

Human Sciences Education, Research, and the Spirituality Nexus in Africa - The Indigenous Musical Arts¹ Epistemology

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Abstract

The paper reflects on the mental dependency syndrome that continues to afflict governance and academic leadership in African countries, and as such authoritatively African epistemology remains virtually invisible at all levels of musical arts education in the continent. Northern hemispheric knowledge paradigms implanted by Colonial education schemes remain emphasized. Consequently, the mentality of African elites remains subtly enslaved under the firm manipulation of the North. As such, political independence with mental dependence is the vogue in African nations. The paper argues that the epistemological validity of indigenous African musical arts could help redeem the cultural knowledge amnesia resulting from continued over-dependence on hegemonic knowledge episteme. African learners and students are compelled to view, study, research and discuss African musical arts with European-American cultural-mental lenses as a result of speculative literature that misrepresent African mental genius. The fundamental spirituality connections of indigenous musical arts epistemology that informs the humanity-butressed African indigenous philosophical ideals and theoretical formulations are tendered. African musical arts educators are then urged to aspire for the virtue of originality in disciplinary representations; to mobilize selves and government authorities to visibly muster pride of cultural integrity; to factually research, discern, teach and practice their prodigious but misunderstood human-intellectual wisdoms. Research orientation and methodology have always marked African indigenous knowledge inventions, practices and intra- as well as inter-cultural advancement. Pointers briefly offered on attaining Africa-sensed, education orientations that respect the primary authority of indigenous practitioners discuss issues of research that touch on library research, mental attitude, field equipment and theory, and sampled an extra curricular intervention practice. The reward is ability to discern African theoretical and philosophical principles basic for inter-cultural discourse. The conclusion is on the meaning and practice of inter-culturism, which in traditional Africa cherished the humanity ideal of sharing. Contemporary Africans need the spirit and practice of sharing, inculcated by indigenous musical arts principles, to achieve mutual benefits in inter-personal/cultural aspirations in educational and other societal practices.

Keywords: Musical Arts, Indigenous Epistemology

Foreword²

African musical arts education authorities, educators, students and researchers must acknowledge essential truths about indigenous epistemology if we are to maintain the humanity and performative qualities of our unique musical arts heritage, as well as benefit from the power and beauty that the musical arts contribute to our overall well

¹ The term musical arts is discussed in the singular as an integration of the sonic, the choreographic, the dramatic and the material components of play (musically underpinned) according to indigenous African conceptualization, expression and terminology; descriptive terms then qualify the peculiar elements that comprise the performative holism.

² Note: Indigenous African musical arts and science invoke the deep, the raw, the mystical and the healing potencies of nature in managing human existence

being. We must open our eyes to see that our musical arts successfully travelled with the extensive African Diaspora to independently give birth to African American jazz as well as Latin American popular music genres such as Capoeira, Cumbia, Salsa etc. It is crucial that we do not remain so intimidated that we continue to succumb to damaging external colonial influences. Foreign classroom musical arts education paradigms not only reduce our autonomy to make Africa-sensible and healthy education decisions, but they make African indigenous musical arts officially invisible. We have every reason to resist what is happening to destroy the health potentials and original intellectual benefits of African musical arts epistemology and fight to restore our noble and viable heritage.

Non cognitive foreign scholars superficially sighted and probed the universe of indigenous musical arts praxis with jaundiced, diagnostic mentality, and ignorantly dismissed African expressions as non-theoretical and informal. The unique lore of African knowledge civilization and creative worldview often eluded them. Nevertheless, they invented exogenous interpretive perspectives, methodologies and terminologies to camouflage their ignorance. Agawu (1992) seminally critiques, in historical periods illustrated with published citations, the Northern scholarship disposition towards Africa, arguing for objective representation of African intellectual presence. A critical issue is whether the African scholar or educator should reason African knowledge productions from the perspective of hegemonic Northern scholarship prescriptions about Africa; or exercise intellectual autonomy, given cognition, in representing original African knowledge creations and expression nationally and globally? The foreign 'experts on Africa' connive with the African pseudo intellectuals they have cloned in advising African polity leadership to endorse and perpetrate published derogatory aspersions on peculiarly African cultural genius. Thus, Africa's indigenous musical arts epistemology, which globally, is perhaps the most theoretically compounded because of its humanity grounding, became excluded in mainstream education in the Humanities and Social sciences. Consequently, African musical arts scholars and students are still trained as clones of Northern cultural intellect despite decades of political independence.

Africans scarcely bother to muster independent mindedness that would cognitively apply original African intellectual matrix in discerning the prodigious humanity merits and compound theory that underpin African musical arts epistemology. Dependency syndrome continues to conflict the intellectual originality of the African elite that determine official policies and practices. The knowledge heritage alienation militates against prioritizing Africa-sensed and contented contemporary education designs without prejudice to incorporating necessary global conventions. Rescuing African rulers, educators, researchers and learners from mental dependency mandates mustering intellectual integrity to query and correct with cognitive insight most literature sources that gravely misrepresent the intentions and expressive manifestations of African musical arts theory and conformational logic. African officialdom, educators, researchers and learners will thereby be rescued from the currently overwhelming mental dependency.

