

# CHAPTER 49

## THE SPHERES OF POST-STRUCTURALISM IN NIGERIAN MUSICAL ARTS

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### Abstract

The etymology of structuralism and later post-structuralism was dug into in this work. The relationship of post-structuralism to the expectations of the Nigerian traditional society was established. The analogy was drawn from various fields like linguistics and psychology. Levi Strauss's theory was x-rayed, the bloom taxonomy was brought to the fore, and the theory of Gregor Mendel was also analysed and later narrowed down to show the essence of post-structuralism as a synthesis of thoughts. The concept was later narrowed down to music and suggestions proffered for what the author views as standards of post-structuralism in Nigerian musical arts.

**Keywords:** Musical arts, Poststructuralism, Nigerian traditional society, Linguistics and Psychology.

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### Introduction

Music is unarguably one of the oldest arts but its scholarly study is alien to Nigeria as it came with the colonialists. Since formal music education was introduced in Nigeria, art music has grown in leaps and bounds. From Michigan to Los Angeles, from Cape Coast to Belfast, from Nsukka to Ibadan, from Plateau State down to the creeks of Niger Delta, the mustard seed has grown. Music

education in Nigeria dates back to the pre-colonial days when the missionaries and government used schools to propagate their ideals through music. In post-colonial Nigeria, the emphasis and content of music education began to change as nationalism became the order of the day. The first generation of music graduates in Nigeria were products of colonial masters and in content, their training was tailored to assuage their needs before nationalistic instincts emerged and emphasis began to change. Among the first generation were William Wilberforce, Chukwudinka Echezona, T K E Philips, Fela Sowande, Dayo Dedeké, Fr. Coker, Laz Ekwueme, Sam Akpabot and a host of others. Echezona was inspired by Major J. G. C Allen. He had his formal music education in Michigan and on return worked for the Church Missionary Society (CMS) until he was seconded to the University of Nigeria Nsukka UNN where he helped to found the Department of Music (Onuora-Oguno, 200: )

The mustard seed has grown and presently over 35 Higher Institutions across the country offer music as a course in Nigeria. Among the first generation of graduates in UNN were Meki Nzewi, Sam Ojukwu, Felix Nwuba, Tunji Vidal, AK Achinivu, Azubuiké Ifionu, Richard Okafor and a few others. This group later found their way to various continents of the world in quest of more exposure and knowledge. Many have since returned home and propagated different philosophies/ideologies at different times, mentored younger scholars/ disciples and promoted diverse philosophies.

If we classify the generation of scholars here by a decade demarcation then I belong to the third generation and we have not disappointed, notable among us are Chris Onyeji, Nnamdi Onuora-Oguno, Okuade, Adeoluwa all professors today. I, therefore, make bold to say that after 5 generations of music scholarship in UNN, there is no better place to start a brainstorming session on post-structuralism in Nigerian Music academia.

### **Concept of Post Structuralism**

Poststructuralism represents a set of attitudes and a style of critique that developed in critical response to the growth and identification of the logic of structural relations that underlie social institutions—whether they exist in terms of politics, economics, education, medicine, literature, music or the sciences. It is an intellectual movement that emerged in philosophy and the humanities in the 1960s and 1970s. It challenged the tenets of structuralism, which had previously held sway over the interpretation of language and texts in the humanities and the study of economics and cultures in the social sciences.

Post-structuralism has proved pivotal in refashioning our image of society and knowledge. It has done so by proposing alternatives that urge a shift in focus, from issues of class, individualism and materialism, to a focus on discourses, identities (differences) and cultural codes. Nevertheless, reflection upon music has been minimally affected by post-structuralism up until now. While post-structuralism stands out as one of the most important intellectual developments that have occurred within the humanities since the late 1950s, musicology, music theory and music analysis

have neither been affected by nor contributed to this philosophical enterprise. Post-structuralism musicology is **based on criticism and deconstruction of musicological objectivism, the general idea of the autonomy of the theory of music** or a shift to the contextuality of music.

Now that the concept has been clearly defined, let us look at how the structures have evolved and think of post-structuralism in the present age.

### **Theoretical Framework.**

In cultural anthropology, the school of thought developed by the French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, in which cultures, viewed as systems, are analysed in terms of the structural relations among their elements. According to Levi-Strauss's theories, universal patterns in cultural systems are products of the invariant structure of the human mind. Structure, for him, referred exclusively to mental structure, although he found evidence of such structure in his far-ranging analyses of kinship, patterns in mythology, art, religion, ritual, and culinary traditions. The basic framework of Levi-Strauss's theories was derived from the work of structural linguistics. From N. S. Trubetzkoy, the founder of structural linguistics, Levi-Strauss developed his focus on unconscious infrastructure as well as an emphasis on the relationship between terms, rather than on terms as entities in themselves. From the work of Roman Jakobson, of the same school of linguistic thought, Levi-Strauss adopted the so-called distinctive feature method of analysis, which postulates that an unconscious "metastructure" emerges through the human mental process of pairing opposites. In Levi-Strauss's system, the human mind is viewed as a repository of a great variety of natural materials, from which it selects pairs of elements that can be combined to form diverse structures. Pairs of oppositions can be separated into singular elements for use in forming new oppositions. I have found the theory of Levi relevant to this presentation because the Igbo cosmos, what I call the unity of two or concordance of duets is relevant in the Igbo cosmos or worldview, I will give excerpts from some Igbo folk songs:

Call - *Ifugokwa egwunwa na mu ezuro ya ezu*

Response - *Ine anyi Jesse*

Call - *Obiakor Obinwa*

Response - *Awa nje nje*

C - *Ikpecha kwa kam kpe*

R - *Ikpecha kwa kam kpe*

C - *Ebe ewu neje*

*Ebe nmgada neje*

*Ma ngwele moke*

In analyzing kinship terminology and kinship systems, the accomplishment that first brought him to pre-eminence in anthropology, Levi-Strauss suggested that the elementary structure or unit of

kinship, on which all systems are built is a set of four types of organically linked relationships: brother/sister, husband/wife, father/son, and mother's brother/sister's son. Lévi-Strauss stressed that the emphasis in structural analysis of kinship must be on human consciousness, not on objective ties of descent or consanguinity. For him, all forms of social life represent the operation of universal laws regulating the activities of the mind. His detractors argued that his theory could be neither tested nor proved and that his lack of interest in historical processes represented a fundamental oversight. Lévi-Strauss, however, believed that structural similarities underlie all cultures and that an analysis of the relationships among cultural units could provide insight into innate and universal principles of human thought.

### **Post Structuralism and Linguistic**

In linguistics, any one of several schools of 20th-century linguistics committed to the structuralist principle that a language is a self-contained relational structure, the elements of which derive their existence and their value from their distribution and oppositions in texts or discourse. This principle was first stated clearly, in linguistics, by the Swiss scholar Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913). Saussurean structuralism was further developed in somewhat different directions by the Prague school, glossematics, and other European movements. In the United States the term structuralism, or structural linguistics, has had much the same sense as it has had in Europe concerning the work of Franz Boas (1858–1942) and Edward Sapir (1884–1939) and their followers. Nowadays, however, it is commonly used, in a narrower sense, to refer to the so-called post-Bloomfieldian school of language analysis that follows the methods of Leonard Bloomfield, developed after 1930. Phonology (the study of sound systems) and morphology (the study of word structure) are their primary fields of interest.

### **Curriculum and Content**

It is no longer news that the pioneer curriculum was Western-oriented, how has it evolved in content if we agree that post-structuralism is a hybrid? My biology tells me that when two homozygous species interact sexually, what we get is a synthesis called a hybrid. I support the assertion above by the theory of Gregor Mendel:

In his monastery garden, Mendel carried out a large number of cross-pollination experiments between variants of the garden pea, which he obtained as pure-breeding lines. He crossed peas with yellow seeds to those with green seeds and observed that the progeny seeds were all yellow. When the  $F_1$  individuals were self-pollinated or crossed among themselves, their progeny ( $F_2$ ) showed a ratio of 3:1 (3/4 yellow and 1/4 green). He deduced that, since the  $F_2$  generation contained some green individuals, the determinants of greenness must have been present in the  $F_1$  generation, although they were not expressed because yellow is dominant over the green. From the precise mathematical 3:1 ratio (of which he found several other examples), he deduced not

only the existence of discrete hereditary units (genes) but also that the units were present in pairs in the pea plant and that the pairs separated during gamete formation. I dare now to say that even in music phenotype and genotype exist and that for me is what post-structuralism in Nigerian music academia is all about. A music education programme must meet the needs of its society, has the present curricula met the required needs? How many African musical instruments are studied effectively in Nigerian tertiary institutions, and what are the state of popular music and pop music studies in Nigeria? A student once accosted me and was bold to say I am not getting what I came here to study. For me, that is post-structuralism in music question 1. The content of education in traditional Africa was functional, aimed at self-reliance social and political participation and was predicated on industry (Onuora-Oguno, 2010:62).

- Staffing and equipping
- Ethics
- Music and related disciplines

In dealing with post-structuralism in music, we must look at music and related disciplines, music and engineering, music and architecture, law music and entrepreneurial skills. The production of sound and working principles of musical instruments are science but its performance is an art.

### **Post Structuralism of Music in a Pluralistic World.**

Music is itself pluralistic. Harmony is the combination of music strains to make a joyous sound. The practice of music in our society must in itself be devoid of monodic traits. Most performers today are still monodic in practice. We live in a global village. Time and space have been conquered. What constitutes a pluralistic music performer? Pluralism assumes that diversity is beneficial to society and that autonomy should be enjoyed by disparate functional or cultural groups within a society, including religious groups, trade unions, professional organizations, and ethnic minorities.

