

# Renewal of Ogu Musical Culture Through Jazz Intervention

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the academic requirements  
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As the candidate's supervisor, I have approved this dissertation for submission.

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work. Where collaboration with other people has taken place, or material generated by other researchers is included, the parties and/or materials are indicated in the acknowledgements or are explicitly stated with references as appropriate.

This work is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Masters in Music degree at the University of Cape Town. It has not been submitted to any other university for any other degree or examination.

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Joseph Olanrewaju KUNNUJI

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Date

**THE RENEWAL OF OGU MUSICAL CULTURE THROUGH JAZZ  
INTERVENTION**

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis instigates the discussion of the broad implications of cultural marginalization on Ogu music of Badagry, Lagos State Nigeria. Owing to the manner in which African States were carved out, without consideration for cultural boundaries, Ogu people were split through colonial delineation schemes with a minority within the Nigerian borders and the majority in Benin Republic. The same delineation process of the British and French administrations led to a multicultural Nigeria with over two hundred ethnic groups. In the ensuing battle for supremacy among the ethnic groups, in which number plays no minor role, the cultural integrity of the Ogu people began to wane. The complexity of social interactions in Nigeria witnessed the more populated and dominant ethnic groups casting their shadows on the smaller ones. The far-reaching consequence of such marginalization and social ostracism is cultural erosion and a xenocentric world-view of Ogu youths.

Whilst elucidating the consequences of cultural marginalization, low self-esteem and the condescending mannerism of Ogu youths toward their traditional music, this thesis concomitantly discusses a possible method of forestalling the musical decay and restoring the integrity of Ogu music through the intervention of the jazz genre. Given the reality of globalization, mass transculturation, and the adoption of Western educational system by African States, musical syncretism cannot be evaded. Thus, this dissertation concludes by examining a method of documentation and reestablishment of Ogu musical integrity, which employs the adoption of jazz elements in creating a new Ogu musical style. Jazz is favoured as it is deemed with the potency of arousing the interest of the western-musically-trained younger generation of Ogu people for whom jazz represents the highest level of harmonic complexity.

To the memory of my father, Ven. Sam Ola Kunnuji, whose resilience in making me culturally aware has prompted my interest in researching our musical culture.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: PRELUDE.....	1
CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	20
CHAPTER THREE: MUSICAL PRESERVATION THROUGH GUIDED SYNCRETISM: THE OGU CASE.....	37
CHAPTER FOUR: SUMMARY, DEDUCTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	60
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	72
APPENDIX A: DAGBE DAGBE TRANSCRIPTION	
APPENDIX B: DAGBE DAGBE ARRANGEMENT	

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **PRELUDE**

In this thesis I present the persistent situation of the marginalisation of the Ogu<sup>1</sup> people of Badagry, Lagos, Nigeria. Ogu people are a minority ethnic group in close proximity to the larger Yoruba ethnic group. This group has been marginalized by the Yoruba ethnic group in the last century, having been incorporated into the nation of Nigeria by the colonial masters. Being an Ogu, although I have attempted to distance myself as much as I could, the notion of absolute objectivity would be more idealist than realistic, as this is a presentation from the viewpoint of an insider.

To start with, I will discuss my personal experience of the marginalisation as an Ogu child who was schooled among Yoruba children. Taking on a broader perspective, I will trace the history of marginalisation to the origin and initial political structure of Badagry Town itself. I will attempt this historical approach to lay the proper foundation for the issue of focus in this research – the marginalization of Badagry-Ogu people. Furthermore, at the end of this chapter I describe the scope and context of the research.

In order to facilitate a thorough understanding of the context within which Ogu people and their music exist, an insight into the historical background of Badagry will be of immense value as a point of departure for the ensuing discussion.

### **I AM NOT EGUN!**

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<sup>1</sup> The Ogu people of Badagry Local Government area of Lagos State Nigeria have been referred to in other scholarly writings as Egun and for the sake of consistency it would have been appropriate to refer to them as such but recent moves towards cultural awareness spearheaded by the elders of Badagry and Forum for Ogu people have insisted upon adopting the ethnonym 'Ogu' rather than 'Egun' as the latter term is deemed to be derogatory

I remember how, as a child, I was waiting to be old enough to make my own decisions, when I could change my surname to a more 'refined' and 'modern' one. It was my desire that either my father's first name Samuel, or his middle name, Oladipupo (a Yoruba name), would become my new surname. This would free me from the many questions that would arise due to being identified as an Egun in a Yoruba-dominated society. Indeed, I was over it – the humiliation and shame attached to being called 'Egun' was not one of the problems I was willing to face for the rest of my life, never!

The term 'Egun' is used as an insult among the Yorubas in Nigeria; being called 'Egun' is synonymous to being called a fool. Also used in the same manner, as an insult among Yorubas, is the ethnonym of another cultural group, Ebira, reduced insultingly to 'Igbira'. A common Yoruba joke features an accident survivor recounting the casualties as 'five human beings and one Egun', which is suggestive of the less-than-human perception of 'Eguns' by Yorubas.

It had become the norm for me to repudiate my ethnic group, preferring to claim to be Yoruba just to feel a sense of belonging to the 'better' ethnic group. I resented hearing my non-conformist father converse in Ogu with his friends: it just was not the suitable language for his status as a middle-class clergyman. To aggravate the situation, my father would never address me by my English or Yoruba names. He stuck to my traditional 'Egun' name regardless of the presence of my peers whom I was out to impress. My friends would ridicule my native name and this further prevented me from embracing my culture. This sense of shame was compounded by the false belief that Ogus were inferior to the Yorubas. As I advanced in years, I began to see the folly in denying my roots. I began to shift to the other extreme of the divide. I did not just begin identifying with my ethnic group but also became passionate about fostering cultural awareness among the youth of Badagry.

My response to the question 'Are you Egun?' has never changed though. While I answer the question with the same set of words as years before, what I mean by those words has drastically changed. Today when I say 'I'm not Egun' it is not a denial of my ethnic group but a response of confidence and rejection of all the negatives associated with the derogatory label 'Egun'. In resonance with the recent move towards cultural

awareness, among Ogu people, I have embraced the term 'Ogu' over 'Egun'. Prompted by the reality of the waning strength of the cultural heritage of the Ogu of Badagry, my research is a step in the direction of our mental liberation.

### **WHERE ARE THE EMIC SCHOLARS?**

It is in the spirit of academic correctness that I have attempted suppressing my prejudice as I begin the arduous task of discussing the undesirable state of a seemingly voiceless and marginalized lot – the Ogu of Badagry. Having tasted the bitterness of being on the periphery due to my Ogu roots, this task is a delicate balance between my emotional experience and objective mental exploration. The situation I intend to address has persisted across generations for centuries and has thus become the norm. My interest, however, has been sparked particularly because few scholarly writings have been published on this matter. The lack of research in this area enables the perpetuation of the cultural domination exacted upon the Ogu. As I began my search for literature, a recurring question arose, 'Where are the local scholars on this issue?'

There exists a mass of literature on the history of Badagry: the trans-Atlantic trade of pre-colonial Badagry and the accounts of the wars that pervaded the period of struggle for the domination of Badagry by the Dahomey Kingdom, Oyo Empire and Lagos Kingdom. All these accounts, authored by non-African scholars including Law (1994), McEwen (1991) and Flynn (1997) and Nigerian scholars including Adedokun (1994) and Asiwaju (1979), are located within the pages of academic journals and books. To the best of my knowledge there are very little contributions from emic scholars. Apart from the work of Avoseh et al (1938), writings on the history of Badagry are mainly by non-Badagrians. I perceive that this may not be due to the absence of academics with roots in Badagry but rather a lack of interest in researching local issues. Perhaps this is due to the belief that "native scholars, researching their own cultures, are generally considered less worthy than those who have travelled far to document the history of a place that is new to them" (Romero, 2001:48-49). Thus, my search for literature revealed that African Studies scholars in Western educational institutions have engaged

in more research and documentation of the history of Badagry than Badagry indigenes that are researchers by profession.

Beyond seeking academic validation, I have embarked upon this research as a step in restoring the cultural integrity of the Ogu people. I intend to carry out this process with the guidance of the Igbo proverb that warns us that, “until the lions have their own historians the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter” (Mutere, 2012:158). As an Ogu, I intend to tell this story from the perspective of the ‘lions’.

I have observed that local history is seldom taught in schools, particularly in today’s cosmopolitan African communities. In the classroom, it appears that a student who is adept in Western history is rewarded over one who can recount her/his local history. Until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, the transference of the cultural heritage of African societies relied solely on the oral medium. Current trends in modern African societies, however, demand that the oral medium needs to be corroborated by written history. A folkloric approach to the transmission of culture was effective in pre-colonial days when socialization was mainly through storytelling by the ‘elders’ of the household and community. In recent times, stories are being told about the African art of storytelling as it gradually fades away due to the demands of modern living and the withering of domestic rituals.

I have thus embarked upon this path of enquiry to solidify the part of Ogu culture that has been imparted to me. An overview of Ogu history is subsequently discussed. In order not to expend much energy ‘reinventing the wheel’, I will summarise Law’s (1994) record which takes into account both the traditional history as documented by the Badagry people and other documentations on the history of Badagry, which are archived in museums outside Africa.

## **OGU MARGINALISATION IN RETROSPECT**

There is a long history of the marginalisation of Ogus in Nigeria. The marginalisation of Badagrians can be traced back to the battles over the control of Badagry by neighbouring states, which also interacted with internal struggles within the town. Badagry “is the ‘modernised’ outgrowth from Agbethegreme, meaning Agbethe’s farm”

(Law, 1994:32). The name validates the traditional history of the people, which holds that in the fifteenth century and probably before, the present geographical location of Badagry Town was a farmland upon which Agbethe from Dahomey Kingdom farmed and eventually settled (Law, 1994:33).

The major consequence of the civil unrest, which pervades the annals of the kingdoms of pre-colonial West Africa, is that the displaced refugees from Weme, Whydah, Jakin, Allada and Houla all settled in Badagry at different times during the fifteenth century. The territorial expansion of Dahomey Kingdom was instrumental in the immigration of refugees, all speaking languages related to, but dialectically different from, Fon of Dahomey. By the nineteenth century, the inhabitants of Badagry had a distinct common language and culture and regarded themselves as belonging to a people called *Gun* (a language group). There were, and still are, eight independent political wards in the town, traceable to the eight places from which the people had migrated (Law, 1994:40).

A Dutch slave trader, Hendrik Hertough, referred to as Hunkotonou in traditional history, founded Badagry as a political unit. Hertough arrived at Agbethegreme, which would later be known as Badagry, also fleeing Dahomian conquest. Hertough was chief of the Dutch West Indian Company's factory at Jakin prior to its destruction by the Dahomey in 1732 (Law, 1994:38). The King of Whydah, Heru, with his two sons Kotogbosu and Kuton, followed Hertough. Heru died at Seme but his two sons made it to Badagry. Internal conflicts regarding the administration of Badagry ensued (ibid).

The local chiefs arranged for the transferral of political leadership to Accra<sup>2</sup> – Akran, Hertough's successor in charge of Dutch factories, then became the Chief of Ijegba ward; one of the eight wards in Badagry. Today, the Akran of Badagry is the paramount ruler, though each of the eight wards still maintains a political structure headed by a chief with some level of autonomy. In the case of Ahovikoh, meaning 'Prince's ward' where some of the settlers of Whydah live, there is a monarch. Ahovikoh's origin is

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<sup>2</sup> It is unclear if this name bears any relationship to the city of Accra in present-day Ghana. Also, the non-African sources consulted by Law (1994), on the history of Badagry, spelt some names differently from the local source.

traced to Kotogbosu, who was said to have returned and established that ward. Other wards include Awhanjigo, Posuko, Bala of Asago, Boeko, Wharako, Ganho. The Chief of Ahovikoh being the head of Whydah settlers including Awhanjigo, Boeko and Wharako, had direct links with Porto Novo in Benin Republic, which emerged in a similar manner to Badagry (Law, 1994:40, 41).

Although there is a generally spoken Ogu language in Badagry, some of the wards have dialects that are understood only by people of the same descent as they. For instance, speakers of Ogu of Badagry do not understand the Wheda dialect, spoken by those of Whydah roots. This is important because it explains the complexities of the establishment of the political structure of Badagry, which makes for weak military strength and makes the town vulnerable to marginalisation (Law, 1994).

Badagry had strong relationships with other Ogu speaking societies in Benin Republic. Families in Badagry still maintained ties with their extended family members in Porto Novo and other parts of Benin Republic up to the late twentieth century. During my childhood, members of our extended family from Porto Novo attended our family functions, crossing the international border to strengthen family ties, which was common. Other families from Badagry also have relatives who are nationals of Benin Republic. However, such ties appear to have waned as the older generation passed away without handing down the history of familial links.

In terms of geographical links with a strategic location at the north bank of the coastal lagoon in south-western Nigeria, Badagry was one of the major trade ports for the Afro-European trade of the pre-colonial days. Being a smaller settlement with resources for economic prosperity and a doorway to opportunities in commerce, Badagry became a pawn in the struggle among pre-colonial West African monarchs of the Oyo, Lagos and Dahomey Kingdoms. In the eighteenth century prior to the emergence of a paramount ruler in Badagry, the chiefs of the different wards served as patrons to different European nationalities, each organizing trade with its client nation independently (Law, 1994:43).



Prior to colonization, trade links existed between Akran, the chief of Ijegba and the Portuguese traders, Wawu, the chief of Ahovikoh and the English traders, Posu, the chief of Posuko and the Dutch traders and Jengen, the chief of Awhangigo and the French traders (Law, 1994:42). At the advent of colonization, these trade links were broken as Badagry was delineated under the British-administered Nigeria. Religious life was organised based on wards, which further accentuated the inter-ward differences and further weakened the central administration. With this structure of 'African Confederacies,' which built stronger units but had weaker central administrations, external powers found it easy to penetrate Badagry. Due to internal disunity, Badagry lacked the military strength to withstand any strong external attack. For instance, Badagry was conquered and dominated by the Oyo Empire in the eighteenth century; later on Oyo withdrew its protection due to internal conflicts in Badagry that made it unsuitable for trade. Also, at different times towards the end of the eighteenth century, the bigger neighbouring kingdoms – Dahomey, Oyo and Lagos, attacked or protected Badagry. Nevertheless, the protection of Badagry did not come without a cost to Badagry. For the bigger kingdoms, protecting Badagry meant protecting their economic interest and trade affiliations. Though very resilient due to its economic importance in pre-colonial West African trade, the internal instability and frequent wars Badagry experienced, affected the growth of the town in no small way. Some of the greater Kingdoms began to shift the base of their economic activities to Porto Novo, which was less strategically situated for trade but more politically stable and peaceful (Law, 1994).

