

GLOBALIZING AN AUTHENTIC AFRICAN *MEDIATURE*

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Abstract

Mediature though a new concept in communication and media studies, is descriptive of the entire production, dissemination and reception of media texts. From the primitive stage of human development, people communicated (and still do) using speech formulated in various languages; this is technically referred to as traditional *orature*. Subsequently, some earlier civilizations like Egypt and Greek to mention but these, evolved ways of committing their thoughts, feelings and ideas in writing. This way of harnessing, storing and disseminating ideas and values in written forms came to characterize learning and formal education generally. This came also to be known as *literature*. The media presence in our world today can be described as obtrusive. The media has pervaded our living spaces, shaped our tastes and thoughts, taken us to various destinations and prodded us with amazing sounds and images. Every media output is a text that is read by the receiver. This could be a television or radio drama, music, movie, documentary, information from websites, and other prodigies of the new media. There is currently a gradual shift from literature to *mediature*. In *mediature* we find an attractive and dramatic synergy between orature and literature. This exposition is an ardent campaign for a “globalizable” *mediature* that is authentically African and productive of African values. In literature we have the Roman, Greek, English, Judeo-Christian literature and other literary genres. In our media saturated world, Africans are not taking the rear position when it comes to the production of media texts that are celebrative of their value systems. Within the framework of African media texts, we currently speak of Nollywood, Ghollywood, Fuji, Highlife, African stand-up comedy shows, Soukous, Makossa, Zulu music and others. This paper is thus a push towards the inauguration of a genuine African *mediature* which can be distinguishably African in content and character and which can also have a global acceptance.

Introduction

Globalization as a concept took the central place among other issues at the dawn of the 21st century. Like other issues of current relevance, it has been viewed and reviewed in so many ways by individuals and groups from diverse disciplines and ideological orientations. As a phenomenon it stands as one of the indicators of changes in the modern human society.

This paper is a committed and purposeful attempt at describing a nascent phenomenon in our contemporary media-driven human society and how it allies with globalization to become a product for export from Africa. Specifically the paper proposes *mediature* as a current approach to the dissemination of information, entertainment and education. After a thoughtful exposition of the entailment of *mediature* generally and its resonance with the African socio-cultural space (which involves advertence to art genres like film, music, dance, dramatic, and other art forms with audio-visual patronage) the paper will proceed to package it for the world through the vehicle of globalization.

Globalization Generally and *Medially*

How is it that a teenager in the UK can press a key on his computer and immediately bring chaos to Houston, the biggest US seaport? Why do bar owners in Southern Spain rub their hands with glee when another low cost airline is set up in the UK? Why is it that a plane crashing into a building in New York can cause hotels in London to drop their prices or a Belgian airline to go bankrupt? Why should an outbreak of peace in the Middle East be good news for European gas consumers, in the form of lower gas bills, but bad news for BP and Shell shareholders? Why should a fall in the value of the US dollar lead to higher unemployment in Germany or the collapse of Communism cause a rise in unemployment among steel workers in South Wales? How is it that a decision by an obscure bureaucrat in Brussels cause the giant US multinational, General Electric to abandon its US \$40 Billion takeover of the electronic firm, Honeywell or that an industrial dispute in Belgium results in British workers getting more training? (www.oxfordtextbooks.co.uk/orc/hamilton_webster/)

All these are descriptive of the contemporary global interconnections that have reduced our world to a compulsory network of affiliations. Though it eludes a unified definition, globalization generally speaks of a world without barriers; in other words, a world that is fecund for socio-economic, cultural, political, and ideological exchange. Held viewed globalization from the all pervading viewpoint. For him, it is "the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide

interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual.”(2) From a wider perspective, Lawrence Ruthenberg held that:

Globalization is the acceleration and intensification of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations. This process has effects on human well-being (including health and personal safety), on the environment, on culture (including ideas, religion, and political systems), and on economic development and prosperity of societies across the world. (2002-2003)

At the centre of globalization is the issue of cross border integration which is actually an interaction and interplay of values. The underlying basis of globalization is thus the cross-breeding of cultural, social, political and economic, religious and ideological values. Globalization thus has impacts that can be seen in various ways depending on the values that are at stake. Furthermore it is pertinent to underscore the point that apart from the modern means of transportation, the modern means of communication including the prodigies of the new media provide amazing synergy for globalization.

