

## **The Role Of The Creative Industries in Pan Africanism and Forging a New African Identity In The 21st Century**

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### **Abstract**

Africa's social and political space is contending with various threats including insurgency, economic sabotage, inequality, poverty, failed leadership, food insecurity, internecine conflicts, racial segregation and many other woes. In addition to this, the rising killings of fellow Africans in xenophobic attacks especially in South Africa has left the continent more heated than in the past. This has also negatively impacted continental relations and questions the relevance of Pan Africanism and other indigenous African philosophies such as *Ima Edi Obio and Ubuntu*. The foundation of African unity appears to be under attack in new spectacles of lynching of “foreigners” right on the African soil. There is a critical need to reassess the very foundations of our existence as peoples of Africa as there is also the urgent need to reappraise and envision new thoughts, perspectives, strategies and methods in promoting Pan Africanism and forging a new African identity especially to emerging generations and demographics of Africans without the benefit of sufficient exposure to the tenets and principles of this ideology. The role of the creative industries including theatre, the performing arts and cinematic media in bringing these issues to the public arena is central to how the dynamics of these issues play out for both local and international observers. Using qualitative methodology involving library study, interviews, observation, the paper will interrogate the function of the creative industries in fostering the understanding of Pan Africanism among Africans and how this can lead to peace and coexistence in Africa as well as limiting the opportunity for various forms of threats within the continent. The paper concludes that the creative industries can be useful tools of reconciliation, peace building and development communication given the opportunity, the right environment and the necessary support.

**Keywords** Creative Industries, PanAfricanism, African Identity, Theatre, Cinematic Media

### **Introduction**

The creative industries is not a new concept per se except that it is gaining currency now because of the incremental shift towards market economy in all spheres of global affairs. With an increase emphasis on driving development and economic productivity using capitalist apparatus in addition to the drive to ingrain broad econometrics principles into all fields, the arts or creative sector has not been spared. Situated in Euro-Western norms of economic productivity, there is a new emphasis on driving development and solving societal problems from the perspective of market-driven positions instead of social dynamics. So

there is no room for *Art for Art Sake* rather we have come to a moment in human history that all disciplines must shift from idealistic theorization and aestheticization to a production track where all subjects “must bake bread.”

Daubaraite and Startiene (2015:129) are of the opinion that creative industries “is of increasing importance in the postindustrial knowledge economy.” With many emerging concepts comes what is now known as the creative economy or economic units driven by creative productions in the entertainment and broad scope of the creative enterprises. The critical role of the creative industries in national development is already gaining serious traction in the highly developed societies. Newbigini (2019) observes that, “. . .the concept of the 'creative industries’, and their importance, is recognized by almost every government in the world and is beginning to give way to a much more inclusive idea of a wider “creative economy.” The developing societies, are also in their customary practice of aping what comes from the global north and the highly industrialized sections of the world, have already started paying attention to how the arts or creative fields have transformed from their former locations as silos of culture and heritage to functional units of economic production. Nigeria is not left out in the fray. With the change of lexicon from arts and cultural products to the creative industries also comes new opportunities of engagement. Popoola (2019:1) reports in *The Punch* newspaper of May 7, 2019 that Nigeria's Central Bank in collaboration with the Bankers Committee is set to commit up to N500m loans creative industries as part of efforts to boost job in Nigeria particularly among the youth.

The government notes that “the creative industries that could apply were fashion, information technology, movie production, movie distribution, music and software engineering student loan.” Elaborating further on this plan, the author states that: 'The apex bank stated, “software engineering student can get a loan of up to N3m, N30m for movie production business N500m for movie distribution business, cover your rental/service fee for fashion and information technology business, cover your training fees, equipment fees and rental/services fees for music business.”’The extent of interest by the public sector in the creative sector as enumerated in the citation above perhaps represents a change of attitude towards a sector that was abandoned for years but now discovered to have been more active with surprising results in boosting the economy of Nigeria as rightly noted in Nigeria's budget for 2017. Before we go further to examine the state of the creative industries in Nigeria, it is pertinent at this point to understand what it is from the perspective of various scholars, practitioners and researchers in the field.

