

**MUSICAL ARCHIVING OF NIGERIAN ETHICS AND IDENTITY IN ÀGÍDÌGBO
MUSIC OF YORÙBÁ, SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA**

Olaolu Emmanuel Adekola

Department of Primary Education,
School of Early Childhood and Primary Education,
Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo State, Nigeria
Email: adekolaolaolu@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Although, discursive engagement on archival narratives has obviously attracted a myriad of scholarly attention in so many dimensions, the extent to which such deliberation is extended to the inherent capacity of Nigerian indigenous music in archival discourse is scanty. In the same vein, the concept of ethics and identity have received much attention, but such attention cannot be said to have engaged the mind of scholars from musicological point of view in a densely manner. Whereas, many Nigerian traditional music represents a collection of documents thereby serving as means of recording historical interest and cultural values of a dynamic society, this has not been properly documented. Perhaps, the paucity of literature in both areas stems from the general notion that archive is construed from the perspective of physical building where archival materials are kept. This paper therefore explores how traditional music is used as agency for archiving cultural values in Yorùbá cosmology, using àgídìgbo music as a point of departure. Interviews were conducted to illicit information and musical excerpts were recorded from life performance of àgídìgbo exponents in Iwo (Osun state), Eruwa (Oyo state) and Abeokuta (Ogun state). Data were subjected to content analysis. It was revealed that àgídìgbo is a veritable means through which Nigerian ethics and identity of communal living, solidarity, contentment, patriotism, and hospitality are preserved for present and future contemplations.

Keywords: Musical archiving, Nigerian ethics, Identity, àgídìgbo music, Yorùbá

INTRODUCTION

The fact that foreign practices have cut off many Nigerians, especially the youths, from extant traditional ethics and identity will not generate too much debate. The cultural elements through which ethics and national identity are projected are increasingly modified and even replaced through the activities drawn from popular culture which is sometimes referred to as modernisation. However, existence and persistence of some traditional music such as

àgídìgbog give a beak of hope in preserving the Nigerian cultural values such as communal living, respect for elders, courtesy and solidarity among others. Although ethics and identity have attracted attention of Nigerian scholars and social analysts, little or no attention has been devoted to ethical issue from musicological point of view. This paper therefore focuses on how *àgídìgbo* music of Yorùbá, southwest Nigeria, is used in archiving Nigerian ethics, identity and historical resources for present use and future contemplation.

Ethics on the one hand has to do with correctness of behaviour among citizens. Ethics is crucial to the general sustainable development of a nation because it is within an admirable rectitude and cherished moral standard in a society that any meaningful development is guaranteed. Identity on the other hand deals with unique essential characters that identify a nation. This underscores why ethics and identity remain front burner issues among the Nigerian scholars and social analysts. Prior to the advent of foreign culture, ethics and identity were taken with seriousness among the Yorùbá and were usually expressed and reiterated using both visual and performing arts engagements. However, Nigerian traditional creative arts have been impacted by popular culture in various ways and this has resulted into transformation of some initial cultural practices/elements while others have gone into oblivion.

These cultural elements such as proverbs, folk songs, maxim and figures of speech through which national identity is projected are increasingly supplemented, modified, redefined and replaced in their affective power through images, meanings, and activities drawn from popular culture. Edensor (2002) affirms that though the tradition-bound ceremonies and other cultural ingredients which most analysts of national identity have concentrated on are still relevant, their power is now “largely sustained by their (re)distribution through popular culture, where they

mingle with innumerable other iconic cultural elements which signify the nation in multiple and contested ways” (p. 12). This happens so as to shift the focus to an exploration of national identity as expressed and experienced through popular culture. Popular culture has therefore affected Nigerian ethics, identity and her historical resources which are initially identified in music, dance, visual arts and other performing artistic expressions. As a result of the fear of total loss of cultural values embedded in traditional music, language, other material and non-material culture, scholars (e.g. Muller, 2002) have been looking for means of archiving, reviving, retrieving, promoting and preserving them. The focus of this work is to contribute to the body of knowledge on the efforts of musicologists on cultural preservation and promotion by discussing how some Nigerian ethical issues, Nigerian identity and Nigerian historical resources, believed to have waned, have been archived through *àgídìgbo* music among the Yorùbá cultural setting.

Conceptual discourse of Nigerian ethics and identity

Explanation on some key terms such as Nigerian ethics, identity and musical archiving is necessary at this juncture as this will provide better understanding of this current discourse. Nigerian ethics explains admirable rectitude and correctness in behaviour among the Nigerians. Ethics generally concerns itself with the question of right and wrong, and good or bad in the human behaviour. Ethics deals with systematizing, defending and recommending concepts of right and wrong behaviour in a society. Ethical theories are divided into three general subject areas such as metaethics, applied ethics, and normative ethics. Ethics in common sense is general normative ethics. When enquiry is directed towards the principles of moral judgment or the criteria for the ethical analysis of morality, then we talk about fundamental ethics.

