CREATIVITY IN ART: CORNERSTONE TO INDUSTRIALISATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
This paper reviews the historical antecedents and perspectives of how creativity in art contributes to development of industries in great nations of the world. This paper suggests how such a unique opportunity can be explored and used in Nigeria as an impetus to Mr. President's transformation agenda to attain industrial and economic saddle in the committee of great nations of the world. The abundant human and natural resources in Nigeria, if properly harnessed, utilized and sustained, could make one cease to be just a consumer, rather he would be a producer and exporter of finished products to other parts of the world. This development would drastically reduce the issue of unemployment that becomes the architect of our insecurity in Nigeria. As the saying goes "an idle mine is a devil workshop". When people's minds are engaged and occupied in progressive activities, there will be no time for devilish acts. Suggestions were also proffered on how the government can propel tertiary institutions that offer art so that their graduates can be employed by Manufacturing Association of Nigeria (MAN) to improve in production.

Keywords: Creativity, Art, Cornerstone, Industrialisation, Nigeria

Preamble

Since time immemorial, there have been advances in man's understanding of his environment, be it in the sciences or humanities. The advances are insignificantly compared to the recent creative explosion that has dwarfs the achievements of previous generations in terms of infrastructure, standard of living, transportation, communication, job and food security to mentioned but a few. In any and every discipline that is open to human comprehension, gigantic strides have been taken by man to understand himself and his environment. All these gigantic strides undertaken by man were as a result of his creative prowess.

Man has been identified as the most creative animal among all creations on earth. His creativity becomes uniquely distinctive when it is recognized that he is constantly altering his environment to discover new concepts and invent devices, there by furthering his vista about the universe. This constant search for answers and change may be the basic urge for man to discover his place in the world around him. This means that man and his society cannot develop without creative thinking and behaviour. Akinboye (2001) states that, creative thinking is the most fundamental of all human resources and skills. Anyanwu (2008) also maintains that creativity is concerned with original thinking and generation of new ideas. De Bono (2004) defines creativity as bringing out new ideas and updating old ones. Akinboye (2003) emphasizes that the quality of human thinking is the determinant of his living standard and future success. Creativity enables man to get the most out of experiences and resources. It is the engine which propels growth, development and expansion of individuals, organizations and the society at large. Thus, without creativity, man would be locked up in his tradition, habits, structures, patterns, conceptions and perceptions. Creative thinking behaviour is therefore, the driving force of human productivity and development. With creativity

the impenetrable becomes permeable and the ultimate unknown only exists in theory but not in facts (The Shabbos light, 2006).

According to Francis (2006) man uses signs and symbols long before written languages were adopted. Early written languages, as Egyptian hieroglyphics were highly specialized sets of symbols derived from pictures. The development of geometry combining mathematics with diagrams made it possible to think of structures and other abstractions of reality. This led to the construction of objects such as building of monumental scale from designs. In an effort to make sense of his immediate surroundings, man used drawings to reach out into the unknown by constituting maps from notes and sketches of explorers which sparked off imagination and stimulated new discoveries about our world and the universe (Laseau, 1980). These are all from man's creative prowess.

What we know today as letters of the alphabets are artistic creations by the Romans. Great discoveries have been published in written words and mostly with Times Roman. Prior to Renaissance period these letters of the alphabets were being used by only the Romans who made wall inscriptions with them. It was during this period that the letters of alphabets were applied in printing books and manuscripts to help speed up learning (Francis, 2006). McCann (1975) asserts that the Renaissance saw the advent of scientific inquiry and use of artist's skill as a tool for research. Leonardo da Vinci used his creative and drawing skills and study human anatomy. He illustrates the human tissues, muscles, skeleton etc. Akolo (2003) also stressed that art has in some countries been integrated into technology for the improvement of products and environment. In some countries artists have been employed to add aesthetic touches to new invented machines or new products before mass-produced for the market. He added that many nations are involved in car productions but each has its own shape unique to it. In Singapore, for instance industrial artist like Mary Gamens, John Tan, Rounie Tan, Chua Ban Har, Kin Cleok are already engaged in such designs.