## **Defining the Creative Industries: Contextual Positions**

Innovation and creativity are concepts that occur often within the same context or used interchangeably. Moore (2016) affirms that: “Innovation and creativity are broadly used terms and Creative Economy concept is present in European and other countries policy documents, including EU policy, UNDP and other international organization strategies.” This affirmation points to the varied nature of creative industries as a concept as well as its multilateral implication in different national contexts.

However, contextually, the creative industries attracts a diversity of definitions. Flew (2017:1) defines the creative and cultural industries as “those parts of the modern economy where culture is produced and distributed through industrial means, applying the creativity of individuals and groups to the generation of original cultural products, which may have commercial value either through direct sale to consumers or as intellectual property.” He goes further to state that, “the cultural and creative industries typically bring together the arts, media, and design sectors, with the focus upon convergent digital technologies and the challenges and opportunities of globalization.” The British Creative Industrial Mapping Document of 1998 describes the creative industries as “a set of economic bodies that employ personal creativity, skills and talents in order to create wealth and jobs” (Gibbon, 2011 cited in Daubaraitė and Startienė, 2015). In line with this perspective, John Newbigin writing in the British Council website provides a historical base for the definition and explanation of creative industries. According to him, the term “creative industries” began to be used about twenty years ago to describe a range of activities, some of which are amongst the oldest in history and some of which only came into existence with the advent of digital technology. Many of these activities had strong cultural roots and the term “cultural industries” was already in use to describe theatre, dance, music, film, the visual arts and the heritage sector, although this term was itself controversial as many artists felt it demeaning to think of what they did as being, in any way, an “industry” ([www.creativeeconomy.britishcouncil.org](http://www.creativeeconomy.britishcouncil.org)).

The critical undercurrent of these various definitions of the creative industries is the extension of the sector beyond traditional arts and culture sector to embrace technology. It thus appears like the traditional idea of a creative industry is giving way to a new understanding underpinned by the dominance of technology and

information communication apparatus in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Newbigun again notes “the fusion of the arts and creative industries with digital technology” resulting in the emergence of 'new industries and skills that were not captured by the internationally recognized templates of measuring economic activity.'

### **Theoretical Position**

This paper is premised on the understanding and implication of three cultural theories including cultural differentialism which orchestrates that “there are lasting differences between cultures which remain largely un-affected by bi-, inter-, multi-, or transcultural processes” (Laycock, 2008:32); cultural convergence that postulates that “the cultures of the world grow increasingly similar” due largely to “global assimilation in the direction of dominant groups” and the influence of cultural imperialism, westernization, globalization among others; and cultural hybridization that results in “production of unique hybrid cultures” (Laycock, 2008:32). Taking this theoretical positions into perspective, the paper surmises the objectives of creative industries as currently projected and ab initio is also being promoted in Africa. It is the position of this paper therefore to argue that whereas there are opportunities in tapping from the creative industries for development, such tapping has to recognize the transcendent place of culture and heritage as foundation to creative enterprise. There is therefore need to understand the African context of the creative industries before adoption of the western model. It is not useful at this stage of Africa's development to quickly prototype the western model of creative industries without recourse to thinking deeply about the place and the role of culture in development. The creative industries, it must be argued again, has the potential to kick start an economic revolution that will provide employment in the continent yet it should not be used to deride the culture and heritage value of the people and their connection to that base.

### **The Possibilities of Building Economy with the Creative Industries**

There is growing international interest in the potential of the cultural and creative industries to drive sustainable development and create job opportunities (Snowball, 2016). The critical role of the creative industries not only in activating economic activities that produces employment and wealth to nations, there are also increase realization of the role of the creative industries in international relations and diplomacy with immense benefits to nations. Newbigun points out that: “In a time of rapid globalization, many countries recognise that the combination of culture and commerce that the creative industries represents is a powerful way of providing a distinctive image of a country or city, helping it to stand out from its competitors.” Here lies our recommendation for the employment of the creative industries in

peacebuilding, conflict resolution, branding, cultural diplomacy in Africa given the challenges of the moment already highlighted in the abstract. According to Snowball (2016), “Cultural industries can be defined as those whose major outputs have some symbolic value- such as fine arts, film and craft – but also possibly including jewellery design, publishing and fashion/ Creative industries are defined more broadly. These have knowledge as their major input, and in addition to cultural goods and services could include things like software design and internet services.” Beyond this, it is already a stated position and a widely acknowledged fact that culture and the creative industries have the capacity to enhance better diplomatic relations between nations that can bring about the right environment to do business. The Handbook of Nigerian Culture (1991:8) affirms this by stating that Nigeria's cultural attractions “can promote cultural diplomacy as a factor for peace, understanding, co-operation on the basis of mutuality and reciprocity and, impliedly, the need to invest funds in these attractions as part of our growing belief in the importance and benefits of tourism development.”