From African Traditional Orature to African Literature: The Structuring and Documentation of Thoughts, Ideas and Meaning

Orature refers to the body of values, narratives and customs that are transmitted through spoken words. The scholars of East African School of Literary Criticism, Pio Zirimu and Ngugi wa Thiong’o introduced the term to replace what was known as African oral tradition or African oral literature. African traditional orature tells us of the total body of oral discourse, styles and traditions of African people, including their visual arts. (121) Africans make use of orature to embody and transmit those moral, ethical and aesthetic values which form their relationships and worldview. Beyond mere verbalization of past events, Ifemesia notes that African traditional orature involves: “A presentation of the ideals and values of society; of the ideological and spiritual patrimony handed down by the ancestors, whose memory the present generation cherishes and reveres.” (122)

To Ngugi wa Thiong’o, orature is not seen as a branch of literature but as a total aesthetic system, with performance and integration of art forms as two of its defining qualities. For him performance specifically distinguishes orature from literature. (17) Traditional African educational system was non-formal and operated without written curricula. The moonlit nights were the classrooms; the elders, age groups, peer associations and family units formed the members of the teaching staff with their creative memories serving as dictionaries, encyclopedias and textbooks.

Furthermore the subjects of study included folktales, folklore, jokes, riddles, games, proverbs, traditional songs and other social and cultural activities. Significantly this form of education which still subsists in most African societies till date involves oral transmission, physical interaction, and visual education. This scenario aptly captures the pedagogical environment that plants and sustains African traditional orature.

Literature comes from the Latin *litera-tu-re* which has to do with writing and learning. The root *litera* has to do with writing. Hence literature can be understood as learning from writings. Technically speaking, literature is one of the great creative and universal means of communicating the emotional, spiritual, or intellectual concerns of mankind. (Larrick 1997) Literature actually operates through an effective synergy of imagination, meaningfulness of expression, and good form and technique. There are many who believe that literature began with the Sumerians around 2700 BC. There are also indications of Chinese, Egyptian, Greek, Latin, English, and other strands of literature having the basic derivations like drama, epic, essay, novel, poetry, short stories, etc.

Though we are more concerned with the transition from African traditional orature to African literature, it is at the same time pertinent to note that there is no formal chronology establishing the exact nature and character of this transition. Reasonable historical evidence has shown that writing evolved early in Egypt with the hieroglyphics. This actually marked the remote inception of literature in Africa. It began with pictorial signs which were intelligible to those exposed to it.

The development of modern literature in Africa has a lot to do with contact with western education. Those ideas and values which formed the major themes of folktales, riddles, stories, proverbs and idioms for which Africans were known came to be documented in writings for further retrieval and reading by subsequent generations. At this point oral transmission of ideas and values gradually gave room for literature. The developmental structuring of modern African literature is itself a large study on its own.

Notably, it is not possible to speak or write of African literature as homogeneous or coherent, just as such claim cannot be made for the varied texts that constitute European literature. Africa is indeed a large continent, with more than fifty nations and numerous languages and ethnic groups. Notwithstanding many cultural similarities across the continent and significantly semblance of imperialism and neocolonialism histories, there are different forms of African experiences and many verbal expressions of them. Attentive to the foregoing, we understand African literature from various perspectives.

Thus we divide African literature by region (West Africa, East Africa, North Africa, Central Africa, Southern Africa) each of which is distinctive environmentally and historically; by ethnicity (the Mande, for example, live across the region now divided by the states of Guinea, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and Mali), or by nationality (for instance Nigerian Literature). African literature can also often be categorized by language of expression (Anglophone, francophone, Hausa, Swahili, etc.) or genre (poetry, proverb, narrative, drama, essay), or some combination of these.

