

CREATIVE PERFORMING ARTS AS MAJOR MEANS OF PROMOTING MULTICULTURALISM: NIGERIA EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT: *Creative Performing Arts is at times restricted to Theatre and Music or segments under them. The reason behind this notion is not unconnected with the process Theatre and Music take. However, by its name; Creative Performing Arts is an art that includes action in which intensions conceived are exhibited in practice as artists. This intension in question could be expressed through visual art or acting-out process that involves creative skill. Visual art stays for as long as the producer desires, while acting-out art lingers in the mind of the beholder after the display of skills has been struck out. The medium of expression in these arts could be peculiar to the choice of the producer (s). It has been observed that creative performing art has been seen as those arts that concern or have relationship with theatre and music because many have not seen visual art process as part of performing art. This means that all the arts have the quality to perform within its ambits which later results to production. Visual, Theatre and music arts are performances that tilt towards promoting multiculturalism. How possible is this? This paper examines the interrelationship of these arts in promoting multicultural heritage of Nigeria people. The paper goes further to interrogate the performing skills in each of these branches of art. It concludes by auditing their performing details with suggestion on how to bridge the existing artificial partition created by practitioners through integrating them with a compound nomenclature that unites the three arts together.*

KEYWORD: creative performing arts, multiculturalism, visual art, theatre art and music.

INTRODUCTION

Performing art is a performance scripted or unscripted body action that is displayed before a spectating audience. Performance art is traditionally interdisciplinary skill that involves live display of expertise in fine or media arts. The presentation of such performance may be done when the performers themselves are present or absent. Creative performance art can be presented wherever there is space, time and audience. Ritica Bhardwaj in *What is Performance Art?* sees performance art as genre in art that is presented live, usually by the artist but sometimes with collaborators or performers. Some artists are not contented with conventional forms of art in fine and applied, they therefore turned to performance art to rekindle their interest in work of art. Contemporary performance art involves the use of body that is why it is referred to as a body art. Performance arts dematerializes the use of art object with human body while traditional media is also downplayed.

The body of an artist is transformed into art object in display and it has been allowed for display at museums in recent times.

Production of art objects involves fabrications from raw material turned to ecstasy. A visual artist uses his art material to produce products for household human use or for industrial use as well. Material artists depend solely on manipulating things around them for purpose of achieving their innermost conception while the performance artists only depend on manipulating the human body to achieve the exhibition of their conception. Performance art is in form of 3-dimensional art forms. This art has weight, height, width and it thus occupies space to make the intension known. Performance art is different from theatre because it lacks plot or actors. The actions are spontaneous. Brock Tighe supplies that most people think of art as painting, drawings, craft and other such things... art can be anything; writing, sewing and other things like them, that don't necessarily come to mind when you hear that word. From this extract, it shows that the way many view art could be different from how convention views it. The reason has made many to generate different ideas in defining what art is all about. The practitioners are creatively exploring different area in humanity to widen the scope of art. Many people believe that performing art is an easy career for people who cannot cope with academic drudgery or is for people who are not smart or self-absorbed (Brock Tighe). The question remains that, is there any difference between performance art and performing art?

This question is simple to answer because details about performance art have been succinctly discussed above. The need for its difference will assist the focus of this paper. Performing art involves the use of human as its main material to achieve the conception from the standpoint of the playwright without the intention of the performer him/herself. Because of this reason, performing arts is a form of creative activity that is performed in front of an audience such as drama, music and dance. It can further be seen as doing both singing and dancing together, it also includes opera, theatre, magical art, mime, spoken word, recitation illusion performances, public speaking and lately stand-up comedy. From the context of this interrogation, the need to synergize the difference between visual and performing arts cannot be under estimated if this paper will read meaning to the readers. Though, visual art is a field while performing is one too. Visual art entails different segments that make it up, and the same thing also applied to performing art before it is named so. In visual art there are segments like; drawing, ceramics, graphics, painting, sculpture, textile, craft and performance arts. Performing art has branches like; theatre, music, and dance. The two fields are so unique to the extent that it became so difficult for one to dichotomize them if they are properly integrated in a production.

Culture is the peoples' way of life. It makes identity of people possible no matter where they find themselves under the sun. Culture is the arts and other manifestation of human ideas, customs, and social behavior of a particular people or society. Rein Raud defines culture as the sum of resources available to human beings for making sense of their world and proposes a two-tiered approach, combining the study of texts and cultural practices, thus making it possible to re-link anthropological and sociological study of culture with the tradition of textual theory. From this context it shows that culture remains the set of pattern of peoples' activities within an ambit of a community or social coverage and it includes the symbolic structures that give significance to such activity (UNESCO).