### **Culture, Heritage and the Creative Industries**

The current and rather loud orchestration of the exploration of the creative industries for its financial or economic benefits appears to suffice on a legacy of exploitation without expropriation. There appears to be a yawning gap between seeking the benefits of the arts and cultural sector for the economic empowerment of nations and cities most especially (see *Cities, Urban Spaces and the Creative Industries*) and understanding its root. This gap has to be addressed especially because the creative industries wittingly or unwittingly has its roots in culture and heritage. In saying this, one already understands the current definition of the creative industries that extends to knowledge production and intellectual property fields such as technology, software development, design, architecture, fashion and even sport. Considering these extensions has not changed the context of the creative industries from its roots in culture meaning therefore that understanding, exploring and tapping from the creative industries for sustainable development as Snowball (2016) suggests in Africa has to take practitioners and policy makers to reflect on, re-assess, reprioritize and reposition culture as culture is the original source of commerce in all times.

To substantiate this position, let us draw further from the definition of culture. According to Laycock (2008:18), the word “culture” “carries three related meanings. First, biologically it refers to the nurture of living things (plants or organisms) under artificial conditions. Secondly, by analogy, it means the personal cultivation of excellence, refinement and elegance. In this case, it carries an aspirational implication.”

These definitions generates clearer perspective for the probing of a concept that is often simply contextualized as “the way of life of a people” whereas as Laycock (2008) further observes, “Culture is something to be attained by conscious effort” (18) meaning the combination of conscious cultural awareness that leads to development will precipitate the expression of creative energies that could bring about industrial benefits. Culture not only enhances life, it refines the norms of existence and situates it in a collective pool of objectives, patterns of behaviour and attitudes that defines the value system in a given society. To ignore culture is to ignore a vital ingredient of human existence and that means there are no grounds for building on the creative endowments of the people. Creative industries should therefore not be perceived as acronymous to the dictates of Silicon Valley and Wall Street rather it should be viewed as creative correlates of societal imaginations that can enhance the wellbeing of the people. It is a people-led industry and not a commercial extension of the control knots of the so called global financial centres. Africa must invent its own creative industries and desist totally from copying the patterns of western commercial arts and entertainment. We need a creative environment that can be tapped to solve our social challenges first and foremost before putting our culture on sale to the highest bidder. If we tow this line, it is the west with all the financial muscle at its disposal that will be in a position to buy it. It will be nothing but another Scramble for Africa and a return to the dark days of putting a continent many steps behind its development potentials.

### **Pan Africanism and the Challenge of a New Identity for Africa**

Africa needs a new identity built on the foundations of its history, rich heritage, culture and knowledge systems. The exiting identity gap is a product of many factors. First, it is the evidence of the lack of prioritization of what is indigenous to us and germane to our understanding of life. This is to say that there are incremental misunderstanding or misapplication of the African worldview. Second, the perils and hang over of colonization are still acting as indicators of a continent free on paper but psychologically burdened by the weight of decades of dehumanization. Slavery and imperialism dealt heavy blows to the African collective psyche and most especially threw the connection points of the continent apart and imposed foreign fissures of thought and self-reflection. Awodiya (2017:107) bemoans this by painting a sad picture of his reading of the Nigerian situation that also extends to the continental sphere: “The impact of colonialism is total and ruthless on the social, economic, political, cultural and educational spheres of life of the Nigerian people as well as in other developing countries.” The imposition of foreign languages on African peoples and the complete extermination of most means of human interaction remains serious

minuses to the continent's potential for growth. The rise of globalisation and other structures of foreign cultural influence especially through the conventional media is a challenge that needs to be addressed as African leadership of the future must be extricated from being tied to the apron strings of former colonial powers and other sources of political manipulations. This is where the onus lies for beginning a programme in forging a new image or identity for Africa. But before we engage these issues in their right context, let us endear ourselves closely with the concept of Pan Africanism. What is it or what does it implicate?