Benefits of creative explosion have helped man to gain control over nature through art education, science and technology, and build a civilized society and a way of life where there is no insecurity. The first man had little control over nature, as he had only simple tools and had no knowledge of raising animals or plants. He wandered around to search for food, and had no permanent home other than the cave. Animal skin was used to protect his body from cold and harmful creatures, and the sun was his source of light. At a point man discovered how to make fire, this discovery further helped man gain some control over nature as he could now carry heat and light wherever he went. This marked the end of the Paleolithic period or Old Stone Age and the beginning of Neolithic period or New Stone Age where man showcased another creative explosion as man learned how to raise animals, and crops. These developments allowed man to build settlements and live in communities, where classes of priests, rulers, craftsmen, merchants among others developed (Mohammed, 2003). This division of labour made civilization possible.

Throughout the ages, explosion in creativity has benefited man in many ways: increased production of goods and services, cheap labour, better living standard among others (The World Book Encyclopedia, 1988). Now that we live in a world that changes rapidly, what was new yesterday is obsolete today. The benefits brought by creativity through art, science and technology make the Nigerian-man to lose his perspective amid the glittering cornucopia. This brought Nigeria to its present insecurity in all spheres of development; be it economic, political, educational and social.

Experience of other Nations

Our craftsmen and women have contributed immensely to the growth and development of our society's economic, social, political, educational and technological status by maintaining and sustaining the traditional cottage industries through art education. They are responsible for making among other things, agricultural implements, household utensils, hunting and war weapons, clothing and numerous things used in our day to day activities. They have bestowed on us a rich heritage of their noble endeavours which have for a long time made Nigeria famous the world over and won us international accolades. This has become a historical reference of the effective utilization of creative arts education that aided a nation to develop in all spheres. If the experiences of other nations are something to go by, countries like China, Germany, America and Britain which are among the great nations today should be emulated.

Oloidi (1990) states that in 1919 there was an attempt to unite art with technology which led to the foundation of the Bauhaus school founded by a German Architect Walter Gropius. This school was founded with the aim of improving the design quality of machine made goods. Read (1961) asserts that the founders of the Bauhaus school accepted the machine as an essential modern vehicle for creating forms and therefore, thought to come to terms with it. The main aim of the school therefore, was to create forms to meet every commercial, technical, as well as aesthetic requirement for technological growth and development in the society. Read added that the Bauhaus believed that the difference between technology and handcraft was not in the tools employed but rather in the effect of the sub-division of labour in modern technology as against the one man control from start to finish in handcraft. It is for this reason that the Bauhaus regarded creativity, art education, craft, architecture and science as inseparable from one another and therefore tried to re-unite them as two different aspects of the same phenomenon (Ogunbor, 2006). The students of the Bauhaus school were trained in both their creative imagination as well as their technical proficiency and related them to technological requirement of the society. Ogunbor added that this philosophy has since been adopted with various modifications by many industrial and educational establishments in Europe, America and Asia.

According to Ekwere (1992) the history of industrialization in China can be traced to the period of Ch'in Dynasty (221-207 BC) when the Great Wall of China was completed and nomadic invaders were barred from trading and investing in China. The reign of Ch'in enhanced internal resources exploration of China

by Chinese and found how best to exploit them for economic purposes and nation building through creative arts education. In an effort to sustain this policy educational institutions were established in towns and villages where learning of art education was highly encouraged. These institutions that were established in Britain, America Germany and China were meant to encourage the teaching of creative arts education to meet the demand of the industrial revolution in Europe, and the development and prosperity of American and Chinese industries (Ekwere, 1992).

If America and China as industrial nations were to compete with the nations of Europe, they needed craftsmen and women and designers who would produce products that were attractive to people abroad as well as those in their countries. Owing to the changes and development, art education took an unprecedented significance. People were trained in industrial vocational skills as their services were needed in industries. The theory could be compared with the period of Renaissance and industrial revolution, which saw the artist positively engaging his time in the areas of printing, publishing, packaging and production of industrial goods. The artist propelled Renaissance and was at the centre of industrial revolution. In the Nigerian society authorities like Mbahi (2000), Akolo (2003) and others who supported this theory consider the artist as indispensable; his service has kept Nigeria moving in the areas of education, especially in the designing and production of teaching aids, book design and illustration.