There are also other approaches to African Literature in terms of themes or generations. These differences suggest not only the diversity and complexity of life on the African continent but also the stuff of which literature is made: language, aesthetic and literary traditions, culture and history, sociopolitical reality. For Luzolo R. Mbemba four important strands of African Literature are notable: African literatures written by Westerners in western languages, African literatures written by Africans in western languages, African literatures written by Africans in African languages and African Oral traditions. It will be fitting to take a closer look at the first three of these significant strands as they relate to us in this section.

African Literature written by Westerners in western Languages

This form of literature is still in existence till date. It talks about Africa as seen by Westerners. They are characterized by images of Africa or Africans that are not always positive. The authors are largely non-Africans who have lived or spent some time visiting Africa. Basically they feel they have a lot to tell their Western audience and those who care to read tales of Africa from their varied viewpoints. A very recent one is Richard Dowen's "Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles" (2009).

African Literature written by Africans in western Languages

The African authors in this compartment are mostly those who first received traditional African education before proceeding to gain western or colonial education. The waves of this literature started during the pre- or post-independence years of Africa. Their approach was basically in the defence and promotion of African values and integrity. To locate those who fall within this category we might step a lot back to single out Olaudah Equiano's *The interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789), and Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford's *Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation*. (1911) Other literatures within this compartment include: Herbert Isaac Ernest Dhlomo's *The Girl Who Killed to Save: Nongqawuse the Liberator* (1935) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *The Black Hermit* (1962), a cautionary tale about tribalism). Later on Leopold Sédar Senghor (1948) published the foremost work on *Négritude: Anthology of the New Black and Malagasy Poetry in French Language*.

Between the 1950s-1960s and afterwards when most African nations gained independence, African literature entered into its flourishing season. Ali A. Mazrui identified seven conflicts that formed the theme of the writers at the time:

The clash between Africa's past and present, between tradition and modernity, between indigenous and foreign, between individualism and community, between socialism and capitalism, between development and self-reliance and between Africanity and humanity.
(564)

There were other themes prevalent at this period and they included social problems such as corruption, the economic disparities in newly independent countries, and the rights and roles of women. All characterized the writings of the writers of the period.

African Literatures written by Africans in African Languages

Language is one of the most efficient indicators of any culture. It not only gives identity to the culture in question, it goes further to carry and transmit the values of the culture in question to successive generations. Some African writers have been critical about using Western languages to define and describe African traditional ideals and values. For those in this school of thought African literatures written in African languages will help in fostering development of African cultural values. It is rather instructive to note that not all the African writers are supportive of using indigenous African languages to write African literatures. Thaddeus Menang establishes that the controversy is chiefly between Ngugi wa Thiong'o (on the proposing side) and Chinua Achebe (on the opposing side). (Menang 2001)

From the proposing side, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and others like Obi Wali, Thomas Mofolo, D.O. Fagunwa, Mazisi Kunene, Ousmane Sembene, and Cheikh Anta Diop are of the opinion that African literatures should be written in African languages. For Ngugi wa Thiong'o, African writers should use African languages as a way of fighting domination by foreign languages and well as against "wider imperialist domination". (1) The proposition of Ngugi and others has been productive as we have literatures written in various African languages like Wolof, Swahili, Lingala, Kikongo, Hausa, Sesoto, Igbo, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu, Umbundu, Kikuyu and many others.

From the opposing side, Chinua Achebe and others like Ezekiel Mphahlele and Timothy Wangusa would maintain the usage of European languages for African literatures. Their reasons are as cogent as those of the proposing side. Chinua Achebe feels that for instance English language could carry the weight of his African experience. He is however of the view that English language (or any other language)

used to write African literatures should be in a new way while retaining local content. He establishes that:

The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many kinds of use. The African writer should not aim to use English in a way that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. He should aim at fashioning a form of English that is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience. (61)

This controversy, nay debate has endured till date. It is however pertinent to adopt a middle ground in the ensuing debate. African writers should write in African languages and at the same time have similar works in western languages for the sake of the export of their ideas. Chinua Achebe's epoch-making *Things Fall Apart* was originally written in English language but it has been translated into numerous languages largely on account of the exposure it got from its initial English form. Furthermore the debaters should also rise up to the challenge of distinguishing between African Literature and Literature in Africa (just as we have English Literature and Literature in English). Our attention is now turned towards the transition from literature to *mediature*.

