

Harnessing the Potentials of African Aesthetics for National Development in the Era of Globalisation

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Abstract

In all significant ages of human development and progress, there has always been a close association of symbolic creative or artistic expressions to uncover the various principles which have institutionalized the notions of good and bad, right and wrong, beauty and ugly, truth and false, and patterns stability and shaved expectations. These creative or artistic expressions are symbolic designs, prescriptions, and responses, which are deliberately fashioned to guide all aspects of a people's life. African aesthetics broadly described as the normative science of beauty in nature and art, in other objects, and in a living experience in line with African culture and traditions, emphasise that it is not enough to create or enjoy aesthetic objects but that it is necessitous to try to understand, explain, critically and morally evaluate them. This paper specifically examines the concept of African aesthetics and the general attitude of Africans towards it. With the help of available literature, the study discloses that African aesthetics can be harnessed for national development. It identifiably unravels that with regard to the human person, African aesthetics above all, intelligibly has a moral value undertone and is tied to that which is good. It maintains that this knowledge and the realisation of its relevance to man and the human community would help create lasting value, achieve satisfaction and serenity, and improve the quality of life generally in all spheres.

Keywords: African aesthetics, development, globalisation, harnessing, national development

Introduction

Aesthetics is characterized by delight, interest, and enjoyment experienced by human beings in response to objects, events, and scenes. It holds the attentive eye and ear of the person and arouses his or her appreciation and enjoyment as he or she looks and listens. African aesthetics expressed in various forms of oral and written tradition contains deep aesthetic insights which reflect the prevalent principles and canons of artistic creativity, criticism, and evaluation. The objects that are traditionally considered worthy of sustained appreciation and enjoyment in African cultures comprise painting, sculpture, music, dancing, and many more.

African aesthetics considers the beautiful to include more in the life of a person than the events, scenes, and works of art. It deals with the standards of value in appraising other aspects of human life and culture such as humanity itself and morality. Some African everyday words signifying a

sense of beauty are intertwined with what is normally adjudged good, proper, and appreciable in the African worldview. By way of definition, Njiofor (2018) defines African aesthetics as a branch of African philosophy, the normative science of beauty in nature and art, in other objects, and in the living experience in line with African culture, tradition, and ideals of the community, for the well-being of all. Ozumba (2007) sees African aesthetics as the African's way of appreciating nature, creating aesthetic objects, evaluating and improving on nature's aesthetic raw materials for the overall improvement of their wellbeing, hinged on man's multilayered relationship that is in tune with God, nature, spirits, ancestors, plants, animals and other seen and unseen terrestrial and celestial forces.

In the African aesthetic worldview, many reasons shore up the African work of art, whether visual, musical, kinetic, poetic, contemplative, spiritual, or other non-visual arts; for there is always a sense of purpose in whatever the African does. His paintings are informed by beliefs, traditions, religion, folklores, conquests, history, etc. Works of art whether in sculpture, building, dress, dance, carving, horticulture, tattooing, theatre, etc., are informed by concepts like peace, love, friendship, courage, toughness, strangeness, hospitality, vision, religiosity, harmony, unity, moderation, etc.

On the negative side, the reason for the work of art in Africa may be to inspire fear, hate, hostility, aggressiveness, invincibility, etc. Here, artworks are both emotional and expensive, unique, individual and communal, and they also gain spread and commonality over time. For Ozumba (2007), most often, whatever the African does in the creation of art satisfies some kind of religious, moral, and or physically-based aesthetic need. In other words, as a rule, works of art are crafted as answers to various existential problems and therefore somewhat serve practical ends. As part and parcel of the life of the African, they are not just made to be admired and appreciated disinterestedly, they are active modes of expression and representations, more or less symbolic forms of "participation" in the spiritual (religious), physical, and social life of the community, and most often indicative of the human relational taste-perceptions of the African people. Hence, African art is functional, depersonalized, and community-oriented. According to Nwala (1985) Africans use:

...the medium of art to give expression to the beliefs, values and attitudes which the community approve and cherish and at the same time the individuals in the society are encouraged as the case may be to accept or reject those values. The individual artist while creating value through his work expresses not only his individual preferences and feelings but the communal values of the society. And usually his message is unmistakably clear because of their symbolic realism. (p. 213)

The upshot of what is meant here is that African works of art mostly reflect the indigenous value system of the African people. Among other values, they inspire hope, courage, perseverance, and togetherness. It is important to understand that there are certain elements observably common across traditional African societies in their aesthetic world outlook. Traditional African society has a really strong bond of togetherness in the community. The people's consciousness of their richness is more spiritual than material, and their happiness and prosperity as a people are based more on their belief system and sense of communal unity and trueness to their environment. In addition, Nwala (1985) stated that most songs, drama, poems, stories, proverbs, sculpture, and other art forms in the African worldview, are embodiments of the values (or preferences) and emotional responses of the community.

It is the case that a culture of team spirit inspires and underlies the crafting of many artistic works of African societies, be it for community use, in professional pursuits, or for those used in family activities and chores. It thus creates mainly a sense of communal and traditional value, ownership, and pride in the product made. More often than not, even craftsmen working on their own would have closely worked with their masters or in a group in the production of some artifacts, for Africans believe that when people work together positively, such activity is for the higher good of the community in terms of its well-being and the process of its becoming (development). Art is the creation of works that are in form, content and execution, aesthetically pleasing and meaningful. These works are used to represent things or express ideas. It involves man's ability to arrange or adapt natural things or conditions to his uses.

Broadly speaking, works of art could be divided into the literary, visual, and performing arts. Performing arts could include such forms as drama, prose, and poetry that exist in written form (from the Latin etymology "litterata" which means to write). Visual arts refer to fine arts which include drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, batik, graphics, and cartoons. Performing art forms also could include film, theatre, music, dance, acrobatics, circus shows, masquerading and festival drama. (Afolabi, 2004: 149).

At this stage, it needs to be stated that all art forms could be performance-infused. They could either be turned into performances, as is the case with the literary arts, or used in performance, as is the case with the visual arts. In fact, in Africa, the arts generally are performance-oriented. Performance energizes the arts and makes them more interesting and of a wider appeal. A drama text is made to come alive by its performance on stage before a live audience. Some poems are not merely read or recited. They are performed before live audiences with such dramatic elements as dancing, gesturing, facial expressions, the giving of gun salutes, etc. This is common in virtually all the poetic traditions in Africa and especially among the Benin of Nigeria with whom virtually all poetic forms are performed. In prose narratives, the storyteller becomes the actor/performer, his listeners his audience. In a call-response convention, "he engages audience participation (a theatrical convention) to enhance the attention of his audience" (Afolabi, 2004: 149). There are also often musical interjections and dramatic orchestration of events in prose narratives. Performances, therefore, permeate all aesthetic genres. In like manner the performing arts "utilise the visual arts for embellishment in order to enhance quintessence" (Afolabi, 2004: 156). These are best seen in the technical aspects of theatrical productions: stage designs, use of props, costume design, set design, graphics, etc.

Importance of Aesthetics and African Aesthetics

From the ancient period to modern times, aesthetics have always assumed a position of eminence among human societies. Among the ancient Greeks, aesthetics was akin to a religious ritual, commanding the attention of the entire society. Aesthetic practitioners were the best brains and leaders of thought in society. Art (aesthetic) was one of the products of the Greek golden age. It was an intellectual counterpart of the great Greek festival of brawn - the Olympic Games. These together with democracy, are legacies bequeathed to the modern world by the ancient Greeks.

As it was in Greece during the classical period, so has it been in virtually all nations of the modern world where aesthetics and the entertainment industry are generally held in high esteem. Today, the performing art industries are major foreign exchange earners for countries such as America, India, China, Britain, Nigeria, Mexico, and others.

One significant and common feature of what aestheticians call works of art or art object have their expressive power, symbolic effects and functional importance, particularly as systems of information and communication among indigenous people. Aestheticians rely in some ways on sculpted art forms as aspects of visual arts in material culture, that reveal the essence and sense of the being of a people and their practical experiences, exposing the different levels of identity and human beings' relationships with spiritual beings and natural phenomena. That is, the artistic expressions and images tell the story of a people, express their lives and living experiences in communicating their sense and essence of their peoplehood. It expresses their imagination, perception, religion, culture, moral, social and political identities, including the relationships of powers (gender, social and political).