The situation of unrest, instability, fears, political insecurity, and weak internal cohesion in Badagry allowed the easy penetration of missionaries and colonial administrators as well. It is not just mere coincidence that Badagry was the first town within today's Nigeria where the early Christian missionaries preached (Avoseh, 1938); gaining access into Badagry was easier compared to a Kingdom with a strong central administration and a totalitarian monarch. Without considering the history of the people and cultural affiliations, the British and French colonial administrations, which began their full-fledged activities in that area in the mid-nineteenth century, carved out their colonies like slices of cake, using rivers as frontiers (Parrinder, 1989:264). The French gave the name Republic of Dahomey to their colony extending as far north as the river

Niger. While Badagry was grouped with Nigeria, some Yoruba-speaking communities were grouped with the Republic of Dahomey, which became the People's Republic of Benin in 1975 (ibid).

Evidently, the main objective of each colonial administration “was to secure important trade routes and strategic settlements for its own government” (ibid). Neither the interest of the people nor the actual physical location of boundaries, which in their view passed through uninhabited lands, was their concern (McEwen, 1991:65). In practice, the boundary was only separating English from French not the Ogas and Yoruba both on either sides of the boundary. Family ties and strong neighbourly bonds were disregarded in favour of colonialists' territorial mappings. Consequently, that has rippled into the marginalisation of minorities in several countries of Africa (Flynn, 1997:313). An aftermath of the activities of the 'colonial lords' is a social and cultural confusion. Another similar case includes the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi (Uvin, 1999:253-271).

As time went by the connectivity between the language groups on either side of the border began to wane. With Nigeria strengthening its territorial integrity by implementing more efficient border control policies in order to prevent illegal importations and exportations in 1990; cultural ties across borders were weakened (Flynn, 1997:313). For Badagry and its inhabitants, being the border town culturally meant hybridity – “a little bit of this and a little bit of that, and not quite one or the other” (Flynn, 1997:325). Invariably, Badagrians spoke Yoruba but with a different accent and their Ogu is also different and a lot more Yoruba-influenced than that spoken in Porto Novo. This places them in a vulnerable position, as they are neither here nor there.

Against the backdrop of the use of the term 'Egun' as abusive, the new generation of Badagrians no longer wants to associate with the traditions of the Ogu people, let alone learn to speak the language. My field experience confirmed a personal observation that these days, one can survive in Badagry without knowing a word of Ogu. Yoruba and English have not only taken over the education of the people but also their spirit. The educated youth are not keen on preserving Ogu cultural heritage as they imbibed an attitude of inferiority relative to Yoruba culture.

In the bid to hide their identity and seek acceptance, many take on Yoruba names instead of the more traditional Ogu ones. They dream of leaving their homes and integrating into an accepted and popular cultural group. As the Ogu culture is severely marginalized in Nigeria, its music remains localized and undiscovered. Ogu culture is gradually being subsumed by Yoruba culture. It is not uncommon for outsiders to refer to an Ogu as a Yoruba assuming that Ogu is a dialect of Yoruba. Needless to say, along with the culture, Ogu music is severely marginalized – Yoruba percussion instruments are more easily accessible and used in Badagry in lieu of Ogu traditional percussion instruments. In my opinion, such modern versions of Ogu music have been overly influenced by external cultures, diluting its true substance.

### **SOME AREAS OF CULTURAL DISPARITY BETWEEN OGU AND YORUBA**

The reason that the Yoruba have viewed the Ogu as barbaric and less ‘evolved’ can be traced to culture shock. Ranging from values, belief system and philosophy of life, expressed in traditions, cuisine, clothing, arts and music, the Ogu are distinct from the Yoruba. It is beyond the scope of this research to enumerate all the areas of disparity between the Yoruba and Ogu culture, consequently only a few areas of disparity are discussed.

First, informed by ecological factors and geographical features, the traditional economic activities constituted a point of disparity between the Yoruba and Ogu. While the Ogu traditionally engaged in water-related economic activities including fishing, salt making and mat making due to the availability of waterside straw, the inland Yoruba engaged in agrarian economic activities. If the hunter’s house is decorated with the skins of some wild animals from his previous hunting exploits, the home of a fisherman is likely to be adorned with shells from sea animals. A thought into the difference in economic practices speaks volumes of the likelihood of difference in material culture; affecting every area of life including the type of musical instruments favoured by each culture.

Furthermore, on the basis of language, the Ogu are more similar to the Dahomians than the Yoruba. For instance, *Jiwheyewhe* refers to God in Ogu and Dahomey languages as

opposed to the Yoruba's *Olorun* (Hunsu, 2011:11). Ogu is a dialect of Fon not Yoruba. In fact, the Ogu variant of the Fon language is still spoken in Porto Novo in Benin today. Ogu influence can be heard in the accent of many Badagrians who speak a Yoruba that sounds strange or humorous to the Yoruba. Disparities also abound in the religio-cultural practices of the two ethnic groups of focus in this research. The Yoruba *Oro* (night watch) society has its parallel among the Ogu – *Zangbeto* (hunter of the night), but with fundamental differences in costume, language, beliefs, functions and formation (ibid). One difference that stands out is the role of the female. The Yoruba *Oro* cult is exclusive to males, whereas the *Zangbeto* society of Ogu culture is open to female membership as well. In fact, a female can rise through the hierarchy to become the *Zanga* – the head of the *Zangbeto* society (Hunsu, 2011:11, 13). The *Zangbeto* society is also prominent in Porto-Novo.

As Hunsu pointed out, the Ogu parallel for the Yoruba *Ọba* (monarch) is the *Aholu* but these two do not directly translate in respect of roles and functions (2011:12). Apart from the case of the monarchs, across the different walks of life things do not directly translate from one culture to the next. As Geertz posited with his 'thick description', actions and meanings are culturally informed (1994). For instance, the roles and expectations tied to the status of an aunt – *tayin* – among Ogus are very different from that of the Yoruba aunt (there is no particular Yoruba name for the aunt but the relationship is explained as father's younger sister, mother's older sister and so on). There are kinship institutions in Ogu culture without parallels in Yoruba culture. In the extended family, two important members are the *tayin* – aunt and *tafe* – uncle. Whether maternal or paternal, both the *tayin* and *tafe* play important roles in the life of an Ogu child. As with many African cultures, from the birth of a child, communal parenting begins. Moreover, among Ogus, *tayins* and *tafes* are almost as important in decision making for the child as the parents. For instance, they offer special prayers at the wedding ceremony of their nieces among other important roles. The *tayin* also has the responsibility of performing the christening rites, including praying for the new-born even in the presence of other male adults, which is not a practice in Yoruba culture (Adedokun, 1994:284, Hunsu, 2011:12).

Another practice that brings to focus the sharp contrast between Yoruba and Ogu as regards gender-related cultural practices is that the christening rite for a female child takes place seven days after birth while that of a male child occurs nine days after birth among Ogus. Conversely the Yorubas, perform the naming ceremony on the eighth day irrespective of gender (Hunsu, 2011:12). Regardless of gender, Ogu kneel/squat as a sign of respect in greeting elders while Yoruba males prostrate and females kneel. Ogu traditionally get married on Thursdays. The name for Thursdays in Ogu language is *Yonnuzangbe*, meaning 'a day for wedding ceremonies', whilst the Yoruba hold their wedding ceremonies on Saturdays.

These several areas of disparity between the Yoruba and Ogu cultures are some important differences between the two groups. Some of these practices among the Ogu, however, are giving way to the adoption of their parallel in the Yoruba culture. For instance, it has become the norm for Ogu children born today to be named on the eighth day irrespective of gender. My research has brought my attention to Ogu cultural practices I never knew existed because they have faded away as the majority of Badagrians have grown to conform with Yoruba ways.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

One reason why we study history is to better understand the origin of our problems, thus equipping ourselves to face such problems and helping us to make informed decisions to solve them. It is in the bid to answer the question of why the performance of Ogu music has become rare in Badagry today that I have, through serendipity, discovered several reasons why Ogu language will likely have fewer speakers in the next generation and eventually fade away in Badagry; if there is no cultural intervention. The present marginalisation of Badagrians by their Yoruba neighbours is an effect of the long history of forced domination of the town by more powerful neighbouring kingdoms. Should there fail to be action against the marginalisation of Ogu people, the future of a culture in the hands of disengaged youth is very bleak. While cultural hybridity witnessed in many cosmopolitan African societies has witnessed the merger of both the foreign and native ways, in the Yoruba-Ogu case, it is not a balanced exchange. Rather,

it has been a case of Yoruba and Euro-American cultural practices subsuming Ogu ones in Badagry.

While I assumed my case was unusual and was keen to learn to speak Ogu, I discovered, to my surprise, that many of the youth, forty years and below do not speak the language, not even the ones who have lived in Badagry for the greater part of their lives. Bàbá Avoseh (one of my teachers in the field) revealed that even the few youths who are able to converse in Ogu cannot do so without diluting such conversations with foreign expressions. With much cultural hybridity, the little ones are left in confusion as to what is foreign and what is indigenous. Should the social distance and anonymity of the Western culture be embraced in lieu of the communal living of pre-colonial Africa? What are the determining factors in the selection of the aspects of culture that should be dispensed with and the aspects that should be retained? What strategies could be employed in preserving the desired aspects of a culture? How can the socialization process be tailored towards the reduction of undesired influences on a certain culture in a global world? These and so many other questions constitute 'tensions' that led to my exploration of Ogu music and its possible reinvigoration among Ogu youths.

Notably, in this age of globalization, geographical territories no longer map out cultures. Gone are the days when American culture is found in the United States of America and practised by Americans. With mass media playing a major role in disseminating mass culture through social media, the internet, films, television, music, newspapers and books, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to say with precision which practices are traditionally owned by which culture (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992). My research however revealed that there are aspects of their culture that the Badagry Ogu people would like to retain even in the face of cultural hybridity and mass transculturation.

Today, while certain cultures overlap several nations, there are also single nations with multiple cultures (ibid). However, in the ensuing mix and cultural hybridity, certain cultures have been eroded more than others and the self-esteem of the people with the 'weaker' culture, wounded. In the emerging national identity, in Nigeria for instance, plurality of culture is being subsumed. Despite the awareness of the multi-ethnic nature of Nigeria, it remains difficult to explain to persons without the background training in

issues of relativism that Ogu are not Yorubas. In my personal interactions with friends and colleagues from different parts of Nigeria, I have tried, repeatedly, to explain the differences between Ogu and Yoruba only for the listener to conclude, after my thorough explanation that 'they are the same'. This response has not only proceeded from less-formally-educated individuals but also from my Yoruba colleagues in the institutions of higher learning.

Though there are many ethnic groups in Nigeria, the ones with larger populations, such as Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa, are considered the 'major' ethnic groups. As such, individuals who lack awareness of the diversity in ethnicity within the Nigerian nation could easily view divergent cultural groups as homogeneous. In this thesis, I hope to stress the reality of cultural diversity in Nigeria and Africa by extension.

As revealed by one of my respondents, during the 2012 Youth day celebration in Idale, Badagry, the organizing committee had to invite a band from Benin Republic to provide musical entertainment for the event. This was done because of the rarity of Ogu-music bands in today's Badagry. Furthermore, the few existing Ogu-music bands are perceived to have watered down Ogu music. The foregoing might not be unconnected to the lack of interest in Ogu music by Western-musically trained Ogu youths. In view of the lack of interest on the side of Western-musically-trained Ogu youth towards their local music, I propose a deliberate method of syncretism – Guided Syncretism. Guided Syncretism is my proposed method of blending elements from different musical cultures while being deliberate about retaining certain aspects/elements of the primary musical culture of interest. In my research, I am deliberately retaining the melodies and rhythmic feel of Badagry-Ogu music; these in my view form the essence of Ogu music. Guided Syncretism will be discussed further in the third chapter of this thesis. Through the instrumentality of my Guided Syncretism study, it is intended that Ogu youths would be bold and unapologetic about their culture.

It is my hope that the younger generation of Ogu people will gradually begin to realize that there is nothing wrong with being Ogu. I look forward to a future where the Ogu child among the Yoruba will be able to say s/he is Ogu from Badagry without being ashamed to say so.

## WHY JAZZ?

Attempts have been made to 'modernise' Ogu music by both Ogu and Yoruba musicians. Several musicians, including Lágbájá the popular Yoruba musician, have arranged Ogu songs; *Thona No We* (an Ogu religious song, meaning 'my father, God, is the blessing giver') being the most rearranged. Yet I am less than satisfied with the approaches employed in arranging or 'modernizing' the unique style of Ogu music. My criticism of the previous attempts at 'modernizing' Ogu music is that many of these arrangements have one thing in common; they tamper with the time signature of the songs, some employing a funk groove. Many versions of 'modernized' Ogu music are usually in double or quadruple time signatures. Suffice it to say that the real essence of Ogu music is its triple feel and its unique percussive style. A vast repertory of Ogu music I grew up singing is in triple or compound time. In essence, to change the time signature in the name of 'modernization' is to mutilate the music in my opinion. Furthermore, in the bid to 'modernize' Ogu music, modern Yoruba and Ogu musicians tend to impose highlife and *juju* harmonies, which are of the popular genres of Western Nigeria. These genres, which are quite dominant, truly undermine the musical diversity of south-western Nigeria. *Juju* or highlife cadential clichés are usually imposed on Ogu songs, which should rather be treated differently. It would amount to a simplistic analysis to conclude that the music of South Western Nigeria is only *juju*, *fuji*, and highlife, considering the cultural diversity of the nation. Ogu melodies, based on the pentatonic scale, are likely to be more receptive to modal jazz harmony than *juju* harmony which utilizes chords I, IV and V mainly. The issue of what works harmonically on Ogu music will be further discussed in the third chapter on Guided Syncretism.

With its harmonic complexities, advanced techniques required on instruments and chord-based improvisation, jazz does not only have a wide appeal, but has also influenced several newer genres. The jazz genre has singled itself out as having gone through the highest number of stages of metamorphoses in the shortest time (Jazz: A movie by Ken Burns, 2000). From ragtime to swing, bebop, hard bop, cool jazz, modal



jazz and fusion, there is a wide variety of what would be considered jazz. Classical harmony has in no little way influenced jazz compositions. “Miles Davis’ modal compositions, for instance, were an outgrowth of his extensive exposure to the works of Igor Stravinsky and Claude Debussy” (Murphy, 2007). Therefore, jazz harmonic thought could be said to have classical influence. To the knowledge-seeking and musically explorative younger generation, who mostly view playing traditional African music as a condescending exercise, the application of jazz thought to African music would be an intellectually stimulating task that would likely win their interest.

Notably, several genres have sprung up as a result of the fusion of elements from various musical cultures and provided them with much sought-after validation. A fitting example would be Afrobeat, which is a result of the fusion of jazz and classical harmonies and the use of western musical instruments with Yoruba rhythms, modality and groove. Fela Kuti used the rhythm section and wind instruments similar to that of a jazz band in developing his new musical concept (Olaniyan, 2004:9-11). In a similar vein, my research will employ jazz harmony on existing Ogu songs and percussive feel.

The use of instruments of the jazz rhythm section; drum set, bass and piano, as well as the horn section; saxophones, trumpets and trombones, in addition to the adaptation of jazz harmony and improvisational style, is deemed to make Ogu music appealing both to a global listening audience and the indigenes, without mutilating its unique sound. This concept of jazz incorporation is borne out of an exposure to the music of John Coltrane whose use of pentatonic scales typifies the sound of Ogu traditional music. My approach to the introduction of Western musical instruments, jazz harmony and improvisational style is carefully tailored to the cultural style while developing Ogu music. However, it needs to be stated that the resulting syncretic style is not intended as an exact replica of Ogu traditional music.