### **What is Pan Africanism?**

Simply put, Pan Africanism enunciates the principle or advocacy of the political union of all the indigenous people of Africa. Within this principle, a worldwide movement that advocates for the strengthening of the bonds of solidarity between indigenous and diasporan groups of sub Saharan Africa can be considered the arrowhead of this ideology. Pan Africanism is obviously an ideological drive towards the discovery of an Africa that embraces its origins, orientation and worldview as a template of its future prospects and development. Potekhin states that Pan Africanism started as a political movement with its own ideological basis at the end of the nineteenth century providing insights into the many attempts for its eventual galvanization into a political ideology that shapes modern African thought system. The early foundations of Pan Africanism especially the role it played in uniting Africans to fight for liberations leaves us with an ideology that has achieved a lot in its early years, has attracted immense interest in scholarly circles, has become the basis for various political developments in the continent but is also battling with serious disconnects that unsettles its germane underpinnings and ideological stance. The *African Arguments* newsletter underscores this by observing that: “Pan Africanism developed into a machine to advocate for African unity by tackling common issues affecting the continent. After that, pan-Africanism inspired the creation of the Organisation African Unity (OAU) in 1963, which became the African Union in 2002 and different pan-African institutions such as the African Development Bank, the African Court on Human and People's Rights, the African Court of Justice, etc.”

These institutional achievements have however failed to unite Africans as envisaged in the formation of the ideology and blemishes the many gains of the past. This situation has contributed to alienating the youth from the Pan Africanism ideology. Again African Arguments observes that: “Young people in Africa have seen so many “pan African presidents” remain in power for decades without experiencing any development for their nations. They are tired of those who use the pan-African rhetoric for their own interest. If the

previous iteration of pan-Africanism was a hymn to African identity and African unity, today the concerns of pan-African youths are democracy and economic development.” This presents paradoxes and challenges the forging of a new African identity as the driving philosophy is out of tune with the realities on ground. Africa Argument again situates the context: “The main paradox of present-day pan-Africanism is the growth of xenophobic violence , for example in South Africa, and the difficulties encountered moving from one country to another within the continent. Visas are still required for an African to travel within the continent, even within some sub-regions like ECCAS. Despite the small increase in intra-African trade, most of Africa's trade is still done with Europe and Asia.” This is where the challenge lies hence this advocacy for the engagement of the creative industries to reposition Africa and establish Pan Africanism as the basis of a new African identity.

### **Using the Creative Industries for Advancing Pan Africanism and Forging a New African Identity**

As already stated, the creative industries that includes drama, theatre, music, film, fashion, craft, indigenous performances can be useful in promoting the ideals of pan Africanism and in forging a new identity for Africans. But this is only possible given the right environment, resources and the political commitment by stakeholders in Africa's development. To start with, we have to define identity in order to be able to argue for the viability of the creative industries in forging a new identity for Africa. Therefore, what is identity? Identity is defined by the *Oxford Electronic Dictionary* (2017) as “the fact of being who or what a person or thing is.' Identity is also described as 'a close similarity or affinity.” However, “In psychology, identity is the qualities, beliefs, personality, looks and/or expressions that make a person or group” (Wikipedia). Fearon (1999) defines identity in categories. According to his thesis, identity refers to either (a) a social category, defined by membership rules and (alleged) characteristic attributes or expected behaviours, or (b) socially distinguishing features that a person takes a special pride in or views as unchangeable but socially consequential (or (a) and (b) at once.” He adds that, “identity” is modern formulation of dignity, pride, or honor that implicitly links these to social categories.” To draw from Fearon's postulates, it is pertinent to link this position with that of Awodiya (2017:110) who asserts that, “The arts, as we know, constitutes one of the most effective means by which people could assert their cultural identity.” This is to say therefore that identity is critical to the wellbeing of a people. Awodiya (2017:109) goes further to say that national development should be anchored on the creative industries. In his words, “To develop, the people must have their feet firmly planted in their history, arts, culture and traditions. Nigeria cannot solve her political, economic and social problems while neglecting creative

cultural education and orientation of her people.”