The elements of culture are arts, literature, performing arts, visual arts, entertainment, games and sports. Culture is hereditary because what is referred to as peoples' culture today came out from what was transmitted to parents from their own grandparents. Cultural heritage reflects in almost every facet of human life. That is why it reflects in what we eat, the clothes we wear, and the jokes we tell. Culture influences the buildings we live in, how we spend our free time, and the skills we learn. It concerns how we think, the ideas generated on issues, how we spend our free time, what is considered beautiful or ugly, the beliefs about what is right and what is wrong, and the goal we entertain for the future. For this reasons, family is the most important segment in emancipating the workability of any culture in the whole world. The reflection of cultural heritage is found in members of different families as they propagate the culture they believe in (Ahmad, Brodsky, Crofts, & Ellis, 13-15).

Language is said to be cornerstone of any cultural heritage because it is the medium through which the content of such culture is transmitted. Language in the other hand reflects a culture's detail. It is found out that people who communicate in the same language ends up sharing the same customs. Language is peculiar to all cultures, however not all cultures have developed forms of writing in relation to the culture they profess. In many countries devolution of culture has been barriered with inability to agree on a medium of language. Everybody believes that transmitting their cultural heritage in another language is a means to losing or watering down a segment of the culture. In a situation where citizens are loyal and glued to their language as means for communicating it, restricts such culture from international recognition. However, they should not be blamed because when younger generations are not properly grounded in their language and culture they turn to become foreigner in their own land as it is in Nigeria and other African countries. (Ifrikha Ahmad *et al* 16-17).

The arts have subdivision of cultures that tilt towards different field of human endeavours. These include fashion, jewelry, gastronomy (the art or science of good eating which covers food preparation, cuisines and drinks). They fall under art because it involves a process in achieving the end product. Literature is an art that concerns written works. Story in literature could come in form of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and critical theory (that is examination and critique made on society and its cultural beliefs). Performing arts is a form of art in which the artists' body, face and presence is used as the medium for expressing the content of a theme. That is why performing art comes in form of circus (performance of company of clowns, acrobats, trained animal, trapeze artists, musicians and stunt-oriented artists), comedy in varied form (like for example Stand-up comedy in which a comedian performs in front of a live spectators while he speaks directly to them to elicit laughter), dance, film, theatre, music and stagecraft. Another element under this context is visual arts, which is a form of art that promote creative works with emphasis on visuality. It achieves its cultural devolvment through architecture, craft, design, drawing, film, photography, sculpture and painting. Entertainment is also numbered as element of culture because it provides a diversion or permits people to amuse themselves in their leisure time. Though, entertainment is passive as it depends on other forms of element like fiction, comedy and fantasy to achieve its objective (UNESCO). The thrust of this paper is to look at how creative performing arts reflects the main means of disseminating multicultural beliefs of Nigerian people without losing the content even if such heritages tilt towards modernism.

Difference between Visual and Performing Arts

Manuel Miller in his article: *What is the Difference Between Visual Arts and Performing Arts? How Can Each Be used In Cultural Events?* says that performing arts is a form of art where artists use their voices, and bodies to convey a message or artistic expression. In performing arts there are ways by which opinion, emotion, feeling, or taste are expressed through performance like, theatre, public speech and more. Miller further mentioned that there are other forms of art such as culinary art that expresses personality, and culture as well as, atmosphere through the creation of taste and composition of food on the plate. The same art such as poetry and writing falls under the category of written art, which includes play writing for stage performance and film art. Performing arts are basically arts that promote skills dovetailing into performance when an audience is present to appreciate the exhibition of such skills. Performing arts attract several other arts to thrive; it is a convergence in another way.