[Propositions: *Cognitive advancement is cumulative, and does not invalidate the integrity of the original; it is a historically more convenient version or feature of an authoritative practice. Development, no matter how imposing or glorious, does not make its mother base dysfunctional; if radical, abusing its base, its future becomes precarious.*

Invention does not sprout in a vacuum; if not ballasted by virtuous legacy, it portends danger and doom for mankind.]

Representing the Validity of Indigenous Musical Arts Epistemology

Official policies in modern education and other polity areas continue to presume that whatever is designed for Northern human and societal milieu must also be automatically suitable for contemporary Africa such as in curricula orientation. Exotic theories, methods and objectives applicable to the knowledge climate, world view and practices of the Northern hemisphere still dictate frameworks for education and research practices, including in studying African knowledge systems in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Hence, there are few authoritatively African voices impacting global issues and knowledge interactions.

Traditional Africa designed and instituted the musical arts as effective agency that managed sublime conduct of life, and thereby humane societal systems. Such critical roles of the musical arts in society management have been discredited, misinterpreted and rejected in favour of imported cultural and governmental practices.

Experiences of African governmental systems have thereby become blemished: In education, the visions, curricula designs and implementation including approved learning materials are culturally exotic; in governance, corruption and maladministration derail 'development' visions, policies and projects; mismanagement of international aids and people/community empowerment programs are rampant.

The preferred foreign theories and models thus produce superficial successes or prove to be outright failures in African State polity experiences. The overall human/cultural modernization fallouts include: disabling cultural intellect and originality; obsessive materialistic life orientation as well as fanciful imaginations of life and self that instigate crime; knowledge empowerment that promotes consumerism as well as mental puppet habits. These syndromes cumulatively erode humanity conscience and consciousness in contemporary living, as evidenced in increasing discrimination, deception and deprivation of the masses; also rampant criminality at both elite and common levels in Africa and globally.

African cultural practices manifest indigenous theories, principles, transmission and evaluation mechanisms that were tested and updated over centuries of organized human communities and their interactions on the continent. The knowledge tapestry, with its systematic retention and transmission conventions, pre-dates contact with knowledge systems from outside the continent. Intercultural interactions were strong within the continent. Misperceptions of the indigenous transmission processes have unfortunately misled academics to argue a dichotomy between formal and informal education as a yardstick for validating effectiveness of knowledge transmission methods. What academic snobs dub informal (performative transmission) evidences knowledge that is formally interacted and embedded in memory and body without stress (play mode); what is celebrated as formal (literacy transmission) is often a learning process that could be stressful, which informally generates dependency syndrome (Phiri, 2008). Literacy knowledge transmission in spite of advantages has less humankind virtues than

performative modes. Indigenous African musical arts epistemology also evidences visual and symbolic literacy coding, not necessarily on paper. Acholonu *et al.* (2005) discusses the ancient symbol-writing of the monoliths in Africa dated around 11,000 B.C. The sound, musical is already a pragmatically rational knowledge-encoding as well as a communicating medium with trans-cultural correspondences and intelligibility. Absence of modern/elitist documentation devices does not, therefore, automatically invalidate theoretical underpinnings, which in traditional Africa transpire as systematic formulae that intentionally process knowledge in play mode (Mans, 2002). Symbolic and performative representations are authoritative transmission modes in addition to robust verbal discourses in some learning and evaluation circumstances. The expanded African world view must take cognizance of modern intercultural as well as global imperatives, such that the indigenous intracultural and intercultural methods need to be complemented by the modern literacy advantages. It must be stressed that over millennia the African indigenous epistemological canons effectively preserved and advanced African musical arts lore, its humanity-framed ideology and expressive logic. The indigenous practices remain contemporaneously viable, but urge advancement in manners that will continue to cultivate humanity consciousness as well as virtuous dispositions in classroom education as well as other societal systems of African nations.

African knowledge transaction and enculturation models evidence correspondences with what happens in other human regions around the globe. The politics of mental and human superiority or inferiority elaborated by Santos (2012) as “Sociology of absences” and “learned ignorance” (2009) as well as argued by Agawu (1992), reflect the Ego syndrome that conflicts modern humanity, particularly in North-South education and governance discourses. Impaired cognition marks evaluation and conclusions on the subject or object of contemplation and study when exclusively Northern insights are applied to sensing, reasoning and assessing what is peculiarly African practice. In old African knowledge cultivation, things are not always what they seem at surface encounter or perception, hence proverbs stimulate intellectual acuity. Surface-impressions could be deceptive as what is transpiring or said commands probing the deeper life or situational implications. African wisdom-sharpening ideology cultures double-think or deep thinking (analytical disposition to the issues of life). As such, in modern research and education, a mental attitude that is judgemental (Ruddock, 2008; 2012) or prejudiced attains mere superficial or ignorant impression, visual or aural. An observer/researcher, who is open minded, easily gains insight into the deeper wisdom underlying a seemingly obvious African indigenous expression, verbal or performative.

Research dispositions, field methodologies and analytical technology designed for Northern knowledge practice are not automatically suitable for cognitive research in African indigenous knowledge environment. For instance, in 2006, at the Centre for Indigenous Instrumental Music and Dance Practices of Africa (CIIMDA), we unsuccessfully tried to transcribe a piece of African indigenous music from Malawi using Sibelius. Upon inquiry we were informed that the transcription technology had not been designed to transcribe uniquely African sonic conformations. Furthermore, non perceptive research data further evaluated or analysed from the perspectives of Northern knowledge conceptualizations and constructs could elicit inaccurate findings. African autochthonous knowledge systems did not originate or borrow from the Northern

hemisphere, and as such commanded Africa-sensed research methodology without prejudice for possible correlations with metropolitan frameworks.