Ethics among the Yorùbá cultural community can further be categorized into family, communication, communal, professional, religious, and political ethics (Olunlade, 2017). All these explain right and wrong as regards community lives, profession, family life, religious practices and politics among the Yorùbá people. The Yorùbá people have pleasing and rich cultural practices as evident in their social customs and their lifestyle both in private and public. Ethical issue is not taking with levity among the Yorùbá as this is expressed in their verbal and non-verbal communications, music, proverbs, dispositions which all point to the concept of *omolúàbí*.

Again, ethics explain the development of existing moralities from a historical perspective (Olunlade, 2017). Nigerian identity has to do with the historical origins of the nation and its political lineaments, and different aspects of social, political and cultural elements which are shared by various ethnic groups in Nigeria. This includes customs, practices, economy, politics and other various cultural elements that unite the nation in her people everyday life. The issue of identity in Nigeria is conceived in this paper as how Nigerians are viewed in the comity of nations. Nigerians were viewed as people of positive ethical standards until recently when physical assaults such as terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, assassination and other nefarious activities of militant groups such as Boko Haram, Niger Delta militants, herdsmen and cult groups emerged. They began to redefine Nigerian cherished identity of peace, unity, hardworking, love and tranquility that Nigerians were known for all over the world. Historical evidence and scholars' testimonies testify to the fact that Nigerians, and most especially the Yorùbá people, are love keeping, accommodating, hospitable, courteous, and of referential behaviour. This redefinition of identity has been attributed to loss of cultural values that

manifested in the lives of Nigerians and decline of traditional artistic expression in music, drama, dance and visual arts. Worthy to note is that the Yorùbá by nature, explain their identity and experience in mythical tales (*itàn ìwásẹ̀*), folktales (*itàn àlọ́*), historical accounts of migration (*itàn orírun/itàn gidi*) and legendary tales (*itàn akoni*) which are done through music (*orin*), poetry (*ewi*) and drama (*eré oníse*) (Falola, 2013; Hamzat, 2017) .

Musicologists and scholars from other fields of cultural and performance studies have always expressed their fear on the loss of cultural values as a result of waning of traditional music as well as reckless abandonment of native language in Nigeria and Africa at large. Although, the issue of cultural loss in African traditional society is an on-going debate, however, scholars have expressed their fear on this in the parlance of cultural and performance discourses especially in this twenty-first century. For instance, Akinlabi and Adeniyi (2017) believe that “Yorùbá is not endangered, given the criteria of language vitality now generally accepted in the area of language endangerment” (p. 33). However, Akangbe (2017) expresses worries over the extinction of most of methods of Yorùbá non-verbal communication such as *arokò*, *àdàlẹ̀*, *agà*, *asẹ̀wẹ̀lé* and *itùfù* as a result of modern civilization, adoption of foreign religions and technological advancement.

Omofoyewa(2017) posits that “argument that western-oriented education in Nigeria has not cut many off from the daily use of cultural elements such as proverbs, particularly among the Yorùbá would not generate much controversy” (p. 107). Further, Raji-Oyelede (1999) argues that the age-old logic of fixability associated with Yorùbá proverbs formation is being threatened by a new rhetorical tradition that accords the typical proverbs a truly amphibian identity. He maintains that using a “supplementary” proverb instead of an “original” proverb for the same purpose, but with mere playful intention, has become the norm among the younger generation of

Yorùbá speakers (vogue). These alternate creations derived from and which stand against traditional proverbs is termed *asàkasà*, that is, the dynamic act of cultural deviant, the prodigal text which always attempts to overwrite its own source as a result of the decline in the development of the standard resources of Yorùbá language among the people and the intention and corruption of Yorùbá conversations among other factors.

In another development, Otsemaye (2017) submits that civilization, religious, and economic trends, as a result of culture mix and mobility of dynamism, have altered some of the Yoruba's ways of life in terms of respect for elders, eye contact as a means of non-verbal communication, the use of right hand instead of left, hardwork, patience, perseverance, uprightness, conversation, giving, benevolence and community relationships. However, their derivations are still not too far from what was customary obtainable. Every society has its own set rules and regulations for acceptable behaviour and everyone is expected to abide by the rules and norms of the society. These rules, among the Yorùbá, are codified in form of ethics, morality, etiquette and general principles of *Omolúàbí* which form the pattern of living among the traditional Yorùbá society. It can be concluded from the foregoing that though there is still some attributes of *omolúàbí* among the Yorùbá people, many of them are no longer in practice. These attributes which were initially cherished are now being termed as “old-school” among the present Yorùbá youths.

