

Politics and Orature in Beautiful Nubia's *Kurunmi is on the Way* And 9ice's *Pete Pete*



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ABSTRACT: Music is an interesting aspect of oral literature that has witnessed different critical studies. Extant researches have explored music from the religious, ritual context, or as an aspect of ritual performance. Other studies have explored music from ideological perspective. This study is therefore justified as it attempts to examine music from the context of entertainment, oral literature and politics. This is done with the aim of exploring the political ideology behind the song and the functions and significance of the features of oral literature in the songs and its effectiveness in passing the messages to the audience. This research adopts Bronislaw Malinowski and Radcliffe Brown's Functionalism as its theoretical framework. Functionalism opines that every aspect of the social life should contribute to the promotion of the society's cultural values that must be passed from one generation to another, however, any aspect of the social life that does not promote the society's cultural believe must be discontinued. The method of data collect were through the Beautiful Nubia and 9ice's selected musical texts which were transcribed, translated and critically examined. This research discovered that Beautiful Nubia and 9ice uses features of oral literature to make their song more pleasing and effectively pass their political message to their audience. Beautiful Nubia engages the use legend of *Aare Kurunmi* to address leadership challenges facing the nation. Beautiful Nubia highlights and extols some leadership qualities Kurunmi displays such as selflessness, fearlessness, bravery and honesty that current crops of leaders can imbibe and electorate can look out for in candidates for leadership offices. This research also discover that 9ice engages proverbs in advising the electorates to be mindful of who they elect into political offices and shun electing incompetent individuals and that collecting bribes from politicians has its attendant consequences.

KEYWORDS: 9ice, Beautiful Nubia, Oral literature, Politics.

1. INTRODUCTION

The experiences of Africans under colonialism made them optimistic of living a better life under self-governance or independence. This expectation is contrasted especially in African communities where democracy grossly failed, and find it difficult to enjoy what good leadership means. The people are grossly disillusioned and frustrated with leadership in African and the inability of Africans to self-govern themselves right. Africans begin to clamour and protest against bad leadership. Africans react to their conditions through every means including arts. Unlike the west, that sees arts for art sake, African artists perceive arts as a utilitarian tool. That is, artists in African view that art should be used for a purpose. Similarly, Bertolt Brecht views arts as beyond an imitation of life, but also a tool for the demonstration of social conditions. That is, arts is not just for entertainment but also a tool for the demonstrations of political and social change. According to Ayo Kehinde (2008)¹, African artists are devoted to the challenges inherent in their environment, in this case, the seemingly evasive good political leadership in Africa.

This paper attempts to explore the interventionist role of orality and music in the political affairs of post-independent Nigerian society. For the purpose of this research, materials and data are garnered through oral interview and selected record songs of Beautiful Nubia and 9ice are purposively selected. Data is garnered from Beautiful Nubia's *Kurunmi is on the way*² from *Irinajo* album and 9ice's *Pete pete*³ from *Tradition* album. This is because Beautiful Nubia and 9ice are notably contemporary musicians

¹Kehinde, A. (2008). Post-Independence Nigerian Literature and the Quest for True Political Leadership for the Nation. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa Vol. 10, 2*, 333-360.

²Akinlolu, S. (2009). *Kurunmi* in *Irinajo* album. Lagos: Roots Renaissance.

³9ice. (2009). *Pete pete* in *Tradition* album Lagos: Alapomeji records

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who draw the lyrics of their music extensively from folk tradition. 9ice is one of the Nigerian hip-hop artists that pioneered the use of folkloric literature like proverbs, myths among others in his music while Beautiful Nubia is regarded to be one of the foremost contemporary folk and cultural musicians. For instance, Beautiful Nubia's *Kurunmi is on the way* is deeply rooted in Yoruba folklore especially, legend while 9ice's *Pete Pete* draws its lyrics from proverbs. It is also important that both songs pass commentaries on the state of politics in the Nigerian community. Since most of the song-texts are written in other language aside English, the song-texts will be transcribed and translated to English. Interview is also conducted for Beautiful Nubia.

Since this research attempts to explore the impacts of song and oral literature in the political space of the post independent Nigerian society, this study will adopt the use of functionalism as its theoretical framework. Functionalism authenticates oral literature as an aid to the understanding of social organization, cultural thoughts and creative activity. According to Eric Porth, Kimberely Neutzling and Jessica Edwards (2009)⁴ art is seen to have a clear social purpose and it is intended to record, preserve and disseminate the social norms for the contentment and continued survival of the social system. Functionalists posit that if an aspect of social life does not contribute or serve some identifiable functions in promoting the cultural values, then it should be discouraged from being passed from one generation to another. In the case of this study, functionalism will aid in exploring the purpose of oral literature and music in passing social and political commentary in the post independent Nigerian community especially in a time like this.

