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## CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND THEATRE PRAXIS IN A DIGITAL EPOCH

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### **Abstract**

Culture is closely related to civilization and all observable civilizations are derived from one form of culture to the other. The cultural and creative industries (CCIs) usually takes advantage of the vast cultural heritage of a given people as sources of inspiration for their artistic enterprise to thrive. At the heart of creativity in every pluralist society is culture. This is evident in countries like Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, among others, where the cultural market offer muse for artists. This paper examines the ways through which the creative industry can tap from the rich resources inherent in the cultural market. It uses the Concept of Cultural and Creative Industries as a theoretical anchor to argue that the CCIs are valuable assets capable of instituting development ethos which can move a state from nationhood to civilization. The study gets its data from the instrumentality of documentary observation *a la* desk review of books, journals and other bibliotheca. It concludes that the theatre possess the innate ability to make Nigeria relevant in terms of soft power diplomacy in world politics and development.

**Keywords:** CCIs, Nigeria, Cultural market, Soft power diplomacy, Development.

### **Introduction**

The cultural and creative industries (CCIs) are aspects of performance. Whereas, performance in contemporary terms can be described as a process or an act of presenting a piece of art, especially as it relates to, or affects the cordial exhibition of a combination of drama, music and dance to express an idea, performance in cultural studies has to do with daily activities or ‘doings.’ While the activities in the performing arts industry is not different from everyday life, it provides source material for the theatre and creative industry to thrive. In the performing arts, the activities and events of our daily living are re-enacted in the form of dance and drama.

The CCIs in Africa from time immemorial have always embodied the totality of the cultural life of a people. In a performance situation, religion, social and cultural life of a typical community is celebrated with pomp and ceremony so much so that they are characterized by dramatic situations (Omoera 111; Omoera and Atuegbe 61-63; Epochi-Olise and Omoera 1-2). Even though such cultural activities were and are mostly functional, they also serve as cultural commodity for the entertainment and tourist market.

When one writes about cultural and creative industries, the active ingredients that make up such a performance memorable, artistically and spiritually rewarding is the ability of the presentation to be vicariously and spontaneously appeal to the social and cultural life of the people; thereby becoming a veritable vehicle for communal awareness and development. Suffice to say that the cultural and creative theatrical experiences retain and borrow profusely from the old traditional orientation. It also emphasizes literary contents as well as a well-structured form; fashioned after the theatrical and cultural traditions. Moreover, theatre is a branch of performance, while any performance may be considered as theatre; performing arts focuses almost exclusively on live performances by creating a self-contained drama.

### **The Praxis of the Theatre**

The praxis of the theatre has to do with practice as distinguished from theory; the accepted practice, or the processes of using a theory in a practical way. So, there is a constant interaction between practice and market. As a result, the innovative theatre artists must locate the appropriate market to be relevant. If the theatre practice is to be sustained and remain vibrant, creativity and innovation is important in theatre praxis because a theatre entrepreneur or theatreprenuer has to deal with the peculiar attributes of the theatre. Sofola sees the theatre:

As a medium of artistic expression where societal happenings are mirrored in a dynamic, living form. A metaphorical image of reality, it reflects the total cosmic, moral and metaphysical order of the life of the people. It is an arena where human beings are presented in a cosmic totality, acting and reacting to forces around them and within them, perceiving and being perceived by those interacting with them, and by those in the audience who experience with them the enigma that is the common lot of humanity. (126)

Afolabi and Oyewo observe that “in essence, theatre is understood in this context as both a place where theatrical performances are presented and also as a collective effort of different people in order to achieve an organized, coordinated activity, event or theatrical performance”(4). Oyewo asserts that “performance in any organization does not depend on financial and technological facilities alone; religious, economic and socio-cultural influences have also been identified as critical determinants of management (55).