African aesthetics has become and can become a powerful instrument for constructing the history of the people. It is a hermeneutical tool (in some aspects) for African aestheticians in interpreting and explaining the cultural lives of the indigenous people. These two perspectives express the values of historical consciousness and cultural self-awareness within a global context.

The African aesthetics is very important in the terrain of African philosophy; it is often grandiose, noble, intimate and intricate. It helps to record the history of Africans as they chronicle their times and epochs and it serves as momentous, and memorials, endearing monuments to and of the time, as well as commemorating for posterity and for self-achievement or the travails of the people as they journey through the ages – that is, as they undergo the necessary transition through space and time. African aesthetics is very symbolic because of the various components like religion and culture that influences the aesthetic lifestyle of the people. Culture plays an important role in the cognitive understanding of reality and unless one is intimately familiar with the ontological commitments of a culture, it is often difficult to appreciate or otherwise understand those commitments. Therefore, it is important we understand the African cultural and ontological conceptions of reality to enable us understand the African's approach to aesthetics.

Central to the traditional African thought system is the idea that there are ancestral spirits whose intentions we can know. Ancestral spirits are individuals who once lived in our physical world. Although they are now physically dead, they are still capable of initiating actions on their own; such actions of theirs have intended consequences on our physical world. Having the knowledge of their intentions provides grounds for unending physical occurrences. This implies that for the African, there is more to reality than what is within the realm of empirical inquiry.

Traditional Functions of the African Aesthetics

Throughout all ages, African aesthetics have always had serious influences on society and performed certain important roles. Some of these roles include entertainment, education, a portrayal of life, social reformation/correction of vice, propaganda, cultural revivalism and psychotherapeutics. Some of these functions are briefly examined hereunder.

Entertainment: The performing arts as an aspect of aesthetics some of which include drama, music, dance, and circus, are veritable sources of entertainment in human societies. The need to relax the brain after hard work, to eschew boredom associated with a regular routine, and to pass time in a thrilling, satisfying environment, makes entertainment important to man.

Education: Much of the artistic expressions are geared directly or indirectly toward teaching certain values such as moral uprightness, good citizenship and virtuous living. Historical artistic expressions were demonstrated to educate the young generations about the history of their village, community and country.

The Portrayal of Life: Every art form portrays life in its base society. This is so because, artists create their works from the raw materials supplied by events in society. There is a convention of the perpetual inextricability of art and society. The artistic expressions are often regarded as imitations or representations of life on stage. They often chronicle human life of a particular period, serving as imprints, a kind of trademark of the periods in which such arts were created. To have an idea of what life was like during the Elizabethan Period in England or the apartheid years in South Africa for instance, one only needs to watch performances or read books written during such periods. A performance of Reggae music (in its original Jamaican form) will definitely reveal the oppressive, marginalizing and dehumanizing conditions under which blacks operate in the Caribbean, a performance of the American Blues/Negro spirituals or the Soweto Blues for instance, will reveal what the experiences of blacks were, under slavery in America in the former or under apartheid in South Africa in the latter. As an imitation of life, the artistic expressions embrace almost everything that life embraces, including life's vicissitudes, chaos, confusion, sadness and joy.

Correction of Vice: Some artistic expressions in Africa are used to correct vices and misdemeanours in society. Comedies, satirical songs and plays are designed to do this. There are also exposed plays, written to correct specific ills in society. For instance, *Izozo*, a Nigerian Television Authority network drama highlights the evils of women trafficking and child labour in Nigeria. According to Nwoga (1981: 230), satirical song performances are often more effective than formal punishments in dissuading people from crime.