2.1 Orality and Nigerian Music.

The origin of music in Nigeria is quite incomplete without discourse on ritual. This can be traced to the moment primitive man starts to gain consciousness of his environment. Andrew Horn⁵ in *Ritual, Drama, the Theatrical: the case of Bori spirit mediumship*, says man gradually comes to the understanding that the forces controlling his environment are beyond his control. These forces sometimes cause incidents that adversely affect man's environment and threaten the existence of man. Then, man began to source for solutions to these challenges and means of influencing these powers. It is from these experiences that man generated the idea of gods. From this moment on, whenever any incident happens, man attributes it to be the handiwork of one of the gods, and efforts are made to pacify or influence such god against or forestall reoccurrence of such incident. It was from the efforts made to pacify these gods that ritual sacrifice started from. Songs are composed for the worship of a god, sacrifices and many other things are done to honor such god. Against this backdrop, an overview of music in the traditional sphere by different authors will be explored.

To start with, Titus Olusegun⁶ (2013:735) attempts to investigate the use of music in the Olokogbe festival. Olokogbe is a religious festival of the Ponyan community in Kogi State. Titus Olusegun (2013:737) notes that the source of this festival can be traced to the cradle of Ponyan community. Olokogbe is one of the festivals that are widely observed until today in Ponyan community. Olokogbe is a god in Ponyan community who is responsible for productivity and Agricultural fruitfulness. Prior to the celebration of this festival, people of Ponyan do not eat yam. The festival's religious activities involve both males and females. Initially, a clan was saddled with the responsibility of celebrating the festival on behalf of the whole community. However, the whole community eventually takes responsibility for the celebration of the festival. The right to perform this festival is restricted to two families. One of these families is Odo-aworo clan. The Odo-aworo clan is noted to be one of the early settlers in Ponyan community. It is important to note that the Odo-aworo clan organises it and provides music for the celebration. Olokogbe festival usually takes place between June and July, and it lasts for a period of seven days.

According to Titus Olusegun (2013: 739), music in Olokogbe festival is used in promoting the cause of the god Olokogbe. Titus Olusegun notes that, the composer of the music used in Olokogbe festival infuses proverbs in the lyrics in order to stimulate the interest of the audience in the music performance. The music performance during this celebration is used to discuss politics, moral and the society. It is also used as a means of entertainment for the audience. Aside from entertainment, Olokogbe songs are historical in nature, in that, it draws its lyrics from incidents, time, and effects of the events in order to teach the audience some valuable lesson from the incident. The lyrics of the songs use wise sayings and infuse philosophical wisdom drawn from experience of the Ponyan people. This is done with the intention of making Ponyan people revise their behaviours, which could have adverse effects on themselves and their community if care is not taken. Olokogbe music deals with serious issues of life. If need be for the performer to critic a person, he does it directly without mincing words. Olokogbe music sometimes functions as a praise song to encourage people that are doing good deeds, for recommendation, correction of evil doing, to warn and counsel the community and to create cultural awareness. Aside from singing the praise of gods, the performers also praise some members of the community. The research has been able to explore the function of music in Olokogbe festival of the Ponyan people of Kogi state. Aside from praising Olokogbe god, Olokogbe music explores the Ponyan people's history in order to draw out lessons for the people from their past. Titus Olusegun (2013: 740) also asserts the use of proverbs and witty sayings in the lyrics of the Olokogbe music.

⁴ Porth, E. Nuetzling, K. and Edwards, J. (2009) Retrieved on 14th August 2018 From anthropology.ua.edu/cultures/cultures.php?cultures=Functionalsim

⁵ Horn, A. (2014). *Ritual, drama, and the theatrical: the case of Bori spirit mediumship. Drama and theatre in Nigeria*. Lagos: Tanus Books Limited.

⁶ Titus, O. S. (2013). The place of music in Olokogbe festival in Ponyan community Kogi State, Nigeria. In *European Academic Research*. I. 5: 734-7

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From the foregoing, it can be inferred that Titus Olusegun (2013), studied Nigerian music from the perspective of ritual festival. In essence, Titus Olusegun perceives Nigerian music as music that functions only in the ritual settings. Titus Olusegun (2013) did not attempt to study Nigerian music outside the ritual context. This study however, attempts to study music as an art of entertainment. In other words, this research attempts to disassociate music from its perceived ritual function and study music as an art of entertainment.

The Nigerians' contact with the Western education and technologies, signify their exodus to the urban area in search for greener pastures. (That is, western education, white collar jobs, etc.). Thereby, Nigerians are gradually embracing western values at the expense of their cultural identities. This has perhaps changed the form of Nigerian music. Nigerian music today is gradually changing its identity. As a result of Western civilisation and religion, contemporary Nigerian music is opening itself to accepting new ideas from the western perception of music. Young Nigerians in the urban areas are left with no other choice than to imbibe the culture that is prevalent in the urban area. According to Ojukwu, Obieloze, and Esimone (2016:118)⁷, Nigerian musician in the contemporary age tries to infuse different creative ideas order to add meaning to life and also be relevant in the market. The present day musicians are subject to the demand of their society and circumstances that they cannot control. It is against this backdrop that conscious efforts will be made to examine previous literatures on contemporary Nigerian music and its use of orality.

Adeyemi Adegoju (2009) examines Lagbaja as one of the Nigerian musicians that tries to project Nigerian culture in his music in the face of the Nigerian world that its cultural values is gradually losing its relevance. Nigerian drum is one of the important cultural values of Nigerian society. Adegoju (2009:3) views Yoruba talking drum, aside from its ability to produce music that can be danced to and enjoyed, can also give hints and send message. When a drummer wants his drum to send a message to another person, he tries to make his drum imitate the tones and rhythm of the human voice. In essence, drummers can use the Yoruba talking drum can be used to communicate with others.