Mediature generally and Africanity

Mediature is a very recent coinage which is still at its nascent stage of development as a definable concept. Looking at it as a word one may presume an arbitrary combination of two concepts namely: "media" and "culture". This way of seeing it is not incorrect though not exact. *Mediature* can be defined as the electronic art of producing, encoding, disseminating, storing, and uploading of media texts and the aptitude of receiving, decoding, retrieving, downloading and using of such texts for entertainment, information and or for education.

Texts as used above need to be explained out very well. In literary studies, a text is seen as the written or printed body of a work, (Dictionary.com June 2009). In media studies, a text can be said to be the individual results of media production: a movie, drama, a television programme or news item, video game, a book, an issue of a magazine or newspaper, an advertisement (in print or audio-visual), an album, a compact disc, an internet website, interactions on social network (Facebook, Blog, Twitter, Skype), mobile phone chats and others. It also refers to any message sent by the media which may be as long as a feature film or as short as a five-second radio jingle. (Day 6)

The various programmes, news items and adverts, words, pictures and sounds we encounter in the conventional and the new media make up what we know as media

texts. These texts that are encoded by the sender are in turn decoded by the receivers (viewers) with a comprehensible cultural template. Evidently, the decoded texts are multi-faceted in terms of meaning. This means that a variety of meanings are deduced considering the cultural setting in view. Using the television medium as an instance, John Fisk holds that television viewers are differentiated and thus have different understanding of television texts.

...the television audience is composed of a wide variety of groups and is not a homogenous mass; and that these groups actively read television in order to produce from it meaning that connect with their social experience. These propositions entail the corollary that the television text is a potential of meanings capable of being viewed with a variety of modes of attention by a variety of viewers. (84)

The attempt at identifying, nurturing, developing and globalizing a form of *mediature* that is authentically African is the religious task of this paper. By African *mediature* we mean those media texts that bear ideas and meanings that are characteristically African in value. It further refers to media texts that resonate with the socio-cultural and historical life/experience of Africans. We shall proceed to indicate the transition from African literature to African *mediature*.

The Electronic Transition to African *Mediature*: Beyond African Orature and Literature

We began this paper by identifying African orature as the primary mode of communicating ideas and meaning which was more or less interpersonal. Orature involves the use of words that are vocalized, as well as physical symbols and artistic performances. Here memory and memorization are of greater importance and for Walter J. Ong (1982), orature (which he calls primary orality) was more additive than subordinate, closer to human life world, more situational and participatory than abstract.

In traditional African societies, orature was the basis of (informal) education. Children as well as young people transiting into adulthood were taught using oral communication and other symbolic art forms. With the advent and growth of literacy (reading and writing), ideas, thoughts, stories, values and indeed all the possible products of orature were committed to writing. This formed the era of literature. So far we have indicated the various moments of the development of literature in Africa and its significant spread throughout the continent. While this spread was going on, the world was rapidly entering into another level and era of communication through improved means of mass communication especially the

electronic media. This opened up another transition from literature to *mediature*. At this point those oral forms of communication which were written down, were creatively harnessed for entertainment, information delivery and education using the conventional electronic media of modern communication (cinema, television, video, radio) and later the contemporary new media (internet enabled devices like computers, mobile phones, ipads, tablets and others). This transition into *mediature* from orature through literature can be seen in so many media texts whose origins could be traced to orature. What follows is a classic example of the transition from African orature to literature and finally to *mediature*.

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*: A Classic Example of Transition to *Mediature*

Things Fall Apart is readily a household name in the literary world. In the award-winning novel, the author Chinua Achebe displayed an amazing creativity that captures and sustains the attention of the reader whose imagination is overwhelmed by an almost live encounter with vivified images and sounds. By reading *Things Fall Apart* one appears to be listening to a great story teller whose narrative style and drive provide the resonance with the Igbo cultural background the novel reflects.