### **The Cultural Industries**

Moore postulates that the idea of creativity becoming an asset has been part of economic policies since the 1990s. The word, according to her, have evoked a variety of new terms, such as “creative sector”, “copyright industries”, “content industries”, “experience economy”, “creative business sector”, “art centric business”, “cultural and communication industries”, “media industries”, and “knowledge economies”... the definitions and concepts of these new terms are not certain and their use would depend on interpretation (738-746).

Moore further contends that the concept of creative industries was first documented in 1994 in Australia when the government released their new cultural

policy “Creative Nation,” designed to help Australia to embody new IT opportunity and the growing wave of global culture enabled by digital media. Creative Nation was presented as cultural policy but it was also essentially an economic policy. This was the first time an Australian federal government, led by Prime Minister Paul Keating, and formally developed a cultural policy, which was supported by additional funding of a \$250 million to cultural institutions.

The report emphasized culture’s importance to national identity and defined culture more broadly than earlier conceptions, by including film, radio, libraries and other areas. It also stressed the economic potential of cultural activity and arts. Whereas, the UK started to articulate the creative industries concept with New Labour coming into power in 1997. At the time, there was active thinking over the development of ICT and the ideas of creative industries and economies being built in parallel, enabled by ICT developments (Sapsed and Tschang 127). At first, it seemed that the term, ‘creative industries’ just replaced that of cultural industries, thereby impacting arts and media policies.

It is important to understand how creative industries have developed from the cultural industries because the history of cultural industries is grounded in the industrial revolution of the 19th century, through to the 20th century when the term cultural industries was first used, although in a critical way. The avant-garde of the 1930s ironized about mass culture – how radio, the gramophone, cinema and cheap novels made culture available for the masses while simultaneously diluting the value of such culture through its artificial reproduction and wide distribution.

Industrializing the cultural and creative industries are apt. this implies a shift from the crude system to an advanced platform and representing a wider social change and economic development closely linked to technological innovations. Technological innovation influences economic and social development because improved productivity changes consumption patterns and the way people organize their lives. Thus, technological innovation leads to social innovation as society adapts to new technology and then seeks for new solutions. “With industrialization came the need for standardization in order to fit factory machine mechanical limitations, schedules, shift work, new energy sources like coal and electricity along with tremendous development of urban and regional transportation” (O’Sullivan and Sheffrin 1-20).

Little wonder then that industrialization brought a philosophical change in attitude towards nature, society or community and the process of rationalization. As industrial workers’ income rose, consumer goods and services markets of all kinds expanded. This provided a further stimulus to consumption, industrial investment and economic growth and economic rationalization lead to ignoring societal matters. This follows the axiom that ‘culture arises spontaneously from the masses.’ However, the argument is that since the commodification of culture forms or artistic objects create a means of income for their creators, profit will become more important than the artistic expression. Connecting the term “culture” in its idealistic notion and “industry” refers to both Marxist economic concepts of commodification, commodity exchange, and capital concentration and worker alienation at the point of production; and to the concept of rationalization. Hence, attention is shifted from the content of culture to its

forms: from the cultural product to the relationship between culture producers and culture consumers thereby turning cultural producers into wage labourers within the increasingly concentrated large-scale corporations.

This explains how technological innovations have transformed artistic practice. It emphasises market commodities rather than on culture as an industry. A kind of process of production with limitations and problems, complex and diverse industries competing for the same pool of disposable consumer income, time, advertising, revenue and labour. Therefore, cultural and creative industries (CCIs) provide explanations of concentration and integration, which are features of capitalist production – including media production. According to Moore:

Cultural industries are defined as those, which have industrial production and organization to produce and disseminate symbols. This definition naturally points to media in general and the digital media in particular... cultural industries are producing and disseminating cultural goods, which imply that cultural goods are likely to be most demanded. Commercialization, reproduction and distribution of cultural goods are more applicable in the popular part of culture. (741)

The term ‘popular culture’ was likely coined in the 19th century. Popular culture comprises the idea, perspectives, attitudes, memes, images and other phenomena that are within the mainstream of a given culture, especially Western culture of the early to mid-20th century. After the end of World War II technological innovations changed mass media and brought major cultural and social changes. 20th and 21st centuries popular culture is closely linked to mass media. “The meaning of popular culture began to overlap with those of mass culture, media culture, image culture, consumer culture and culture for mass consumption” (Moore 742).