This talking drum according to Adegoju (2009:5) is an important feature of Lagbaja's music. Lagbaja uses talking drum in his music as a communication tool in his music. According to Adegoju (2009: 7), Lagbaja is not the only Nigerian musician that uses talking drum otherwise known as *bata* in his music, but Lagbaja's use of *bata* in his music is quite unique and different from others. Lagbaja, sometimes shares the floor with the drummer of *bata* by either inviting him to speak through his drum or acknowledging his message. Hence, Lagbaja is found using the interjections such as, "*o se ayan, omo deyii*, that is, "thank you, drummer, this boy", *Oro lo so, o paro*/That is, "your contribution is germane, you have not lied" and so on in his music. This, according to Adegoju (2009:18) echoes the Yoruba proverb that says, "only the wise can understand the cryptic message of *agidigbo* drum". The use of drum in Lagbaja's music to Adegoju is a cultural semiotic. To Adegoju (2009), it is not only the use of the talking drum, *bata*, that makes it unique but the presence created for it in the music, the way Lagbaja exploits it to pass message (which is its primary function) in his music.

What's more? Adegoju (2009:10) posits that, Lagbaja does not only promote the use of Nigerian cultural heritage in drum, but also celebrates Nigerian dance style. Lagbaja views that, Nigerian's contact with the westerners has destroyed Nigerians confidence in their cultural values. Lagbaja tries to discard this by promoting Nigerian values over the western culture. In Lagbaja's music, he tries to rubbish the promotion of the western cultural values that are pushing Nigerian values into extinction. Lagbaja uses his condemnation of western dance to Yoruba music to indicate the destruction of Nigerian values on Nigerian cultural heritage. According to Adegoju (2009:19), Lagbaja tries to pass across to his audience that, western dance lacked harmony. Lagbaja, in his music, attempts to compare western break-dance with the Yoruba dance. He views that, in the western dance, the hand goes in the direction of Ilesha (a city in southwestern part of Nigeria), the legs goes towards Port Harcourt (a city in Southern part of Nigeria) while the head shakes like Agama Lizard's head. On the other hand, the Yoruba people believe "dance style prides on the wriggling of the buttocks" in responding to the rhythm of the musical instruments. Another Nigerian style of dancing which Lagbaja takes pride in is that of the ant-lion, that is *Okoto* and *Kuluso*, two things which are known in the Yoruba culture to have the ability to spin and dance. Adegoju (2009:20) opines that aside from the promotion of Nigerian dancing style and drum, Lagbaja also uses his music to pass comments on issue affecting the society and politics. Lagbaja also uses his music to reawake and revive Nigerian values that are gradually losing its relevance in the society.

In essence, Adegoju (2009) has been able to examine the use of orality, while focusing on drums and dance in the music of Nigerian musician using Lagbaja as his study. He has been able to establish Lagbaja as a musician that uses drums and dance as a motif of orality to promote Nigerian values in his music.

2.2. Politics and Music

An important tool of galvanising support and lifting the spirit of rebellion is music. Dard Neuman (2008)⁸ notes that once a speech has been delivered or read, it is usually difficult for the audience to have a second reading or second listening of such speech. For music, it is a different case, music can be learnt by heart and repeated several times. It equally gives its listeners a sense of unity and togetherness. Beautiful Nubia (Oral interview:2018) corroborates that "music is a powerful force that slips slowly into the people," and "they enjoy, then listen to it, they have got the message, they don't even realise it." Unlike, lecturing the people or

⁷ Adegoju, A. 2009. The musician as an archivist: an example of Nigeria's Lagbaja. *Itupale Online Journal of African studies*. 1.

⁸ Neuman, D. (2008). Music and Politics in the classroom: Music, Politics and Protest. *Music & Politic* 2, No. 2. 1-22

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teaching them same values. Neuman ibid argues that if facts and humour are mixed together and infused in a song, the song will reach larger audience especially those that are unable to read or decipher written speeches. Neuman ibid argues that the influence of songs in fostering unity cannot be overemphasised, Neuman however notes that songs can also be used to enforce the slavery and enduring mentality in people as in the case of spiritual songs for slaves in slavery era. These songs helps the slave masters to repress the spirit of the slaves from rebelling against their masters, and keep them contented and submissive.

Furthermore, Pauline Fairclough (2013)⁹ projects that song is as old as mankind and ever since mankind began to fight for human rights, human progress, and happiness against tyrants, people have being resorting to songs. People are stirred through songs. The songs of liberty has always been significant in struggle against bondage or oppression. Songs have equally played a lot in Labour movements in the contemporary age.