Propaganda Roles: The artistic expressions in whatever form are sometimes used to disseminate information, especially new ideas and principles. They could also be used to suppress certain ideas or practices which a propagandist wants to be suppressed. Governments have found these artistic expressions as effective veritable tools in propagating government policies and activities. This is why governments usually commission plays, dances and musical performances to promote programmes and ideas such as family planning, voting during elections, the evil of human trafficking, participation in the census, payment of taxes, and national re-orientation programmes like '*change begins with me*'. Such operatic performances like Hubert Ogunde's *Yoruba Ronu*, Ngugi's *Mother Sing For Me*, and Kanayo Kanayo's *Professor Johnbul* were written to conscientise and mobilize the masses of people (Nigerians and Kenyans respectively) for political and social actions. Wole Soyinka, a Nigerian playwright organised the performance of many of such plays in the 1970s. He also staged plays to support Road Safety Campaigns.

Psychotherapy: The performing arts as a component of African aesthetics are sometimes used as psychotherapeutic agents in the cure of stress and other sicknesses of the mind. Musical shows such as the Blues, Negro Spirituals, Calypso, Ska and Reggae, and the masquerade arts in the Caribbean Islands (Papa Diabie, Hosea, Devil at Christmas, and others), are often consolatory safety through which oppressed peoples express their discontent and get (if only temporarily) relieved. According to Taylor (1981: 103) the Blues, a kind of music written and performed by black Americans, developed as a response to the savage and degrading conditions of the slaves

and their descendants. Ngugi Wa Thiongo (1978: 103) too regards the rastafarian performing artists as “helping the wretched of the earth to rise above the absurdity of their situation”.

Comedy is often performed to bring relief and laughter to a tension-soaked or sorrow-laden individual, while tragedy could be staged to show such an individual that there are others whose crises are greater than his (Afolabi, 2004: 152). A tragicomedy could be staged to show a distressed person that if he endures, he could still laugh again in the end. A particular performance called psychodrama is used as a medical healing agent in psychiatry to heal mental patients. It is a process of psychotherapy in which a patient is made to dramatize or to watch a play involving his problems. This is usually done before a select audience, under the supervision of a psychiatrist. This form of drama is therefore a panacea for personality and character ills or maladjustments.

Cultural Revival: Either in film, dance, theatre, music, circus, masquerade arts, acrobatics or festival of arts, these artistic expressions are always great portrayers and purveyors of cultural heritage. They, therefore serve as veritable means of cultural revival each time they are performed. These arts serve as the repositories of culture, norms and values of society.

Intellectual Exercise for Fulfillment: African Aesthetics involves intellectual exercises. They are often more than mere entertainment, but great avenues to critically examine great issues of human life and man’s role in his environment and the universe at large. As could be seen in the works of great artists like Ben Enwonwu, Ola Rotimi, Cyprian Ekwensi, Chinua Achebe, John Keats, William Shakespeare, Pablo Ruiz Picasso and others, great arts often provide a means of probing honestly and fearlessly, the meaning of life and the mystery of existence. They are usually vital, living experiences that probe into some of life’s most basic problems with courageous honesty.

According to Whiting (1996: 6) “...on the intellectual level, a tremendous portion of the greatest ideas ever conceived by man have been expressed in dramatic form.” He opined that playwrights, actors, directors and designers have sought for the meaning of existence with the same passion and sincerity that has characterized the works of great scientists, philosophers and theologians, and that artistic expressions rest on a common foundation with all learning, on man’s capacity to explore, wonder and reflect.

Globalisation and African Aesthetics

The implications of globalisation on the artistic expressions of a nation are obvious. With the latest developments in information technology, artists can communicate with any part of the world in the twinkling of an eye. They also have access to the works of fellow artists in other parts of the world through the World Wide Web. They are able to avail themselves of great opportunities to interact with others and to promote their work all over the world. In like manner, their works could circulate around the world. In the past, it takes months before a box office hit in London could reach New York. The original cast has to travel down to New York before New Yorkers can have a taste of the London production. Today, by the grace of internet, it is possible for different audiences over the world to simultaneously watch the same performance at the same time - some watching the performance live, others watching live through the satellite. African aestheticians encounter new horizons, challenges, visions and inspirations through the internet and they can package and showcase their works through the same media. If anything, globalisation has made the roles and functions of African aestheticians to be more effective.