Pluralism was stressed most vigorously in England during the early 20th century by a group of writers that included Frederic Maitland, Samuel G. Hobson, Harold Laski, Richard H. Tawney, and George Douglas Howard Cole, who reacted against what they alleged to be the alienation of the individual under conditions of unrestrained capitalism. It was necessary, they argued, to integrate the individual in a social context that would give him a sense of community, and they pointed to the medieval structure of guilds, chartered cities, villages, monasteries, and universities as an example of such a society. Pluralists argued that some of the negative aspects of modern industrial society might be overcome by economic and administrative decentralization. How do we achieve effective post-structuralism in musical arts education?

### **Post Structuralism in Ecclesiastical Music circles.**

What is the role of music and musicians in church circles? Has the patronage of music by the church subjected musicians to inhuman treatment or have musicians held the church to ransom? In a typical liturgical service as soon as the presbyter announces: Let us pray to usher in service; the choir is already standing by to lead the procession. The organist equally turns the beautiful bride because his services are essential and give splendour to the church service. He leads the congregation, guides the choir and works symbiotically with the clergy. The choir often put in months of serious practice to put up a decent performance and suddenly an overzealous priest after spending long hours in announcements that are already in the bulletin cancels the choir slot for a five-minute anthem which took over six months to prepare! The musician becomes disappointed and dejected. Nothing discourages an artiste as denying him the opportunity to display what he has rehearsed. He can endure hunger more than that. Then the sword of Brutus, no entertainment for him and his band of musicians. On the next occasion, he demands his entitlements from the onset, the church labels him greedy and inconsiderate. In post-structuralism, the musician must be equipped with courses on human management. Proper education becomes a necessary panacea, through sound education fashioned in post-structuralism, the musician must improve his social habit. He must be aware that he is an icon, whatever he does is in the public domain.

### **Post Structuralism and Aesthetics of Music.**

Music can affect our emotions and intellect, and lyrics can assuage our loneliness and incite our passions, as such music is a powerful art form whose aesthetic appeal is highly dependent upon the culture in which it is practised. Aesthetics is generally defined as the study of the beautiful, musical aesthetics therefore should be the study of the beautiful in music, the ultimate goal of such a study being the establishment of criteria that would allow us to say whether or not a particular musical work is beautiful while another is not. The main objection to such a point of view is that beauty is by no means the only and possibly not even the foremost criterion of what may be roughly described as merit or artistic worth. Music like other works of art may be aesthetically satisfying without being beautiful. There has been controversy in the intellectual discourse of aesthetics because discussion on it tends to overlook some salient factors, one of such is that aesthetics depends heavily upon a cultural frame of reference. A dialogue on the effectiveness of post-structuralism in music will only be effective when cultural considerations are taken into account.

### **Post Structuralism and Curriculum Development in Music**

In music academia and curriculum development, we must look at the effectiveness of the curriculum in our immediate society. Functional education must be the focus. What courses inherited by the Western masters are relevant today in our society? There must be a synthesis of

traditional education that brings native intelligence to the fore and marries it with relevant Western-oriented courses so that we can incubate and nurture students of the universe. Blooms taxonomy readily comes into mind:

He classified objectives in education into three main domains, cognitive objectives – placing the greatest emphasis on remembering reasoning, concept formation and creative thinking. Affective objectives — emphasise emotive qualities expressed in attitude, interests, values and emotional biases, and psychomotor objectives emphasizing the muscle, motor skills and manipulation in various activities like handwriting, speech, physical education

According to the *National Policy on Education*:

There is a need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria; to this end, school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive; while interest and ability should determine the individual's direction in education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004: 7).

Societies, traditional or modern usually design their educational systems to meet their needs and satisfy their aspirations. The Igbo as a cultural entity had unique needs and aspirations which were satisfied through the mobilization of existing institutions and individuals in an educational enterprise which also prepares the young ones for effective adult life.

Functionalism, self-reliance, social and political participation and stability were the ultimate outcomes and were predicated on industry, resourcefulness, creativity, and obedience to God and society. Education has been portrayed by many sociologists and educationalists to be an experience that borders on the peoples' culture and which through learning processes prepares an individual for adult life in his particular society, indigenous education could therefore be interpreted to mean that type of education that is natural or native to a place or that could be found within a group (Agu, 1997: 28). In the view of (Fafunwa, 1974: 15), Traditional education is the type of education that existed in Africa before the arrival of Islam or Christianity.

## **Conclusion**

From the aforementioned, post-structuralism in Nigerian musical arts education must be a synthesis type of education in which members of a sociologically identifiable group are transmitted to and received by their members for their peculiar purposes. It was education which was premised on the cultural norms and values of the society, its ideals, philosophies, needs and aspirations. Several issues must be examined while discussing post-structuralism in Nigerian musical arts education. These include issues of content, relevance, methods of instruction and evaluation, instruments and organisation, for these are the basic considerations in an educational system.

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