It is worth to note that as a result of this fear of total loss of cultural values embedded in music, language and other material and non-material culture, scholars have been looking for means to revive, promote and preserve them. Sanga (2014) describes the expression of fear on cultural loss and evocation of musical figures as “postcolonial archival fever” and “maladies of postcolonial souls” respectively. As a result of this fear of total extinction of cultural values, Sanga further

posited that “postcolonial souls” in Africa, in the face of the threat of cultural extinction, have been constantly evoking the figures of traditional musical elements to archive, revitalize and enact/re-enact their cultural identities (Sanga, 2014, p. 3).

Music has potential of safekeeping and safeguarding cultural values that would have otherwise lost in transit as traditional elements, culture, customs and language of a giving society are preserved through music. In this paper, the author examines the efforts of traditional Yorùbá musicians, using *àgídìgbo* music as a reference point, in safeguarding cultural values in Nigerian society through their music performances. This is in tandem with Muller’s (2002) assertion cited in Sanga (2014) who suggested that song compositions are “mechanism for archival deposit, care, and retrieval” of both “personal and collective heritage and history”. This way of understanding music as archive (and musicians as archivers) is not only a concern of music scholars. Musicians themselves also recognize the importance of traditional songs in recording and keeping history alive as this is evident in the way they craft their compositions as well as their performances (Muller 2002, p. 409).

Cultural hegemony in Nigeria and the role of *Àgídìgbo* music

Cultural hegemony in Africa is promoted by many factors such as westernisation, colonisation, modernisation and imperialism which have resulted into transformation and in some cases, absolute cultural subjugation. African scholars and artistes/artists, advertently or inadvertently (as the case may be), have resulted to archiving in their bid to preserve cultural values. An archive in this paper refers to a space of safekeeping cultural values that are embedded in traditional cultural products for future reference and preservation. Musical archive plays a significant role in the preservation of cultural identity. Muller (2002, P. 426) as cited by Sanga

(2014), identified functions of archiving including retention of cultural identity which is a form of resistance to colonialism and the hegemonic status of Western music among postcolonial subjects. The archive is also a template or a prototype of pastness in contemporary works and a springboard for present and future innovations.

There is no doubt that foreign influences have impacted in every part of Africa and foreign dominion has been experienced too. These influences have made and continue to make significant impacts on music in the African continent. This is because, culture is not static but adaptive and by extension, music, as a major part of culture, is dynamic and changing in form and content as various influences act upon it (Nketia, 1974; Omojola, 1995, 2006, 2012; & Emielu, 2006). This is better explained by Emielu (2006) that:

Africa, before European and Islamic contacts, was made up of self-sustaining 'ethnic nations' who lived in more or less homogenous communities where life was an integral aspect of life and musical performances punctuated important milestones in the life of the individual from the cradle to the grave. Music making was built around communal activities such as agricultural and other economic activities, domestic chores, religious rites, and rituals, festivals e.t.c. song texts were derived from shared history, myths, legends and philosophies, while musical instruments were constructed from materials found in the environment. Music was also an instrument of social control as well as a symbol of political authority. The songs were folk in nature and nobody claimed authorship of any composition. Music was used for recreational activities as well as worship and at no point was music or musical performance sold as 'economic product' (Emielu, 2006, pp. 29-30).

From the foregoing, music making was based on communal activities and the song texts reflected the history, philosophies, beliefs, myths and legends of Africa. However, many African and of course Nigerian cultural music in postcolonial era have gone through various levels of cultural mutation, imperialism, subjugation and transformation which has at one time or the other imposed cultural extinction with its attendant cultural loss.

The fear of cultural loss or cultural extinction, which some scholars termed as “postcolonial archiving fever”, (Sanga, 2014) therefore, motivated many postcolonial writers, artists and scholars to use various means to enact their cultural national identity thereby preserving cultural values in the face of cultural extinction. Drawing from Derrida (1995), Sanga (2014) argues that the effort to salvage African cultural values using various means is a challenge to postcolonial souls as they are tormented with the ‘fever’. The figures of traditional musical elements are evoked to preserve indigenous cultural identity in the face of threat of cultural extinction since “there is no archive fever without the threat of this death drive” and cultural extinction (Derrida, 1995).

