Modernist sense- A person invents destruction, which is hailed, patronized as supreme brilliance; a person invents mind-healer, which is ignored, relegated as ordinary intellect. Destruction strikes, trauma engulfs all – temporarily

Surnames and place names survive generations- symbolic. When we ignore or discard the symbols or profound wisdoms of the past in the education of the present and future we nurture a frivolous mentality. Cumulative indigenous lore is a mine of lessons for contemporary conscience reformation. We declare on ancestral authority that there was prodigious humanity logic, evidentially scientific, permeating the original conceptualization, thinking and practicing of the musical arts as a creative and proactive communion of the sonic, the choreographic, the mythically/mystically dramatic and the material components. The unity or occasionally discrete operation of the components constituted a soft science of engineering conscientious humanity and functional societal systems. The sonic component invariably structured expressions in the other components, hence musical arts is a (singular) generic term. The study and arguments tendered here are informed by connections with the consistent philosophy, theory and creative principles of African indigenous knowledge paradigms.

The soft science of the musical arts, unlike the tangible and material (hard) sciences, is an intangible force that is not exactly quantifiable but qualitatively proactive and behaviorally monitored. Prevalent human imagination of life has become overwhelmed by the fascinations and magic of modern technological and entertainment living; now also perverting purpose of life in rural communities. Obsession with materialistic acquisitions has virtually stifled the divine essence in the basic nature of humans; hence self-centeredness and villainy are rampant in the conduct of societal affairs globally, even in educational sites and policies. The trend needs to be reversed for the sake of the survival of humanity anywhere in the globe. Dastardly crimes against humanity driven by inordinate greed or hatred or ego tripping, and which is facilitated by technology or hard sciences at any place in the globe, invariably traumatizes or destroys minds and lives of masses often including those remote from the place of commission. Mind sublimating agencies that would attenuate the

---

1 This discourse derives primarily from applied research and performance interactions with indigenous musical arts manifestations and mother creative artistes. It will not necessarily conform to the scholarly convention of citing literature sources. Any coincidental experiences published or otherwise are hereby respected.
demonic misuse of technology and hard sciences become imperative in education sites, public governance and institutions as well as in inter-human relationships. By the natural law of duality in nature such a countering remedial force must be the spirituality imbuing, soft sciences that routinely infuse conscience into the functioning and inventions or innovations of human intellect. The soft science of the musical arts that effectively imbued salubrious mind in the education and management of old societies remains contemporaneously viable. The humanity conscious contemporary Arts education classroom in particular, is central to reinstating such direly needed values and virtues basic to humanity-cherishing education policy and proactive curricular as well as conscientious educators.

Indigenous knowledge productions are anchored on systematized frameworks/formulae for replication, incremental extension, hence scientific. There are measurement and evaluation indicators albeit memory-archived. In the cultural arts, for instance, there are markers and terminologies for categories, genres, styles and types, which are articulated as need be. Down-to-earth scholarship commands us to respect these in order to be imbued with the sensibility that would faithfully discern, document, advance, practice and transmit them as valuable historical templates for contemporary humanity-sensed science and arts education.

*Humanning*\(^2\) Dynamics - [The musical arts was originally conceived and conformed to generate intangible dynamo that ignites and processes qualitative living, embodied knowing, doing and dying]

Posited below are some of the conceptual principles, philosophical and theoretical, which purposively ground indigenous musical arts of Africa as a humanning as well as healing scientific design:

- Hard sciences and technological wizardry facilitate easy living and doing. But they also imperceptibly forge “stone heart” in devotees because they could warp the spirit, distort perceptions of self and life, and impoverish humane considerations in contemporary creative aspirations. On the other hand, the purposive soft science of Indigenous sonic configuration, choreographed psycho-physiological health and dramatized cosmos infuse humanity attributes. Separately or co-jointly these creative components engineer sublime spiritual disposition, mind and body wellness, humane disposition and also sometimes generate proactive states of altered consciousness requisite for accomplishing subliminal actions that foster life and relationships

- The creative philosophy of profundity in minimality (M Nzewi 1997) commands artfully generating prodigious effects/affects with minimal creative and material resources in the musical arts science, food science, medical science, humane relationships etc. Some African musical arts manifestations that are perceived as complex or

\(^2\) To make sublimely human
bewildering derive from simple sonic/choreographic/dramatic configurations of natural and cosmological resources.