This assertive tone is central to understanding the how identity underpins development. What we can take from here is that people become better prepared to develop when they first understand who they are and the structures that have enabled their evolving. In this context, people who misunderstand, misinterpret and wrongly align their identity are subject to foreign influences as appears to be the case with Africans. Awodiya (2017:108) illustrates this point when observes that: “More significantly, Nigerian peoples and cultures have been infiltrated by alien and subversive values, consequently, educated Nigerians are often disoriented and plagued with the crisis of identity. Their minds are dutifully trapped in Europhile abstractions and imperialist doctrines. These Nigerians, to a great extent, do not believe in themselves nor have faith and confidence in their capacity to create, innovate or invent. Nigeria's virtual lack of cultural awareness is the reason why her people have some basic flaws of personality, lack self-definition and patriotism. Nigeria may not join the comity of developed nations until she understands that what she needs is not just appetite to consume but rather the ability to liberate the creative and innovative energies of her people for productivity and development.” Taking the above to be the statement of the problem, how can we practically engage the creative industries to accomplish the task of creating or forging a new level of pan African consciousness that can thrive as the new identity of Africa? This is the task before us. Therefore, how should drama, theatre, film, fashion, television, digital and visual arts become active in creating a new image or identity for Africans?

### **Theatre and Drama**

Theatre is a veritable communication tool as well as an identity affirming instrument capable of deployment in forging a new identity for Africans. In his 2019 World Theatre Day message, Carlos Celdran, a Swiss theatre practitioner and performance expert justifies the role of theatre and drama in identity formation. According to him, “Theatrical tradition is horizontal. There is nobody who may affirm that theatre exists at any centre in the world, in any city or privileged building. Theatre, as I have received it, spreads through an invisible geography that blends the lives of those who perform it and the theatrical craft in a single unifying gesture.” What Celdran calls “an invisible geography that blends the lives of those who perform” speaks to the universal import of theatre making and the appeal of performance language. This is to say that theatre has a unique ability to kick start conversations across cultures as it also has the ability to inspire humanity into talking with itself. Humans have a tendency to seek a life in cocoons where they

matter and the ideas that rules is theirs and theirs alone. There is that natural tendency in man to subvert other opinions and restrict identity formation to norms that are dictated by what Chimamanda Adichie calls a “singular narrative.”

Drama and theatre frustrates such ambitions and always aims to bring people together. It creates an arena of interactivity where people engage in meaningful ways and get to understand a lot of issues better. Theatre create a meeting place for people, the rich, the poor, the young, the old, the privileged and the disadvantaged all find a common meeting ground in the theatre or through theatre. From this cooperation enhancing role, drama and theatre is better positioned to bring about the formation of a new identity for Africans. The ideals of Pan Africanism has a veritable platform through theatre to generate new thought and ideas about who we are as Africans and what we can become when we stand together. Theatre can strengthen our bonds as a people from a common ancestry. Theatre has a unique communication orientation that is easy for people to grasp. Whether that language is satire, or comedy or melodramatic snapshots of the human condition, the audience consisting of people always lend themselves to the voice of theatre. Based on this background, it is pertinent to suggest that theatre should be empowered to be active as a central driver of cultural revival in the continent.

Theatre was very active in the revolution of the past. It was active in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa and in other anti-colonization crusades in other parts of the continent. Why is it taking a back seat today? What did we do with theatre as a continent after we dutifully engaged it in the struggles of the past? What honour did we bestow on the dramatists, the actors, the many artists who took lots of risks to employ drama and theatre in fighting the ills that bedeviled our continent? Where are the national theatre academies that documented the exploits of our creative heroes and heroines? Why are our theatre and drama programmes still dominated by foreign praxis and pedagogies many years after the dethronement of colonialism? Why are post-colonial curriculum in theatre and dramatic studies in the continent still operating without sufficient local content from our indigenous knowledge systems? These and many other questions centre-stages the need to rethink how we relate with theatre and drama because it has all that it takes to propagate the Pan African philosophy leading to the formation of a new identity for Africans in the twenty first century.