One of the traditional music that promotes Nigerian cultural ethics and identity is *àgídìgbo* music. *Àgídìgbo* music is an important aspect of Yorùbá musical culture and language as it derives its source from deep traditional Yorùbá belief and customs. Its performance usually springs from the spontaneous emotions or profound reflections of some extraordinary individuals, proverbs, dictums, aphorisms, figures of speech and other Yorùbá traditional elements. These traditional elements in *àgídìgbo* music are preserved as long as the songs are being rendered. *Àgídìgbo*, a Yoruba melo-rhythmic musical instrument, is a variant of African mbira. Mbira is an indigenous instrument of the Bantu probably invented somewhere in central or Southern Africa. Since the Bantu languages are class languages, Mbira name vary from one place to another. On the Bantu migration routes (Kubik, 1964), whenever the instrument was adopted by a new tribe, a suitable name was adopted. For instance, mbira is known as *àgídìgbo* among Yoruba of Nigeria. *Àgídìgbo* music as a genre derives its name from the principal

instrument of the band, *àgídìgbo*. It is a social recreational music among the Yoruba people of southwest Nigeria. The music predated Highlife and Fuji in Nigeria.

In this sense, *àgídìgbo* music becomes an archive or documentation/collection through which Nigerian ethics, identity, historical record, musical events and moments that would otherwise be forgotten with lapse of time are kept. *Àgídìgbo* instrument does not only archive the traditional music, but also the mental constructs of indigenous African identities thereby archiving and keeping alive a style of musical genre and its meanings in the creative human beings who can modify it to meet the contemporary needs and for future references.

Theoretical framework

Theory of archive as popularized by Derrida (1995), Muller (2002) and Sanga (2014) was adopted for this paper. Archive in this context connotes the use of music as a device of storing major events, retrieving history, preserving cultural heritage and enacting social identities. The theory of archive is very significant and useful in this paper as it is used in interpreting and understanding the selected excerpts in *àgídìgbo* music. It is therefore believed that *àgídìgbo* music (musical instruments/ensemble, song texts, compositions as well as music performance) is used as a mechanism for archival deposit, care, and retrieval of both personal and collected heritage and history. The theory explains how *àgídìgbo* musicians use their music to present a template or prototype of pastness in contemporary musical works. In addition, it explains how they use their music as an archive that acts as a springboard for present and future innovations and how their musical archival function as retention of cultural identity, and as a form of resistance to cultural imperialism or “hegemonic status of western music among the postcolonial subjects” (Muller, 2002; Sanga, 2014).

Musical archiving of Yorùbá ethical values and identity in àgídìgbo music

An attempt is made in this section to identify some notable Yorùbá ethical values and identity as expressed in àgídìgbo music. These are derived from selected interview responses and musical contents (excerpts and texts) during the field work for this paper. Some of the ethical elements and identity which are promoted and preserved through àgídìgbo music include: communal and solidarity, tolerance, contentment, industry, honesty, generosity, dedication among many others. They are carefully discussed below.

i. Communal and solidarity ethics

Yorùbá people are lovers of peace, hospitable and accommodating as this is evident in the way they allow other ethnic groups to settle down among them. Infact, they even allot a piece of land to them such as *sabo* - a settlement area designated for the Hausa among the Yorùbá. Almost every language of the world are found within the Yorùbá geographical enclave in Nigeria. Yorùbá people cherish relationship and relate as family among themselves as they believe they are all children of the same progenitor - Oduduwa. Spirit of collectivism and cooperation, contrary to individualism and disintegration, has been one of the ethical values among them. The philosophy that says “unity and togetherness produce strength” manifests in their music and other community activities such as àáró, ówẹ and other communal activities. The manifest in àgídìgbo music is usually in form of audience participation in either chorusing the refrain or dancing to the music. Their music always enjoys the participation of the audience. The philosophy gives room for the spirit of unity of purpose and togetherness among the people. The àgídìgbo music draws people to the performer so that they can hear his/her words (messages) and, once the performance has begun, the audience’s attention will not wane throughout the period of the performance. The musicians are guided by the proverb: “èniyàn!’asọ̀ ò mi,

Bímor'èni léyìn mi araà mi a yá gágá'' (human beings are my cloth (cover); whenever I see people behind me, I am elated).

Àgídìgbomusicians express their feelings as they sing their music; they carry the audience along and offer the challenge of interpretation of the song texts to the audience. They achieve this throughuse of deep sayings in their performances. An example of such songs is seen in the excerpt below where the musician- Pa Sangoyemi used his music to draw the attention of people from various communities, living in such places as Owódé, Obáfè and Kájolà - some notable areas in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. **Musical example:**

Ara Owode, ero Obafe

Moderate

The musical score is written in 6/8 time and consists of three systems. The first system (measures 1-8) has a vocal line with lyrics: "A ra o wo de o e ro o ba fe a ra o wo de o e ro o ba fe". The piano accompaniment consists of a simple bass line. The second system (measures 9-15) has a vocal line with lyrics: "se o lo se o lo a be o lo e ro o ka jo la". The piano accompaniment continues with a similar bass line. The third system (measures 16-20) has a vocal line with lyrics: "a o lo a o lo a wa o lo e ro o ka jo la". The piano accompaniment continues with a similar bass line.