Similarly, Beautiful Nubia (Oral interview: 2018) notes that people finds it easy to connect to music. This is because "folk rhythms are the rhythms of the earth, the rhythms of our hearts. Anyone that listens to... songs from any part of the world quickly feels the pain of the people, feels their joy, you feel their exoneration. Their moments of high and moments of low. You can hear it even sometimes in passing melodies. Simple rhythm, you can hear the people's mind, the people's essence, you can hear it in that music...it is a reflection of who they are." In essence, music helps the people to capture and project their emotional, physical and mental state at every point in time. Furthermore, music is an art that people can easily connect with. This may be because of its ability to appeal to human emotions. Beautiful Nubia views that music is not about singing as it also passes some important details like telling more about the people, politics and culture that produced it. Music that truly entertains is a reflection of the people that produces it. In that, it reflects their experiences, situation and condition of the people.

Beautiful Nubia (Oral Interview, 2018) pointed out that:

I think it is important for us to realise that there is a lot that we can learn from our history and our past. And if you do not think about your past, then you will be making the same mistake that you have been making for hundreds of years... if you look around us, you'll realise that, you need to start looking to the past and finding points for courage, points for inspiration from that history. Sometimes, I need to bring it back to the people. I need to remind people of our cultural values. If you are going to change society, or build our society or make progress, we need to imbibe those old values of our ancestors, the values of honesty, and hard work, and patience, and humility and perseverance, and contentment which is the biggest of them all, selfless sacrifice, we need to imbibe these values... so I use these stories, and these elements (features of oral literature) that you have mentioned. I am just using them as vehicles for my messages that are important that I think the people needs (sic) to learn.

In essence, music according to Beautiful Nubia is not just about entertainment, but an avenue of recollecting the past and cultural value in order to build a better society for both the present generation and the future generation. Beautiful Nubia notes that most of the mistakes that are being made in the contemporary age could have being avoided only if the people can recollect their past and pick valuable lessons from them which he hope to achieve using his music.

3. POLITICS, LEGENDS AND MUSIC

Legends are different from myths. Myths are fabricated stories about animal, human, or supernatural beings that seeks to validate an occurrence or a situation. On the other hand, legend are stories that are centered on known human being, they may be dead or alive. Legends are exaggerated stories that deal with heroics exploits of humans. While myth engender stories that encapsulates the cultural believe of a group of people, legends narrates the exploits of human beings. In other words, myth draws its narrative from culture while legend draws its narrative from real life incident. This type of story is therefore, historical in nature as it recounts the deeds of the past. Isidore Okpewho (1992: 182)¹⁰ refers to legends, as deals with "account of personalities and events that are considered so memorable that they deserve to be talked about or recounted again and again." The event that made the character(s) may have happened at any point in time. This makes the memory of the event to be vague. It also subjects the events of the story to different manipulations by the performer as he is bound by nature to forget some incidents and manufacture some incident. This perhaps explains the two categorisations of legends, which are historic legend and romantic legend.

According to Okpewho (1992:183), the historic legend occurs mostly in within memorable timeframe. This makes it possible for the incident to be recalled as it has just occurred in recent past. The narrator is therefore obliged to stick closely to the details of the incidents. Perhaps members of his audience may know the personalities concerned and can recall the incidents vividly. The narrator is therefore, careful of attaching any imagination to his story as his audience may contradict him. The narrator makes extra efforts in researching the story in order to, get more knowledge and be familiar with the incident. On the other hand, the romantic or mythic legend affords the narrator the liberty to add his imaginations to the story. Since the romantic legends are incidents that happened in the far past, the performers are forced to rely on their imagination in recounting the story. Hence, there are no such restrictions

⁹ Fairclough, P. (2013). *Twentieth-century music and politics: Essays in Memory of Neil Edmunds*. Ashgate Publishing Ltd. Farnham

¹⁰ Okpewho, I. 1992. *African Oral literature: backgrounds, character, and continuity*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

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like historic legend in romantic legend. Romantic legend performer tends to add fantastic details to their narratives that are not in the story. When they are questioned, they hide behind the excuse that, "things are no longer what it used to be" (Okpewho 1992). However, it can be inferred that incidents in both romantic and historic legends actually occurred and not incidents that are purely products of imagination.

What's more? Beautiful Nubia in *Kurunmi is on the way* explores the personality of Kurunmi, a warlord in Yoruba land. In the song, *Kurunmi is on the way*, Beautiful Nubia attempts to pass a political comment to his audience using the story of Kurunmi as a good leader whose leadership quality is worthy of emulation. Beautiful Nubia views that, the society is not lucky to be ruled by the type of good leaders that ruled in the past. He says that, it is important that children learn from history to know about great personalities what it means to be a great leader. Beautiful Nubia views that the crops of leaders ruling in the society now a days are selfish, cunning, greedy, and full of deceit. Beautiful Nubia perceives the importance of reminding the society of the types of people that can be referred to as leaders and also for the member of the society not to be swayed by the antics of political leaders, who have no plan for the people but for their selfish interest.