African Aesthetics as International Agents of Globalisation

As has been stated earlier, African arts effective agents of cultural promotion and information dissemination with limitless scope of operation. Many governments, people and nations have used this nature and scope of aesthetics to promote and suppress certain ideas.

Much of the cultural brainwashing of African nationals by westerners is done through the medium of the performing arts - popular music, movies, soap operas, and dramatized advertisements that are western inclined. This is usually achieved through various forms of broadcast media. The youths are particularly prone and susceptible to these influences because they involve fashion, adventure, sexuality and those other things that naturally appeal to youths.

In the modern day human society, especially in the era of information technology, African aesthetics can be effective agents of propagation and imposition of values. They have been found to be effective propaganda machinery by governments, advertisers and other opinion leaders in society. The arts have a way of penetrating deep into the human psyche in a very subtle way that is hardly noticeable. This is why advertisers employ music, dance and drama performances to promote the sale of their products. Governments employ artists to write and act plays to enlighten the people about certain government projects and programmes, such as enlightenment on HIV-AIDS, programme of immunization, payment of taxes, and participation in civic duties such as voting during elections or taking part in the census.

It is for the purpose of social and cultural diplomacy (in order to propagate national ideals) that civilized nations exchange visits by cultural troupes among themselves. Such troupes usually consist of performing art troupes of the visiting country's national theatres. They seize the opportunity of such travels to showcase the different cultures of their countries. "This is why in 1976, John Vorster, the then Prime Minister of apartheid South Africa sponsored a musical group "Ipi Tombia?" ("Where are the Girls?"), consisting of black and coloured Africans to countries in Europe and Africa to fraudulently prove that apartheid is not the monster people thought it was" (Afolabi, 2004: 153).

It should be stated here that instead of travelling to foreign countries to showcase cultural norms and values through various artistic expressions, it is now possible to transmit such performances through technological means from the base or setting of such performances, to be viewed simultaneously both at the base and abroad. If the war between Russia and Ukraine could be watched live, there is hardly any cultural content that cannot be transmitted for the world to see in this age of globalisation.

Negative Effects of Globalisation through the Arts

The importance of performing arts in re-educating and reconstructing colonised minds cannot be over-emphasised. Although political colonialism has officially ended in Africa, it still exists unofficially in socio-cultural re-modifications. The cultural neo-colonization of Africa can be done using theatrical performances and musical shows for example, using radio, television and other media platforms. For the purpose of effective propaganda, some satellite television stations provide free access and broadcast to most countries around the world. The implication of this is obvious. In most developing countries, the United States of America is seen as the model of nationhood, the land of freedom, the quintessence of national pride and honour. Western values are therefore very subtly, but effectively ingrained into the psyche of the average receptor-nation through the free audiovisual signals received from the western media. It is no wonder that people

in the developing world prefer to dress like Americans, speak like Americans, pattern the structure of their houses after those in America, ride flashy cars, and so on. Undue exposure to western cowboy films, a life of violence as seen in crime- portraying movies and American Wrestling in particular, also encourage negative values in the receptor-nations.

To youths in Africa, western fashion is the vogue. American dressing patterns such as “body hugs”, “hot pants”, “topless” dresses, strapless bras and sensuous dressing are the order of the day. Sex appeal seems to be the guiding watchword. The hair too is either “permed”, jerry-curled or wigged to look like that of Americans. In spoken English, American English, complete with the accents, slang, cliché and spellings seem to be the order of the day. Many African films contain scenes of organised crime, gangsterism, sex, shooting, killing and maiming. Not surprisingly, crimes that previously were uncommon, are now assuming greater dimensions in Africa - hired assassination, professional prostitution, various forms of sexual perversion, rape, and so on. Today, Africans are more familiar with the names and performances of musical groups, artists and Hollywood stars from the United States and Britain and other parts of the western world, than those from their own countries or neighbouring African states. The works of many African artists such as music, film, dance, sculpture, paintings, stage drama, and others, today, appear incomplete without doses of exploitation. African popular musicians are the chief culprits. That is what decades of neo-colonization have done to Africa, through the power of information technology as expressed in the various artistic performances. It is the researcher’s view that to rectify this anomaly and hold African values in esteem, African aesthetics in all its ramifications should be utilised positively.