Call: *Ará Owódé o èrò Obáfé*
Res: *Ará Owódé o èrò Obáfé*

People from *Owódé* and people from *Obáfé*
 People from *Owódé* and people from *Obáfé*

Call: *E ó lo, se ó lo à bẹ ò lo èrò Kájolà* Will you go or not people from *Kájolà*?
Res: *A ó lo, àwáó lo à bẹ ò lo èrò Kájolà* We shall go, we shall go, We people from *Kájolà*

This principle is one of the major philosophies that influence the behaviour of the Yorùbá. They usually solicit the spirit of togetherness in everything they do and they always encourage their young ones to imbibe the principle. Hence, the proverb: *f'òtún wẹ̀d̀sì, f'osì wẹ̀tún, niowò fí m̀* (when both hands wash each other, both will be clean). This underscores the importance of unity among the community people.

ii. Greetings and courtesy ethics

Greetings for different periods and occasions are known ethical values among the Yorùbá people. Courteous and reverential behaviours are well known virtues among the Yoruba more than any other ethnic group in the society. Yoruba traditional ethical values underscore the way people greet and relate with one another in a courteous manner. Yorùbá people are referred to *ẹ kú* people (Olunlade, 2017). The phrase means the people who greet and have greetings for all times, situations, climatic changes, and seasons more than morning, afternoon and night e.g. *ẹ kú iyálẹ̀ta* (“good mid morning” greeting for period between morning and afternoon), *ẹ kú òjò* (greeting for rainfall), *ẹ kú òrinrin* (greeting for cold weather) e.t.c. This is better explained in the excerpt below - proselike texts recited at the beginning of performance by one of my informants, Pa Ganiyu’Dakaje:

<i>Gbogboyínnimokí n o lolódìkan</i>	I greet all of you without any exemption
<i>Mo kí yín tésótésómokí yín t'ológun tológun</i>	I greet you warmly and with the spirit of warrior
<i>Mo síkí yín tàgbàgbà a bẹ</i>	I greet you the elders
<i>Orí ẹgbẹ m'ókòkànlélégún</i>	Because we call the twenty-one
<i>la béjìogbèl'a só l'óóko</i>	Members <i>ẹjìogbe</i> (ifa corpus).

ómóeni o sèdí wèrè ké sèdí bèbèrè
Ká mú lèkè ká e n í di elòmí wò

We cannot decorate the buttocks of another man's
Child with beads just because one's child
buttocks is not well structured

ògaraní sohùn awo, òbàrà ohùn àlùkò....

The voice of the occult and *aluko* are loud
and clear....

Òwò k ókólafíí wọ'gi
Òwò àpáyálafíí wọ'rókò
Mọ wàyà mì bì ọkọ íkẹgùn
E f'òwò mì wò mí o
Ìbàiyàl'èmi kókó jú/2x
Mọ jáden 'ilémotijúbà
Ìbàiyàl'èmi kókó jú

We respect the tree because of its lump
We respect iroko tree because of its hole
I'm confident like the hole used for planting yam
Accord me my own respect
I first of all pay homage to the mother
I pay homage before I left home
I first of all pay homage to the mother

The musician recognizes and greets all and sundry accordingly without omitting anyone. He reminds them that under no circumstance will parents abandon their own child to go and support another man's child. This means that the musician uses his music to solicit favour from the "elders" during his performance. Paying homage to such ancestors is a show of respect that will make his music subsist.

The song explains that the musician, first of all and as a matter of duty, paid homage to the "mother" before leaving home. This is an example of songs used to accord respect to spiritual powers that are associated with womanhood which cannot be seen with physical eyes. It is a common belief among the Yorùbá that sometimes, musicians interact with spiritual beings. It is believed that any musician that fails to give honour to "elders" in his/her singing endeavour may suffer some misfortunes and possible discontinuity in music business. Any musician that will enjoy acceptability from people and continue to be relevant must accord respect to the "elders". This is done in terms of courtesy giving and appropriate greetings for all and sundry. Thus, elders in this context may not necessarily refer to adults alone as other categories may be termed

so. Greetings and courtesy giving are some of the ethical standards which *àgídìgbo* music promotes among the Yorùbá.