In the move towards hybridity, certain aspects of the cultures involved will be downplayed. However, if the melody and rhythm of Ogu music should be significantly altered, the very essence of the music is lost. Thus, this research demands careful execution, without which the aim will be defeated.

## **METHODOLOGY**

I structured the research to proceed in three stages namely; pre-fieldwork, fieldwork and post fieldwork. Activities involved in each of the stages are discussed subsequently. At the the pre-fieldwork stage I reviewed the available literature applicable to my study of Badagry music; these covered the history of Badagry and general principles of African music. I also collected data through interpersonal and informal discussions with Ogu youths using Facebook chat rooms. My respondents at the pre-fieldwork stage included students, young professionals and musicians who are indigenes of Badagry. I also began to collaborate with other movements towards creating an Ogu awareness. There is a Facebook group named 'Online Forum for Ogu People' with a similar aim as that of this research, the difference being that my research approaches the cultural renewal with the use of the people's music. The issues that emerged include the decline in the numbers of speakers of Ogu language over the generations and the lack of interest of Badagry youths in exploring their musical heritage. These issues informed the creation of the research questions and schedule.

During my fieldwork I collected data through various means. My fieldwork employed techniques such as participant-observation, one-on-one interviews and focus-group discussions. I made audio recordings of interview sessions, performances of individuals and that of a *mase*<sup>3</sup> group. As live performances of Ogu music are less frequent in Badagry these days, I could only witness one during my fieldwork, which spanned a two-month period.

A snowball sampling technique became necessary as there are relatively few performers of Ogu music. This technique requires one known respondent to

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<sup>3</sup> *Mase gown* is a variant of Ogu music, which is played at social functions including marriage ceremonies, naming ceremonies and other celebrations. *Mase gown* and other variants of Ogu music are discussed in the third chapter.

recommend others, who then recommend more performers, causing a sample population to grow in the manner of a snowball. For the group interviews, I restricted each group to two or three respondents who were close friends or members of the same performing group, which ensured a relaxed atmosphere. Consequently, respondents aired their opinions freely without the restraint that could be created by the presence of an outsider other than the researcher.

The post-field stage was the longest of the stages as it involved multiple complex and interrelated activities. Activities ranged from transcriptions of interviews, telephonic follow-up interviews, arrangement of Ogu songs for a jazz septet (the ensemble featured a vocalist and a percussionist depending on the requirement of the piece), to my performance of the arranged Ogu songs at jazz venues in Cape Town, my examination recitals and engaging with my listeners for post-performance feedbacks.

## **SCOPE AND DELIMITATION**

Although Badagry is a major locale for Ogu culture in Nigeria, other Ogu communities are found in Ipokia Local Government Area, Ogun State Nigeria, which shares boundaries with Lagos State to the West and North. Also, Ogu-speaking communities abound in Makoko and other smaller settlements in inland Lagos State. Outside the borders of Nigeria, Ogu culture is found in Benin Republic. My fieldwork was conducted in Badagry and as such, the discourse in this thesis is particularly focused on Badagry Ogu culture. Moreover, Badagry Local Government Area of Lagos extends to Ikoga, Iworo, Ajido, and ends at the Agbara boundary of Lagos State. This research only focuses on Badagry Town and not the whole Local Government Area.

The scope of this research is also limited to the collection, harmonisation and arrangement of existing Ogu songs for small jazz ensembles: quartets, quintets and sextets with vocals. In the bid to create musical stimulations for the musically educated Ogu youth, there is an introduction of jazz harmonic activities and invariably, this is done with the intention of creating a wider acceptance of Ogu music beyond the borders of Badagry and Nigeria at large.

## **CHAPTER OUTLINES**

In this first chapter, through a historical approach I established the differences between Badagry Ogu and their neighbouring Yoruba ethnic group. Tracing the descent of Badagry Ogu people to different societies of today's Benin Republic, I unpacked the fact of their distinct differences in ancestry and cultural heritage from the Yorubas.

In the second chapter, which will feature an adaptation of the Standpoint Theory for the explanation of cultural marginalization, I will argue for the chain of cause and effect between diversity, different perspectives and conflicts/marginalization. In that chapter I will introduce the colour blue as a metaphor in describing the numerous variants of African cultures and musics. Furthermore, I will advance the discourse on Standpoint Theory with my introduction of a new concept – Varied in-group Standpoint. The chapter will conclude with a consolidation of the view of Africa and its music as heterogeneous.

In the third chapter I will focus on the music of Badagry-Ogu people. I will discuss the characteristics of Ogu music as they fit into Turino's (2001) characteristics of African music. In addition, I will list the instruments employed in the performance of Ogu music and explain how the genres are named. Furthermore, I will describe my approach of Guided Syncretism as I have employed it on Ogu music.

The fourth and final chapter of this thesis contributes to the on-going discourse on the possible co-existence of humans in spite of differences in race, religion and socioeconomic status.

## **CONCLUSION**

Much effort is made daily to birth new genres by fusing elements of various musical cultures. The resulting sound is usually a departure from the original music. While the outcome of my syncretism of Ogu and jazz musics may not be a departure from the norm in this regard, my approach in this research is invested in attempting to preserve

the original sound of Ogu music as much as possible. I aim to maintain the melody and the rhythm of Ogu music tradition, while incorporating jazz harmony and introducing chord-based improvisation on Western instruments. This will effectively achieve the objective of revival and renewal of Ogu music, while making it more appealing to the musically literate younger generation who are reluctant to identify with it in the traditional form in which it currently exists.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter on my theoretical framework features two main interconnected themes. The first theme is the metaphoric use of the colour blue and its shades in elucidating Africa and its diverse cultures and musics. The second theme, feeding on the establishment of heterogeneity of African cultures and musics, employs the Standpoint Theory in analysing differences in perspectives as a result of differences in cultural practices and value systems.

Subsequently, with the application of the above-mentioned themes, I argue for a chain of cause and effect between diversity, differing perspectives and conflicts/marginalisation. In linking the three social variables – diversity, differing perspectives and conflict/marginalization, I will draw my main inference from the Yoruba-Ogu case, while mentioning other applicable instances within Africa. The order in which I will clarify the concepts is the same order in which they occur in the chain of cause and effect.

Moreover, my analysis of the Yoruba-Ogu case is not restricted to the data available through my fieldwork, but also embraces my personal experience as an Ogu child who grew up among Yoruba children. There has been a continuous conversation between my childhood experience and the data from my fieldwork: this chapter features a delicate balance between both. There are points of convergences as well as areas of divergences between the data from my fieldwork and my childhood experience. This is so due to the dynamic nature of culture; much change has occurred over the past three decades of my self-awareness. However, this chapter reconciles both sides through the application of Standpoint Theory.

Also, I contribute to the discourse on Standpoint Theory with my introduction of Varied in-group Standpoint, which was evident through the analysis of my data. Standpoint

Theory and Varied in-group Standpoint will be thoroughly dissected later on in this chapter. As a point of departure, I will proceed to discuss diversity within Africa.

## **AFRICA IS BLUE: A METAPHORIC APPROACH TO HETEROGENEITY**

They come with the assumption that there is such a thing as African or Asian or American Indian music, *disregarding boundaries obvious to the host* (emphasis mine). Thoughtful members of all societies regard their own music as something special and the ethnomusicologist is accused of underrating its musical diversity (Nettl, 1983:153).

Like all the individual shades in the spectrum of what constitutes the colour blue, African cultures, though all denoted as African, are heterogeneous. To the undiscerning western-classical-influenced ear, all African music might be quintessentially made up of complex rhythms, out-of-tune singing and simple scale structures, thinking of African music as a homogeneous entity – Africa is blue. Recounting his experience of African music in an interview, however, C. Waterman concluded that “African music is not a wide outpouring of unbridled emotion, but rather is music fundamentally concerned with principles like restraints, balance and sharing” (quoted in Campbell, 1995:39, 42). The above-mentioned elements, in different combinations create the unique characteristics by which different cultures are identified – there are shades of blue.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars in what would be known as Ethnomusicology erroneously represented Africa as homogeneous. At this stage, the works of Hornbostel (1928), Herskovits (1924,1930) and Jones (1949), among others, featured prominently. Reflective of the political scene and how Africa was viewed at that epoch in history, many of these writings were evolutionist, comparative and teleological in approach. It was common for these scholars to generalize about African cultures and African music. These scholars focussed mainly on African rhythms to the neglect of other aspects of African music. During the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars such as Jones (1954) began to canvass for the rethinking of African music.

As the fields of Anthropology and Ethnomusicology advanced in the 1960s and during the subsequent decades in the twentieth century, scholars began to give credence to the uniqueness of every people (Nettl, 2005: 153). It became more obvious to scholars that African music is synonymous with heterogeneity and diversity.

Often loosely used, the abstraction African music may not depict more than a response of 'blue' to the question 'what is the colour for the event?' Blue, as used in the context of this thesis, does not in any way suggest mood or emotion. My focus is to draw attention to the existing nuances of cultures in Africa, which affect thought processes, music-making and daily life. Thus my use of the colour blue is convenient for my analysis as it has numerous distinctly named shades. Though communication is administered largely through speaking in all cultures, an understanding of what is said is a function of one's level of proficiency in the language of communication. In the same vein, though music exists in almost all cultures, an understanding of each musical culture is a function of one's level of exposure to such musical traditions. What sounds in-tune or out-of-tune, for instance, is thus largely relative. Akpabot (1986:41) observed the diversity in Nigeria and purported the possibility of differentiating ethnic groups by the kind of rhythms they play.

Although my focus is not on chromatics (the study of colours), it is necessary to mention that there are said to be at least sixty shades of the colour blue, ranging from Ice blue to Midnight blue. Moreover, within one shade of blue, there are several more hues. Claustre and Maritorea (2003: 1514-1515), for instance, pointed out "there are numerous shades of Ocean Blue; caused by the numerous components that determine the colour of the ocean." In the same vein, African music varies from one society to the next and also within a specific culture. Southern African bow music, Shona *mbira*, Igbo *atilogwu*, Yoruba *apala* and Ogu *mase* musics are variants of African music and analogous to the different shades of colour blue. Ogu music, if placed side-by-side with the bow music of southern Africa, sounds totally different, yet both fall under the broad categorisation of African music. In essence they are both 'blue' but are at different ends of the spectrum, similar to the comparison of the palest Ice Blue with the darkest Midnight Blue. It is essential to guard against the characterisation of genres that came



to be popularised and identified through the condescending lenses of early anthropologists mentioned earlier (Hornbostel, 1928 and Herskovits, 1924, 1930). There are so many in-betweens in African music that broad categorisations lead to obscuring many unique styles. Furthermore, *zato*, *mase*, *pakre*, *ajogan*, and *kpatcha*, being genres of Ogu music are depictive of the different hues of the same shade of blue.

Based on the foregoing, the diversity of African music is corroborated in the existence of several variants of the same musical type just like there are variants of Ocean Blue. Certain shades of the colour blue are so different one would perceive them as completely different colours whilst others are so similar that, if placed side by side to each other, one will likely conclude that they are the same shade. This extreme divergence and imperceptible difference, in two different shades, exists in African music as well. While *mase* and *pakre* are completely different with regard to the instruments used, vocal style and occasions during which they are performed... the difference between *jegbe* and *ajogan* are imperceptible to the outsider; yet the insider can tell them apart by merely listening to the *ogan* (bell) pattern. This proliferation of genres is typical other African cultures as well.

### **THE STRANGE BLUE: DISCOURSE ON ACUTE RESPONSE TO CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

My consciousness of the difference between shades of blue is not unrelated to my membership, as a child, to the Boys' Brigade: a church-based paramilitary organization. The Boys' Brigade uniform was blue. Different shades of blue distinguished the ranks. Members individually purchased their blue textile, which was the prescribed material for the Boys' Brigade uniform. Conformity to the shade for each rank was of paramount importance. One who deviated from the shade was sanctioned and his offending costume confiscated. Adorning 'a strange blue' attracted sanctions in the Boys' Brigade, just as having a different variant of African culture still meets with subtle disapproval and even social marginalization as in the Yoruba-Ogu case. Ogu language and accent is scorned largely among the Lagos Yorubas, as it is 'the strange blue' in that context.

Similar to the Boys' Brigade's expected shade of blue, the Yorubas have a set of unwritten expectations of what cultural sophistication should be. As these pre-conceived notions are not met by Ogu culture, the result is disapproval expressed through derogatory jokes and name-calling. Another example within the Nigerian social context: it is not uncommon for the Yoruba to generalise that the Igbo are rude; this labelling points to an unmet expectation imposed by the Yoruba on what respect is. Whilst Yoruba boys prostrate themselves to show respect (or bend down with a finger touching the ground) when greeting their parents, Igbo boys may bow their heads slightly. The Yorubas who have observed this mannerism therefore conclude that the Igbo lack respect. It is an issue of an unmet expectation, or coming into contact with 'a strange blue'. These differences in socialisation have created tensions in the coexistence between the Yoruba and Igbo over time. One instance of such tension was manifested during the 2015 gubernatorial elections in Lagos, when the Oba (monarch) of Lagos was said to have uttered hate speech against the Igbos resident in Lagos. Oba Akinolu allegedly threatened to drown the Igbos in the Lagos lagoon should they fail to vote for his prescribed candidate during the elections. Oba Akinolu's utterance resulted in a nationwide tension between Igbos and Yorubas (Ahmed, 2015).

Cultural heterogeneity is expressed in multiple languages, arts, knowledge, customs, belief systems, laws and other cultural means. The culture shock brought about by heterogeneity (as illustrated above) produces varied reactions and is sometimes accentuated, resulting in the perpetuation of hostility, violence and the marginalization of people bearing culture dubbed as 'strange'. Ting-Toomey and Chung's (2012) 'Understanding Intercultural Communication' captures the issue of responses to cultural differences well. Human conflicts, wars and marginalization have mainly arisen due to differences in culture, values and expectation.

Conversely, culture shock could be subtler and in the form of latent disapproval. As a result of culture shock, cultural chauvinism and ethnocentrism are common. Out-group cultural practices are viewed as barbaric, brutish and crude or unrefined whilst in-group practices are justified or excused. Due to cultural chauvinism, ethnic groups and individuals attempt to 'refine' or modernise other cultures. This is evident in a

missionary's assertion after listening to the Kikuyu congregation in Kijabe, Kenya, that she was eager to teach them "how to sing properly" (Scott, 2009:13). Though an African, this person had her roots in Western classical music and sought to impose her standards on another culture.