African Aesthetics to the Rescue

It is obvious that modern day African society has derailed from its original norms and values to a large extent. The African spirit of communalism and extended family system of “being your brother’s keeper” is replaced with a western spirit of “every man for himself, God for us all”. Sexual morality in terms of decent dressings and strict and disciplined social relations between opposite sexes in Africa is getting replaced with open sexuality, hugging, kissing, and even coitus, as often displayed openly in western films, advertisements and musical promos on television.

The first assignment that the African aesthete of a nation has to do is to promote the authentic, unadulterated culture, norms and values of their nation, and show how and why these are better than imported values. This may be seen as a kind of neo-Negritudism. Films, musical shows, live theatre and home videos should promote those things/virtues that make Africa a unique land of peace and a unique place where moral sanctity is sacrosanct. Such traditional institutions as marriage, chieftaincy, and politics that evolved from, and are well-suited to African societies should be promoted. African arts should possess significant marks of Africanness, or else, Africa would be lost in identity with time. This is why Booth Tarkington (1941) asserted that:

A country could be perfectly governed, immensely powerful and without poverty; yet if it produced nothing of its own in architecture, sculpture, music, painting or in books, it would someday pass into the twilight of history, leaving only traces of a creditable political record.
(p. 2)

The Censors boards established should carry out their constitutional role without fear or favour, because they have been empowered to delete whatever is generally considered offensive or objectionable in the performing arts. Musical clips, films and plays that promote violence, exploitation, materialism, crime and vainglory should be seriously censored. No responsible

government allows its country to be a free dumping ground for all forms of cheap, irresponsible products or services.

One major assignment that the African aesthete should do is to stop portraying Africa in a negative light before the whole world. In an era of globalisation, any play, book, sculpture, movie or video clip could be circulated around the world within a few minutes. There are some home videos that some producers produced to discourage certain evil practices in their society. The producers expect that the circulation of such films will be restricted to the areas in which the films are set. In an era of globalisation, such restrictions may be unrealistic. An example of such a film shot and released in Nigeria is *Misconception* by Pete Edochie. The entire film centres on how human beings are being eaten by fellow human beings in an African society. The video film deals with gory details of how innocent men are trapped in pits like animals, killed and roasted as a delicacy, for an entire community. Although the producers shot the film to discourage “those men-eaters”... it is nonetheless an international embarrassment if such a film gets out to international audiences. In recent times, the prevalence of ritual killings have been traced to what people watch on videos, some of the youth recently alluded to this. Therefore, all hands should be on deck to curb the menace of ritual killings and practice.

Another of such Nigerian film is the popular *Battle of Musanga*, the so-called “great epic of the century”. Allegedly based on real-life history, the film is set in the 18th century, when Africans allegedly did not wear clothes. Since its creators wanted to portray life realistically in order to enhance plausibility and verisimilitude, Africans were made to appear in semi-nudity (with leaves covering the groin region) throughout the film. Nearly a hundred ladies (whose only major role in the film was dancing) appeared half-naked in the film, dangling different shapes and sizes of naked breasts on the screen. The film also showed a council of chiefs and elders at a meeting. For entertainment, they were served the human flesh of a criminal who was caught in an act of attempting to rape a woman on a bush path. The Head chief announced that because the flesh was that of a stranger, it makes the meat even more delicious. The apparent psychosis of the Musanga king who chokes his own soldiers to death without provocation, the way he decorated his shanty palace with human skulls, and the way he licked the white man’s saliva with relish when the latter spat on him in disgust, are derogatory portrayals of Africans. The *Battle of Musanga* is a neo-manichean film, a literary encapsulation and confirmation of the jaundiced, euro-centric views about the underdevelopment of Africans. In an era of globalisation a film like this will go a long way to permanently damage the image of Africa, as viewers will not see it as a representation of events three centuries ago.