iii. Chastity and fidelity ethics

Yorùbá people frown at infidelity and promiscuity and this hatred for such unacceptable acts is expressed through various means, including music. Sexual activities before marriage are condemned with several warning especially among the young girls. Violation of this ethical standard often results to shame to both the parents and the girl herself. That is why the Yorùbá people prefer their children to marry instead of being promiscuous when they reach the marriageable ages. Prior to the present time, if a girl lost her virginity before marriage, she faced the punishment, indeed; there were ways of detecting virginity among the girls in Africa. Both married and unmarried girls are therefore warned severely of the repercussion of infidelity before and after marriage through appropriate music and festival activities. This is because Yorùbá believe that if a woman is promiscuous, she will either kill her husband or kill herself through her infidelity. Although, one may view attitude of Yorùbá to issue of chastity as being gender biased because emphasis on chastity and fidelity is usually laid and more pronounced on female rather than both, one thing that is certain is that fidelity is not trivialized among them.

The ethical values of chastity and fidelity in marriage permeate *àgídìgbo* musical performances. The music (song-texts) promotes loyalty to a promise. Accuracy in reporting facts or detailed and precision in musical production are part of ingredients foregrounding Yorùbá philosophy as expressed in *àgídìgbo* music. It also promotes the principle of trust and faithfulness among the people. The musicians use their music to condemn any act of infidelity or unacceptable behaviours such as taking another man's wife that can affect the peace of the society. Pa

Sangoyemi, who reminisced on one of his experiences when his band was performing; a man who allegedly “snatched” another man’s wife passed by. He suddenly changed his music to satirize the man. He sang:

<i>ògá yíḃò sì má a sè tùtù</i>	The man who is light in complexion will make sacrifice
<i>ògá yíḃò sì má a sè tùtù</i>	The man who is light in complexion will make sacrifice
<i>ìyàwó ifá tí o gbà yí o</i>	The ifa priest’s wife you snatched
<i>ògá yíḃò sì má a sè tùtù</i>	You must make sacrifice to pacify the oracle

The musician referred to the man euphemistically as *ogayibo* (a light skin person\the man who is light in complexion) because the man was fair in complexion and referred to the wife he snatched as *iyawoifa* (wife of ifa priest). This is to scare the man that he will not only return the wife but will also do with appeasement of sacrifice. This explains that his adulterous act will not go scot free this time but with dire consequence. In this regard, *àgídìgbo* music is used to archive fidelity among the people.

iv. Contentment

Contentment is another Yorùbá philosophy that manifests in the performance of *àgídìgbo* music. This is exemplified in Yorùbá proverbs used during performance and interview with one of my informants, Pa Ganiyu ’Dakaje who averred that:

Itelorunjeokanpatakininuiwaomolúàbí, nitoripe, òyàn ògbòḃò s’òkánjùà, kó jẹbaálè tán k’ótún lóhùn ójebaálè. A n lo orinwalati se atenumo o Pataki itelorunlawujo.... “bee siniàlòkùòbìnrin kíkigbèsè” (KII, 2105).

Translation

Contentment is one of the major characters of *Omólúàbí*, because one should not be so selfish to the extent that after becoming *baálè* (village chief or community head) he still wants to become *baálé* (family head - the former is the title given to head of a community which has higher authority, while the later is the title for the head of a compound who is

answerable to the former). We use our music to emphasize the indispensability of contentment in the society. He added that a covetous musician will lack band members since a covetous man will always want to have another man's wife, this may result into rancour in the society and "a promiscuous woman is an agent of death or poverty in a man's life."

The excerpt explains that a leader should not be too ambitious at the expense of his integrity.

Also, the expression *kàkàki n fẹ̀ Wòsílà ma kúkúfowór'ajá, b'ájá bá bímo lẹ̀mejì owó mi á pé*

(Instead of marrying Wosila, I will rather use my money to buy a dog; if the dog gives birth twice, I will realise my money) is an example of song texts that project contentment in *Àgídìgbo*

music. Wosila is a female name used figuratively in the music to represent an adulterous woman.

The musician argues that it is more profitable to buy a female dog than to marry an adulterous woman who will become a liability. The dog will give birth but an adulterous woman can only give birth to calamities. This means that any man who marries an adulterous woman will constantly service debts because a promiscuous woman is a liability to any society. This type of proverb is used in *àgídìgbo* music to warn both men and women against adultery and to teach them to be contented with their spouses.