Lately, when we see them, they talk about change
They say it is their turn now to be leaders of the people
Tell them I've been there many, many times before
And no one can trick me with honey mouth again
Lately, when we meet them they flex their muscles up
They talk about bravery and courage never seen
Tell them I know book o and heroes wey no dey beg
Real man na for action, no be for mouth o...
Lately, when we see them, they talk about their conquests
The many battles fought in the trenches for your rights
If you ask for evidence, na award you go see
And many many honors from foreign bodies o
See them on the street now preaching to the crowd
The true test of a leader is to lead right in front
And be responsible when things go wrong
No be to dey run and make excuse o

Beautiful Nubia says that Kurunmi's heroic deed is something worth knowing for younger generations in order them to emulate, and learn from so as to make better choices in life. Kurunmi was a warrior who lived in the nineteenth (19th) century during the reign of Alaafin Atiba and Alaafin Adelu. According to Sola Balogun (2009)¹¹ Kurunmi was the Aare ona kakanfo (War generalissimo) of Yoruba land who lived in Ilaje. Kurunmi was known to be a brave and fearless warrior who used his position as the Aare Ona Kakanfo to win many battles and wars for Yoruba nation. The Aare Ona Kakanfo serves as the warlord of the Yoruba race. The Aare Ona Kakanfo is bound to obey the Alaafin's directive on any issue especially with regard to war and security. Kurunmi registered his displeasure against the new Alaafin, Alaafin Adelu, whose enthronement is against the Oyo throne succession policy. Oyo throne succession policy states that, the first son of the Alaafin should be killed immediately after the death of the Alaafin is announced. Alaafin Atiba had prior to his death in 1959, connived with some of his chiefs to install his first son, Adelu, as the King rather than kill him. A proposition that Kurunmi was not pleased with as he feels it is against the customs and traditions of Oyo kingdom. The kingmakers carried out Alaafin Atiba's wish and Adelu was made the Alaafin of Oyo. Kurunmi however, fails to recognise Alaafin Adelu as the new king and did not reverence him. The new Alaafin tries everything to bring Kurunmi to his side. Adelu offered Kurunmi bribe in order to get his loyalty and respect, which ended up being a futile effort. This to Beautiful Nubia is a circumvention of the tradition. Kurunmi's resoluteness to stand by the tradition of the Oyo kingdom is a great thing that Beautiful Nubia found to be an example of leadership for the younger generations.

Sola Balogun (2009) projects that, the new Alaafin soon grow tired of Kurunmi's antics and was forced to go to war against Kurunmi. The Ibadan warriors under Bashorun Ogunmola and Balogun Ibikunle with the directives of Adelu mount serious attacks on Ijaye at River Ose. The war dragged for years until Kurunmi experienced a setback in the cause of the war. This setback left Kurunmi demoralised and dejected, when he learnt about the death of his five sons in the battlefield. Kurunmi see this as a colossal loss in fighting to ensure justice and reign of traditions and cultural laws. Stories on the where about of Kurunmi's death seems to be controversial, while some states that Kurunmi committed suicide after hearing the news, some says Kurunmi was captured in the war and taken to Oyo as slave, while others opines that Kurunmi died after the war had ended and was won by him. All tales about Kurunmi's end however suggested that Kurunmi after his death, was buried at River Ose.

¹¹ Balogun.S. 2009. *Kurunmi and the corruption of power*. Retrieved on June 14, 2018, from oluwafiropo.blogspot.com/2009/05/kurunmiand-corruption-of-power.html?m=1

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Beautiful Nubia perceives this act to be an act of leadership. Beautiful Nubia in *Kurunmi is on the way* views that a great leader must be able to stand by what he perceived to be the truth and right. Beautiful Nubia views that, Kurunmi is not a leader that runs when it comes to defending what is right. Unlike, the way contemporary leaders behave Kurunmi stood firm on his decision not to recognise the new king since his installation is not in line with the cultural and traditional status. Kurunmi, refused to be bribed, cowed or forced into going against his will and cultural demands. Despite the fact that Kurunmi had the chance to make wealth, riches and power from perverting justice, Kurunmi took the hardest part of protecting tradition and lost five sons and other valuable properties, perhaps including his life as other tales had about him.

Here comes the fire-eating guy
My lord with arrows in his eyes and burning anger
Let no one stand in his way
This land will never be the same again
Here comes the fire-spitting guy
Aare Kurunmi is on the way with his sword of justice
Warn all the liars and pretenders
The day of reckoning is here, beware!
Children, you will learn and you must never forget
The past is full of heroes from whom we can learn
And real lessons to guide us today
Many, many stories to make us proud too
Lately, when we meet them they count up their losses
The pains and the scars of their vain struggle o
Kurunmi lost five sons all in a day
But he never wavered till the very last stand

The story of Kurunmi fits into what a legend is. Legends, according to Ruth Finnegan (2012:357)¹², are commoner's terms for historical narratives. The story of Kurunmi is an historical narrative that occurred in the 19th century. In essence, Kurunmi's story is different from a fable or a myth in that, it has historical basis, that is, its root is in history. Also, Finnegan (2012: 357) views that legend narratives discusses historical acts of human and deals with events bothering around war, migration and so on. These are not far from what the story of Kurunmi entails. The legend of Kurunmi is what Okpewho (1992:183) refers to as historical legend. This is because, it is an event that happened within memorable timeframe.