Artistic expressions could be used to showcase the natural problems of some African societies to the world without damaging the dignity of such societies. The purpose will be to solve such problems. For example, the year 2003 documentary of the American Cable Network News (CNN) on Ethiopia reveals the very pathetic human situation in the country. Transmitted on Cable Network as it was, the problems became manifest to the whole world. Help could therefore be on the way. The situation in Somalia today is similar, together with other war-torn countries of the world. It is no surprise therefore, that the United Support of Artists (USA) for Africa - a group of fifty American performing musicians, came together in 1985 to release the album *We are the World*, to assist twenty-five African countries who appealed to the United Nations for emergency aid to ward off famine. In this era of globalisation, more of these performances could be organised to achieve similar results.

African aesthetics should be veritable sources of national income earning in this era of globalisation. The entertainment industry in America, India, China and Britain are great sources of national income generation in those countries. This is because of the importance of the art forms in the life of the nations. Some of the performing art endeavours include the film industry, music, recording studios, fashion, cosmetic and theatre industry. If a country could effectively tackle problems of piracy and related challenges in the performing arts industry, there is no doubt that her entertainment industry could be a high-yielding source of economic stability to her. African aesthetic if well-articulated and explored is a potential national goldmine that is yet not well-tapped. Governments should encourage artists to write plays that will consciously counter and nullify the negative effects of western culture, to show the dangers of mass importation of foreign cultural values.

Television stations should be made to broadcast plays, films, musicals and feature programmes that promote traditional values and the ideals of virtuous living. A certain percentage (say sixty percent) of their programmes should be local. Some Asian countries like India have inaugurated such policies to protect their citizens and promote their local arts. Globalisation obviously has both positive and negative edges. It is indeed a double-edged sword, and it is the way that it is utilised that determines which edge of it prevails.

Contribution to Knowledge

This paper contributes to knowledge in the area of aesthetics and specifically African aesthetics on the potentials in it. It exposes to us that African aestheticians study the varieties of art in relation to their physical, social and cultural environments. They use psychology as a tool to understand how people see, hear, think, learn and act in relation to the materials and problems, its creative process and the aesthetic experience. It is clear and worthy of note that aesthetics traits from African conception of beauty, based on African cultural and aesthetic values distinctiveness, widens more humanity's horizon of understanding of it. This conceptual status should be sustained on conscious policy level by the government of African states and in the operational tasks of the continent, exported as Africa's contribution towards better aesthetico-qualitative global human community. This thought is held because, as one of the important concepts that guide our sense of reasoning and judgement, proper knowledge and understanding of African aesthetics and the realisation of its relevance to man, human society and the state, would create value, achieve satisfaction and serenity, maintain global harmony, and improve the quality of human life in all spheres.

Conclusion

This paper has shown how artistic expressions have been used by western media organisations, with the aid of technology, to derail the socio-economic psyche of African people. This paper has also shown how the anomaly could be obliterated, or at least ameliorated by the artistic expressions of African nations. More importantly, this paper has shown how globalisation can make African aesthetics to be more effectively utilised for all the roles outlined in this paper, that is, to educate, entertain, and promote culture, to correct anomalies in society, for propaganda, for psychotherapy and for intellectual fulfillment.

African governments should adopt a policy of indigenization of the arts. This involves the promotion of indigenous artworks that are of relevance and influence to the local society. Governments should also control the in-flow of western or foreign arts into the country. Those that

have the potential of breeding wrong values and promoting crime should be censored. African aesthetics should be used to rebuild the image of Africa through promotion of those things that can make Africa proud. The arts indeed should be veritable sources and means of cultural diplomacy for African countries. They should be used to propagate those things that unite the society and promote good social norms and values. They should also be used to reform society, correct social ills, and re-educate colonised minds. They should be used to point attention to problem areas in society, and like the union of “United Support of Artists for Africa”, endeavour to collectively solve the problems. With the large business scope of African aesthetics, they should be veritable sources of national income and socio-economic upliftment of nations.

African aesthetics indeed, have the potentials to do all these and more, if properly controlled, focused and directed under dynamic leadership. This is when the arts could be used to achieve national development in the current era of globalisation and information technology.

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