### **Music, Songs and Vocal Arts**

Africa is uniquely blessed with a musical heritage that is waiting to be fully tapped as an instrument of identity formation or affirmation especially for the African young persons. Music draws massive following

and Africa has a notably rich heritage in musical art. Music serves several functions in the society. It brings people together, create avenue for relational connectivity, is used as entertainment during events, teaches morals and generally sends out messages that helps in character formation, satirizes social ills, serves as a repository of traditions, customs and norms of existence, preserves languages and is a source of identity affirmation.

The creative field of music is importantly a source of income generation. African musicians are yet to fully tap from their music as they have also not sufficiently explored indigenous resources to make music. Pan African ideals can be best propagated through the use of music because music retains a popular appeal across all ages. The high rate of incursion of foreign tunes and especially western music and musical culture into Africa is not helping the indigenous cultures of Africa. It has done more harm than good to the musical heritage of the continent because through this foreign incursion, foreign cultural norms and behaviours invades the continent.

Pan Africanism can benefit tremendously from the abundant musical heritage in the continent. Forming a new identity for African will require integrating the norms of that new identity into traditional and popular songs and musical compositions that celebrates Africa, its history, people, heritage, its challenges, goals and aspirations. When young people in Africa are allowed to hook up to other societies for music, they will imbibe the culture of those societies as against what is indigenous to them. We need to teach African music in schools from elementary to tertiary levels of education. Academies of indigenous music should also be established and funded and given the mandate to train the youth in our indigenous musical traditions. Identity formation should be pursued both formally and informally. African households should return back to the era of promoting the enjoyment of indigenous music at home. Children should be exposed to the music and effort made by the adults to explain the meaning of the music to the young. Early exposure to such music will engender interest and assimilation by the young ones. Neglecting our musical heritage should be discouraged through conscious policy formulation that encourages the teaching and learning of music, songs and vocal renditions that are indigenous to African communities.

### **Visual and Digital Arts**

The fine arts of Africa are viable products of our heritage and should inform design and building thinking in the continent. Contemporary architecture and design should tap from indigenous knowledge and the natural beauty of the environment instead of copying others. Software engineering can benefit from the

visual culture of Africa and the creative craftsmanship, ideas and talent of our people.

### **Dance and Choreographic Expressions**

Dance is one area that Africa parades a repertory to no other part of the world. There many creative dances that also parade aesthetic and communication qualities that can rebuild the identity of the African and restore hope in the Pan African ideology. According to Thompson (2015: 8) “African dances unfold in its offertory the totality of the multi-faceted livingness of the African people; rudiments of their belief system, their religions, trado-political attitudes, and the indigenous technology.” This is to say that African dances as an all-encompassing art is rich in structure and rendering to generate visual particulars that can foster better knowledge of the continent and the people. Dance is catalytic in its ability to emblemize the colours and patterns of thoughts that informs the expression of beauty. We need to tap dance to tell African stories and sustain ideas that orchestrates our unique identity.

### **Film, Television and New Media**

The photogenic spread of Africa's natural endowments is generating millions of dollars to other nations and continents while Africans wallow in poverty. National Geographic and other wild life channels in paid satellite television virtually draw their key resource for content from the wild regions of Africa. The film and television industry in Africa has to be tapped as tools for reimagining African identity formation and the spread of Pan Africanism in the continent. Nigeria's Nollywood is the biggest film market in the continent yet it has not been tapped as an image building and propaganda mechanism for the orchestration of African ideas. Television and film are fluid media that also commands great following. They are powerful media with the capacity to penetrate into people. We need to use them to sell African ideas, spread African philosophy and generate thought on the new identity that is suitable for Africans in the current century.

### **Crafts and Décor**

Africa's craft works are powerful expression of the identity of the people where they originate from and can serve various functions including re-establishing a strong connection with the identity of the people. Craft work, sculpture and graphic production should be included in creative packages aiming to create a new identity orientation for Africans.