However, most of the aspects of the artist's role in industrial development is not given much priority in Nigeria particularly in the areas of traditional architecture, textile design, ceramics and engineering to develop and modify their products to go with the tastes of the modern world rather Nigerian society has thrown in the towel to allow its markets flooded with foreign made goods. Mohammed (2003) postulates that historical evidence has shown that in Nigeria the situation was not much different from what was obtained in America, Europe and especially China in (221-207 BC). Mohammed (2003) further states that Nok culture flourished in the last few hundred years before Christ. A very good example is the extensive iron working industry found in northern Nigeria in 1943 which dates 300-100 BC. However, this effort made by our predecessors could not be upheld because of the unpleasant activities of the industrial nations who wanted to meet up with the high demand of raw materials to sustain the industrial revolution through African labour, Nigerians in particular, as well as the establishment of a market for their finished products.

According to Davidson (1971), the Pope (Head of the Roman Catholic Church) in about 1555 AD divided the unknown world into halves: the Eastern half, 'Africa', was given to the Portuguese while the Western half 'America' was given to the Spanish to engage in slave trade for the buying of African captives for use as slaves in the Americas. This obnoxious act on Africans, Nigerians in particular was a big blow on Nigerian artists, technologists and scientists as most of the men and women in these fields were taken to America to work in the plantations for the development of the industries in Europe at that time.

Meaningful Industrialization

There cannot be any meaningful industrialization without the support of design industry. The Nigerian government over the years has tried to encourage the study of science and technology in Nigerian institutions at all levels of education in an effort to industrialize Nigeria, but to no avail. Why? Because the most important ingredient of industrialization was neglected by our system and policy on education, and that is 'art education'. Three aspects of knowledge play important roles, in the process of production of industrial goods. Science knowledge goes into the working function of the utilitarian product; technology goes into the mechanical mass production of that product while art education input goes into the design aspect of the product at the beginning and at the end (Mbahi, 2005).

In any industrial process the designer indicates the possibility of a new product through his creative and aesthetic vision. One would not be satisfied psychologically and would lack interest in an object that lacked aesthetic values. Most utilitarian objects are acquired for two main reasons, functionality and aesthetic values. If appearance would not be considered in the process of the production of industrial products then the input of art education would not be important and there would no need for those elements of design such as lines, shapes, forms, colours, textures that gave utilitarian objects an admirable outlook. Our houses may only be for protection from the harsh weather condition and dangerous animals.

According to Mbahi (1999) the difference between Nigerian manufactured goods and imported goods; is not so much in technical limitation as in aesthetic input. Our factory made goods were not backed by aesthetic intuition. The Nigerian industrialists are ignorant of the importance of aesthetic sensitivity as an ingredient in the production of industrial goods. Aesthetic sensitivity would enable Nigerian manufactured goods compete favourably with the imported ones. Most technologically developed nations are so because they realized that one of the conditions required for inventions is to accumulate knowledge from art education institutions and training centers. Though art education is taught in some tertiary institutions in Nigeria, less attention is given to it by government and the public probably due to unawareness of its importance to industrial development. Palmer (2004) establishes that art is simply a purposeful human behavior, used to enhance the quality of man's experience through the things he makes or creates.

Suggestions

1. Government should develop interest and concern on Art Education at all levels of our educational pursuit in Nigerian.
2. The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) should constitute a coordinating Visiting Team that would attend end of session student's art exhibitions in Nigerian tertiary institutions to make choices of new and good designs for their industrial goods and at the same time employ some outstanding graduates to work in their industries.

3. The Manufacturing Association of Nigeria (MAN) Visiting Team should organize a periodical visit to sister industries within and outside Nigeria to garner more experience and new ideas to improve on their products;
4. Scholarship award can be introduced by the government of Nigeria and MAN to outstanding students to advance their knowledge in their areas of specialization so that they would later improve the design capacity of the products produced by Nigerian industries.
5. The government of Nigeria should maximize financial and moral support to traditional cottage industries by organizing training/workshop for craftsmen and women to have new ideas and technique of design and improve in their production capacity so that their goods can come near to what is obtained in other countries;

Conclusion

This paper highlighted how some great nations used creativity in art education to become industrialized. In the same vein, African nations like Nigeria were said to be the same, but along the line folded their arms and decided to be consumers than producers. A brief history of Nigeria was led into the unfortunate circumstances was equally highlighted so that a new bearing can be taken to put Nigeria on a right footing industrially. Suggestions were proffered as way forward to the Nigerian government and the Manufacturing Association of Nigeria to forge ahead industrially.

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