Some Northern scholars assume that belonging to the world region that fashioned cosmopolitan knowledge hegemony confers the competence to pontificate factually about, and prescribe valid explanations for the products of Southern knowledge civilizations such as Africa (Phiri, 2008). They arbitrarily assign imaginary characteristics as well as misleading terminologies to African musical arts conformations and practices that perplex them while disregarding the folk terminologies of indigenous knowledge discourse. Such misperceptions are also adequately critiqued by Agawu (2003) with respect to inventing African rhythm. African membrane and slit drums for instance, do not play “percussion”; rather melorhythm conceptualisations and constructs (Nzewi, 1974). Nor is the concept or implication of cross rhythm African; rather inter-rhythm (Nzewi, 1997) is the African complementary logic. The systematic creative logic and vocabulary that inform Africa’s unique knowledge products are invariably founded on humanity principles. As such the cultural meaning, sense and idiomatic expressions of musical arts that are distinctively African must be discussed from African rational perspectives. Hence, researchers who respect African knowledge integrity need to be cautious about some existing literature that misrepresents and relegates African creative philosophy, intentions, logic, grammar and principles. Cognitive research must take priority account of the informed explications furnished by the indigenous knowledge experts and owners, and should correct opinions/terminologies that contradict the integrity of original African creative intellect and knowledge civilization, whether collective or culture-specific.

Human-cultural practices from community to global manifestations evidence inescapable commonalities. The commonalities should first be cherished and emphasized as the mental-practical template for recognizing, distinguishing, respecting, accommodating and inter-culturing peculiar culture/group variants of common humanity knowledge roots. Factors and features of peculiarities cannot be sensibly evaluated, analysed or discussed in terms of superior or inferior brain constituent or intellectual capabilities. Ecological, cosmic and common biological sensitizations informed primordial thought systems. Then peculiar rationalizations of life practices and knowledge systems occurred to super structurally distinguish viable culture groups or societies over historical existence. Contemporary world peoples should begin to focus on, and emphasize basic commonalities of fellow humanity and from there the peculiar culture indicators appertaining. The artificial instigators of wars, hatred, prejudices, discriminations and exploitation will there from be mediated or minimized globally. Inter-cultural understanding, tolerance and interaction of ideas and beliefs will flourish. Other-humanity consciousness, thereby conscience, will minimize wanton destruction of the Other’s life, and the survival of the currently precarious human cosmos may be sustained. Current emphases on differences or diversity is flamed by elites whose egomaniac dispositions conflict governance, economic, education, religious, political and social aspirations and ideologies. The above reflections have implications for humanity-framed musical arts education and scholarship that will entrench inter-cultural sensitivities in knowledge exchange as well as cherish enrichment ideals in contemporary education sites.

Bearing in mind the common-humanity factor advocated, there are acceptable conventions for musical arts research and study that must not be egotistically radicalized in shopping for human or intellectual differences (Agawu, 2003). One such convention, which is not necessarily a culture signifier, is staff notation. The sound musical is conventionally marked worldwide by common concepts of sonic elements: melody and tone levels, rhythm sense, metric order, harmonic sense, pulse feeling, performance dynamics, and ensemble sense/coordination. Within such common phenomenal elements there are then cultural idiomatic preferences (Nzewi, 2005, p. 204). Such factors that rationalize peculiarities, which must be respected, could derive from philosophy of life, psychical wellness applications, socialization, cosmic stimulations, ecology, cultural spiritual tenets, sensitizing humanity consciousness and conscience etc.

Common African world view, for instance, reckons with the philosophy of dualities such as in the melodic: conventional melody (with clear pitch levels) and melorhythm (with tone levels - masked pitches- as in African drums). Conventional staff notation device for representing common musical elements accommodates peculiar cultural nuances that necessitate additional symbols such as for stressed note, staccato etc. The conventional staff notation, which is fluid and adaptable, adequately captures the African musical philosophy and configurations with respect to meter, voice/instrumental parts and ranges, melody, rhythm and harmonic sense. The peculiar technology of specific instruments intended to produce unique sound effects, such as vibrant tone levels of melorhythmic drums warrants new symbols for such an Africa-specific sonic concept. Melorhythm symbols for representing tone levels then go with conventional symbols for rhythm notation and meter in written music.

The invention of alternative notations such as pulse or graph contrivances contradict the conventional rhythmic sense of African drum music or *mbira* music, for instance, same as the implication of the fastest 'pulse'. Consciousness of time flow (metricity) in African music is marked as firm recurring grouped pulses, commonly 4 or 3 walking beats in a conventional bar. Strange notations that represent African music configurations as mechanical ticktock action distort the normative fluid performance dynamics, which performance (music and dance) evidence. Only tone level indicators (symbols) for melorhythmic sound conceptualization for instance, is mandatory within the staff notation rhythmic symbols to sensitize the uniqueness of tone levels (subtle pitches) in African drumming. Otherwise, strange notation devices misrepresent African musical sensibility as different, queer, and immediately disorients the mentality of African students and performers in contemporary education, that indigenous African mind is subnormal. Such disorientations as culture-alienating rhythm notations, conjure African students to feel that their cultural practices are abnormal or absurd. The globalizing world needs to champion common representation frameworks for common human sensibilities, ideations and practices. The ideology of common humanness will foster instead of subvert inter-cultural respect, understanding, interaction and exchange. Specialties or uniqueness would there from be understood and respected.