The 'strange blue' circumstance transpires in the current musical context in Lagos as well. Music making in Lagos today has been overly influenced by the ideals of Western Classical music, which has caused a deviation from the norms of nascent African musical practices. Traditional musical types that do not conform to the ideals of Western Classical tonality are viewed as inferior and attempts are made to ensure compliance by the younger generation of educated African music performers. Badagry Ogu music, for instance, has been through numerous stages of transformation and its essence tampered with, in order to ensure its conformity to Western-influenced Yoruba genres. In the process of doctoring non-conforming musical types, a mutilation of unique musical practices occurs. The original musical texts are aligned to the requirements of the status quo rather than developed into different forms. A case in point of Ogu music, which has been influenced by Western diatonic inflection, thereby altering the meaning of the text can be found in the song *zemihin*. *Zemihin* is a contemporary Ogu-love song, which literally means 'carry me'. The meaning of the text '*n hen hode w abo na do hawe, de a no do hemi gbo we no jeji nu mi*' from *zemihin*, has been significantly altered due to the adoption of the diatonic tonal inflection. The musical notes to which '*jije numi*' is sung alters the meaning of the entire phrase. The entire phrase translates as 'whenever I discuss an issue with you, the way you respond pleases me'. '*Jije numi*' means '...pleases me'. However, the musical notes to which that section of the text is sung literally changes the meaning to 'hit cutlass for me'.

Ogu music, being the 'strange blue', has been tailored to adopt the characteristics of popular Yoruba music, namely *juju* music and highlife. The hitherto mutilation of Badagry Ogu music, which is thoroughly discussed in the next chapter, is not only carried out by Yoruba musicians but also by Ogu musicians; who have been influenced by Yoruba and Western Classical musics.

As Edward Said points out in *Culture and Imperialism* “the early description of metropolitan West of their overseas territories was stereotypical. Their notion was to bring civilization to primitive or barbaric people. Flogging or death or extending punishment was required when they misbehaved or became rebellious because they mainly understood force or violence best. They were not like us and for that reason deserved to be ruled” (Said, 1993:xii). Within Africa, the perpetuation of notions of ‘them’ and ‘us’ exists in subtler ways. Based on the evidence available to me through books and oral tradition, I propose that one of the reasons for the violent treatments meted out by the colonial masters, to their African subjects, might have been a result of the sharp contrast between their cultures and those of Africans.

Waterman (1990:3, 14-16, 89) noted that the larger Yoruba ethnic group of southwestern Nigeria was a creation of nationalists, seeking independence for Nigeria and as such needed a united front to fight the common enemy – the colonial masters. Within the Yoruba ethnic group, there is a vast spectrum of diversity and dialects. There are subtle disagreements and hostilities. It was common in times past, for some Yorubas to discourage their children from marrying into other Yoruba sub-cultures. However extreme this may appear, such hostilities exuded by certain Yorubas towards other Yorubas are less intense compared to the hostility the Yorubas, as a cultural unit, exude towards Ogu people, who have fewer similarities with the Yorubas. In other words, I advance the notion that Yorubas are likely to be more tolerant to the cultures similar to their own.

The reaction to the contrast between cultures and musical types may be proportionate to the degree of their uniqueness from each other. Sharp contrast in culture might have been responsible for the extreme hostility and violence witnessed during the colonial era. Consequently, African societies experience differences that are not as pronounced as those between Africa and the West and as such react in subtle disapproval, labelling and sometimes non-violent marginalisation as seen in the Yoruba-Ogu case. The reactions of Africans to African cultures similar to their own are thus likely to be subtle, primarily because they are like close shades of the same colour. Although subtle, within an African context, cultural hegemony saturates day-to-day interactions. The idea of the

use of colours and shades in explaining cultural marginalization is captured in the cross-disciplinary sphere of Standpoint Theory, which is dissected further in the next section.

## **STANDPOINT THEORY**

Standpoint Theory is a postmodern approach to explaining different perspectives held by individuals or groups, which occupy different socioeconomic or gender strata. Hekman (1997:343) argued that social realities would be perceived differently as material conditions change, that is, perspectives change with change in the social class of the individual. Furthermore, Lenz (2004:98) clarified Standpoint as “an understanding of perspective and experience as part of a larger social setting – that is a standpoint is *an intellectual achievement* (emphasis mine) that reflects political consciousness.” Made popular by gender-related discourses, Standpoint holds that perspectives are formed based on one’s membership of a particular group. Members of a group are more likely to share similar perspectives about their group and other groups.

Standpoint theorists opine that membership of a particular culture and sub-culture places the individuals on a platform from which the society can be viewed. An important, yet controversial stance of Standpoint Theory is its argument that the less privileged are privy to a more accurate knowledge of social realities (Harding, 1991: 121). A standpoint is more than a social location and can be collectively achieved “through engaging in the struggle required to construct an oppositional stance” (Wood, 2005:61). Individuals are often socialized into the perspectives of their social group. If perspectives are learned, then such learned perspectives can change: This is a characteristic of Standpoint Theory known as dynamism.

Centred on the foregoing argument, perspectives on issues are also diverse across the continent of Africa as a result of the significant cultural diversity and varied social experiences. Individuals view social phenomena through the tint of their culture or the cultures into which they have been socialized. Thus, insight into the perspectives of a culture involves comprehending the different aspects of the complex whole. This is validated by the varied cultural viewpoints in Africa and explains why some Yorubas

experience surprise, curiosity or shock when encountering certain aspects of Ogu culture. The marginalisation of Ogu culture by the Yoruba could have arisen from the view of reality from a Yoruba cultural standpoint that negated a realisation of the possibility of other views from other cultural standpoints.

Considering the possibility of different perspectives as a result of the membership of different cultural groups, I will subsequently adapt Standpoint Theory to the discourse of cultural marginalization, drawing inferences from the Yoruba-Ogu case.

### **AN ADAPTATION OF STANDPOINT THEORY TO CULTURAL MARGINALIZATION: THE VIEW THROUGH TINTS**

Having mentioned the possible relationship between group membership and perspectives, I will reiterate that different perspectives could lead to culture shock, conflict or marginalization. Other reactions to different perspectives would include surprise, curiosity and intrigue. My focus will be on the unpleasant reactions and the possibility of analysing them.

Taking a cue from the Hegelian model and Marxism, conflicts and social marginalisation have been proven to be an outgrowth of different perspectives, owing to membership of different socio-economic status groups. In other words, marginalisation based on differing perspectives is not unique to the realm of cultural interface. It can be observed, as we will subsequently see, in other forms of stratified relations. Wherever there is stratification there is a likelihood of the presence of different perspectives, and wherever there are different perspectives, conflict and/or marginalisation are likely to exist. This is because each group views social reality through the tint of its group norms. One's specific group is capable of tinting such a person's perspective in one direction or the other.

A brief discussion of the Hegelian model, being the bedrock of Standpoint Theory alongside Marxism, will facilitate a more comprehensive outlook on the import of Standpoint Theory to the discourse of cultural marginalization. Although the Yoruba-Ogu relationship does not translate directly as the master-slave relationship, which Hegel

explained, his analysis of differences in perspectives as a result of the membership of different groups, applies to a great extent.

The Hegelian model considers unequal power relations as the reason for differences in social perspectives (Hegel, 1807; in International Communication Association Annual Meeting, 2012). Using the master-slave relationship, Hegel submitted that the standpoint of the master is hugely different from that of the slave and their standpoints affect what each of them can or cannot see. Individuals of different status groups and at different rungs of the social hierarchy possess dissenting opinions on social realities. As long as there is social stratification, in Hegel's view, perspectives will remain diverse and individuals will form their perspectives based on their standpoints or their groups' standpoints.

Furthermore, the Hegelian view holds that some standpoints are less accurate than others. Those at the periphery stand a better chance of a more accurate perspective than those in the centre. As the subservient in a master-slave relationship, slaves have the responsibility of understanding their masters, as an understanding of their master is necessary for their survival. Being able to anticipate the preferences and interpret the mood and desires of the masters connote virtues to the slaves whereas, the masters do not need to reciprocate in understanding their slaves. Thus, subservient groups and those on the periphery are privy to a more holistic and accurate view of the society than those at the centre. In the same vein Harding holds the view that the disadvantaged develop perspectives that are less partial and less distorted than those occupying the privileged social status groups (Harding, 1991:121). This is not an argument for a better or more appropriate standpoint; it rather points to differing perspectives as a product of different social location.

Marxism, in consonance with Hegelian theory, did not only note that the haves and have-nots do not share the same perspectives on social reality, but also pointed out that the proletarian perspectives on social occurrences is more accurate and comprehensive. Karl Marx (1894/1993; in International Communication Association Annual Meeting, 2012) understood 'standpoint' as arising from material and social conditions that shape a group's experiences while focusing on such conditions under

capitalism, which he viewed as a system of exploitative power relations (ibid). 'Class' in Marxist theory is the entry point, meaning that making sense of social relations and influences of other processes starts with the notion of class.

The masters in the Hegelian model and the haves in Marxism share similar perspectives while the slaves in Hegelian model and have-nots in Marxism conversely share the same worldview. Adding to the discourse is Hegel's view of the accuracy of the perspectives of the subservient. Hegel's view is borne out of his explanation that the subservient requires an understanding of the perspective of his master to fulfil his role in the power relationship. Similarly, Ogu people at the margins of the relationship have imbibed Yoruba culture as a survival mechanism in Yoruba-dominated south-western Nigeria. This explains why Badagry Ogus speak Yoruba and the Yorubas do not speak Ogu. It is a requirement for the Ogu to learn how to speak Yoruba and understand Yoruba culture as their survival depends on their ability to 'be Yoruba' in the Nigerian milieu. With the contributions of Hegel and Marx to the development of Standpoint Theory, I do not desire to echo the obvious on the existence of varied perspectives informed by social stratification. It is imperative, however, to mention that the standpoint of Ogu people is clearly distinct from that of the Yoruba. The difference in outlook and perspective, despite geographical proximity, can be traced to the doorstep of their cultural difference.

Perspectives from different standpoints can be likened to views through different tints. While different standpoints permit different angles of reality, different tints alter the appearance of reality. Provided the object being viewed remains unchanged; views from different tints are tainted based on the degree of the tint, so do perspectives change based on varying standpoints. I refer to the manner of greeting cited earlier: the action of a boy who bows his head slightly to greet his father, when analysed from a Yoruba standpoint, is judged to be rude, while it is perceived as normal from Igbo standpoint.

### **COMPARISON IS AT THE ROOT OF JUDGEMENTALISM**

One thing is considered comparatively better than another, as meaning is derived through their interconnectedness. This interplay between cultures can, therefore, bring



about prejudice and discrimination. Ogu culture is considered less civilised based on the ideals of what is considered civil in the Yoruba culture. In other words, the Ogu are looked down upon when viewed through the tint of Yoruba culture. Furthermore, Harding noted that all standpoints are “partial and perverse” and standpoints have little to do with truth claims (or better perspective). They rather depend more on a preferred conceptual entry point (Harding, 1991:127). The idea portrayed here is not the superiority or accuracy of Ogu perspectives in relation to those of the Yoruba, but a depiction of the role played by diverse perspectives in the experience of culture shock and social marginalisation. My focus is on how membership of a social group distinctly shapes members’ experiences, knowledge and ways of interacting.

### **STANDPOINT IS ACQUIRED, NOT ASCRIBED**

It is important to note that standpoints are not ascribed but acquired. While this is partly factual, the learned characteristic of standpoints needs to be taken into consideration. Culture is not inborn, but acquired through the process of socialisation. A standpoint, in the same manner, can be transferred through the same social processes employed to propagate culture. If standpoint is learned, then it is susceptible to being influenced by the various agents of socialisation such as peers, mass media, social media and educational institutions to mention but a few (Trompenaars, 1996; Brake 1976; Dexter1985). The periphery groups can adopt voices within a dominant group. As Lugones notes, minority voices might have been shunned or erased, as no social group is truly homogeneous (Lugones, 1994).

The dominant group, with numerical strength, stands a better chance to control the mass media, educational and religious institutions. Whoever wields the control of the mass media has the power of shaping public opinion of what is desirable or not. Hekman (1993:359) succinctly stated it thus; “those who wield the control of the media are capable of controlling the perspectives of those occupying the unprivileged social position, who in turn may become less sensitive to their own marginal state”. Owing to the control of the mass media, education and religious institutions, the younger generation of the less dominant culture could be socialized to accept the perspectives of the dominant group as well as the norm of their subservience. This is precisely the case

with Ogu youths. In a Yoruba-dominated Lagos, Ogu children, schooling among Yorubas are socialised through their peers and social media to accept the subservience of their culture. This situation was confirmed through field experience and evidence from my childhood as an Ogu boy.

The complex interplay between diversity, perspective and conflicts, as discussed earlier on in this chapter, sets the Ogu child up for the struggle of attempting to become more like the Yoruba. Yoruba youth, on the other hand, are unsympathetic to the marginal status of Ogu people, as both groups have been socialized to adopt the Yoruba standpoint.

### **VARIED IN-GROUP STANDPOINTS**

Having discussed that Standpoint is achieved and not ascribed, I will focus on the possibility of Varied in-group Standpoints. Going by Lenz's (2004:98) definition of Standpoint as "... an intellectual achievement that reflects political consciousness", it occurred to me that membership of a group does not guarantee the acquisition of the group's standpoint. If standpoint is beyond social positions and can be learned, by extension, there could be different degrees of awareness of the perspectives of a social group. Certain individuals are more aware of the perspectives contained within a particular social group than others. Furthermore, if there are degrees of awareness of the perspectives of a social group, certain factors could contribute to a higher level of this awareness. Having been exposed to Western classical music as a chorister, I grew up with the notion of the inferiority of Ogu music compared to Western Classical and Yoruba music. My friends with whom I shared a similar childhood experience have the same bias. Placed side by side with my field experience, my childhood bias is shared by Badagry youth today, who are unwilling to explore their musical heritage. This is what I refer to as a xenocentric worldview.

At times individuals are unable to quantify their experiences due to their lack of exposure to different situations with which they can compare their current position. Notably, within the same group, the standpoints from which individuals perceive social realities may differ. Furthermore, individuals in advantaged groups can possess a Varied

in-group Standpoint from other members of their status group; such Varied in-group Standpoints may thus enable broader perspectives of the status quo and as such, the margins become obvious. When the margins are more obvious, the individual becomes more objective, having learnt about the perspectives of others. For instance, Marx himself was not a proletariat and neither was Hegel a slave, as noted by Harding (1991). These two scholars were, however, able to depict the situation in the margins as a result of their Varied in-group Standpoints. The concept of Varied in-group Standpoint reiterates the idea that despite belonging to a social group, individuals may either be more conscious of the perspectives of their own group and seek to advance it or may not share the perspective of their group. For instance, among the Yorubas, there are those who possess a Varied in-group Standpoint from their in-group, which allows them to be less ethnocentric in their dealings with Ogas.

The assumption of essentialism as used in the feminist Standpoint Theory is that “all women share the same socially grounded perspective by virtue of being women” (International Communication Association Annual Meeting, 2012). Some women are, however, more aware of the feminists’ position by reason of their access to information/knowledge that has aroused their consciousness. Not all women will even be aware of their marginal state or attempt to challenge it, due to their regarding the current disposition as the norm of society. And then there are black feminists who have a different take on feminism from their white counterparts, due to their simultaneous exposure to racial and gender issues.