- The principle of specialization within inclusivity commands that all must experience the psychic-physiological wellness ideology that undergrounds creative aspirations in indigenous musical arts. Dance and dramatic enactments (supernormal or ordinary) boost body and mind health. So dance or drama in indigenous cultures was not what somebody indulged for others to merely watch with emotional distance. The degree of practical participation could vary depending on the category of the dance – mass medley or stylized formation (Nzewi. 2007). Hence the venue for public dances makes ample allowance for all-inclusive somatic communion, and for the audience to still freely interact in somatic bonding in instances of exclusively stylized dances. A non-designated dancer could “invade” the space of the specialized dancers for sportive somatic applause or gestured/verbalized acclamation at the sidelines. A fluid audience is the norm. Spontaneous audience responses (acted out or merely verbalized as per immediate affect) heals the soul. It is equally a factor of spontaneous creativity – energizes/inspires or dampens the creative inspiration in “performance-composition” (O. Nzewi 2009: 59) of the specialist performers. 3 The principle of generating audience interaction as a force that promotes creative genius informs the blocking of a presentation venue for any type of performance. The principle of inclusivity as a humanning philosophy also frames the rationalization of creative elements. The average capability of members of a community must be accommodated in exercising creative freedom. This humanity consciousness accounts for the melodic range in African vocal music being of a modest range: everybody can sing along without undue vocal strain, as much as there may be persons with unusually expansive vocal range. Allowance is then made in inclusive performance configurations for persons with exceptional skills to contribute extra aesthetic flavor or functional impact to the overall outcome by having space to demonstrate such uncommon capability.

- Individuality in conformity Indigenous African philosophy of life in a society recognized that every individual has a unique attribute. Rigid control or robotizing of the human person to rigidly conform to rules contrived by privileged elite is, therefore, not an original African ideology. To be capable of exercising individual interpretation of the norm enriches its performance and experiencing, and is cherished. In creative activities, a person who is incapable of original flavor in interpreting or reproducing the known framework is scorned as a “non-person”. The basic customary expectation is that everybody must observe the societal norms in behavior and creative environments. At the same it is recognized that every member of a community has peculiar

---

3 Israel Anyahuru an Igbo mother musician asserted that: “If nobody dances when they should, I will conclude that they do not appreciate my music… I would feel dispirited and tire immediately… If, on the other hand, I perceive the sign that my music is being well received, I could even create new tunes that I have not played before on the inspiration of the occasion” (Nzewi, M. I Anyahuru & T Obiaraumunna 2009:53)
attributes that must be legitimately exercised within norms and standards. In creative activities this philosophy commands that everybody must express unique flair in performance within normative framework or template, but without radicalizing the expected. For instance in a choreographed dance of ten artistes there must be ten aesthetic personalities of the same choreography. It is humanly necessary in contemporary education that the individuality of learners must not be suppressed, thereby aborting their eventual emancipation as original creative personalities in any future field of specialization. Space to contribute creative/innovative genius, is a virtue that African indigenous education methodology in the musical arts fostered

- Inter-borrowing and enriching was an old African diplomatic forte as the musical arts is a science of fostering and sustaining diplomatic relationships. Comparative knowledge interaction that promoted mutuality as a virtuous disposition was the custom. Competition was eschewed because of the psychical injuries it generates: A winner develops an obtrusive Ego that is shattered with traumatic consequences if s/he loses next time; the loser develops a feeling of human/mental inadequacy with the psychological disorders appertaining. Winners and losers project mutual ill will and incur personality deformity – arrogance and humiliation as the case may be, both leading to a-social disposition. Comparative philosophy of interacting capabilities eliminates the psychical disabilities caused by competition

- Some peculiarly structural configurations in music are purposive. A topos sounded on the right instrumental timbre could be applied as anesthesia and sleep therapy. Self-administered recycling of a theme calms or agitates the mind depending on the circumstance. Sharing of thematic structures psychically connects and bonds participants. Indigenous form in music interplays calm and tense passages or sections for mind health.