The Spirituality Nexus

The spirituality junction in African musical arts is its intangible but effectual capacity to sensitize humanity disposition. This marks the creative imagination, purpose, theory, also

the spirit-elevating performative interactions that are much neglected in classroom education and research. Invocation and evocation of super ordinary state of being or states of altered consciousness made African indigenous musical arts an effectual spirit force that instilled sublime mental disposition in humans, and infused material existence with consciousness of the divine. Hence, intentional goals determined the acoustic essence of instruments, the configuration of psyche-stimulating structures, forms and progressions, and formulation of inter-complementary ensemble relationships and the organization of presentation.

Spirituality is not a matter of belonging to a religion, rather a disposition that experiences the supernatural sensitizations that command godly emotions, desires and actions. The doctrines of the dominant modern religions prescribe specific days in the annual calendar that adherents should devote exclusively to the worship of God as overt demonstration of spirituality. In old Africa, religion as belief in, and submission as well as supplication to the will of an omnipotent Owner of life saturated all aspects of daily existence including relationship with nature and cosmic forces (tangible and intangible). The intense spirituality climate necessitated the abundance of devotional sites as well as daily supplication rituals in religious and secular living activities. Spiritual disposition thus underpinned life imaginations, creative aspirations and production processes, ensuring stable, other-conscious, conscientious community living and inter-community relationships. Cultivating and sustaining spiritual personality in all citizenry was fundamental in life education processing. It commanded the institutionalization of the supernatural force, the musical arts, that intentionally inspired instilled, cautioned and enshrined sublime conscience in the conduct of all societal affairs. The philosophical tenets, theoretical principles and performative prescripts of indigenous musical arts of Africa were calculated primarily to stimulate and entrain:

1. Consciousness of sharing, no matter how minimal the thematic/material resource
2. Performing individuality (thematic independence/peculiar attribute) in the consciousness of communality (ensemble texture/complementation theory)
3. All inclusivity disposition and practices that commanded employing modest but potent structural/formal elements within everybody's capability
4. Developmental grammar of thematic re-cycling (regeneration theory) that energizes the proactive potency of terse themes/iconic ideas/shared capabilities
5. The privileging of group identity as grounding for self actualization (collectivist ideology – *individuality* in conformity) while eschewing ostentatious solo displays (egotist/*individualism* ideology) etc

The sonic conformation of these ideals induced intense spiritual disposition that mediated and disciplined creative/performance aspirations and advancements in musical arts and life. Hence, the African creative ideology in African musical arts conformations eschewed grandiose and euphoric structural displays - egotistic disposition. Rather theoretical logic had dept-structuring - concise yet complex configurations that conjure evocative affect or marshal contextual activities.

Indigenous musical arts was a utility-purposed phenomenon. Spirituality infused categories accomplished assigned actions in virtually all aspects of traditional living in Africa:

1. Family life (folk tales and songs for foundational morality and life education)
2. Work sites (soothing the psyche while energizing, relaxing and promoting the execution of productive chores without stress)
3. Polity system (monitoring, validating, policing and sanctioning governance actions to safeguard and promote society's interests, ethos, ethics and solidarity) Hence, indigenous Africa championed critical singers not praise singers
4. Interest groups/associations (music conducts solidarity and bonding: mobilizing, identifying and binding membership/participant spirit)
5. Communal celebrations (music is communality: uplifting minds for amicable interaction of tangible human as well as intangible spirit relationships and actions)
6. Personal moments (experiencing psychical solace and self composure – self music therapy)
7. Sacred rites (music is religion: conjuring and affirming rapport with affective-effective supernatural obligors that impact the fortunes of life)
8. Healing sites (music is health: effecting mind therapy, conditioning mind for physiological healing, managing routine mind wellness, and generating conducive states of altered consciousness for undertaking super ordinary community tasks)
9. Group recreation (playfully engendering somatic communion and other awareness instinct)
10. Justice and discipline (supernaturally sanctioned to perform law and order duties deploying sacrosanct human mediums in applying intangible force)
11. Intangible survival mechanism (enables transcending traumatic inflictions such as forced cultural/human dislocation, relocation or deprivation; withstanding mental/physical abuse - when life is not extinguished a spiritually healthy mind accommodates immediate life situations and nurtures a future; instilling sharing and mutuality disposition).

Old cultures then cultivated music as a beneficial phenomenon belonging to the sacred domain, which accords divine reckoning to all societal issues it transacts. Critical utterances musically rendered in the right contexts became sacrosanct communications-affirmations, sanctions or injunctions. Anyahuru's testimony in Nzewi *et al.* (2009, p. 77) is that musicians were inviolable human agents of the Supreme Deity at periods of spirituality-elevated performative consciousness. The context-specialized musicians were bound by divine oath (transcendent conscience) not to tell a lie; otherwise they would suffer psychosomatic retributions. These indicators of the spirituality nexus of music in old Africa sustained the spiritual equilibrium of those Africans who experienced the trauma of enslavement in the Americas and elsewhere. It enabled indigenous African peoples to cope with devastating mind and body inflictions of colonialism, aimed at subverting and obliterating African belief systems that instilled sober morality nature and other-accommodating world view.