Access to knowledge could vary individuals’ standpoint and empower them greatly; thus improving their capacity to withstand marginalisation (Harding, 1991:127). The Ogu who occupy prestigious posts in Lagos and have identified with Ogu movements have encouraged more of the ground-level members to uphold their Ogu standpoint. This response by Ogu elites is propelled by an awareness of Ogu marginalization, informed by the varied platforms such individuals occupy. In essence, those who occupy more informed standpoints can enhance the adoption of particular standpoints by those who are less aware of such standpoints.

Changing a standpoint, however, is in reality more complex than merely changing a tint through which one's social realities are perceived. A standpoint is catalysed through socialisation which is more encompassing, and in Marx's words, middle class individuals would have to commit 'class suicide' in order to grasp the standpoint of the working class. Social phenomena take on different interpretations based on the varying values of different cultures. The totality of human experiences is interpreted relative to culturally defined standards; from what tastes good, what is humorous, what sounds good musically to what is considered beautiful, the impact of culture cannot be overemphasised.

## **CONCLUSION**

Initially ethnographers approached Africa with an evolutionist outlook without taking cognisance of the heterogeneity of the continent's cultures. Nettl's (1983) writings on the issue capture this well. Western researchers, distinguishing between Western music and the broad classification of African music, ignored the clear-cut distinctions between the music of different cultures within Africa. Nettl (1983) noted the tendency in early ethnomusicologists, to approach non-Western music with the methods of Western music, making comparisons with evolutionist overtones and imposing research methods so that their findings would accommodate their basic assumptions (Nettl, 1983:262).

Labels such as African music and Yoruba music have reduced vast and widely diverse musical cultures to simple homogeneous categories, which could easily be understood within the cognitive categories of early amateur ethnomusicologists. Recent writings by Agawu (2003), however, have advocated a rethinking of the representation and approach of African musics. Notably, this approach of imposing one's ideals on others is not exclusive to the West. It has been inherited by and is endemic among Africans as seen in the interactions of the Yoruba with their Ogu neighbours. Yet within the boundary of a nation, different shades of African cultural heritage coexist. Thus, Berlin and Kay (1991) proposed the need for each culture (shade of blue) to be considered within its specifics.

The diversity of African music may not be obvious to outsiders, but proves too obvious to be ignored by the insiders. Each of the 'shades' of African music and culture must thus be approached on its own merits without a prior outlook of semantic universals (Berlin & Kay, 1991).

Tracing the chain of cause and effect between diversity, differing perspectives and conflict/marginalization, this chapter on my theoretical framework has discussed cultural marginalisation within Africa using the Yoruba-Ogu case. As my case study has revealed, cultural marginalization could be linked to differing perspectives owing to cultural heterogeneity. The interconnectedness of diverse and differing perspectives could give meaning to different ideas or positions. This may possibly bring about ethnocentrism though, as people begin to view other cultures through the tint of their own 'blue' – their specific culture. Themes such as diversity and difference of perspectives may lead to culture shock and the possible marginalization of the smaller cultural group.

Using the metaphor of shades of blue to represent diversity within the African context, I explained that the Yorubas disapprove of the Ogu shade of African culture and such disapproval sometimes leads to sanctions and social marginalisation. When exposed to unfamiliar cultural practices of the Ogu people, who are a numerically weaker cultural group, the larger Yoruba ethnic group have responded with the intent to 'correct' such practices. This process involves the imposition of one's cultural ideals onto the weaker group in order to force them to adopt the dominant standpoint.

In recent times, with increased internal cohesion among Badagry-Ogu people facilitated by the social media, there have been non-violent resistance to such marginalisation. There has begun a gradual tilt towards Ogu consciousness by Badagrians as the youth have begun to embrace their idiosyncrasies to gain their freedom from a xenocentric worldview, which has persisted for decades. This social process of dominance and resistance is the result of cultural imperialism and colonialism and other subtle forms of marginalization.

My submission is that when people cannot tolerate divergent cultural practices of a weaker group, they may utilise factors such as numerical strength to subjugate the members of the smaller culture. The dominant group may not hesitate to marginalize the minority group in order to normalise its standpoint. Due to the fact that music is a component of culture that is easily accessible, it reflects cultural stance in a huge way. It follows that the ideology of cultural dominance is evident in the musical practices of the dominant group being incorporated into the music of the subservient group. In the Yoruba-Ogu case, rather than approach Ogu music with the specificity it requires, Yoruba performers have attempted to impose the ideals of Yoruba popular music on Ogu music. This is in order to keep Ogu music as close as possible to the common practice in Yoruba popular music, indicative of the reluctance to accept diversity.

Initially every creative process will go through its teething stage before it matures and it is at this stage that the status quo will attempt to resist innovative moves. Ogu music has not been allowed this opportunity of growth as the predator forces in Yoruba popular genres have squashed innovations on Ogu music in the past. This may not be disconnected from the reason why Ogu music has been underrepresented in the mapping of Nigerian music history.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **MUSICAL PRESERVATION THROUGH GUIDED SYNCRETISM: THE CASE FOR OGU MUSIC**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

As mentioned in my previous chapter on the theoretical framework, the field of Ethnomusicology has progressed beyond the interpretations of African musics offered in the writings of Hornbostel (1928) and Herskovits (1924, 1930). Yet for me, a few reservations regarding writings on African musics by Ethnomusicologists of the present age still remain. Some literature on African music have made broad and inaccurate generalizations that do not hold true for some of the cultures within Africa. There are cases where researchers, after one or two years of field experience in one locality on the African soil, have written books with ambitious titles. Recently, I enthusiastically began reading Stone's (2005) book, boldly entitled "Music in West Africa: Experiencing Music, Experiencing Culture", only to discover that the researcher had conducted her fieldwork among the Kpele people of Liberia and had made generalizations based on that experience. Generalizations about West African music in the text made me doubt any awareness on her part, of the existence of Badagry in 'West Africa'.

First and foremost, Stone began with a claim that her book "centered on performance in West Africa" (Stone 2005:1). This is a claim that would only be valid if the research had covered at least more than half of the cultures of West Africa. A further discourse on Stone's book would distract me from my current point, as the issue of the representation of African culture is not my focus in this chapter. I only refer to it in order to lay a foundation for my discourse of the variety that exists within even a single musical culture: Ogu culture.

Although researchers have on occasions written volumes based on their field experiences, I think of field experiences as 'snapshots' or at best 'video clips' because they capture and are restricted to, a particular place and time in the history of a people. To make generalizations about all or most West African music, after a period of fieldwork

in a particular West African society, is thus as inaccurate as making generalizations about an extended family after spending a limited amount of time with just one family member. In three decades of being self-aware, I had made visceral conclusions on the musical practices of Africans until I came in touch with the bow music of southern Africa, which gave me a cultural jolt. For this reason, I advocate in my previous chapter the need for specificity in academic writing. A report on the musical tradition of Kpele culture of Liberia should be entitled “The Music of the Kpele of West Africa” and not merely “The Music of West Africa”. Such bogus titles are misleading and eventually discredit the author. Also, considering Liberia’s unique history, being the freedom camp for repatriated slaves at the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, it is an inappropriate sample for generalization on West African cultural practices.

This chapter on Guided Syncretism as a method of cultural preservation begins with a discourse on Badagry music and how things have changed in the twenty-first century due to globalization. Globalization is defined by the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary as “the fact that different cultures and economic systems around the world are becoming connected and similar to each other because of the influence of large multinational companies and of improved communication”. The same dictionary defines syncretism as “the mixing of different religions, philosophies or ideas”. In this case, syncretism would imply a blend of elements from different musical cultures. For the purpose my research, I have chosen the harmonic element of jazz music and the melodies and rhythms of Ogu music to create a new musical style. Subsequently, I discuss Guided Syncretism as a method of musical preservation. This chapter concludes by focusing on Guided Syncretism as a tool to be considered in preserving cultures, as the world moves towards inevitable cultural hybridity and musical syncretism brought about by the reality of globalization.

### ***Prequel to examining African music:***

I have listed a few thought provoking questions, to serve as a backdrop against which I begin my critique of earlier writings on African musics. Firstly, how many years of continuous exposure to and study of Western classical music does it take for a scholar to be regarded as an authority in the field of Western musicology? Secondly, how does



that compare with fieldwork of a year or two, in an African society, leading to the award of a Doctorate in Ethnomusicology? Thirdly, if one characteristic of culture is its dynamic nature, why then does the discourse on African culture emphasize the past more than the present? Leading on from this, shouldn't writings on African music reflect its different stages rather than treat it as static?

### **A REITIRATION OF DIVERSITY WITHIN ONE MUSICAL CULTURE**

Of the literature I reviewed on the subject of African music, Agawu's (2003) account stood out, as it contains an in-depth analysis of several musical cultures from around the African continent. Agawu's know-how in the discourse of African music can neither be dissociated from his first-hand contact with some African cultures over a period of years, nor his own African heritage. In my opinion, his conclusions are thus more informed than those of non-African ethnographers who make blanket conclusions about African cultures after being in contact with less than 5% of the continent's cultures. Meanwhile, Merriam (1959:13) pointed out the existence of cultures in Africa, which display characteristics that are not general to other African cultures. This reality cannot be treated with levity as such characteristics make for the unique musical styles such cultures possess. In Merriam's words: 'the rhythmic organization and function of hand-clapping and drumming, the two rhythmic devices most frequently used in Africa south of the Sahara, differ' (Merriam 1959:14). Further to this assertion by Merriam, I will add that beyond the rhythmic devices, musical instruments, styles, melodic structure, use of harmony and scales differ across the continent of Africa.

Although African musical cultures may employ similar scales, for instance, the uses of such scales differ from one musical culture to another. Difference in method of scale use may be responsible for why individuals listen to melodies without lyrics and are able to tell from which culture such a melody is likely to come. Also, while some musical cultures among the Yorubas employ the major pentatonic scale, Ogu melodies tend more towards minor tonality: the pentatonic scale is common to both cultures but their melodies do not sound alike due to the difference in the mode of the scale used and the style of melodic construction.

In addressing the issue of misrepresentation of Africa and its cultures, Turino wrote “there is a tendency among North Americans and Europeans to think of Africa as one place, and African music as a single, identifiable phenomenon. The continent of Africa has over 50 countries, however, and linguists have identified at least 800 ethno-linguistic groups. In Nigeria alone, 386 different languages have been identified” (Turino 2001:174). He further stated that musical traditions have strong links with ethno-linguistic groups and as such, it is more appropriate to think of African music in terms of ethno-linguistic groupings rather than in terms of nations (Turino 2001:174).

### **THE ‘AFRICAN-NESS’ OF OGU MUSIC**

This section discusses the uniqueness of Ogu music and the specifics of its genres. This uniqueness could elude the *etic* researcher but is obvious to the performers. The uniqueness of Ogu music is not necessarily to create division but to preserve the beauty in diversity. Agawu (2003) and Nzewi (1997), among others, have done extensive work on the issue of what constitutes African music. Therefore, I will not be repetitive or echo the obvious. Instead, in the same way the aforementioned scholars have distinguished African music from other world music, I hope to distinguish Ogu music from other variants of West African music.

Although Turino’s (2001:171) characteristics of African music has an undertone of essentialism, I have adopted these characteristics only as headings to my discussion of Ogu music as they create a basis for my description. As such I discuss my views on traditional Ogu music here under Turino’s headings.

**Interlocking:** Ogu music is based on the principle of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. When pitches and beats fit together, the resultant whole sounds as a unit, such that the listener may not be able to distinguish its parts. Ogu music typifies this trait: a part played in isolation sounds so simple; the interlocking of many such simple parts produces a complex whole. Listening to Oyono’s ensemble during my fieldwork in Badagry, I noticed the performers were fifteen in number, each playing a simple part, but the ensemble produced a density of sound that could not be separated into its component parts by merely listening, due to its interlocking characteristic.

**Call-and-response:** A sizeable number of Ogu melodies are responsorial. The leader sings in alternation with the chorus. The cantor in Ogu music is required to be adept in melodic improvisation necessary for praise singing at social gatherings. While the cantor improvises, members of the chorus continue playing their percussion instruments. In addition to singing, each chorus member is a percussionist. The cantor gives the call to which members of the chorus respond. The call-and-response sometimes takes the form of exact repetition while at other times, it takes the form of antecedent and consequent, in which case the response is not the same melody as the call.

**Dense and overlapping texture:** The cantor and members of the chorus are not exempt from playing some parts of the underlying rhythm: each plays an *ogan/gunkeke* (bell), *aya* (rattle) or *pli* (small drum) while they sing. The activity of all band members playing a percussive instrument brings about a dense, overlapping texture, which sets the body into motion and catalyses dance. The nature of many Ogu melodies is the initial occurrence of a call-and-response section, which is repeated, then followed by a rhythmically intense vocal and dance section; in which the cantor and chorus punctuate the music with vocalized rhythms till the end of that piece. What follows after this is a return to the beginning of the piece, an improvisation or even a transition to a new piece while the rhythm continues.

**Cyclical and open-ended in form:** Performances of an Ogu musical group goes on for several hours and sometimes overnight, depending on the occasion. A surprising feature of the music is that the transition from one song to another is usually done without a break. The music never stops for the duration of the performance. This is made possible by the cyclical and open-ended form of the music. The cantor plays a major role in cueing the transition, usually after an improvisation section. Turino noted that African music proceeds as an interactive process: this stance is supported by the performances I witnessed during my fieldwork. In consonance with Akpabot's view on African music, Ogu traditional music has a free form as it develops from the beginning, without a break, until they stop (Akpabot, 1986: 65).

## **OGU TRADITIONAL MUSIC DISCOURSE**

A major characteristic of Ogu music is the uniqueness of the traditional instruments, mostly percussion instruments, employed in its performance. Each genre of Ogu music to be discussed later on in the write-up, features a different lead percussion instrument. The lead percussion instrument in most cases distinguishes the genre. Some of the genres as revealed by Dr. Pius Fasinu<sup>4</sup> (my major interlocutor for this section on Ogu musical genres), are more prevalent among the Porto Novo Fon people of Benin Republic. This is due to the waning strength of Ogu traditions in Badagry, as discussed in previous chapters. The major components of traditional Ogu music are the melody and rhythm. However, the following section zooms in on scale usage in Ogu melodies and the time signatures employed in Ogu rhythms. Ogu music thrives mainly on a large ensemble of percussion instruments and cantor-chorus singing. The words and melody are inseparable (Warren and Warren, 1970:28).

### **Scale use in Ogu melodies**

The musical scales used by a community are not merely the result of objective imitation of pitches and intervals experienced within a limited environment but are equally subjective, being the innate reaction of the community to the sound and quality of musical notes and the general acceptance of certain intervals and pitches as opposed to others, the one appearing to be 'in-tune' or locally correct and the other 'out of tune' or alien (Tracey, 1958:19).

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<sup>4</sup> My interactions with Dr. Pius Fasinu, one of the administrators of the Online Forum for Ogu People, dates back fifteen years – while I studied towards my Bachelors degree in Sociology, he studied towards his Bachelors in Pharmacy at the Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State, Nigeria. Dr. Fasinu was raised in the music and traditions of Ogu people and has been resolute on Ogu cultural revival. He has been the most easily accessible of my interlocutors, teachers or respondents, having studied towards his doctoral degree at the University of Western Cape, Cape Town. On his graduation and relocation to the United States, he has remained accessible through the telephone and different online chatrooms.