Visual arts are means for creating aesthetic purposes while it is assumed to express beauty and meaningfulness. Manual Miller explains that visual arts include painting, sculpture, watercolour, graphics, drawing and architecture. He goes further to say that visual arts category include; music, poetry, film photography, conceptual art and printmaking; that is why those in this field are referred to as artists. In visual arts many branches are integrated and all these branches can stand on their own but the knowledge about other branches make any chosen branch to function collaboratively perfect. The products emanating from visual arts tend to classify people in the society if they can acquire its custody. Visual arts like other counterpart arts have its control from the elites in the society. People that have the means of proving their status use products from visual arts to distinguish themselves from ordinary people in the society. The theory of John Berger (669) who was a Marxist argues that visual art was the dominant medium for artists between 1890 and 1900 which reflected the world view elites at that time. Berger theorized that the art of any periods tends to serve the ideological interests of the ruling class (670). This theory reveals that visual arts tilt towards emancipating the intention of the societal affluence because they turn to dictate the trend of production. Both visual and performing arts are dependent on genre determined by the elite because they are the consumers of the product. This has given rise to symbiotic relationship between visual arts and performing art as they both thrive together.

Performing art therefore is a form of art where artists use their voices and bodies in other to devolve message or artistic expression. Visual arts have different way of conveying its message. It is however different in its form because a visual artist use paint, canvas and various materials to create art products and objects (Ved Dwivedi). This portends the actual significant difference in the spiritual or metaphysical sense, because performing art can convey more of a fluid story. This is a form physically taken on a journey through all those frames and scenes. Be that as it may, a good piece of visual art invokes emotions and imagination enough for spectators to compose a story about the art piece (Declan Hart). In buttressing the difference between the two arts, Wez Wezley says that visual art is the practice of using a medium such as photography, printmaking, painting, drawing, sculpture, mixed media and graphic design to produce a physical artwork. He in the other way looks at performing art as normal physical activities produced by a person such as circus activities, dance, acting, singing, music/musician which requires that person producing singularly or with others. The peculiarity between visual and performing art is that the two need audience to thrive. Wezley

concludes that performers can use art mediums to dynamically enhance or express a work. The extract significantly mentions art medium which is not referring to art branches but collective arts in general. Practitioners have overlooked the inclusion and contribution of other experts in the field of performing art by streamlining their expertise to the use of quarks. This has underrated the symbiotic relationships that have existed for producing world class production in film and in other various fields of arts.

Creative Performing Arts as Means for Multiculturalism

Creative Performing Arts (CPA) is the integration of both visual and performing art forms. Visual and performing arts from the beginning are agents and babies of cultural beliefs. CPA is such that interrogates all the forms of art to make for a performance. The curriculum for CPA is designed by experts to prepare students for professional careers in the arts. Each student is made to pay attention on at least one major area that makes up the nomenclature called Creative Performing Arts (CPA) such as creative writing, dance, drama, music, stagecraft and visual art. In the context of achieving maximally some students often concentrate on more than one by having their specialization as major and minor. Creating schools for CPA came out of discrimination against a particular set of people in the society by those who felt their races are better. The war first began in United State of America. There was segregation of school attendees which eventually created a lot of pandemonium in the society. The battle to dismantle segregation school system began between 1960 and 1970. In 1965 civil right activists put up a law suit to prevail on the government to stop segregation school system. The judge found that the schools were not actually or intentionally segregated, but that the racial composition of these schools resulted from the racial composition of the neighbourhoods which they used as catchment terrain to devolve their educational services. Cincinnati Public Schools were used as sample for the case. In 1971, these schools had grown more segregated and the supreme court of United States upheld *forced busing* (the term is generally used to describe the mandates that came from the court or court order) as a remedy for school segregation in other cities (Borman & Spring). The ban on segregated schools was enacted and implemented, and the schools in Cincinnati were to become liberal to all kind of races.

In a bid to avoid similar consequence like the one experienced in Cincinnati, Bill Dickinson and Dr. Donald Waldrup proposed alternative schools designed to calm the desire of parents for academic choice for their wards and to also abide with the court order that dismantled segregation school system. Dickinson led the school from its founding in 1973 until 1991 when Fountain Square in Cincinnati Ohio, United State began to be renovated since it was built in 1871 to begin newly created school for Creative Performing Arts students. The system that replaced segregated schools allowed for open enrollment; that is children could choose any school and attend any school of their choice to maintain racial balance. The theory to abrogate desegregated schools was open enrollment which meant that students could attend any alternative school they chose at no cost as long as there existed, racial balances in all the alternative schools. Students were therefore admitted into these programmes on ratio one white to one black (Jacobs & Felix, 110). In 1973 school for Creative Performing Art was fully established. Robert McSpadden and Bill Dickinson who were both music teachers, taught in that school as starters while grant came from a renown philanthropist of art, Ralph Corbett to the tune of about \$292,000 and Baldwin Piano Company joined him to donate \$24,500. With the experience of Waldrup and Tom Murray who were co-director of west-central division of Cincinnati

elementary schools, worked to make the approval come to reality. An interview with Murray appeared in *The Cincinnati Enquirer* a morning daily newspaper published by Gannett Company in Cincinnati Ohio, United States, likewise the same interview was published in a Journal called *Gifted Child Quarterly* where Murray explained that:

... Fourth through sixth grades in classes. Teaching will often be done in teams. Art students will design scenery for plays, written by drama students. Music pupils will supply the music. They work together regardless of age. In reading classes they will read according to their own individual levels. A brilliant music student, capable of interpreting Beethoven's wildest dreams, might stumble on fifth level reading. This does not make him a dunce simply a slow reader (108).

When the school became multifarious in arts subject accomplishment, the School for Creative Performing Arts (SCPA) was fully on ground to service the process of abolishing desegregation. The other schools started to degenerate from attracting patronage because pupils chose new SCPA as an alternative. The schools developed so well that students were seen practicing instruments in hallways and restrooms because they were enjoying the new process of education that allowed for cross-cultural development of American people. When the school was about to be moved to a more spacious place to accommodate the ever-growing applicants, the people of Cincinnati opposed it and called the school administrators names for their wrong decision. The development became so great that the school as at 2005 spread all over America. This historical analysis of school for Creative Performing Arts set the basis for the argument of this paper that there is need to appropriately use Creative Performance Arts for greater means of disseminating multicultural endowment of Nigeria people. But how, you ask?

Creative Performing Arts as an Antidote for Multiculturalism in Nigeria

Creative Performing Arts (CPA) is at times misconceived for theatre or music. Theatre arts and Music are segments of CPA not CPA itself. The reason why people nurse this misconception for so long is not unconnected with the process Theatre and Music take, they both exemplify performance. However, CPA is an art that includes action in which intensions conceived are exhibited in practice as artists. The role performing arts plays in a well-rounded education like it did in American's Creative and Performing Art schools stand as model for inculcation in Nigeria. It was made to serve the role of leveler for both whites and blacks. From the look of things now everyone is interested in learning from what they derive from products of arts. CPA is more than role playing or doing a little dance; it's the ability to learn about versatile and transferable life skills that matter. Performing arts is a physical, mental and emotional journey about the betterment of an individual in the realm of human endeavours. This intention integrates different field of arts in operation to learners. This intension in question could be expressed through visual art or acting-out process that involves creative skill. Visual art stays for as long as the producer desires, while acting-out art lingers in the mind of the beholder after the display of skills has been struck out. The medium of expression in these arts could be peculiar to the choice of the producer (s). It has been observed that CPA has been seen as those arts that concern or have relationship with theatre and music because many have not seen visual art process as part of performing art. This means that all the arts have the quality to perform within its ambits which later results to production.

Culture is derived from the Latin root *cultura* or *cultus* which means inhabit, cultivate or honour. Culture in general refers to human activities. The present day Anthropologists refer to culture as the universal human capacity to classify experiences to code and encode information so as to communicate symbolically to whomever the matter concerns. Since people living in different places have their culture, it must therefore be learnt. There are different cultures in different countries; these cultures can be transmitted through acculturation and enculturation process. Art as it is makes use of creative impulse to achieve its process and product. Art is a subdivision of peoples' culture which is addressed through its component and branches (Kristen Eglinton, 51-52). The main focus of CPA is dissemination of culture. The content used in theatre, visual and music arts is taken from the cultural heritage of people. The creative performance of artists helped in propagating the culture of their people and that of those around them. African literature is so tagged because of its peculiarity to people's cultural heritage. Barber & Newell (102) say that West African literature encompasses a vast field of creativity, including the spoken word and dramatic performances as well as printed texts... Familiar Western literary categories such as poetry, fiction, non-fiction and drama are not always appropriate to describe the creative practices as enmeshed in traditions that are not necessarily compatible with them. This extract reveals the potentiality of CPA in making the arts relevant to the society. Teaching it in various level of education will help in propagating the content of cultural heritage. The curriculum of art should be redefined to address the issue of culture. What many people know about other people's culture is through media art.