Due to the hard conscience of capitalism and the fanciful theoretical fabrications in academia, musical arts as a sacred phenomenon that infused sublime spirituality in the conduct of societal and inter-cultural living has become subverted to become profane entertainment indulgence. It is now largely conceived of, contented, practised and transmitted as a trivial commodity irrespective of branding as popular, academic

(serious/contemplative) or extant folk. The purposive essence has been excised; the profound societal reverence traditionally accorded its priests (mother musicians) has turned into profane worship of egomaniac stardom. As a consequence, diseased spiritual dispositions now mark the insensitive design and execution of modernity practices in political governance, inter-human/cultural relationships, business and inventions, also human upbringing, socialization and education etc. Diabolical acts were previously monitored and sanitized by dedicated musical arts designs that remain contemporaneously viable with updates/advancement³.

The world direly needs a super-ordinary force (the indigenous musical arts and practice epistemology) that has capacity to subtly induce temperate life aspirations in contemporary humanity globally. Such an intangible spiritual force will conscientiously instill dispositions that champion inter-cultural respect as well as shared humanity spirit irrespective of skin colours, ideologies, nationalities, ethnicities, and pretensions of social, political, economic, religious distinctions. The challenge for spirituality imbued musical arts educators, learners and practitioners is that the spirit force of ancestral musical arts epistemology be cognitively advanced and deployed to humaning education, reconciling human divisions and redeeming technologically endangered humanity as well as posterity. Sadly, African elites and commoners alike have been mentally deviated to irreverent abuse of their ancestral spirit collective. Sense of sublime direction in contemporary life and society mandates spiritual reconciliation through music healing rituals, the rational process and efficacy of which, Thela (2012) has exemplified in a reconstructive study of *phekolo* ritual ceremony in Botswana. Self-consumed modern humans everywhere have not yet renounced surnames as automatic subconscious reverence to personal ancestors who date generations past in Africa and globally.

We again argue that contemporary musical arts education founded on the common theoretical principles and humanity virtues of indigenous African epistemology remains capable of humanizing life orientations and aspirations as well as mediating extreme materialistic and ego obsessions. Conscienceless capitalism and materialism increasingly incite wars and mass criminality, while satanic techno-mania enticements pollute minds, body and senses globally. The inter-group wars that continue to devastate lives and minds in African countries are remotely incited and sustained by the demoniacal profiteering drives of international armament industries. Inhumane foreign capitalist interests always win the wars while ostensibly sponsoring sham conflict resolution gimmicks. No warring African countries/groups manufacture the sophisticated weaponry they use; and yet the manufacturing Northern hemisphere nations tax every bullet exported to warring and dying Africans. In indigenous Africa musical arts and marital (blood) bonds resolved conflicts permanently.

³ In the 1970s in Nigerian, for instance, Fela Ransome Kuti effectively used his Afrobeat popular music style to challenge the insensately corrupt political governance, and was severely harassed for daring; in 1985 the writer staged at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka a modern total theatre, "Dance of the worthies" (Nzewi, 2010) adapted from indigenous prototype, to critique the pervading immorality of top leadership elite in the country's societal systems, and was punitively dismissed from service for daring.

Egomania, crass materialism, and educational sophistry are obsessing the psyche, and generating mass psychosis evidenced in alarming inhuman atrocities globally. Indigenous musical arts of Africa are a spirituality nexus that imbues consciousness of the divine. The abiding epistemology retains the potency, with advanced application, to tame and spiritualize evil dispositions.

Africa-Sensed Musical Arts Education and Research Orientation⁴

Aspects of Northern hemispheric education and research paradigms in the musical arts are applicable in Africa. However, a strong base in the humanity spirit of African epistemology is imperative in contemporary school musical arts education practices that would start re-humanning modern life orientations and aspirations in Africa and beyond. Sober, culture cognitive scholarship is very much of essence, and requires renouncing the mind-colonizing hegemonic ideology and academism conflicting Africans. Hence, the factual misinterpretations that abound in literature on African musical arts need to be contested and debunked. Cognitive insights into the indigenous philosophical and theoretical paradigms only need contemporaneous advancement deriving from original minded research.

Privileged scholars continue to ill-advise African education bureaucracy to indiscriminately impose Northern Hemispheric education models while repudiating Africa's profound musical arts knowledge heritage due to lack of human and cultural integrity. African musical arts sublimates the mind, and thereby sobers life orientations that conflict humane living. Hence I submit that sublime humanity consciousness and conscience is an authoritative contribution African musical arts and science principles can competently offer to humanize unsound minds globally.