While studying the scales of southern African cultures, Tracey (1958:17) identified the use of pentatonic, hexatonic and heptatonic scales by different musical cultures in Africa. I have not yet come across instruments of fixed pitches among Ogu people, however the pentatonic scales are commonly used in Ogu melodies. In discussing the scales he found common to some African cultures, Hugh Tracey noted; “Pentatonic melodies are strong and vital” (Tracey, 1958:18). Although tritonic, tetratonic, heptatonic and hexatonic scales can also be found around Africa (Akpabot, 1986:4-5); the scope of my research is limited to Ogu music.

How the pentatonic scale is used in constructing melodies may differ from culture to culture and from genre to genre. This is not to rule out the use of diatonic scales in Africa. Even though they might have been introduced as a result of Western contact, they have become ingrained in African popular music. The minor pentatonic scale employed in most traditional Ogu songs is built up with an interval of a minor 3<sup>rd</sup> between the starting note and the next, followed by two intervals each a tone apart followed by an interval of a minor third. The degrees of the scale and the intervals between them indicated in parenthesis are below:

1 (minor 3<sup>rd</sup>) 2 (tone) 3 (tone) 4 (minor 3<sup>rd</sup>) 5 (tone) 1

During the process of transcribing Ogu melodies, a common trend I observed is the resolution to the third degree of the minor pentatonic scale described above (see appendix A). There is an interval of a perfect 4<sup>th</sup> between the root note of the scale and the third degree. In view of this, my approach in harmonizing such resolutions tends towards quartal voicing and modal-harmonic treatments. I will return to this later in this chapter.

Ogu melodies are sung in line with Merriam’s assertion that they are “open and resonant...a wide variety of tone quality is used for deliberate effect” (Merriam 1959:17). On the other hand, Ogu melodies defy Merriam’s thought on African music as regards the absence of melodic modulations. Merriam wrote, “melodies are almost always short, many times fragmentary and repetitive, they do not modulate to other keys, and the form can be described as African ternary, which means that the first section of the

melody is brought back with no modulation in the middle section” (Merriam 1959:17). Ogu melodies sometimes feature modulations, which could be a major 2<sup>nd</sup> or a perfect 4<sup>th</sup> up. The section labelled B in the melodic extraction below is a modulation of a major 2<sup>nd</sup> up. The melody begins in the key of G minor (pentatonic), the 2<sup>nd</sup> bar moves briefly to F minor (pentatonic) but returns in the 3<sup>rd</sup> bar to G minor. The melody continues in G minor (pentatonic) until the section marked B, where it modulates to A minor. The melody returns to the home key 2 bars to the end of the extraction. This practice among Ogu people negates the notion that African melodies do not modulate and that the response is the same as the call.

## Kuluno

Ogu song demonstrating melodic modulation

♩ = 100 **A**

4

8 **B**

11

### Rhythm and time signature

In discussing Ogu rhythm, my aim is to facilitate understanding, particularly for non-Ogu readers. Thus, the terminology I have employed are those commonly used in Western Classical and jazz musical cultures. Also my explanations are not the thoughts of the performers who emphasis the importance of ‘feeling the rhythm’ over its theoretical analysis.

The rhythm plays a major role in Ogu music. There are sections of musical performances where the melody stops while the rhythm carries on. During this time the dance, in which the upper part of the body is more active, becomes more intense. Ogu rhythms are combinations of several interlocking rhythmic motifs and time-signatures. The simultaneous use of more than one time-signature is a strong feature in Ogu music (Warren & Warren, 1970:32; Kauffman, 1980:9,16; Locke, 1982:233). Ogu rhythm embraces different time signatures at the same time: it is not uncommon for 3/4 and 4/4 to coexist in the same bar at the same time in different parts. While performing with my experimental band, which plays my transcriptions of Ogu music, the coexistence of different time signatures in Ogu rhythms have become more obvious. Members of the band have had to count in different time signatures depending on what each feels from the rhythm. While some have interpreted a 6/8 time in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, because they have had to play three equal beats consistently in bars of 6/8, the parts still sound together as a unit. The rhythm is kaleidoscopic in nature: depending on which instrument you are listening to, you can hear the rhythm in different ways and in different time signatures.

I observed that the original performers of the music do not think in terms of time signatures however. In fact, the concepts of musical measures and time signatures are strange to the majority of them. Despite its essentialist's undertone, I found Warren and Warren's (1970:35) assertion – "The African, however, doesn't think in terms of 'bar lines' any more than he thinks of 'scales'" to be true for Oyono's band members. Where there is no bar-line in mind, displacement of accents and syncopation become non-issues. The accent is displaced often as the music progresses and it is not thought of as a special feature, but as the norm. The performers may not even be aware of what the Western musically trained ear will identify as rhythmic displacement. In particular, the older generation of performers, who are not exposed to Western delineation of musical time, are neither aware that they are crossing rhythms nor playing different time signatures simultaneously. They simply 'feel' the music and respond with the appropriate rhythmic pattern.

The time-line acts as a yardstick by which means each performer (from drummer to singer) can determine his or her rhythmic relationship to every other performer (Warren

and Warren, 1970:38). Agawu (2003:62, 95) noted that in many African languages there are no words for rhythm. This holds true for the Ogu language. Rather, in response to the different interpretations of African musical practices/elements by non-Africans and Western-influenced Africans, I opine that the complexity of Ogu rhythms, for instance, perceived by outsiders, are indeed extraneous to the performers with whom I closely related. As Agawu (2003:63) pointed out about many African musical cultures, the performers conceive and interpret their music in a different way from my Western-classical-influenced approach. This is not to rule out the importance of documenting the theory behind Ogu music and making it accessible to non-Ogu musicians/scholars who may be interested in learning about Ogu music. I will return to this shortly.

Agawu (1995) presents two extremes of the argument on the complexity of African music. On one side of the divide are scholars such as Butlan (1979:60) writing: “if the African falls from heaven, he will fall down to a beat”. Also, Waterman (in Helen Myers 1983:28) opined that rhythmic complexity is the hallmark of African music. In the same vein, writings by R. Waterman (1948), Jones (1954), Gbeho (1957:63), Weman (1960:58), Kauffman (1980), Temperley (2000) all view African rhythms as complex. Their views are captured well in Agawu’s book. On the other side of the divide is Agawu’s claim that “African rhythm is an invention, a construction, a fiction, a myth, ultimately a lie.” (2003:61). The following section features my take on Agawu’s critique of the notion of African rhythm.

### **Engaging Agawu’s Proposition of Sameness**

With my roots in a drumming culture, I agree that traditional Ogu drummers may not perceive their rhythm as complex; the notion of complexity is an outgrowth of a comparative study of African rhythm by Westerners. Such a comparative approach to the study of African music pervades the works of early writers on African music (see Hornbostel, 1928, Herskovits, 1924, 1930, Jones, 1949, 1954). However, the creation of a theory around Ogu rhythm with the active involvement of the performers may not necessarily demean the art as Agawu (2003) has suggested.



Firstly, I would like to think that many Ogu performers do not want to keep their musics as mysteries to the outsider. If this is the assumption, the description of Ogu music is necessary, however with the active involvement of the performers in the process of such description. The performers of traditional Ogu music may not have described their practice with terms used in Western classical or jazz forms, this, however, is not a basis for the denial of a possible explanation of such performances and the creation of an Afrocentric system for its description. As in many musical traditions, practice exists before theory. Thus, the construct of theoretical bodies of knowledge around Ogu musical genres may serve the purpose of preserving them, while making them more accessible to outsiders.

To further reinforce my point on the construct of a theory around Ogu music, I would point to verbal communications. The speakers of a language are hardly aware of the details phonetics describes about pronunciations. Their lack of awareness, however, does not negate the validity of the argument of phonetics, which would aid in the understanding of the language by researchers. Agawu (2003:64) argued that difference can obscure certain realities and impose extraneous qualities on African musics. Furthermore, he purported that researchers are dedicated to the construct of difference. Against Agawu's (2003:64) argument of the construction of difference by researchers, I respond by stating that difference does exist as my research has revealed. From the use of scale, rhythmic patterns, musical instruments to musical aesthetics employed, there exists much difference between the musical cultures in Africa. The instruments, genres and use of scale in Ogu music discussed here is not the same as that of the Yoruba traditional music. However, I insist that such differences or even the entire musical culture should not be studied without the involvement of the performers. With the emergence of African scholars with active roots in African musical cultures, such studies on African musics will thus become more easily achievable.

## **OGU MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND GENRES**

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, I have merged the instruments and genres under the same section because some of the genres derive their names from the lead percussion instrument employed in their performance. Also, funeral rites are very

important ceremonies and it inspired a lot of genres in the past. While there is the possibility for some African cultures, through assimilation, to have acquired and absorbed musical instruments from other continents, which today are regarded as African, such assimilation is not known among the Ogu people of Badagry. Music in Badagry feature indigenous African instruments, mainly percussion instruments, the same as are used by the Fon people of Porto Novo, Benin Republic and other societies, which play host to Ogu culture within and outside Nigeria.

Certain percussion instruments feature in almost all the genres creating the support rhythm. The style or patterns of drumming, however, differ from one genre to the next. Each genre employs a different combination of percussion instruments. The lead drum featured also distinguishes between genres. For instance, *sato* genre features the *sato* drum. Having mentioned the role of the lead drum in the naming of genres, it is necessary to mention how some of the drums derive their names. As Akpabot (1986) noted, onomatopoeia plays an interesting part in the names given to many Nigerian musical instruments. Some Ogu percussion instruments are named by the sound they produce.

### **The background percussion instruments:**

The ***Ogan***, also known as ***gunkeke*** (bell), is a percussion instrument used in Ogu music. The *ogan* is usually of different sizes: some are small enough to be held in one hand and played with a stick using the other hand, while others are big and can only be stood on the floor while held in position with one hand and played with the other. The *Ogan* keeps the time in Ogu music.

The ***Pli*** is the main background drum in Ogu music. It is small in size compared to the lead drums and it is played with two slim-wooden beaters. It is high pitched and played in combination with two, three or more of the same drum, to create the rhythmic bedrock for Ogu music. When combined, two or three of these drums are tuned to different pitches as they play interlocking rhythms.

**Aya** (shakers) – this is similar to the rattle made with interwoven beads covering the exterior of a gourd. This instrument is not exclusive to Ogu people - but used in many African musical traditions including Yoruba drumming traditions.

The above-listed percussion instruments are used in almost all the genres of Ogu music. The next section highlights the genres of Ogu music and the lead percussion instrument each features.

**Hungan** is a genre of Ogu music named after a long conical drum, which is the lead drum of the style. Ogu people believe a funeral is not complete without the *hungan*. This variant is exclusively for funerals.

**Sato** is a genre named after the *sato* drum. The *sato* drum is the biggest of the drums played in Ogu music. It stands upright and is played by two to three people dancing around the tall drum. The drum stands taller than its players, who jump up at the same time to hit the top of the drum simultaneously. *Sato* genre is a ceremonial style, which is performed very rarely and for specific rites. Males who are bereaved of either or both of their parents play *sato* drum. Also, people who have not passed through the process of initiation into the *Sato* cult are not allowed to see the top of the drum. *Sato* is for extremely important functions such as the coronation of a new monarch and its performance is deemed to have spiritual connotations.

**Mase** is a genre played for social occasions and is perhaps the most popular variant today. It features praise singing and communal dancing. The lead instrument of *mase* is a wooden-box drum known as *masepotin* (literally meaning *mase* box). The *masepotin* is also called *agbale* or *agbalepotin*.

**Pakre** genre uses bamboo slices cut into shape and adapted as clappers in combination with drums. In this genre, hand clapping also plays a major role. This genre mostly occurs in a procession where the performers are participating in a celebration or ritual.

**Ajogan** is the royal dance or royal entertainment. In today's cosmopolitan Ogu societies, the Catholic Church has adopted this style in worship. The major component

of *ajogan* is the mix of *ogans* (bells). The bell is dominant in this style and many bells are combined to establish the rhythm. There is usually no need for a drum. When drums are employed, they come in only occasionally to spice up the music or to create contrast between sections. While the cantor/lead vocalist sings, the drums are silent and only begin to play during the chorus section.

**Kaka** is another genre of Ogu music. It is used often for after-funeral entertainment and other social gatherings. While guests at the function are seated, the band performing *kaka* moves amongst them, singing and drumming. The drums are usually hung on the shoulder unlike other variants where the drums are positioned on the ground. This is because *kaka* is played standing/walking and sometimes moving from house to house.

**Jeke** is a variant of Ogu music not named after a lead percussion instrument. The melody tends towards the major tonality and it seems more influenced by the Western diatonic tonality than other variants.

**Kpacha** was originally performed at funerals but has been adapted for other purposes. The uniqueness of this variant lies in its vocal style.

**Adjahoui** is also not named after a lead percussion instrument; spoken passages typify this variant. Its form is usually open-ended with smooth transitions from one piece to another in the form of a medley.

**Agbadja** focuses on polyrhythmic drumming with cross rhythms, usually interlocking.

**Toba** is played at socials, regardless of the occasion. A specific pattern of handclapping, to support the drumming, typifies this style.

**Zenli** is performed with the clay pot drum, known as *zen*, leading.

**Jegbe**, like *ajogan* is played with a combination of *ogans* (bells) combined with percussive beating of the chest. The performers hit their chests with their palms while they sit in a circle to sing. Handclapping is also alternated with hitting of the chest when the music climaxes. This variant of Ogu music is prevalent among the older males, considered the elders in Ogu society.

**Agome** features the *agome* drum, another drum made from clay. Unlike the *zenli*, which is a pot, *agome* is a membranophone, with skin covering the top of the clay conical frame of the drum.

For the above-named variants of Ogu music, it is unusual for the lead drum to play throughout a piece. The lead/main drum usually plays as the music climaxes and in sections mapped out for improvisation. The *ogan*, *aya* and *pli*, in combination, play the rhythm, while the lead drum is silent.

## **COSMOPOLITANISM AND MUSIC IN AFRICA: THE CASE OF BADAGRY**

The history of Western Classical music espouses the different stages in its development. Antiquity, Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Twentieth century are terms used, not just to map out periods in the development of Western Classical music, but also to map out the different genres and styles. In much the same way, African musics have evolved from what was heard a century ago, though little has been done to document the stages in the development of African musics. Colonialism, activities of missionaries et cetera, have played major roles in the transformation of African cultures, thereby significantly altering the musics of Africans. As a result of this transformation, aspects of the musics of African peoples have been neglected or discontinued while some African musical instruments along with their concomitant genres are at risk of extinction (Kirby, 1965). Agawu (2003) noted that the way Western classical music has been preserved, with much funding for its continuance; African music has not been so preserved.