Contentment produces integrity, which is another philosophy of the Yorùbá that is evidenced in *àgídìgbo* music. Musicians usually make reference to some proverbs that promote integrity. An example of such a proverb is "*kókóleguniyán, kùùkùleegunàgbàdo, kàsòrò kába bẹ̀niyìomoènìyàn*" (Yam particle is the bone for pounded yam, maize pod is the bone for maize; saying a thing and people finding it to be true is the honour of a man). This explains integrity of a man that manifests in whatever he says. Integrity is usually reflected in *àgídìgbo* music and is promoted by musicians as they usually try to avoid disappointing their fans. They believe that a

musician that is fond of disappointing his/her fans will not always enjoy good patronage and will eventually fade off in the music arena.

v. *Mastery cum dedication*

Mastery in *àgídìgbo* music requires serious dedication and commitment, although some musicians enhance their proficiency through the use of traditional substance. He/she who wants to become an expert in the technique of the *àgídìgbo* must embrace the philosophies of self-development and dedication. All my informants expressed the inevitability of dedication and self-development in the performance of *àgídìgbo*. Mr Abdul-Rasheed affirmed that: “I would have abandoned *àgídìgbo* if not for my determination to learn and dedication to the instrument. I used to carry my *àgídìgbo* for personal rehearsals almost all the time because of my interest in it”. Pa Salawu added that:

Every profession requires commitment, dedication and perseverance. For example, *Enikeni ti yo ba lu Àgídìgbo la luko'naomioka, ogbodoni 'roriatifayaran* (whosoever will be a notable *Àgídìgbo* player must be able to persevere). I remember when I was learning the instrument; you would always see me playing it, though it was not easy when I first started to play it. As time went on, I gained mastery of it. This is as a result of my dedication, perseverance and God's help. I used to sustain injury in the hand but as I gained mastery, injuries are history today. So, whatever you do, you should persevere and be serious with it because you do not know where your service will be needed. Sometimes, our music is based on this during performance (KII, 2015).

A similar view was expressed by Pa Sangoyemi (another informant) but he used a song to substantiate his point further. He averred that unnecessary reliance on substance in achieving great feat in life is uncalled for, adding that if a man is dedicated to his work and can persevere; such a man will soon reach his goal. He noted that seeking magical power to succeed rather than pursuing money through dedication to work is futile. The song says: *eré owóni o sá /2x, eni to n*

sáréògùngùn n tan ra rẹ̀ jẹ̀; eré owóni o sá (work hard for money; whoever runs after charms as substance deceives him/herself).

My informants claimed that their attainment in *àgídìgbo* performance was as a result of personal continuous practice and self-dedication to the instrument and the music since any public brilliant performance is preceded by serious private rehearsals. Any musician who fails to recognize the principles of mastery and dedication to the instrument cannot be a band leader because a band leader in an *àgídìgbo* group must be an expert on the *àgídìgbo*. Playing the *àgídìgbo* requires serious concentration during public performance as it involves playing the instrument and singing along. The musician must engage in long and dedicated private rehearsals. Playing the *àgídìgbo* requires total concentration of the player - both hands; head, mouth, legs and all mental faculties are fully engaged during performance. This is normally done to avoid shame; one must attain proper mastery of instrument which can only be achieved through dedication to rigorous practice and perseverance in order to attain a professional level in performance.

Mastery of one's profession with dedication is held in high esteem among the Yorùbá and *àgídìgbo* musicians always advocate this in their activities. The musicians believe that "*pátápátá làá f'ójú, kùnàkuna làá d'ètẹ̀; ojúàfòṣòfò tán, ijà níh dá'leṣè* (it is better to be totally blind, it is better to be absolutely leprous; half-sightedness usually results in conflict). This implies that it is better to be absolute in whatever one is doing because haphazardness in professionalism usually results in conflict; as such a person will not meet up with the expectation of society. If you do not possess mastery of your profession, you are sidelined. People will patronize other qualified hands. The musicians use any avenue in their musical performance to emphasize dedication to work and perseverance in one's endeavours.

vi. Generosity

Àgídìgbo musicians usually promote kind heartedness in musical performances. They do this by creating a funny atmosphere for their audience during their music performance. They make their music attractive to the audience and the audience also reciprocates with gifts (usually money).

Mr Abdul-Rasheed Iroko claimed that:

A stingy musician cannot practice the music profession for long. Musicians must give money to people out of the proceeds from the outings so as to receive favour from people. A band must also be generous to band members so as to win their loyalty. We practice this and we teach our band members and audience to do the same through our music (KII, 2015).