- The deportment of body as well as choreographic expressions in dance effect self-administered system health: Maternity dances tune and maintain reproductive organs in women; sustained muscle-vibration massages, and reduces tension resulting from the stress of physical labor or existence, particularly in men. Exchange of somatic energy in mass dancing is soul and spirit therapy for all participants. Indigenous dances generally encoded cultural texts (Agawu, 2003:113) as well as staged emotions that could be age-gender peculiar. Traditional dances are functional or/and poetic (soma-linguistic) conceptualizations, hence poetic dances

- Spirit manifest drama when encountered, is modulated with music and dance as transcendental experiences that conjure heightened spiritual consciousness. It also interprets and socializes the supernatural as well as nature forces active in the cosmos, and impacting life experiences. Meta-dramatic enactment of the perceived spirit essence of some paranormal forces/occurrences helps in coming to terms with their, otherwise, extraordinary affects and effects. Some types tame obnoxious ego-impulses in the conduct of life.
As much as the idea of entertainment permeated indigenous musical arts activities, entertainment was scarcely ever the primary objective of an artistic creation even in autonomous children’s musical arts domain that to a large extent facilitated multifaceted life education functions. The entertainment cloak disguising the culturally purposive body of any musical arts conformation was factored in as a lure that spurred and sustained the accomplishment of the primary objective, while serving subliminally as a mind lubricant - the functional aesthetic content of indigenous artistic conceptions.

Advancement Dynamics - Reinstating the agenda of proactive down-to-earth Arts scholarship and education: Appreciate how the earth sustains life, and there would be scarce need to prefer moon-capturing brilliance to earth-enriching intellectuality. Enriched earth sustains nature and enriches life.

Deriving from the legacy pinpointed above, some down-to-earth arguments instead of elitist, high-flowing scholarship eruditions will frame the reinstatement cum advancement measures being advocated. Indigenous musical arts creations are categorized under functional-names, type-names and/or style-names in a culture. This is testimony to the fact that replicable formulaic and procedural frameworks mark creative conformation and performance contextualization. The scientific grounding of indigenous knowledge epistemology, creative advancement and propagation procedures must first be discerned. The knowledge inventions that nurtured humanity up to the irreverent and reckless modernism would then furnish the core resources and genius for contemporary living and scholarship, in spite of overwhelming mind-diverting tricks of genius. In hegemonic music education, for instance, the compositions of the Baroque to Romantic era still furnish the core knowledge base for musicological, compositional, historical eruditions as well as contemporary concert repertories. Most invented developmental theories and ingenuity that subvert and deform the cultural-historical mentality of posterity indulge in academic ego trips that are remote from earth (humanity) sensibility. Elitist education, scholarship and performance inventions such as “excellence” and “best practice” may aggrandize the self-consumed academic mind, but intimidate, alienate and deprive learners, most of who thereby feel mentally inadequate, develop vacuous or negative mentality, and opt for socially-morally maladjusted pursuits, often perversely clever in creative imagination.

The argument proffered is that the philosophy and theory grounding indigenous creative conceptualizations, some of which have been outlined above, are momentous. The cognitive advancement of their essence is imperative for sanitary, humanity-sensed education that could re-instill benign spiritual disposition and virtuous social personality in contemporary humanity, starting from early upbringing. Contemporary education policy, curricular content, learning methodology and assessment criteria as well as scholarship orientations are central to the re-instatement of down-to-earth and thereby humanity-sensed education in which the holistically perceived musical arts is central. The traditional paradigms should
then query current aesthetic fantasies that celebrate obsessions with performance and education sophistry to the
detriment of humanning ideals.