### **The Creative Industries**

The definition of creative industry differs from country to country. At the base of the diverse definitions or legislation of it, is the recognition of individual creative talent, innovation and the exploitation of the intellectual property. The development of the creative industries is linked to the contribution of culture to the economy. For example, books, films, music and sound recordings, art and concerts as creative enterprise have contributed immensely to our national gross domestic products (GDP). This is because certain sectors of our economy constitute the spectra of creative industries. Again, the creative industries can be reflected in the concept of ‘creative class’ – where the field of creative industries is based on occupations or fields of activity. Another aspect of the creative industries is the holistic urban development, comprising the concept of the “creative city” (Sapsed and Tschang 127).

Nevertheless, the creative industry can be seen as an important part of the wider economic system, supporting the new economy and ‘is constituted as a constellation of workers, firms, institutions, infrastructures, communication channels and other active ingredients’ (Scott 49). There are other forms and practices in which creative industries take place, such as creative networks, creative linkages, creative spaces and events. In spite of the fore-goings, measuring the value of culture in economic terms is

limiting because cultural value is much broader than the service value, which the creative workers can be paid for their work. So, arts and culture are marginal in terms of economic contribution and should be confined to the realms of public intervention.

### **The Pedagogy of Theatre in Digital Epoch**

It is imperative to affirm that the activities of the cultural and creative industries fall within the praxis of theatre arts. With the advancement in science and technology, the world have become a global village (Bakare, Isijola and Bakare 186). It is now possible to transmit social-cultural contents, live performances to larger audiences through the instrumentality of the mass media, especially, the social media outlets such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and live steaming across the globe and, or via an online virtual tour, or even through Zoom. This research encourages effective application and use of present day digital advancement in technology to advance indigenous theatrical engagements so that the cultural and creative industries could be increasingly attractive and provide already – made job opportunities for the growing unemployment ratio in our pluralistic societies. This can be done through combining digital technology, creative inputs, and workforce diversity.

There is no gainsaying that the digital environment has dramatically affected creative industries in all kinds of ways, requiring dramatic changes in all parts of the value chain, including business models, stakeholders' relationships and intellectual property managements. A very pivotal aspect of appreciating and encouraging the new digital environment is the ability of firms to innovate, to successfully exploit the affordability of the new technologies to generate, archive, and add value to their theatrical productions. According to Snowball, Tarentaal and Sapsed, the impact of digitization on the CCIs are an important testing ground for its impact in other industries previously thought of as frivolous and an expensive luxury, the creative industries are now considered an industrial priority and a "laboratory" for studying the transformation of modern economies and societies (707).

Several ways abounds by which the digital environment can drive entrepreneurial tendency; resulting in digital dividend for both industries and the societies that embraces the online environment. The benefits amongst others includes: access to new markets; job creation and improved social culture as crime will be reduced in the long run. The facilitation of labour market information and new jobs cannot be undermined; better quality cultural goods and creative services at lower prices. Attracting and adopting the digital epoch to theatre productions will increase workers productivities and lower productivity costs; thereby leading also to better access to public services. In the area of economics scale, the inclusion of digital technology in theatre performances would ultimately aid governments to achieve economic growth and employment improvements, hence enhancing improved well-being. Snowball, Tarentaal and Sapsed further claim that:

Findings showed that 90% of CCI innovators used digital technologies to transform their relationships with customers through, for example, offering personalized products and services, and different prices for different levels of exclusivity, which changed revenue models. Many were also able to provide

specific services to target markets through market segmentation. 87% increased revenue through association with firms (for example, groups of artists) and brand extension, which enabled them to increase their customer base and to enhance their credibility through such associations. The general sample of CCIs was more likely to use digital technologies to automate (rather than transform) their business models... digital technologies can [therefore] lead to a variety of new business models, and that a new way of doing things may not completely replace a traditional model but leads to the adoption of a ‘‘portfolio of business models.’’ (708)

What the above statement implies is that digital technology is a bridge between producer, marketers and consumers. With technology comes growth and expansion. Sapsed and Tschang argue that digital technologies affect not only business models, but also the way in which creative work is produced. Taking the example of the development of online games from both UK and USA studios involved in digital art production, they demonstrate how software tools change the production process by allowing artists to experiment and include multiple iterations at any stage of the process, rather than these activities being confined to developmental stages. The sequencing of the production process becomes much more fluid... enabling ideas to be [constantly] realized, tested and revised (127-141). The importance of new digital technologies in providing both unprecedented opportunities for innovation and growth in the CCIs is really overwhelming.

### **Cultural and Creative Industries in Digital Epoch**

The aim of this paper, however, is to explain the connotation and characteristics of the cultural and creative industries in the aura of digital economy and to reflect on the developmental tendencies of the industries to humanity. The digital economy comprised series of economic activities that use digitalized knowledge and information as key production factors: modern information networks as important carriers; and effective use of information and communication technologies as an important driving force for efficiency improvement and economic structure optimization. The rapid development of digital technology has brought new development and new changes to the cultural and creative industries, including new products, new industries and new models, which have changed the connotation and extension of the cultural and creative industries. So, it is imperative and essential to pay adequate attention to such milestone advancement.

There is also the need to emphasize once more that in the digital epoch and in addition to the integration of creative thinking in the production and dissemination of cultural products, cultural and creative industries have begun to merge with digital technologies, which have led to changes in the industrial form. The basis of traditional industries and the scope of the industry have been expanded; new development space has been opened. This is the reason the cultural and creative industries in the digital economy epoch can be called digital content and digital creative industries, which is considered from the perspective of the extension of cultural and creative industries. To grasp the connotation of the cultural and creative industries in the digital epoch, it is

imperative to probe into what may constitute the words, ‘digital’, ‘cultural’ and ‘dynamics’ of culture and creativity.

The word, ‘digital’ or ‘digitality’ is used to describe the core of the cultural and creative industry. The changes brought by digital technology have changed the original industrial form of cultural industry, restructured the productive, and disseminative processes of the cultural industry, and the creative value has been further highlighted. All of these changes happened first within the terrain of culture considering the meaning diverse users and consumers give to the digital product. It follows, therefore, that culture is the basis cultural and creative industry. Hence, cultural and creative industry in the digital economy bear cultural responsibilities in the form of cultural missions. Here, culture is used as a tool for soft power diplomacy because that which is being consumed, digitally, stems from a culture. By adopting technology, we are also, albeit unconsciously, adopting the culture of the producer. The dynamics of such cultural exchange between the digital producers and those who put in cultural contents on them are on a constant production process of exchanging identities whilst also making monetary gains. The main characteristics of cultural and creative industry can be categorized as:

- i. The uncertainty of demand for creative products;
- ii. Cultural and creative industries have multi-level, dynamic and personalized industrial characteristics. It now has more new features;
- iii. The digital cultural and creative industries have the characteristics of productive digitalization, disseminative network, and consumptive information;
- iv. The networking industrial organizations and the ecological and opening production process.