The novel revolves around the protagonist Okonkwo; a man who sets out to undo the failures of his father. In a bid to build a masculine superstructure that contrasts his fathers', he becomes insensitive, controlling, severe and tyrannical. The turning point of the novel begins with the killing of an Umuofia woman by the neighbouring Mbaino people. A delegation from Umuofia goes to Mbaino to ask them to choose between war and peace by offering a young boy and a young (virgin) maiden as forms of retribution. Mbaino chooses the latter. The young maiden is sent to the house of the man whose wife is killed and the young boy, Ikemefuna, is taken by Okonkwo as a ward.

Okonkwo's overbearing masculinity made him kill Ikemefuna when the Oracle decreed that he should be killed (though not by him). Okonkwo's undeserving defiance in many things brought complications in his life. On the burial of Ezeudu (the wise man who warned Okonkwo not to feature in the killing of Ikemefuna), Okonkwo accidentally shot the son of the deceased and that instantly qualified him for exile to his maternal home for seven years as a retribution. Before his return the nascent Christian religion was on ground and affected a lot of changes. In an attempt to forcefully revert the changes, Okonkwo commits another murder (this time a messenger of the white District Officer), and seeing that the community could no longer stand together to defend a common course, he commits suicide!

A very attentive reading of *Things Fall Apart* leaves no one who knows the Igbo cultural landscape in doubt that the story is an artistically and literarily documented

orature. In the novel Chinua Achebe displays a legendary literary propensity that expressively articulates the entire cultural structure and lifestyle of the Igbos southeast of Nigeria before and during the advent of the British colonial masters in that part of the later amalgamated Nigeria. He actually developed the story by bringing together traditional stories of the Igbos that were memorized and transmitted orally from one generation to the next. The festivals, farming activities, communal disputes, folktales, marriage ceremonies, village square meetings, births, sicknesses and deaths and other traditional activities were shared orally as stories to succeeding generations. That was how he got to know them all from his Ogidi home town southeast of Nigeria. The conflict between the Christian missionaries and indigenous culture was well known in Ogidi being one of the first centres of Anglican missionary work in Igboland.

The transition of *Things Fall Apart* from literature to *mediature* is what Ukachi Wachuku and Chisimdi Ihentuge would refer to as “The Journey from Page to Screen”. The descriptive prowess which Chinua Achebe rendered in the novel is generally appealing and would whet the appetite of any narrative film maker. The transition from literature to *mediature* began in 1961, about three years after the publication of the book. It started with a radio programme by the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation called *Okonkwo*, which featured Wole Soyinka in a supporting role. Next was in 1971 when effort was made to fit the novel into a 90 minute drama directed by Hans Jürgen Pohland and produced by Francis Oladele and others. The drama which featured actors like Elizabeth of Toro, Orlando Martins and Johnny Sekka did not really catch so much attention. It was in 1987 that the big one came. This time *Things Fall Apart* was adapted to screen and shot on celluloid and included thirteen episodes of 30 minutes each. The crew included David Orere (director), Adiele Onyedibia (producer), and Emma Eleanya who adapted it to screen. The cast among others included Pete Edochie, Nkem Owoh, Sam Loco, Justice Esiri and others.

From our reckoning here the stories in *Things Fall Apart* preceded the novel which was published in 1958. By this we are establishing that the stories existed in people’s memories and were transmitted orally occasionally. The literature in 1958 functioned in creating a productive synergy which harnessed the stories artistically and comprehensively. The transition into *mediature* followed with the adaptations into radio and television in 1961, 1971 and 1987. Today we have further *mediatized* forms of the novel in video compact discs, video digital discs, internet videos (YouTube), blogs, animations and others.

Having so far identified a classic transition from African orature through literature to *mediature*, it will only be pertinent to establish the different strands of African *mediature* so that one can identify and appreciate them wherever they are seen.

Strands of African *Mediature*

African *mediature* is made up of various functional parts. Put in another way it is made up of various genres. All these join up to form the foreground of African mediature. Within the framework of African *mediature* there are strands like music, dance, movie, drama, social network, reality or interactive shows, talk shows, and documentaries.