CPA in this context is a means to address multiculturalism like the case of multidimensional cultural heritage in Nigeria. Multiculturalism is a word that describes a society where many different cultures live together. Nigeria is a multicultural country because apart from many cultures that originate from different ethnic groups that make-up the nation, there are several citizens of different countries in this same country who as well propagate their culture. In such a country like Nigeria, tolerance is necessarily needed to foster multiculturalism because xenophobia hurts it. Multiculturalism is the practice of giving equal attention to many backgrounds in a particular setting like Nigeria. We can use students' classroom as an example of multicultural setting in which students are made to converge from different ethnic background and they are all treated equally. The coexistence of different culture is the main context of multiculturalism (Wikipedia, 2019).

CPA is not restrictive in approach because it involves so many hands from so many specialization of art to work the process together to bring about what is called its end product. The versatility approaches to process and product distinct it from other subject areas to have moral justification for the development of multiculturalism. Why? Transmitting information about multiculturalism involves many people from different cultural background or having contact with the practitioners of such culture under focus to have the correct details. Nigeria is a typical example of multiculturalism because there are over 400 languages in the country and these languages carry their culture as means for identification. The cultures have clear cut differences and resemblances at times that make one to confuse one for another. If CPA will transmit cultural beliefs and heritage in Nigeria, the need for proper consultation and bridging the gap of ethnicity cannot be overlooked. Multicultural education driven by CPA is meant to address the diversity inherent in different ethnic group living together in a society or country. The reason for imparting this knowledge is to promote justice, equity, and respect for all that make-up the society where multiculturalism permeates. That is why

a well thought-out multicultural art focuses on pieces of creativity that have essence of cultural themes (Wikipedia, 2019). Kristen Eglinton (52) in her book *Art in the Early Years* says that multicultural art is the study of artistic and aesthetic endeavors of the people and cultures that form the non-western world. CPA intertwines with multicultural art to revolve around putting up achievement in peoples' culture in the area of dance, music, graffiti, drama, and other media that address culture and races that express passion for where they domicile. The cultural beliefs of people, when they are properly educated along the line affect the way they approach political and other human issues in the society.

Multicultural art is creative on its own because it achieves its acceptability through the elements of culture. These elements characterize a particular way people live their lives. The art can help to propagate culture within a multicultural coverage where people though diverse but have determined to living together as one cultural body. The orientation emanating from multiculturalism helps people to live together without difficulties. In a society, people live to achieve various activities championed by people themselves and this is done at leisure, during entertainment, when exhibiting industry, at recreation, even at war and other exercises that turns their society around. The diversity and dynamism of cultural background at times may impede on what is set as goal, but if the members of the society has been re-orientated on how to live together despite diversity and dynamism of cultural background, such goals will be achieved. The vacuum that should have been created as a result of not having information about how people can live together with multicultural background is what CPA is out to cover. Since cultural arts is embedded in music, art, drama, it therefore remains the tools that help in developing the mind and body, refines feelings, thoughts, and tastes. It goes ahead to reflect and represent peoples' customs values which in turn enhances our daily attitude and behaviour in the presence of others. CPA based on multiculturalism helps people to broaden their exposure to many cultures found in the society they call their own (Elizabeth Delacruz, 89). It is therefore perfectly acceptable to plan an arts inclusion that will support the content area and that illuminates any specific definable society, world or regional culture. The ball is now in the hand of curriculum and national planers.

CONCLUSION

Creative Performing Arts (CPA) as discussed in this paper is not a stultified discipline where what you see in operation is the same drudgery of replicating extinct cultural beliefs. However the refinement is how it can address issue of multiculturalism that becomes extant in the present Nigeria. There are over 400 ethnic extractions in Nigeria with diverse cultural beliefs. The need to bring such multicultural people together has eluded the constitution planners but art has it. It has been examined in this paper that the problem of ethnic division can be put to rest if people are entreated to accept multicultural arts' process and product. The song in the mouth of people now is science and technology without thinking on diverse composition of the society and how they can thrive together. The usefulness of CPA has been discussed extensively to give the background to possible solution to the problem. It could be made compulsory at school age for them to study cultural and creative arts that will expose them to the issue on multiculturalism. CPA is a broad way on which the vehicle of multicultural knowledge travels. It integrates the culture, the product, the beliefs and practice for dissemination. Nigeria is very big and the problem is also big, surmounting the big problem is

enshrined in the process, practice and product from CPA. Let it be promoted now for proactive concern. Make it one of the core subjects to study at school so as to resolve incessant human problem around the cultural diversity.

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