The reason creative aspects of the industry seems to be on the top banner is due to the fact the creative workers excavates and organize historical and cultural contents such as folk culture, historical legends or myths, tourism resources and other traditional cultural material of a specific country or region through creative mind; and use certain technical means to re-create these materials to produce cultural creative products or services which are in line with the times’ value. The cultural and creative industry, no doubt, depends on the input of cultural resources and knowledgeable creativity. Once invested and accepted by the market, the marginal cost decreases and the marginal income increases. Using digital technology associated or in affiliation with other industries can produce various cultural and creative products, such as e-books, games, video, etc., which can change the original industrial form of the cultural into an industry that have better scale effects and bring higher marginal benefits to the cultural and creative industries.

In terms of building a relationship structure for the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in a digital epoch, the networking style is relevant. The network system spreads information in all directions simultaneously in the network chain. In the digital epoch, the development of digital technology, especially the development of internet and social network media technology has made way of information

transmission more flexible and adaptable than the traditional unidirectional and centralized method. In addition, the network structure is also manifested in diversifying communication paths of the cultural and creative industries. For instance, digital technology can break through the limitations of shooting films and present better pictures at a lower cost through the combination of digital technology with satellite technology.

This can open up a new communication path for the media industry through digital technical means to understand users' needs by digital technical means; and provide differentiated products or services. News push software and live broadcast software are good examples. To create a development path for the cultural creativity, and to promote industry in this digital economy, all efforts should be geared towards strengthening the protection of intellectual property rights in cultural and creative industries; improve the talent cultivation system of cultural and creative industries; improve cultural and creative industries policies and management mechanism; due to the global cultural and creative market, develop cultural and creative industries with dynamism and an open mind. This is because, it is necessary to actively use digital technology to promote the opening up of the cultural and creative industries into a newer height and depth. The evolution of the digital platforms and their links with the traditional definition of cultural industry cannot be separated, they require each other for co-efficient and co-equal values.

This can be articulated in series of studies which cuts across these issues: from a cultural sociology to a new definition of the industrial production of culture, that is, from studies that will be attentive to intellectual professional skills or equally creative skills that perform the role of intermediaries in several cultural circles. The highlights of this study seem to be two. The first extended from the media to other forms of industry or cultural crafts, such as fashion; challenging the reductionist approach that identified the pillars of the cultural industry mechanisms only in the media. The second level is the approach of creative dimension, in dialectical and problematic dialogue with certain literature that considers this dimension to be a salient feature of contemporaneity. In fact, in recent times, the expression "cultural and creative" has been progressively replacing; at least in institutional discourse. Facing the issue of professionalism, considering the skills, abilities, training, and routines, has allowed breaking the glass wall, which studies on cultural industry should be kept intact.

## **Conclusion**

Diverse opportunities abound for the Nigerian theatre given its ability to create a thriving cultural markets for music, film, drama and other aspects of the performing arts. If the Nigerian government and key stakeholders take steps to inject more investment into the creative economy; movie, music, telecoms, publishing, gaming and information services, and others – the creative and information industry is likely to maintain its position as the most valuable sector outside oil and gas industries. The cultural and creative industries, coupled with digital economy are among the drivers of innovation in the global economy and society. Today, the industries and the digital system in technology are inseparable and largely dependent on each other. This union

promotes knowledge-based economy, through which the cultural and creative industries thrive. Most traditional and cultural industries like film, publishing, music and photography have been transformed by the power of digital technology; thereby, opening up newer opportunities for enhancing businesses and promoting investments. This is because the digital epoch mingling with the cultural and creative industries gives new life to production, services and entertainment.

Cultural and creative industry can be re-distributed as: drama, film, costume, television, video, radio, advertising and marketing, crafts, design; exhibition, games, graphic, interior, galleries and libraries. Digitalization has been a game-changer for the cultural and creative industries; distributing the entire value chain and altering the way we communicate; create and function (effort). This has led to the development of a more complex system with new large technical players like Facebook, Instagram, Google, Netflix, Amazon, etc., dominating the space. Whereas, the number of people that subscribe to streaming services has tripled over the recent years. Museums, exhibitions, concerts and theatres are now being offered online.

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