Before proceeding to expand these, it will be pertinent to differentiate between African *Mediature* and *Mediature* in Africa. African *mediature* are those media texts that have their roots from African traditional lifestyles and value systems; in fact they resonate with at least one of the traditional African cultural landscapes. This could be in terms of the idea, meaning, symbolism, performance, language, ethos, and kindred factors. *Mediature* in Africa on the other hand are media texts sent and received on African platforms but they do not contain ideas, meanings, symbols, performances, languages and ethos that are African by characterization. They in fact do not have basis in African orature. Typical examples are Endemol's *Big Brother Africa* and Ultima Limited's *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* which is styled after its British model.

African *Mediature* (Drama and Movies)

There are currently many of these in Africa to the extent that one can draw out sub-strands from them. We currently speak of Nollywood, Kanywood (Hausa Movies), Youruba Movies, Ghollywood, Sollywood (South African Movies), Swahiliwood (Swahili Movies). In terms of Drama they are quite innumerable. African *mediature* from the point of view of drama and movies came from the transition from orature through literature. The foremost, original and quite authentic texts were designed to harness oral texts, which later became written texts into electronic media. This media were to meet the entertainment and information need of both the highly educated and the illiterate. Some television dramas in the late 70s, the 80s, and 90s marked the grand inception of this transition into *mediature*. Some of these were the *New Masquerade*, *Cockcrow at Dawn*, *Samanja*, *Tales by Moonlight*, and *Living in Bondage* which sparked off the home-movie industry in Nigeria. By the year 2000 and afterwards more stories transited from literature to *mediature*. These are too numerous to mention though I single out *Super Story* which was literature in the 90s but became a television series from the late 90s till date and has won many awards including Nigerian Merit Award as the most popular TV Drama serial in Africa.

African *Mediature* (Music and Dance)

Music and dance are two important arts in Africa. In fact ceremonies and festivals are incomplete without them. They are very important and significant aspects of

African orature. The golden age of literature tried to accommodate them but the limitations of representing sound and visual performance in writing are quite obvious even with the creative ingenuity of Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka or more recently Chimamanda Adichie.

The transition of music and dance from orature and literature into *mediature* has been a celebrated one. The indigenous music and dance functioned in telling the story of the people, their accomplishments, their values and worldviews. There so many African music forms and dances involved in this transition into *mediature*. The following are among the major ones:

Afrobeat: Popularized by Fela Anikulapo Kuti. It tells the story of the people in their situations.

Apala: Yoruba indigenous talking drum

Benga: Popular among the Luo people of Western Kenya.

Chimurenga: Popular music from the Shona people of Zimbabwe. Example is the music of Thomas Mapfumo.

Fuji: Yoruba voice and percussion style using original African percussion instrument. This is popularized by Sikiru Ayinde Barrister and Adewale Ayuba.

Gnawa: Originates from Morocco with salves brought from Mali in the 16th Century. It uses stringed instruments sinter or gimbri, singing in unison, and clapping of hands.

Highlife: Dance music from Ghana and Eastern Nigeria. It developed from *Kpanlogo* rhythm in Ghana. It celebrates good life, peace and unity among the people.

Iscathamiya: Traditional Zulu call-and-response a cappella choral music sung by men in South Africa. It recounts experiences.

Jit: Hard, fast and percussive Zimbabwean dance music.

Juju: Popularized by I.K Dairo. It uses traditional Yoruba rhythms but uses western instruments like drum kit, guitars, keyboards even accordions with the traditional talking drum. King Sunny Ade is a well known Juju performer. It celebrates Yoruba culture.

Kwasa Kwasa: This is a shake-your-booty dance style that begun in Zaire. It is popularized by Kanda Bongo Man.

Kwela: South African penny wistle (tin flute) music.

Makossa: Cameroonian dance rhythm from Douala region. It is also a traditional dance step.

Marrabenta: Mozambique urban rhythm. It is as well a distinctive dance sound with traditional resonance.

Mbalax: Original Senegalese (Wolof) music with modernized version by Youssou N'Dour. It has become a mixture of Afro-Cuban, Wolof and American pop.

Mbaqanga: South Africa Township Jive.

Palm Wine: Originally from tropical Sierra Leone and played with acoustic guitar accompanied by traditional percussion instruments. Palm wine is the local drink that characterized this music.