Beautiful Nubia adopts the legend of Kurunmi to the contemporary society in order to bring back the memories of the great man of the past and teach younger generations of what sacrifice means. Beautiful Nubia's *Kurunmi is on the way* passes a satirical comment on the political class in the society. He accuses them of not representing what they preach. He views that the political class are after their pockets and not the people's welfare. To Beautiful Nubia, this political class can be compared with chameleon whose true colour cannot be ascertained. He views that they pervert justice in order to enrich themselves. Beautiful Nubia however, projects Kurunmi to be a leader that is worthy of following his footsteps. He projects Kurunmi to be a man who is unflinching and stands with the truth no matter what. Beautiful Nubia suggests to the political class to follow the footsteps of Kurunmi in their dealings while in public office. He opines that Kurunmi would not accept bribe in order to side-line the rule of law. Beautiful Nubia enjoins that every leader must emulate the person of Kurunmi if they really have a serious plan to achieve their promises in political offices. In other words, Beautiful Nubia recounts the personality of Kurunmi and his belief system. Kurunmi is not just an historical figure to Beautiful Nubia but someone whose identity, principles, and belief is worth emulating. The heroics deed of Kurunmi according to Beautiful Nubia has not only made him to be one of the greatest but Aare Ona Kakanfo but also one of the greatest leaders in the history of Yoruba. Although, Kurunmi would have made more money, fame and perhaps more recognition if he had given into the demands of Alaafin Adelu, Kurunmi rather took the tortuous part and lost five sons, his properties and himself in the cause of the war and standing with what he believed. Beautiful Nubia views that the resoluteness of Kurunmi to take the right part is not only noteworthy for the younger generations but also for the crops of politicians in the country, who pervert justice and are only concerned about gaining wealth and fame through scrupulous selfish activities.

4. PROVERBS AND POLITICS IN THE MUSIC OF 9ICE.

According to Isidore Okpewho (1992:226), proverb is an art that is produced from the ingenuity of the oral artist, which is accepted by all. This is because, it contains a truth about life that appeals to emotions and critical minds. Okpewho (1992) perceives proverbs to be the wisdom of many and the wits of none. That is, nobody can lay claim to being the owner or creator of a proverb, rather proverb is communally owned. All proverbs are property of the cultural heritage from whence it comes from. In essence, proverbs belong to the culture that produces it. Okpewho (1992: 227) projects that, "proverb is a piece of folk wisdom" that is "expressed

¹² Finnegan, R. 2012. *Oral literature in Africa*. UK: Open Book Publishers.

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with terseness and charm." In essence, proverbs economises its word usage, hence, it is selective about its choice of words. Its charm on the other hand, refers to the literary appeal the proverb has. Okpewho (1992: 227) opines that proverbs are results of intelligent and critical reflections of different aspects of the man's environment and general human affairs and conduct.

9ice in *Pete Pete* attempts to pass a comment on the state of the country. 9ice uses proverbs in order to pass this satirical political message to his audience. This corroborate Chinua Achebe (1959:2)¹³, view, that, "proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten." In order to have better connection with his audience, 9ice engages proverbs in the music. According to Finnegan (2012: 388), the meaning of a proverb depends on the context and in order to have a better understanding of the proverb, conscious efforts must be made to comprehend the situation where such proverb is performed.

9ice employs this feature of oral literature in passing across his messages to their audience. This perhaps, helps him to connect better with his audience and makes it easy for his audience to get his message. 9ice's *pete Pete*, attempt to pass comment on the political state of the country, Nigeria. In the song, *pete Pete*, 9ice views that Nigeria ought to have attain a level of development which is lacking. 9ice projects that this may be owing to the political class who are not being sincere to Nigeria and Nigerians. 9ice however, views Nigerians are also to be blamed for voting in people that are not performing or making the country to attain its potential. In the music, *pete Pete*, views that Nigerians should take charge of their country and collect it back from selfish politicians. In passing across this message in *pete Pete*, 9ice employs the use of proverbs which will be examined. To start with, when 9ice was trying to project the state of the masses in the Nigerian society, he made use of;

Ilu polukurumusu The country is in a mess

T'ewe t'agba lonje 'yan won ni'su Both young and old are not happy

9ice laments that the people of the independent country has been in a state of mess ever since her independence in 1960. The proverb in this excerpt means that the masses are suffering. When *t'ewe t'agba lo nj'eyan won ni'su* is translated literally, it means that, "both young and old are eating their pounded yam as yam." Pounded yam is regarded by the Yoruba people to be the king of foods. For pounded yam to be prepared, yam must be cooked and pounded. In the case where a person eats his pounded yam as yam, it may be out of the impatient of the person, indiscipline, or greediness that has made the person lost the satisfaction that can be derived from eating pounded yam, the king of foods. 9ice views that, Nigerians out of their impatience, indiscipline, and greediness elect bad leaders to political offices. This deprived them, Nigerians, of the enjoyment and satisfaction they would have gotten from electing a better leader. They are however, forced to suffer and enjoy the problems and challenges that comes with electing bad leaders. This proverb used by 9ice fits into Okpewho (1992) definition of words, in that, it economises words and it has literary appeal, it is also derived from an intelligent observation of the man's interaction with environment and man's activities, especially in the area of food.

What's more? 9ice views that his song does not spare anybody, neither the masses nor the political class. Hence, anyone that felt his song has reproved him should try to make necessary adjustment. This is perhaps why 9ice uses another proverb in *Pete Pete* which is;

Petepete t'ana ni ko pa, eni bataba The mud has been struck with a rod,

ko'lo mo 'yen ni he who it splashes on should go learn.