Research Issues

Research is a common human, experimental disposition and practice, which predates modern academic mentality and empirical method. The sophistication of literacy research notwithstanding, research instinct is evident even in children's intuitive modes of heuristic acquisition of knowledge. Humanity-framed research regimen (Nzewi, 2004) intentionally ignored or taken for granted by modern scholars, strongly underscored fields of indigenous African knowledge civilization as evidenced in:

1. Research in indigenous food science including dietetics and preservation proved that the raw, rough and bitter edibles available in nature have rich health values as do the naturally sweet. The research findings and practices also serve as metaphor for life. Contrarily most modern artificial sweetening, colouring and seasoning of edibles or life experiences deriving from modern scientific research, are hazardous to mind and body health.
2. Indigenous African medical science was anchored on research of the healing elements/energies of nature resources (plant world, animal world and minerals) as well as cosmic forces and musical (soft) science. Gelfand *et al.* (1985)

⁴ See Nzewi, M. (2009) "Africa-sensed research methodology for re-kindling the performance of social-psychical health among (South) African children", which proposes the research ideology of Educational ethnomusicology in Africa.

provide an encyclopaedic documentation on Zimbabwean traditional medicinal resources and practices. Indigenous research-informed knowledge of human anatomy guided orthopaedic, physiological, mental healing, first aid and rehabilitation practices. The soft science of preventive health care and rituals was prioritized. Research experiments into ingestible medicine often used domestic animals as ‘guinea pigs’

3. Agricultural science research guided food cultivation technology and techniques, also farmland enrichment (natural/human waste fertilizers), crop rotation, food processing and preservation etc
4. Habitation research recommended suitable building materials such as mud wall architecture that adapts to climatic conditions and environmental functionality. Indigenous aesthetic maintenance and décor imbued mind wellness
5. Indigenous musical arts science researched healing vibrations (the raw and vibrant) of instrument materials, health potency of structural and formal conformations such as repetitions (sedative), cyclic thematic development (mind activation/stress relief), proactive melorhythmic idioms (stimulating), maternity dance vocabulary (birth organs massage), medley dance staging (somatic healing), mass psychical health drama (spirit manifest), also musical management of congenital madness as well as personal/group psycho-therapy. Generally musical grammar, choreographic and dramatic vocabulary were researched and applied, play mode, as soft (intangible) science of mind and body wellness.

Modern education does not mentor African students that there was strong research culture in traditional Africa, fields of which are sampled above. So students and scholars become mentally intimidated by hegemonic research regimens that exclude unique African epistemological exemplar and its fastidious experimentation legacy that bequeathed the valid knowledge archetypes worthy of modern academic research for advancement. Arrogant modern academic researchers invent themselves as experts on African humanities and social sciences practices while granting the indigenous knowledge authorities the status of mere ‘informants’ (Phiri, 2008). Knowledge creators cannot be treated as statistical objects – predictable, insensitive, non-rational and non-methodological. Hence, for instance, presumptuous and auto-suggestion research questionnaires often require them to answer “yes” or “no” as if they are programmed automatons who do not rationalize, critique and reflect what they produce.

Research interaction in African indigenous knowledge sites cannot be exactly predicted or pre-prescribed by scholars ignorant about the genesis and nature of the research subject or topic. Knowledge probing modes in indigenous Africa uniquely connect interlocutors. African knowledge expressions are often metaphors on life and the cosmos, which command decoding of deeper (actual) meanings. The researcher must be humble, empathetic, patient, and open to contingencies as indigenous knowledge situations are not statistical equations. Otherwise s/he will access superficial data irrespective of any technological support that capture only the moment without the variables.

Dynamics of interaction determine what can be known about a person or what s/he represents. No isolated indigenous performance of the known is the precise version. Every performance is almost always a context sensitive variant of a performative

framework in which the indigenous knowledge creator or practitioner is the authoritative expert, and the researcher is a learner or literacy interpreter. Otherwise, if you already know what you are researching, why go to the field at all to inquire? Serious minded African researchers should cautiously navigate the constants and variables of indigenous knowledge modes and interactions. Hegemonic academic regimens prescribed for research in African indigenous knowledge civilization are often inapplicable conjectures that ignore the unique intellectual integrity of African indigenous knowledge systems. Enforcing hegemonic research regimens in African institutions produces mentally dependent African scholars and teachers who pitifully parrot published exotic inventions of African knowledge expressions and education practice. Carr (2007, p. 280) also referencing Gadamer (1975) argues insightfully that knowledge embedded in practice requires adoption of 'practical science', more than 'theoretical science', "to preserve and promote, rather than replace or supplant, the mode of knowledge and understanding already implicit in practice". Carr further posits that education practice, by inference epistemological practice, "in any given time and any given culture is always constituted by, and constitutive of ... historically bequeathed traditions of educational thought and action" (p. 276). As such, no culture's knowledge or method is essentially superior to the others as long as it progressively initiates posterity into its historically dynamic episteme. Africans should therefore, argue, study and practice musical arts and science knowledge primarily from the historical authority of their valid humanity knowledge legacy.

Library Research

This is important, but should not necessarily precede the elicitation of the field facts communicated by the authoritative owners and carriers of knowledge as much as some sincere and respectful researchers have produced insightful literature. Prior rigorous library research enforced in academic research proposals predisposes mental perception of field facts. A researcher needs to be open-minded, and must primarily privilege the field truths enunciated by the authoritative knowledge owners and practitioners who are invariably but uniquely articulate, performatively and verbally. Library research thereafter would enable the researcher to objectively test the validity or otherwise of any literature sources related to the topic. The discipline of independent and inquiring mind is requisite in Africa modern education. Publications do not bestow authoritative knowledge of African indigenous intellectual products upon non-creating/practicing researchers/ writers. Such literature therefore merits secondary factual weighting. "A healer (the expert practitioner) knows best about what s/he has packaged in her/his medicine bag" (an African adage).