### **Fashion**

Africa has a strong fashion and clothing market that is yet to be developed and projected to provide both

employment and income to the people. Beyond the generation income, fashion industry is also a source of identity projection. Fashion can play a role in spreading African culture and the Pan African philosophy. Fashion belongs to a cultural exhibit on the fast lane of human connectivity. People have lots of attachment to fashion as fashion influences how people are perceived. Africans have opened themselves too wide to accept foreign fashion ideas and materials while neglecting what is indigenous to them.

### **Recommendations**

Given the imperative of the creative industries in unlocking the understanding and association with the very foundations of our existence as peoples of Africa, the most urgent thing to do is to look back into the study of African history and culture to form the intellectual base for periscoping the future of our continent. Our young people need to know the continent first before they can come into the public arena of forming opinion about issues bothering on the development of the continent. Key philosophies and concepts including Pan Africanism that drives the African past and the expected renaissance has to be taught at all levels of the school system in the continent. There is also the urgent need to reappraise and envision new thoughts, perspectives, strategies and methods in promoting Pan Africanism and forging a new African identity especially to emerging generations and demographics of Africans without the benefit of sufficient exposure to the tenets and principles of this ideology. This is where the creative industries can become most useful. As a malleable, people-oriented and creative media of public communication the creative industries whether as drama, visual and digital productions, cartoons, film and television, fashion, technology and applied performance are naturally positioned to create spaces of dialogue with various strata of the African populace that can lead to functional indoctrination that can bring us together rather than separate us.

Western media is often divisive in its reportage of the continent or analysis of development about it. The need to counter this aggressive and undermining advocacy can best be stopped with a counter narrative that positions the continent as a space in constant development and not a society perpetually at war with itself or an environment bastardized by disasters, conflict and inequality. Theatre, the performing arts and cinematic media if sufficiently positioned can bring these issues to the public arena in a manner that can foster proper public perception of the continent. The creative industries should therefore be central to how the dynamics of public communication and mediatory practices aiming to bring about a new identity for Africans is developed and projected to both local and international observers. The creative industries can practically

foster the understanding of Pan Africanism among Africans and how this can lead to peace and coexistence in Africa as well as limiting the opportunity for various forms of threats within the continent. Lawal (2015:1) rightly observes that theatre can be applied in a variety of context with successful outcomes. The indigenous performances of Africa also have a role in shaping a new identity for Africans as well as propagating the Pan African philosophy. Our indigenous dances, folk narratives, music, craft, clothing and textiles are also important aspects of our creative industries that needs to be integrated into programmes that will highlight the gains of culture in sustainable development. Envisioning creative industries from only capitalist-Euro American prism will not serve our local need. All of our creative products are good enough to serve various utilitarian and economic purposes.

### **Conclusion**

The paper started on the premise that the creative industries can become useful in accelerating the public perception and understanding of Pan Africanism in addition to forging a new African identity. Using examples from a selection of our cultural and creative productions and media, the paper's core argument has been that the understanding and application of creative industries should look beyond a western construct and embrace a continental perspective that admits local dynamics. The paper further argued that creative industries should be pedestaled and understood from its roots in culture and heritage because culture is foundationally the first connecting point between people, ideas and commerce. Building on the premises of three cultural theories including cultural differentialism, cultural convergence and cultural hybridization, the paper further argues that Africa's development aspiration is to substantially solve the problems of hunger, food insecurity, conflict, disease, wars, leadership failures while also raising youth that are sufficiently aware of the history of the continent, can connect to the culture while also finding meaning and respectability in embracing other Africans.

The paper condemns totally the unfortunate denigration and victimization of other Africans in xenophobic attacks or other forms of victimization in parts of Africa especially in South Africa. It views this development as emerging from a lack of proper understanding of the universe of African existence, the role each African state and individuals played during the struggle against all forms of colonialism, apartheids and other forms of inhumanity meted out to Africans by foreign political and economic interest. In recognizing this shared history of standing together and fighting for the common good of the continent, the paper articulates the need for African young persons born outside the struggle era to be sufficiently

educated on what they stand to gain from accepting other Africans instead of seeing them as sources of their economic problems. It is therefore the position of this paper that the creative industries should not only be “used” to lift nations and cities into prosperity but that sufficient investment should be committed in developing and sustaining this vibrant aspect of the economy so that future generations can still tap from them.

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