With Christianity came the notion that some instruments or styles of music are too profane to be used in the worship of God. A vivid impact of the colonial rule in Africa is the loss of aspects of culture. Since culture is entrenched in religion, particularly music cultures, the neglect of traditional African religions with the arrival of Western missionaries meant the neglect of aspects of African musics. Today's metropolitan African societies have been significantly culturally transformed. Conscious efforts have

to be made in certain cosmopolitan African societies to re-live their musical heritages and perform traditional musics, because such have ceased being the norm.

The background of this research is the reality of today's cosmopolitan African society. My childhood experiences and the fact that things have changed so drastically in less than three decades is a pointer to the speedy Westernization of African societies. I speak specifically about Badagry where I grew up and which is highlighted in this research. During my formative years, I lived with my nuclear family and other members of my extended family in the family hamlet referred to as *agbole*. *Agbole* literally means 'family circle' and it was exactly that. Apart from the rooms being built to enclose an open communal space in the middle, the lifestyle was also communal. Children anticipated the moonlight stories told to them by their grandparents and uncles. Everyone went out in the morning to school or work, leaving the senior members of the family at home, but by 4pm the home came alive again with everyone's return. Staying out till 7pm really had to have a good reason behind it. The afternoon play sessions were dominated by African games, although soccer had also gained in popularity among the kids. Subsistence living was still prevalent, though parents had white-collar jobs. Every family owned a little plot of land, which produced the green vegetables for consumption.

We grew up to the melodies of the cradle songs mothers sang, bearing their babies on their backs as they went about their chores. A memory from my childhood is that of mat weaving, which is a common craft among Badagry-Ogu women. The activity of mat weaving preceded the waterside straws, with which the mats are made, produced a musical sound reminiscent of a high-pitched squeak. When mat weaving was done in groups, the sound produced by the same activity carried out by several mat-weavers produce a rhythm to which these women sang. Group work was thus accompanied by singing and rhythm. Likewise, the games children played were accompanied by hand clapping and singing. These and other musical activities that were part of work and play sessions explain why several Ogu parents initially had misgivings about their children wanting to study music.

Being distant from the centre of musical attraction in the core of Lagos, we had no contact with professional musicians as far as I remember; yet each person was an amateur musician. The men had day jobs and they retired to making music in the evenings. Individuals owned their own percussion instruments, which they employed when the need arose. A child learned music gradually and naturally, similar to the manner in which language is acquired. An uncle who owned his own percussion instrument set handed the *ogan* (bell) to his nephew to keep the time as he played rhythms on the drum. This was reinforced in the religious institutions; boys learnt to keep time first by playing the *ogan* (bell) in church. For those who practiced Christianity, the orthodox choirs had the boy sing treble, with his father and grandfather singing in the same choir. It was almost automatic for a child who grew up in Badagry, in the setting I have described, to be able to play some kind of percussion instrument.

I could continue speaking indefinitely about the Badagry of three decades ago. Though Western influence pervaded almost every sphere of the lives of Badagrians of yesteryear, Western ways were not as dominant as we see today. A retrospective look provides a view of mammoth transformation that occurred in African society to date. *Ab initio*, social distance, which is the order of the day in today's cosmopolitan Lagos, was not ingrained in the rubrics of Badagry in the past. Today, each nuclear family has its own mansion or flat fitted with an alarm system and high walls and a spontaneous visit from a family member is no longer encouraged. The African games we played have now been replaced with video games and other Western leisure-time routines such as Facebook and Twitter. Gradually, it has become a rare sight to see the breadwinner of the family at home by 7pm; that is considered early, considering the heavy traffic during peak hours in the emerging mega city, Lagos. Today, the Badagry child's exposure to Western classical music begins from conception, with parents blaring symphonies and band music in the home, rather than traditional African musics. The not-so-elitist African parents play hip-hop, rap and other popular musics.

Taking a cue from Agawu (2003:xviii), the focus of the present discourse is the modern day child who grew up reading Shakespeare, watching Hollywood movies and playing classical piano. This child has been taught in English throughout her/his schooling and

knows more about the French Revolution than the Biafra War. This child dances to funk and hip-hop and will likely have to acquire the skill of traditional African dance if ever s/he needs to. Agawu (2003:xviii) pointed out that this twenty-first century African child wears shirt and trousers to formal functions and jeans to clubs. S/he may never have a reason to wear African attire in a year and when s/he does, it is considered exotic.

Consequent upon the foregoing, which is not exclusive to Badagry, the African child of two decades from now may have to be taught traditional African musical traditions in the same way a Euro-American child is taught traditional African music. The impact of societal and cultural change enhanced by globalization and transculturation cannot be overemphasized.

It has become easier for cultures to mix, with access to other cultures of the world just a click away on the Internet. Also, the ease in geographical mobility, enhancing the possibility of the relocation of families outside their community or continent, is a further aid to the waning Ogu traditions. As alluded to in the second chapter of this thesis, many Badagry children are Ogu only by their middle names; they neither speak the Ogu language, nor do they know about their cultural heritage. Socialization now lies primarily in the hands of educational institutions with Eurocentric curricula. Children grow up singing hymns in church and the style of worship even in new Pentecostal movements takes after the Western popular style of soft rock.

When church pastors talk about worship songs, certain styles of music readily come to mind. It would be considered deviant to play a core African musical style during worship time in some churches in Africa today. Sadly, what we call cultural mix and hybridity is in fact not a mix but the case of one culture subsuming another, and this has been evident in the manner this hybridity has manifested itself in the past three decades. If a mix is an equal blend of cultures, then what cosmopolitan African societies are experiencing cannot be referred to as a mix, but the gradual taking-over of African traditions by Western ways. It is to forestall a total decay and loss of Ogu heritage that I have suggested Guided Syncretism as a method of cultural preservation.



The twenty-first century African child, who has been raised in the context described above, is less likely to have an interest in African traditional music for certain reasons. Firstly, this child's idea of tonality is Western biased and s/he would judge African singing by the ideals of her/his Western-influenced knowledge. Also, the formative years of this African child, whose first language is English, would have been spent learning Western music and as such, s/he may be condescending towards African musical styles. Without dwelling too much on what is, the next section focuses on what could be, and takes a step towards the restoration of the cultural integrity of Ogu people and by extension, Africans.

### **SYNCRETISM: Innovation with Ogu music**

Many Badagrians have absorbed the ideals of Western music. I therefore propose Guided Syncretism, which will enable Western-musically-trained Ogu youths, and those socialised in cosmopolitan African societies, to learn their musical tradition while holding on to the harmonic sophistication of jazz music. Ogu music is rhythmically rich and its melodies appealing. Thus I have retained the rhythms and melodies of the traditional Ogu songs I arranged. My Guided Syncretism method adds jazz harmony to the existing traditional Ogu songs. My idea is not to map out or confine Ogu music but to retain its uniqueness whilst making it more accessible. The reason for this approach will be explicated in my final chapter, under the section on the importance of localization as a tool of economic empowerment.

### **Jazz intervention**

Jazz itself is a product of syncretism. African American blues and Western Classical harmony were merged through a gradual process to bring about what is known today as jazz. Jazz, though fully evolved, is still being influenced and has continued to influence other musical cultures. My approach of Guided Syncretism is another case of an exchange between jazz and traditional music (Nettles and Graf, 1997:8). With a fully developed harmonic system, the influence of jazz on Ogu music in this Guided Syncretism is in the area of harmony, form, combination of instruments and chord-based improvisations.

Agawu (2003:8) identified Western harmony as the most domineering of the three basic dimensions of Western music: melody, rhythm and harmony. While some musical cultures in Africa have their own system of harmony, my research on Ogu music has not revealed any system of harmony. A large number of vibrant urban-popular musical traditions have sprung up all over Africa, each fusing local musical styles with Western musical resources (Turino, 2001:189). This hybridity is not necessarily negative, but there are instances where the uniqueness of such African musics are undermined.

The Ogu music case has not revealed any form of an adoption of Western harmony, instrument, or form. As such, Ogu music lends itself to the intervention of jazz harmony, being harmonically virgin. Also, for the purpose of arrangement for a jazz ensemble and the chord-based improvisational style, I have employed the jazz musical forms in the ensuing syncretic style in this research.

### **The Harmony**

As this thesis is not focused on jazz harmony, I will not dwell on it, as there are many publications on the subject of jazz harmony. I will only mention my approach to harmonizing the traditional Ogu songs I have arranged. Because of the persistent use of the minor pentatonic scale, Ogu melodies are more receptive to modal harmony than non-modal harmony. The two main techniques I employed in arriving at my harmony of the Ogu songs I arranged will be discussed subsequently.

**Chord-tone/tension assignment:** To retain the minor pentatonic sound, I employed the method of chord-tone assignment in harmonizing some of the Ogu songs I transcribed. Chord-tone assignment technique requires the allocation of a predetermined chord-tone to the melody note at the beginning of each bar. This is done while giving credence to the cadence; the musical treatment of resolutions at the cadences take precedence over the assignment of chord-tone. Thus, the melody notes at the cadences may be exceptions to the rule.

This method was employed in the arrangement of *Dagbe dagbe* (see appendix B). The melody note at the first down beat of every bar is assigned the status of the 11<sup>th</sup> of a

minor 11 chord (min 11). With this method of harmony, slight adjustments were made considering musicality and general rules of melody/harmony concord.

**Working backwards from the cadence:** For some of the songs, I started harmonizing from the cadences, backwards to the beginning of the melody. This is also a common practice in working out jazz harmonies.

### **The Arrangements**

At this stage, my Guided Syncretism features arrangements of traditional Ogu songs for a small jazz ensemble consisting of a horn section, rhythm section and voice.

**The horn section**, made up of a trumpet, alto sax, tenor sax, and a baritone sax as the lowest voice, plays the role of the chorus while the voice plays the role of the cantor. The horn section responds to the call by the voice. Some of the arrangements, which are instrumental, feature the role of the cantor being alternated between the trumpet and the tenor sax. In addition to the role of the chorus, the horn section plays background fills during the solos and also plays soli sections written in the style of traditional Ogu songs. The horn section differs from the vocal chorus in Ogu music in its use of harmony, which is absent in Ogu vocal chorus.

The style of harmony in my arrangement is similar to the style of horn section harmonies employed by small jazz ensembles. Smooth voice leading is of paramount importance so that each part flows smoothly. Dobbins (1986) offers more insight in this area. Quartal voicing, a system in which the interval of fourths between parts is favoured, is also used to achieve a certain kind of angular sound desired for some of the pieces. A five part quartal voicing of a minor 11 chord for instance may include all the notes of the minor pentatonic scale. A personal preference in voicing a Cm11 chord will be (from the lowest not upwards) – C, F, Bb, Eb and G (these are the notes of the C minor pentatonic scale).

To illustrate my method, I included in the appendix my arrangement of *Dagbe dagbe* (see appendix B). The A section of my arrangement is the song in its entirety (see also appendix A). However, to create contrast, I added a composed B section to the

arrangement of *dagbe dagbe*. The contrasting section maintains the style of Ogu melodies and stems the possibility of monotony.

**Improvisation:** The improvisation in this experimental style is not free but chord-based. On each of the minor 11<sup>th</sup> chords, I employ the minor pentatonic scale, which spells out all the notes of the chord. To create excitement in the improvisation, I occasionally employ the passing note of the blues scale. The blues scale is a variant of the minor pentatonic scale; it adds the passing step between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> degrees of the pentatonic scale. As such, the style of harmony used here permits the application of the blues scale.

**Cadences:** Based solely on pentatonic scales, Ogu melodies are hardly receptive to the usual iimin7 – V7 – I cadence cliché of jazz, which does not fit unadjusted on Ogu melodies. The absence of the leading note in pentatonic melodies makes the use of a dominant preceding the tonic, less tasteful. In my arrangements, the cadences used a few options. These include the resolution to the final chord from the dominant built on the flat 7 of the home key (bvi7), subdominant minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord (ivm7), or a dominant 7<sup>th</sup> with a suspended 4<sup>th</sup> (V7sus4). All the above-listed options provide suitable cadences for the pentatonic melodies Ogu music features.

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter began with a critique of Stone's (2005) generalisations about music of West Africa as I advocated specificity in writing about African musics. Furthermore, I brought to the fore the reality of the gradual change occurring in cosmopolitan Lagos and how it has affected Badagry and by extension, Ogu music. Cosmopolitanism has complicated the situation and has toned down the Africa-ness in current Lagos. This transformation, causing a change in the way of living and thought processes of people, is not exclusive to Lagos. With the fast 'modernisation' of African societies, social identities of Africans could not be spared from the change. In addition, music is also being transformed significantly. The idea of tonality and good music is not unaffected by the current impact of cosmopolitanism.

By and large, today's cosmopolitan African societies are infected with a Eurocentric worldview. Ranging from music, to art, crafts, style of dress, governance, knowledge, beliefs, religion and norms, to mention but a few, Africa today is being modelled after Euro-American ideals. Notably, the idea of cultural supremacy is not exclusive to the relationship between the West and Africa, but it is ingrained in the day-to-day intercultural relations of Africans, as my study has shown. Some Africans, particularly the youth, can be said to now possess a superiority complex and ethnocentric standpoint compared to other Africans.

As the reality of cosmopolitanism cannot be retracted, I propose Guided Syncretism as a technique for forestalling the decay and loss of Ogu melodies. I am aware of the possibility of a musical genre subsuming the other, when two musical cultures form a hybrid. Thus, in my Guided Syncretism, which is aimed at preserving Ogu melodies and rhythms, care has also been deployed so that the aim of the research is not defeated. However, I am also open to serendipity, which could give rise to an unintended musical style. I have deliberately left the melodies and time signatures of the Ogu songs I arranged, unchanged while transferring the rhythms from hand percussion instruments to the modern drum kit. This ensures the preservation of the melody and the rhythm while creating a wider appeal with the harmony, structure, Western instruments and the chord-based improvisation here being explored. Ultimately, my Guided Syncretism aims at arousing the interest of Western-musically trained Badagry youth who hitherto have shown little or no interest in their cultural heritage.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **SUMMARY AND DEDUCTIONS**

The ideology of cultural supremacy is usually expressed through many forms of prejudice and domination. Colonialism, apartheid and other forms of subjugation of a people by another, and even violent conflict resulting in genocide, pervade the history of humankind. Many parts of Africa bear deep scars as a result of colonialism, including Nigeria, my home country. South Africa is yet to recover from the effects of apartheid. Though the historical events may appear to be in the past, intellectual and emotional legacies of latent prejudices and cultural supremacy linger on.

Directly related to colonialism, globalization and the cultural domination many Africa societies have experienced, is the new quest, in today's cosmopolitan Lagos, to become as close to Euro-American societies as possible. One's level of acceptance, in Lagos nowadays has much to do with the degree to which one has imbibed Western culture. High-profile companies are modelled after the paradigm presented by First World capitalist economies. The ethos of such companies is reflected in the style of dress, official language, administrative structures and style, and in every facet of human interactions and dealings within such organisations. Development might be interpreted as the construction of sky scrapers, installation of security gargets and employment of security personnel to guard buildings: such are the physical proofs of economic advancement in urban parts of Lagos, which have attracted immigrants from other parts of Nigeria over the years. In no small way has the pattern in development undermined the 'Africanness' of the mega city.