Mental Attitude

Authoritative field research in the indigenous African knowledge field requires recognizing and conforming to modes of knowledge interaction and explication commonly adopted by the creators/performers. In tradition there was not always need or forum to verbalize creative thoughts and processes outside performative environments. But if culture owners are appropriately engaged, they do elucidate discursively even with practical illustrations. Every culture has adequate indigenous vocabulary and terminology as well as analytical procedure used for articulating, critiquing and transmitting knowledge as necessary. Problems arise when an indigenous creator-performer is

required to articulate as per the discursive style, directives or autosuggestions of pompous scholar-researchers.

Field Equipment

Modern audio/visual research equipments are helpful but may record only partial data in the African musical arts creativity and performance matrix. When such equipments are obtrusive, as is invariably the case, they inhibit rather than promote normal spontaneous creative consciousness and procedure. They thereby often reduce the reliability of recorded field data as a basis for factual analysis and conclusions. The point has been made that in the indigenous performance-composition convention contextual contingencies determine the outcome of every particular re-created standard framework. Indigenous African ideology did not entertain precision mentality, rather relativity within standard or model frameworks. After all, both the material and immaterial world manifest and sensitize relativity ideology. Field equipments therefore fix exact features of a relative performance or discussion, which could be regarded as a model for a typological frame of reference.

The Issue of Theory

Literacy does not exclusively legitimize theory. Any African musical arts creativity and performance piece is systematically conformed, thereby formally underpinned by theoretical principles that mark categories and styles. Epistemology of indigenous African musical arts has points of departure from the theory of European classical music that currently dominates the mentality, design and methodology of contemporary education practices, often indiscriminately relied upon to evaluate African musical arts studies. The same grounded theoretical logic marks conceptual conventions of the melodic, harmonic, choreographic, dramatic etc in all world cultures. Cultural distinctions occur in terms of: textural/structural grammar, creative/expressive idioms, developmental preferences, conformations of the melodic and the harmonic, etc. Creative theory, presentation principles and aesthetic aspirations in African indigenous musical arts expressions are experienced as applied and effectual soft science that manages human nature and societal affairs.

The Issue of Practice and Extra-Curricular Intervention

Enterprising educators should not always depend on policy and curriculum to make the humanity values of indigenous African musical arts of benefit to learners. It is possible to establish extra-curricular performance clubs that could also function as practical musical arts learning sites. Such performative initiatives might require initial financial resources to purchase basic African music instruments.

It is possible to locally source funding or materials from a school or college community when parents are sensitized about the character-forming capacity of indigenous ensemble music philosophy and theory for young people. Such clubs are needed in particularly urban school locations to harness the creative potentials of learners as much as provide socialization cum positive character stabilizing forum, away from mind-disabling urban distractions. Such is a pilot project, "Initiating modern African classical drum music

literacy and dance skills in South African schools – Pilot research project”, initiated in South Africa with funding from the National Research Foundation (NRF) in 2010. Teachers in two Pretoria schools volunteered to organise extracurricular performing groups with interested learners in their respective schools.

Nandie Mnyani⁵, a modern African classical drummer, the implementation facilitator of the research project, started working with the two schools in July, rehearsing the learners once a week. The group at Voortrekker High School (VTH) under their teacher, Cecelia Nel started so strongly that in October 2010 it gave the first public performance at the school’s end of year prize giving day, adopting the name “Drumatics”. The Facilitator noted that at the group’s end of year meeting the learners were already showing “overwhelming creativity”, and in their reflections promised “not to stop playing music even if they go to other schools”. Nel, the teacher in charge, reported as follows about one boy whom she described as a loner: “he was grateful he came to join the group as he now felt that he belonged somewhere ... and was now able to make conversation with other people... and through drumming he has learnt to love music.”

The Facilitator’s 2011 research report recorded that Drumatics were invited to play to open the Heritage day celebrations at the Department of Basic Education in Pretoria. In a quiz on national symbols conducted as part of the ceremony, “the Drumatics students were the ones who were answering all the questions... the Deputy Director of Education was very impressed by the quick thinking the group... demonstrated... and commended the teachers and the Principal” of their school. Another highlight of the group’s performances during the year was being invited again by the Department of Education to play at the prestigious Inkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History competition that brought together learners and teachers from other parts of the country. The Facilitator’s 2011 report noted that the “Drumatics soon became the pride of the school” being invited to play at all the events happening in the school. The group members were taking over the facilitation of their rehearsals, composing own new songs, and started working out folk tales dramatization with music, dance and acting. The positive change in the previously loner learner’s social image as much as the other members of the group as “respectful and disciplined” were observed and discussed by other school teachers about the Drumatics. And as per the Research Facilitator’s report: “the project could also be used as a healing process for students who suffer from depression or other psychological problems... empowers the young people with many skills like leadership, voicing out your views, working in a team and socialising”, thereby positing the virtuous spirituality nexus. By 2012 the project expanded to pilot schools at Soweto and Brooklyn.