When mud splashes on the cloths or man, it is regarded as dirt that must be cleaned and gotten rid of. 9ice views that his song, *Pete Pete* is a form of chastisement for the people in the society. More so, since the subject of discourse of the song is politics, people may therefore, pick offence, and wants to retaliate or perceive 9ice as appalling. 9ice views that, the focus should rather be on getting rid of the stain on them rather than fighting the person that points it out. The proverb therefore, seeks to inform the masses that instead of picking offence, they should rather correct their misgivings and address the issues pointed out. This proverb, projects to its audience that the issues outlined by the musician in the song affects the musician, the masses and the political class. Hence, utmost care must be taken to correct these issues. The use of this proverb is perhaps, to settle any intending quarrel or disagreement that this song may bring as Okpewho (1992: 229) rightly projects that, proverbs can be used to settle quarrels and disputes in the society. In essence, the proverb serves as a form of truce between 9ice and his audience that may intend to fight him over the message of the song.

Furthermore, this proverb as used by 9ice in *Pete Pete* is what Remi Raji- Oyelade (2004)¹⁴ calls the post proverbial. According to Fayemi (2008: 4), post proverbial is the type of proverb that has been reformulated by younger generations to suit their purpose by changing the content and structure of the traditional formulation in order to give the proverb some new meaning. 9ice uses *Petepete t'ana ni k'opa eni ba t'aba, ko io mo'yen* that is, the mud has been struck with a rod, he who it splashes on should go and learn. While the original form of the proverb is *Pete Pete t'ana ni kopa o taba ara ile, o ta ba ara oko, eni ba'ta ba komo fi se ibimu, kolotun ibe se ni*, that is, the mud that was struck with a rod, splashes on people at home and abroad, he who the mud splashes on, should

¹³ Achebe, C. 1959. *Things fall apart*. Lagos: Heinemann Publishers.

¹⁴ Oyelade, A.R. 2004. Posting the African proverbs: a grammar of Yoruba post-proverbial, or logophagia, logorrhea and the grammar of Yoruba post-proverbial. In *Proverb scholarship* Ed. Wolfgang Mieder. Vermont: University of Vermont

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rather make amendments and not get angry. In essence, 9ice has restructured the proverb to fits his need. However, he still retained the message of the proverb. In other words, 9ice adapted the message of the proverb while restructuring the proverb itself. This proverb, corroborates Ruth Finnegan (2012: 379)'s position on proverbs. According to Ruth Finnegan, "proverbs are rich sources of imagery and succinct expression on which elaborate forms can draw."

So also, 9ice views that people have waited too long without acting, hoping that things will be well and everything will be normal. 9ice in *pete pete*, thinks that people should arise an act against the lawlessness.

Bi eni wo seju akan o, eyin aro Like the person waiting for the crab

le ma wa o to blink, will stay for long at the back of the fireplace

In *Pete pete*, 9ice thinks that, for Nigeria to develop, her citizens must stop act towards achieving it and not only hope for it. 9ice views that, if the wishful thoughts of Nigerians for Nigeria is not backed up with actions, Nigeria would remain in its position. 9ice views that the much needed development and growth will not happen in the country until Nigerians are ready to actualise it themselves. The crab is an aquatic animal that lacks the ability to blinks its eyes. An attempt to see if it will blink its eyes, maybe regarded as a fruitless one. According to Finnegan (2012: 383), proverbs can adopt the use of animals, and man as fictional characters to pass its message across to its audience. This proverb stems out of man's observation of his environment (Okpewho, 1992). It is used to encourage the masses to work towards their desired goals and not only hope for it. Again, 9ice uses post proverbial by restructuring the proverb to arrive at a new meaning. The original form of the proverb is "*eni ba wo iseju akan, yio pe leti omi*," which means, "he who waits till the crab blinks, will stay for stay for a long time beside the sea." As against 9ice's *eni wo iseju akan eyin aro lema wa* that is, he that waits for the crab to blink, will stay for long at the back of the fireplace. In essence, in order to communicate better to his contemporary audience, 9ice had to change the structure and review the proverb.

In same vein, 9ice's *pete pete* views that, despite Nigeria's dependence on crude oil, her status as an oil producing state is not reflecting the growth and development of the country;

Nnkan sa l'eye i'je kagbado tode Hen eats something before maize was discovered

This proverb means that, the hen eats something before maize was discovered. Food is one of the essential things that keeps living things alive. Without it, living things will starve and eventually die. In essence, the hen was surviving and living well on something before the discovery of another food. 9ice posits that, Nigeria, before the discovery of oil depends on something, that is, agriculture. In this period, the masses enjoyed and the country was developing at a steady rate. 9ice opines that, the growth of the country has remained stunted upon the discovery of oil. Nigeria, despite the fact that the country produces oil, is not at par with other oil-producing nation. He views that the government should return to what it depends on (that is, agriculture) before the discovery of crude oil. This proverb corroborates with Akporobaro (2012:81)¹⁵'s position on proverbs. Akporobaro opines that proverbs afford the performer a fulfillment of desired goals.

What's more? 9ice in his music *pete pete* accuses the masses of collecting money from the political class in order to elect corrupt politicians into offices.