I wish to emphasize the four cankers that deviate humanity ideals while inflicting psychical-spiritual injuries in the
contemporary human milieu, globally. They are: competition mentality, refinement/purification obsession, the
fantasy of excellence, and the mind corroding Siren of flippant entertainment as a creative or experiential objective.

Competition is a beguiling but mind-devastating demon, ridden by greed and vanity. Brilliance thrives in dual dynamics:
Comparative brilliance that strives for mutual recognition and cross fertilization of genius is divine - entrenches humanity
instincts; competitive brilliance that schemes to undercut or destroy others' genuine efforts and grab all the glory and lucre
is demonic - destroys humanity conscience. There is humanity virtue in comparing capabilities and achievements such as
in festival meetings whereas competition to either win all or lose injures the soul and spirit of the competitors. The
objectivity and infallibility of the judges (often non-cognizant of the true merit in what is being judged) is contestable.
Competition generates stress, strain, anxiety, cheating, animosity and insecurity, also ego syndromes or depression in
winners, losers and consumers alike.

Refinement, whether of humans or natural materials/elements eliminates virtue or value-content. What is rough or bitter
but natural is genuine, and contains robust healing qualities if ingestible or internalized through the senses. The energy
expended in purifying or refining the natural self or substances warps the mind, and the process depletes value content.
Excellence is a chimera, an illusion that distorts reality in the minds that fantasize or pursue its Siren – Who is the
excellent human that determines excellence without subjectivity or prejudice? There are standards, and valid
individualities that enrich standard.

Entertainment (contemporary notion of good life) subverts or aborts conscience, and dims sensibility/sensitivity. After the
excitement, what, substantial for noble or basic living is grasped? Hence flippant or amoral entertainment creativity and
consumption are the harbingers of corruption, dissimulation, delusion and ultimately criminality. Flippant entertainment,
which the media and some educational programs avidly promote is mentally diverting, and perverts the sensibility of
tender or permissible minds globally. I stress that in indigenous musical arts practices the entertainment facet of an artistic
rationalization and presentation is conceived and perceived as an undercurrent that sustains interest in the achievement
of the functional intention. Traditional evaluation of aesthetic content is more of how effectual, how virtuous than how
enjoyable?

There are enough resources in the world for every psychically normal person to access basic social and economic
wellbeing, if the indigenous community principle of sharing is re-inculcated. Indigenous ensemble music structures are
rationalized to intangibly sensitize and endure the godly virtues of sharing in group as well as inter-personal activities. The disposition to share should be inculcated in humaning education. An interactive classroom is essential for humanity-sensed arts education bearing in mind the advantages of experiential theory in cognitive knowledge acquisition — the forte of indigenous pedagogy:

The concept and practice of arts education that will begin to produce profound humanity benefits in contemporary minds and lives should reinstate the indigenous paradigms that prescribed group dynamics in creativity and purposive action. The argument notes that the school and classroom now represent the ideal site for re-constituting the traditional sense of community. Group creativity and production, exploring mono-cultural or multi-cultural themes and resources, is the ideal in contemporary classroom that practices integrated arts education. The group owns the final product, and members are committed to its success. The process socializes and bonds the learners, inter-stimulates creative genius, commands mutual accommodation of one another’s capabilities and personalities, liberates introversion while taming self-centeredness, resolves disagreements and democratizes criticism. It also pools intellectual and practical capabilities for enhanced finished product, generating fellow-feeling and group pride. It is particularly inclusive — accommodating handicaps, emancipating personalities and as well mitigating obnoxious character traits. Arts education that endorses group creativity and production should encourage learners at any level to be independent, do everything by and for selves with advice as maybe desirable: researching, scripting, composing, choreographing, costuming, directing, acting, production management and marketing if need be.