Regga: Originally Jamaican but it has strong roots in Africa among Rastafarians. It is critical of bad government and suppression. It formed major themes for independence and freedom from colonial rule.

Soukous: Grew in the 50s among African from Zaire (Congo) in Diaspora. It features a mixture of Kwasa Kwasa with zouk and rhumba. A major proponent is Koffi Olamide.

Were: This is African Muslim music used as a wakeup call for early breakfast during Ramadan.

African Mediature (Social Networking)

Social networking can be described as an online service platform which functions in building social relationship among users around the world. It also refers to communities of people who share common interests and activities using Web-based tools to communicate with one another. In a more technical sense Danah Boyd and Nicole Ellison wrote:

We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to: (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.¹³

Social networking has generally captured and sustained the attention of people all over the world. There many social networking sites worldwide, but the most prominent and frequently visited include MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Imeem, Hi5, Orkut, Bebo, Friendster, LinkedIn, StudiVZ, Skype, Yahoo messenger, Xing, Digg, Microblog, Twitter, Whatsapp, and Nimbuzz.

One of the rare things that the social networking services have done very well is to create and sustain communities of people who share common interests. Facebook for instance makes it possible for people to form groups of people who share some similar opinions, beliefs ideas and meanings. Using facebook as a point of reference, we see in social networking sites the aptitude of creating an interactive platform that resembles what was obtainable within the socio-cultural environment of orature.

It could thus be said that social networking in Africa has been productive in the transition from orature through literature to *mediature*. During the era of orature people discussed community based issues at the town meeting squares and such discussions were exclusively reserved for specific individuals who had right to speak. At the era of literature, some learned members of the elite who had access to pen and paper had the “permission” to air their views; some form of monologue was involved.

The transition into *mediature* through the social networks made it possible for anyone at all to have a voice on issues concerning the community. With social networks discussions are live and on real-time. One could ask questions and receive answers instantly; information, ideas, news items and so forth could be shared with a mouse click.

African *mediature* (Reality Shows and Talk shows)

Most media related reality shows in Africa are reflective of original African orature. In fact they are called reality shows because they resonate with the life and culture of the people. There are so many reality shows on our screens and other media of communication. Some of these came about based on the need to reconnect with the traditional lifestyles in the community where people were engaged in funny talks, competitive games like wrestling, swimming, climbing, running and others.

These and similar activities were at a time no longer very feasible because of urbanization. During the golden era of literature, the aforementioned traditional activities formed themes for writers especially in school textbooks. However the transition into *mediature* brought about the production of funny talk shows like Nights of a Thousand Laugh, AY Live, TeJu BabyFace. Those competitive activities within the era of orature also entered into the screen like the *Gulder Ultimate Search*, *Naija Sings*, and others.

Globalizing an Authentic African *Mediature* vis-à-vis Globalizing the Local and Localizing the Global

The exposition so far has been able to establish that the world is currently running on the platform of *mediature* with notably manifestations through the various

conventional means of communication and the new media. The exposition also identified the active presence and functionality of *African mediature* which also resulted from the transition from orature through literature. In the exposition effort was made at differentiating between *African mediature* and *mediature* in Africa. While the former contains and celebrates African values and lifestyles, the latter operates with affinity to the African landscape as a location or a reference point while the values, ideas and lifestyles are foreign to Africa.

“Globalizing the Local and Localizing the Global” is in line with the idea of globalizing (making export of) *African mediature* (localized in Africa). The authentic *African mediature* has to do with media texts that are appreciably and valuably African in character and content. It is pertinent to note that many African media texts have been on the global market for some time now; though they have not been given the mark and title as *African mediature*.

Conclusion

Globalizing an authentic *African mediature* is a challenge and a project. It is a challenge because westernization has a lot of influence on especially the new media which forms one of the important platforms for *mediature* to strive. There is need to set standards that will govern media outputs that can be accepted as authentically African. This idea should begin from the early stages of formal education. This paper is thus proposing *African mediature* in the curricula of the various levels of education. If from their early stages of development children are shown, learn and appreciate the entailment of *African mediature* it will be progress in the right direction as African media in the future will be secured.

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