Won a senu mere kalo kalo They collect bribes and pretends, gbe nnkan mi senu wuye.

Kato kalo is the Yoruba name for Ponzi scheme. It is a form of illegal investment, which people invest money in, with the hope of gaining profits. However, in most situations, it disappoints them and they lose their money. When the Ponzi scheme folds up, it is believed that, it takes along with itself, people's investment that cannot be collected or retrieved. 9ice likens the masses to ponzi schemes that collect money from the politicians in order to vote for them. 9ice views that, during the time of election, people collect money and other incentives from the politicians to vote for them. 9ice views that this act, renders the masses powerless in the time of election as they are obliged to vote for those that bribed them and not the qualified candidates. 9ice opines that, the contribution of the masses in to the current state the country has found itself is their weakness in rejecting bribes during election. 9ice posits that right candidate is paid little or no attention because he cannot bribe his way through an election. According to Okpewho (1992) proverbs are didactic, in essence, it is used to teach morals and to enlighten the masses. 9ice attempts to use this proverb to teach his audience that collecting incentives or allowing incentives from politicians control their mindset on who to elect in political office is not good for the country and themselves.

Furthermore, 9ice opines in *Pete pete* that, if care is not taken, those that collect bribes from politicians or celebrates them will suffer the same fate as those that

Pasan taa fi na 'yale o nbe The whip that was used to chastise

lori aja funn elder wife is still in the roof for the new wife

When a new wife has just been married in a polygamous house, her husband takes conscious efforts to take extra care of her. The husband makes sure she does not lack anything she wants because she is newly married. The older wife does not enjoy this type of care, attention, and enjoyment. Her husband is rather insensitive to her and her needs. This proverb, attempts to tell the new wife that, she will be subjected to the same treatment when she gets older in the marriage and a new wife comes in. 9ice views that

¹⁵Akporobaro, F.B.O. 2012. *Introduction to African oral literature*. Lagos: Princeton publishing company.

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corrupt politicians should not be celebrated, neither should their follower happy because of the incentives they collect from them. Through this proverb, 9ice seeks for the unity of Nigerians most especially the masses in fighting against corrupt politicians. 9ice says if a section of the masses decided to celebrate the political class, they would eventually suffer the same fate as others. According to Akporobaro (2012:78), proverbs are powerful carriers of traditional wisdom, social mores and are used for moral education. This proverb is didactic, as it warns 9ice's audience to be careful of their actions and inactions, as it tends to affect them later. When people gain the consciousness that their actions will be rewarded, they are liable to act right.

Furthermore, in *Pete Pete*, 9ice uses proverb to inform his audience to be careful of their behaviour. 9ice views people act the way they do because, they think that there is no reward for their actions and inactions.

Asegbekan kosi o, There is reward for all actions

Ase pamo Iowa, ase sile labo waba. You will reap what you have done

Whatever man does, come back to him. The acts of men go a long way to affect them and their environment. 9ice views that both the attitudes of the political class and the masses have both adverse and pleasant effects on the country. 9ice enjoins Nigerians to act in a way that the country will develop and attain its potential rather than remain stunted. 9ice views that, if the political class can behave in the right way and the masses elect responsible people in political class the country will develop steadily. 9ice says if the political class and the masses have the consciousness that whatever they do have an effect on the country, they may probably change their attitude towards Nigeria. He views Nigeria needs people who will be dedicated to the goals and cause of the country and not those whose actions ruin it. Since every act of man is rewarded, it will be important for Nigerians to act in order to develop the country and not to pull it down.

In other words, 9ice's aim in *Pete Pete* is to pass comment on the state of the country, Nigeria. 9ice views the ruling class and the masses as the reason the country has not been able to fulfill its potential. Since the subject matter of the song is on politics, and leadership, 9ice engages the use of proverbs that bothers on the shortcomings of the people and call for restoration and cooperation of Nigerians in moving the country to fulfilling its potential. The proverbs used by 9ice in the song have been examined in relation to the contextual usage. This corroborates Finnegan (ibid)'s stance on understanding a proverb. Finnegan says conscious attempts must be made to understand the context where a proverb is used in order to better understanding of the proverb. In essence, context cannot be separated from the meaning of a proverb. Context rather enhances the meaning.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Beautiful Nubia and 9ice engage the use of legend and proverbs in their songs in order to pass important lessons across to their audience and also make comments on the state of their country's leadership and politics. These features of oral literature used by these musicians are rooted in their culture, which makes it easy for their audience not only to connect with their music but also to understand the message they are trying to pass across to them. Music having the ability to appeal to human emotion and psychology (Akporobaro, 2012: 310) have a better edge when they audience connects easily with its song-text. Beautiful Nubia uses legend in order to teach his audience values of having good virtues that will makes the society to develop and grow while condemning the bad virtues that would not only destroy the individual but also the society at large. On the other hand, 9ice uses proverbs to admonish his audience to make the society a better place to live. 9ice views that, whatever becomes of a society is a direct product of the actions and the inactions of the people in the society. Aside from these didactic functions of oral literature in these songs they also perform aesthetic role by making the songs not only beautiful but also, appealing to the ears of the audience.

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