Nobody is born a failure. Sometimes upbringing and education, directly or indirectly contrive failures out of ordinarily capable persons. No creative product that demonstrates genuine effort is a failure or should be graded a failure. To categorizing persons and their outputs as failure, often as per elitist/inapplicable evaluation criteria, damages self esteem and social personality. The consequences could be dire, traumatic for life thereafter. What is flippantly condemned as a mistake/failure, especially at moments of creative stimulation (improvisation/performance composition) or in laboratory experiments, is quite often an unintended divine sign. If spontaneously explored, “mistake” could spark a profound experience/discovery/novelty (Nzewi, M. 1997: 68). The ogre of mistake intimidates effort. Failure or mistake is in not trying sincerely. It is disastrous to humanity upbringing, to confront learners at any level and stage of education practice or performance with the definitive demons of winning and losing, failing and passing. The negative impact on the mind could impair psychical personality, attitude to education, post school engagement with life, life orientation/aspiration and social conscience. Self-contrived failure is a different proposition.
The soft science of African indigenous musical arts was the spirit force that instilled humanity conscience, and also
monitored, critiqued, sanctioned, approved the ethical conduct of societal systems. In other words, the indigenous creative
personality and the musical arts entity served, and were respected as the impartial, forthright and incorruptible conscience
of the human collective. The same constructive societal consciousness could be inspired by contemporary arts
education. Learners would then be oriented to research, query and generally reflect about, then stage the state and
humor of their societal milieu – political, economic, social’, and mores etc. They should as such routinely be conscious
about their human environments as well as global events, and stage perceptions of their immediate world in classroom
production sites. They should ideally constitute the conscience of their respective communities/societies through
undertaking society/humanity-sensitive productions. Purposive education that is located in real live experiences would
thus involve learners in knowing and interacting creatively with their realistic human environments. In this education
dynamics communities and homes will become partners, and learners, who are future workers and professionals, would
ideally be actively involved in education for sustainable humanity development. Productions that stage perceived moral
template of the society could be purgative and cathartic, also corrective experiences. Other subject areas could also
provide themes for classroom group theatre productions, thereby consolidating knowledge in those areas.

Literacy perspective and individual reflective assessment of practical experiences must frame practical group heuristic
activities. Reflective reports on practical experiences and contributions in group creative output should provide individual
evaluation dimension. Otherwise, group score is ideal for group production irrespective of magnitude of roles or in-put by
individual members

How classroom education is transacted could make learning an interesting or tedious, threatening and frightening
necessity for some, or prompt rebellious attitudes. Arts education has the potential for generating a vibrant school and
classroom environment that would make overall learning a stress-less self-discovery experience. As much as possible,
learners’ group productions must be staged for general school and community consumption

The dynamics of applied indigenous epistemology in contemporary education and community projects [Humanning
education takes cognizance of both classroom and public education sites]

Commitment to advancing the humanning strengths of indigenous knowledge in an iron-heart age has driven the research
that, over the years, enabled the discernment of the indigenous philosophy and epistemology of the musical arts as being
underscored by a soft science of humanity and society management. The findings inform pragmatic endeavors so far, to
test the viability of indigenous knowledge conceptualization as well as educational paradigm of knowing in contemporary
realities.
The Soccajasco Kids project was started as a community project of the Department of Music, University of Pretoria, South Africa in July 2000. It aimed at applying the humanning science of the musical arts to reform the life orientation and social personality of street children in South Africa. About 13 street children from two shelters close to the University were recruited for the pilot. They received training, one hour a week in drum-based African musical arts activities. The participants not only became proficient African modern classical drummers, but acquired transformed sense of self-worth within a year. They were thus able to perform along with the English Chamber Orchestra, the Overture for the First International Classical Music Festival of South Africa, at the Gala Opening concert on August 11, 2001 at the State Theatre, Pretoria, South Africa. The Overture was written for "Orchestra and indigenous (African) instruments", and four Soccajasco Kids played the African music instrument scores. Thereafter the Soccajasco Kids members who became formed into a typical Africa-sensed contemporary musical arts troupe have toured in Africa and Europe giving concerts, and administering drumming workshops for group-bonding and educational purposes.