It can be deduced from this quotation that generosity and humour are essential qualities of *àgídìgbo* musicians. All my key informants pointed to these two Yorùbá philosophies as essential principles for a successful musician. They believed that any musician that is tight-fisted cannot succeed in music. They noted that a musician must be generous to his/her band members; otherwise, s/he will lose his respect and eventually lose his/her members. He/she must not be stingy to those who ask from him and even those that do not ask but deserve his/her support. This is important because music, as it has been earlier said, belongs to the spiritual realm of the world and being stingy to the “world” may result in closed door of favour and success. This philosophy of being generous to all and sundry is so important in the lifestyle of the Yorùbá people. They believe that whoever is merciful shall receive mercy.

vii. Humour

It is normally expected that a musician be hilarious in his dealings with the audience. A dull musician will create a dull atmosphere which is not conducive to music performance. A musician

is expected to be friendly and entertaining at the same time as the profession demands; otherwise, one will not have audience and will soon pack up from the music stage. One must be creative enough to introduce new materials in the repertoires and present them with humour so as to win the heart of the audience. For instance, all my key informants were so funny and accommodating during the interviews for this work. They noted that being humorous is a secret of their sustenance and their healthy living. They also explained that they use their music to create an atmosphere of humour and encourage people to emulate them. For instance, Pa Ganiyu 'Dakaje explained that:

Unfriendly musicians cannot win the hearts of their fans. A musician must be humorous; otherwise, one would send fans away. When I perform my music, people laugh and are happy. Through that, they forget and dance away their sorrows, but if I am not happy myself, how will I make other people happy? That is why a musician must be hilarious in his music performance (KII, 2016).

Yorùbá people believe that no matter how beautiful a woman may be or how good her market may be, if she does not add humour, nobody will look at her side. These principles are part of good characters that the Yorùbá people stand for, culminating in what they call philosophy of *Omólúàbí* stored in *àgídìgbo* music for future use.

CONCLUSION

There are so many of these Nigerian ethics and identity in *àgídìgbo* music and a few of them have been discussed one after the other. The Yorùbá ethics which *àgídìgbo* music preserves promotes include: communal and solidarity, greeting and courtesy, chastity and fidelity; good character, good manners in speaking, bravery and collectiveness that promote unity and progress. All these principles are referred to as characteristics of the *Omólúàbí* and they are the golden

rules for the Yorùbá people. When people do violate these ethical issues, disharmony and conflict are inevitable among the people in society. Àgídìgbo is viable means through which Nigerian ethics and identity are kept for contemporary and future usages.

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Appendix 1: Key Terms

Àròkò- this is one of the symbol communication systems among the Yorùbá and probably the most popular among others. It is a process that uses parceled object/objects to pass messages across from the sender/encoder to the receiver/decoder through a human medium. It employs both human and material elements for its operation. See Akangbe (2017) for more explanation on *àròkò*.

Àlèlè - this is a form of non-verbal communication among the Yorùbá in which an object is put on property and farm produce to preserve it from trespassers. It is a traditional way of passing warning to all not to overstep their bounds which usually has a dire consequence for any violator.

Agà - this is another non-verbal communication which includes the use of symbol-object to warn people not to trespass or be mindful of a certain danger that lies ahead. The consequence is graver for the trespassers compared to that of *àlèlè*.

Àséwélé - this is another prominent non-verbal communication method among the Yorùbá in the pre-literate Yorùbá society. The principal objects in *àséwélé* are leaves and sand. This is principally used to ward-off people from the materials kept at the road side or to indicate a sign to tell others that someone has passed the road after a pre-discussed arrangement. See Opatotun (1986) for more information.

Ìtùfù - this is a non inflammable object that was usually put at the back of the offender's house or in the wall to notify the concerned person that house will be burnt down as a result of an offence committed.

Àsàkasà - the dynamic act of cultural deviant; a prodigal text which always attempts to overwrite its own source.

Àáró -A cooperative work among friends, especially farmers, in which they rotate farming works among themselves in form of helping each other in the farms. For instance, if they go to one person's farm today, it will be the turn of another person tomorrow.

òwẹ̀-This is similar to *àáró* in some sense but different in approach. *òwẹ̀* occurs when a son-in-law requests the assistance of his friends to work in the farm of his father-in-law. Usually, food and drinks are only provided for the friends without any financial rewards.

Pa Ganiyu 'Dakaje is a traditional *àgídìgbo* exponent hailed from Iwo, Osun State. The researcher was with him on several occasions for interview and interaction, being one of the key informants. Despite his eye challenge, he is a notable *àgídìgbo* exponent in Iwo and its environs. He plays the *àgídìgbo* and sings very well. He was above 80 years old during the fieldwork.

Mr Abdul-Rsheed Iroko hailed from Eruwa, Oyo State. He has an *àgídìgbo* band and he plays *àgídìgbo* very well; he is also a good singer. He was about 65 years during my fieldwork. He was one of my key informants.