With the added experiences of the two new schools the Facilitator noted, especially with respect to the Soweto site, that the extracurricular drumming ensemble project “opens a lot of possibilities for children especially those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds as they get exposed to new venues and meet new people who encourage them to strive for the best.” Cecelia Nel handed over the Drumatics to another enthusiastic teacher in 2012 as she re-located from South Africa for family reasons. The strong emotional bond

4 Nandie Mnyani is the Ensemble Concert Instructor at the Center for Indigenous Instrumental Music and Dance practices of Africa (Education, Research & Performance) for Southern African Development Countries (SADC) funded by the Norwegian Foreign Office 2004-2011.

in the Drumatics group was noted, also the “high & strong standard in musicianship and ... professional approach in presentation”. The group had taken over full ownership of itself, and the work of the Facilitator became more of overseeing than instructing, and old members were training new members, and planning to record a CD. The group gave eight performances during the 2012 activities year. The literacy drumming aspect of the project has not quite taken off due mainly to the fact that the cooperating teachers in the schools are not music teachers and as such cannot assist the interested learners with reading written music as the Facilitators has only very limited time one day in a week to work with each school group. The NRF assisted project (mainly providing funding to procure music instruments and logistics) has demonstrated that school centred extracurricular musical arts activities have immense benefits for young persons, including character formation, other respect and bonding, stimulating creative disposition and developing life skills in practical terms among other humanity values and virtues, given committed and enterprising school teachers/facilitators. As per African indigenous epistemological model, once the enabling environment is created children and learners have innate creative and self-organizational capabilities to drive, and benefit creatively and spiritually from, own respectable performative activities, requiring mainly the mobilization and overseeing of adults in school locations.

Routine socialization, thereby humanization, of young persons from early age as in African traditions, is severely lacking at contemporaneous learning sites (schools) and at communities and homes, urban or rural. Modern social dynamics isolate, individualize and personalize more than socially-spiritually connect learners and teachers. This modern sophisticated construction of society and upbringing breeds anomy, abysmal lack of good conscience in life orientations and actions. Hence, young people develop unhealthy spiritual dispositions and amoral habits quite early in life into adulthood. Schools are ideal character forming environments through curricula practices that incorporate personality enhancement coupled with interactive extra-curricular socialization (other-respect and bonding) of tender minds. In such educational policy, intra-cultural, inter-cultural and multi-cultural consciousness of humanity-based knowledge transaction would thrive as a vital essence of every learning program for moral societal living.

But curricula designs often prioritize sophisticated assessment fancies over humanning knowledge empowerment and learning activities that groom well-founded attitude of the mind. As such, schools are increasingly becoming sites that generate stress in learners and teachers thereby breeding criminal dispositions and activities. The divine role of indigenous African musical arts is to provide spirituality enriched socialization and learning forums. Hence, classroom and collective school socialization cum en-spiriting forums, as the learning agency of indigenous musical arts model, should be structured into overall school program.

Complementary to the NRF sponsored project for spiritual socialization cum creativity education of learners cited above, we have advocated programming the “somatic fellowship” imperative of end-of-school-week mass dance session as a spiritual communion activity to interact learners, teachers and parents alike – “a soul-enriching catharsis after the rigors and stresses of regimented classroom and other school engagements” (Nzewi, 2007, p. 218). Such mass or group practical socialization

activities are also forums for identifying learners with special social/emotional inhibitions, and start giving them special remedial attention on site.

Conclusion

Insularity was never African humanity and community disposition thanks to applied musical arts agency. Mutuality and interculturalism marked societal worldview evidenced in marriage customs, family and group resettlements, commercial practices, and in vigorous musical arts borrowing/exchange. Inter-cultural spirit in Africa never entailed competing to disadvantage or defeat the other, in order to win some material prize exclusively. It never entailed judgementally “disenfranchis(ing) ...innate musicality” that conflicts modern music education (Ruddock, 2012). Rather, the spirit of recognizing, accommodating and sharing pervaded old African cultural intermingling. The ideal in performative interactions was comparative interculturalism- to compare and inter-change capabilities and specialties for mutual knowledge growth.

Intercultural exchanges have always enabled advancement of every culture’s state of living, knowing, creating and producing. Over historical time it yielded the underlying commonalities of theory and philosophy that mark the musical arts practices of sub Saharan Africa. “Interculturalism entails mutuality and respect in exchange and marriage of ideas and practices, basic to recognition and respect of unique identities” (Nzewi, 2005, p. 64). This mandates competent knowledge of what you represent, and recognition for what you intend to interact with. Then you relate in play spirit to inter stimulate and integrate respective knowledge practices for mutual advancement even deriving a hybrid creation on the spur of an intercultural performative interaction. Hence, African knowledge systems were never static or stereotyped; rather mutual exchange enabled continual advancement. In contemporary Africa as well as global knowledge interactions, interculturalism should then entail comparative interchanging and integrating of capabilities and specialties for mutual growth or hybrid creations, basic to humanity principles. This should be the ideal inter-cultural ideology in contemporary musical arts education, research and practice in Africa.

Finally, the depositions in this discourse have focused on cognitive understanding of own cultural epistemological heritage as a pre-requisite knowledge base for inter-cultural practice, i.e., accruing other compatible cultural knowledge exemplars, African and global.

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