In 2004 the Centre for Indigenous Instrumental Music and dance Practices of Africa (CIIMDA) was established in Pretoria, South Africa. Its mission is to re-orientate, retrain and intellectually capacitate cultural arts educators in the South African Development Community (SADC), currently educated on European classical music knowledge, to be capable of relying primarily on the African indigenous philosophy, theory, pedagogy and creative resources for contemporary classroom musical arts education in Africa for African learners. The CIIMDA curriculum and creativity-education ideology encourages teachers and learners to establish performing club groups in schools to buttress classroom learning. In 2008 the annual SADC school children’s musical arts festival resulted, and interacts participating school children groups from various cultural backgrounds in comparative creativity and performative communion. Festival presentations and spontaneous creative interactions feature the learners’ autonomous musical arts products under the supervision of teachers. Over 2000 classroom educators have participated in the CIIMDA re-training program.

CIIMDA educational and creative socialization activities entail running courses and workshops for educators, learners and other groups in society. A course/workshop activity includes engineering participants to partake in group-creativity experience in ad hoc small teams of persons who may have been total strangers to one another before the course/workshop. Within limited sessions allotted to group production exercises during a course/workshop, each team must prepare and present a finished musical arts piece for public appreciation by the end of a course/workshop. This has always produced successful outcome even in multi-cultural settings. For CIIMDA courses within a country, teachers and children are mixed up in small groups for the exercise. An exemplary case in Namibia, 25th June 2008, is that of an 11

---

4 CIIMDA is funded by the Norwegian Foreign Office through Concert Norway.
year old girl who, during two days of other CIIMDA training activities, competently directed her mixed gender-age team comprising adult teachers and fellow children to produce and present a dance-theatre piece. This is a contemporary testimony to the validity of the indigenous African ideology of egalitarian creative capability being validated in contemporary education: Leadership in creative and production activities is not a matter of age or level of school education. As such teachers merely need to motivate learners to emancipate and exercise their innate creative, performance and leadership capabilities in group creativity and performance leaning.

The practical research experiences of the CIIMDA project over five years of re-training teachers and learners on African indigenous musical arts knowledge systems for contemporary education, has resulted in the design of a course that leads to an award of the Certificate in African Indigenous Cultural Arts Education (CAICAE) that targets educators/teachers/professionals as beneficiaries. The curriculum has strong practical and applied research components, and is grounded on providing cognitive knowledge of the indigenous philosophical, theoretical and epistemological perspectives, which will serve as a basis for African minds to engage with conventional theories and philosophies of art education practices and contents without total loss of cultural-humanity integrity. The courses emphasize literacy imperative as well as humanity-sensed approach to education content.

At the University of Pretoria I have been applying the indigenous concept of humanity-sensed Arts education through coercing interactive creative activities, to a module on African music offered to multi-cultural/racial students. Second year students of the Department have over the years been required to form into small units of creative-production teams. Each team must deliver a finished performance product, which earns the primary score in the Module assessment. Team productions, commonly integrating music, dance, drama and costume arts, are presented for evaluation in a public concert milieu. The result has been astounding in terms of levels of creative originality, integration of the components of musical arts, multi-cultural sensitivity, and creativity inter-stimulation as well engendering other-consciousness. And, of course, productions earn group marks while individual reflective reports on the production experience earn individual scores.

These practical research experiments indicate that a purposive concept of contemporary Arts education policy and practice devoted to a harmonious society needs to open-mindedly re-instate the soft science of humanity that underpinned indigenous musical arts knowledge and practice. And it must engineer heuristic learning through group creative and performance activities among learners. The result would imbue social cum humanity conscience as well as engender psychical-physiological health among learners, teachers and humanity in general over time.

References