Badagry, which is 70km away from the heart of Lagos, is not spared of the Eurocentric pattern of modernization. Badagry-Ogu people are faced with at least two levels of cultural domination – the one being that imposed through colonialism and in recent times, globalization, while the other is the domination of the Yoruba culture. Thus, Badagry appears to have lost so much of its cultural heritage in conforming to Western and Yoruba practices. In view of this, while summarizing and drawing conclusions based on the aforementioned, I aim to contribute to an on-going discourse of peaceful co-

existence of humans across racial, cultural, religious and socio-economic strata. This chapter concludes by driving home the importance of music as a transformation tool and its significance in the reorientation of Badagry youths.

## **SUMMARY**

In the first chapter of this thesis I established the differences between Badagry Ogu and their neighbouring Yoruba ethnic group through an historical approach. Tracing the descent of Badagry Ogu people to different societies of today's Benin Republic, I unpacked the fact of their distinct differences in ancestry and cultural heritage from the Yorubas.

In the second chapter, which featured an adaptation of the Standpoint Theory for the explanation of cultural marginalization, I argued for the chain of cause and effect between diversity, different perspectives and conflicts/marginalization. In that chapter I introduced the colour blue as a metaphor for describing the numerous variants of African culture and music. Furthermore, I advanced the discourse of Standpoint Theory with my introduction of a new concept – Varied in-group Standpoint.

In the third chapter I focused on the music of Badagry-Ogu people. I discussed the characteristics of Ogu music as they fit into Turino's (2001) characteristics of African music. In addition, I listed the instruments employed in the performance of Ogu music and the sub-genres thereof. These musical practices, are today at risk of extinction: most of my respondents, who are above the age of 60, mentioned that the youth are unwilling to learn about Ogu musical style. In view of the lack of interest by Badagry youth and the imminent cultural loss, I present another perspective to the idea of 'losing ourselves' in order to live with others as suggested by Touraine & Macey (2000).

### **To what extent must we still lose ourselves?**

In an emerging global society, identities are being redefined in the face of merging cultures, transculturation, hybridity and cosmopolitanism. Yet there seems to be a rise in racial, religious, class, gender and cultural-related conflicts. Touraine & Macey (2000) suggested 'losing ourselves' as that appears to be the solution to the hydra-headed

conflicts, which have persisted between humans of different races, religions, classes, genders and cultures. 'Losing ourselves' could be understood as letting go of some of our differences, while being more tolerant of other races, cultures, classes, genders and sexual orientations and religions. In this section, I present a different view to the suggestion of 'losing ourselves', as it needs to be considered in the context of past occurrences in the history of humans.

Over the years, Africa has suffered loss in respect of culture. Notably, the experience of partial cultural loss is not exclusive to Africa. Cooper (1994:1526) identified that the internal cohesion within Europe led to the ascription of 'otherness' on non-European populations: in the bid to explicate racial subjugations. Over the years some European nations have also experienced marginalization by other European nations. Yet, apart from racially and culturally induced ones, subjugations have occurred across the divides of gender, creed and even economic strata.

However, my focus in this section is centered upon Badagry-Ogu people and, in particular, ways in which the Yorubas have marginalized them, thereby making them lose so much of their identity. Thus in the next section, I will contribute to the multi-faceted issue of cultural loss through the domination of one culture by another and the manner in which it has been erroneously interpreted as cultural exchange or hybridity. This I aim to do without creating a sense of hopelessness but rather drawing attention to the nuances involved in the discourse on the emergence of a global culture.

### **Unequal exchange**

In view of inherent conflicts among the different races, ethnic and socio-economic groups, which I stated briefly earlier in this chapter, there is an on-going discourse on the peaceful coexistence of mankind. Touraine & Macey (2000:3) proposed the condition by which 'we can live together' as 'losing our identity'. In response to this I bring to the fore the reality of the unequal exchange that has occurred in the history of Africa. While I discuss this, I will return to its application to Ogu cultural ostracism.

First, considering the colonial experience, which has left Africa transformed permanently, I purport that it is an unfair disposition to suggest that African cultures



should still lose themselves, having been the victim of unequal exchange in its history. African societies have adopted non-African languages as official on African soil. Official dress, even in the tropical parts of Africa, is the Western suit and not the more appropriate African attire. The family unit is not exempt from the imposed influences of colonial masters. The extended family has been replaced by the nuclear family structure. Social isolation and social distance now lace African relationships as opposed to the communal style of living of pre-colonial Africa. Furthermore, African names and religious practices have had to give way as Africans were taught to let go of what they held dear for centuries before the advent of the missionaries who came to 'save' Africa. Having mentioned all that Africa has lost, I am inclined to doubt the equity in what is referred to as 'losing ourselves'. 'Losing ourselves', in my view, should be mutual in respect of give-and-take by both parties involved. If what Euro-American cultures have lost in their exchange with Africa is not commensurate with what Africans have lost, then I propose that the 'losing of self' as suggested by Touraine & Macey (2000) needs to be more on the side of the Europeans rather than on the side of Africans.

Discussing Cosmopolitanism, Turino (2000) highlighted the one-sidedness of what could be misconstrued as cultural exchange in Zimbabwe. "When you say you want all peoples to unite, you really mean that you want all peoples to unite to learn the tricks of your people" (Turino 2000: quote from Chesterton's 1904 interview). Turino further employed the term – cosmopolitan to describe objects, ideas, practices, ways and cultural positions (or perspectives) that have been embraced widely in the world, yet are specific only to certain groups, peoples, countries or social classes (2000:7). In view of this, I reappraise Touraine & Macey's (2000) notion of 'losing ourselves'. Having mentioned that many African societies have 'lost themselves' in their embrace of Western ways, I raise the question of the extent to which each party must lose itself for equity to be achieved in the ensuing cultural exchange.

Returning to the Ogu people, a further loss of Ogu culture will mean the death of the culture in my opinion. If at all any people should lose themselves, it should not be those who have already lost and are constantly losing themselves in the face of the progression of the unequal exchange of today's cosmopolitan African societies. As an

extension of this discourse above, I also propose the reestablishment and gaining of self in the Yoruba-Ogu case and as such I will discuss the importance of the localization of Ogu culture and the reestablishment of its cultural boundaries.

### **Localization of Ogu music; 'gaining ourselves'**

I wish to refrain from restating previously discussed initial differences between Badagry-Ogu people and their Yoruba neighbours. However, one can hardly tell them apart today as Badagry-Ogu people have accepted and conformed to Yoruba ways almost beyond recovery. In the light of the unequal exchange hitherto discussed, I propose 'localization' over globalization as it serves to empower the locals as opposed to globalization, which demeans the locals and enforces the feeling of insufficiency and less-worthiness on them (Norberg-Hodge, Gorelick & Page, 2011). Mama Sejlo<sup>5</sup> (Mrs Tanpinnu, my major female informant and teacher during my fieldwork) revealed how cosmopolitanism has reduced the belief in local music. She explained that the youth are unwilling to carry on the traditional music-making role of the wife during ceremonies within the family. Young performers of Badagry music are likely to feel less worthy than their counterparts who perform Yoruba music and more so Western Classical music. This preference for Yoruba music and foreign music has invariably affected the performance of Ogu music negatively. Should the younger Badagrians desire to pursue musical careers, they are likely to prefer to learn foreign music or Yoruba popular music, which would be more financially rewarding.

Globalization, capitalism and cosmopolitanism are systems that appear to promote oneness, unity and cooperation. However, they could inadvertently form a basis for competitiveness and foster a survival-of-the-fittest disposition to life. These systems do not exist without the creation of a power center, which becomes the model for societies in which they are more recently introduced. As locals, who had inherited subsistent economies, are forced into the wage-labour system, they become absorbed into the

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<sup>5</sup> Mama Sejlo is the leader of a female *Ajogan* group popular in Beokoh quarters, Badagry. She is over 60 years of age and has shown concern about the continuance of her group beyond her existence.

social stratification system, which places them at the lower stratum. People who were initially happy and had no basis for comparing themselves with the international community may then begin to feel a sense of poverty and the need for help (Turino 2000:5; Norberg-Hodge, Gorelick & Page, 2011).

Meanwhile prior to the enforcement of capitalism and consumerism on African societies, the performers enjoyed Ogu music; it was not profit-driven and more communal than competitive. Happiness and the enjoyment of the process of learning and performing was key. There was no pressure to 'get it right' or be thrown out, as the monetary economy would suggest. In a capitalist economy, not 'getting it right' means losing time and time translates into money. The ripple effect is competition, sadness and survival instinct, which has made the locals suspicious of their neighbours. An in-depth analysis of the effect of colonialism, capitalism, globalization and modernization of Badagry culture would be beyond the scope of this thesis, however, from the foregoing, I conclude that Badagry-Ogu people have lost so much in terms of their culture. I therefore suggest that Badagry-Ogu people need to be more retrospective in terms of their culture; a restoration of their cultural values and practice within the context of localization will likely empower the locals both economically and emotionally.

### **Strengthening Ogu musical heritage through Guided Syncretism while creating accessibility**

Throughout the political unrest in Europe of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, leading up to World War I, music played an important role in defining nationalistic affiliations (Radice, 2012:189 - 208). Composers made use of folk tunes to arouse the interests of their listeners and further strengthen national heritages. The practice of strengthening national cultural heritage through musical exploration of roots is not a new approach. Composers including Edward Grieg (1843-1907), Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904) and Claude Debussy (1862-1918) among others were notable for the arrangement of folk tunes for symphonies. This approach culminated in the strengthening of national ties and cultural preservation.

Notably, 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalism had its negatives; it could have been responsible for the divisions leading to the world wars. Nonetheless, the cultural cohesion intended through my Guided Syncretism is less likely to promote ethnicity as it adopts Western musical instruments and harmonies, which Badagry youth might have been exposed to through Western education. It is however likely, as my pilot study revealed, to arouse the interest of Badagry youth to their music, some of which I have notated using the Western musical notation system. With the notation of Ogu music for Western musical instruments and use of jazz chord symbols, Ogu music would become accessible to musicians beyond Badagry who are Western-musically trained. Beyond strengthening Ogu musical heritage and making it more accessible, Guided Syncretism could also serve as a method of preserving Ogu melodies, which may be lost if they are not transcribed or recorded.

My method of Guided Syncretism discussed in the third chapter of this thesis is not the ultimate culmination of the intended transformation in the outlook of the younger generation of Badagry-Ogu people; but the first step in the direction of restoring Ogu culture. Further down in this process of cultural restoration, Ogu percussion instruments will be introduced to replace the drum kit, which cannot exactly reproduce the dense rhythm played by several percussion instruments in Ogu music. The piano, bass, and horns will be retained, as they will be the custodians of the harmony, which I have introduced into Ogu music. The reason for my suggestion of localization is not far fetched. It is aimed at the teaching of Ogu culture to the younger generation of Badagry Ogu people, however modern they have become. Through its music, Ogu culture may be more easily re-established and taught to the youth.

The sense of cultural superiority that pervades the dealings of members of both cultures is by no means exclusive to the Yorubas and Ogus in Lagos State. Rather, such inimical dispositions could be said to characterize the relationships between some other cultures on the African continent. The results of such hostilities are as diverse as its cases of occurrence. Furthermore, African cultures are not the only cases of cultural loss. Through the creation of one global economy, one global culture, we are at the risk of destroying values preserved through diversity and increasing the gap between the rich

and the poor, while creating misery, gloom, hopelessness, sadness and crime (Norberg-Hodge, Gorelick & Page, 2011).

## **POSTLUDE**

Ogu people and non-Ogu audiences, previously unexposed to my field, have positively received my pilot arrangements of Badagry-Ogu music in which I apply my principles of Guided Syncretism. However, the arrangements have also been met with a number of criticisms, which I intend to address. With regard to the positive responses: my use of jazz harmony and traditional Ogu tunes have been commended mostly by Ogu people on the online forum with whom I have shared the music and my research work. The non-Ogus comprise live audiences in Cape Town and Durban, South Africa; and social-media followers of my music. These non-Ogu audiences responded in a similar manner. Apart from their appreciation of the harmony, my audiences, during my examination recitals and performances at venues such as the Waterfront Amphitheatre, Straight No Chaser (Cape Town), The Chairman and The Jazz Center, University of KwaZulu Natal (Durban) were intrigued by the melodies and the rhythms played on the drum-kit and percussion instruments.

One of the criticisms that I received from my colleagues at presentations of my work in progress was that the outcome of my Guided Syncretism has significantly altered the traditional music. In response to this I need to state that I don't intend an exact replica of the traditional music, for this expectation in itself would amount to a contradiction. How does one go about creating a replica of a musical style while making a major addition such as harmony? However, my intention was to retain the melodies and the rhythm as alterations to the melodies may render them unrecognizable to the people who know those songs. Nevertheless, I recommend a thorough understanding of jazz modal harmony before proceeding with Guided Syncretism of the sort I have explained in this thesis.

As I mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, one of my Ogu respondents, Mr Setonji Kuponu<sup>6</sup>, revealed that for major performances in Badagry, bands are invited from Benin Republic due to the notion that the Ogu musical groups in Badagry do not play unadulterated Ogu music. This respondent suggested that what these Badagry bands play has been watered down. In view of this, I began to conceive of a comparative study of Ogu music, as it exists in Badagry, Nigeria and Porto Novo, Benin Republic.

My fieldwork and post-field enquiries revealed musical practices, instruments and forms of Ogu music too broad to be thoroughly espoused within the scope of a Masters thesis. Each of the genres, listed in the third chapter of this thesis, has its unique characteristics that distinguish it from the others. The differences between the genres of Ogu music may not be obvious to the outsider but they cannot escape the notice of the performers. If the rhythmic pattern meant for one genre is substituted for the pattern of another genre, the performers are quick to pick it up and they frown at such cultural incompetence. An in-depth study of the differences between these genres is long overdue.

As mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, gender roles differ between Ogu social structure and Yoruba social structure. So also, gender roles in performing groups of the Yorubas do not parallel those of the Ogus. My research of Ogu music revealed gender-based performing groups and thirteen distinct genres of Ogu music; some of these genres are gender specific. *Gangbe* is exclusive to females while *hungan* and *sato* are exclusive to male performers. At the next stage of my probe into this culture, I will study the gender roles in Ogu musical culture and by extension, gender roles among Ogu people.

In my search for literature on the subject, Law (1994) and Avoseh (1938) stood out. Hunsu's (2011) work was carried out in Badagry, but its focus was not on the culture. The aforementioned works touched on the history of Badagry people. Mine is a music-focused research. The research is not aimed at analysing the past and pointing attention to rights and wrongs on the discourse of African music. While taking account of

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<sup>6</sup> Mr Setonji Kuponu is one of the youth leaders in Idale Whedakoh, Badagry.

the current state of Ogu music, the research aims to offer guidance towards preventing further decay or loss of the music of Badagry people.

### **Limitations**

My research was confronted with a number of challenges, through all stages of pre-field, fieldwork and post-field. First, due to the rarity of the performance of unadulterated Ogu music in today's Badagry, my fieldwork had to be properly timed for me to witness a major performance. Performances of Ogu music are usually done in the second half of the year, around the festive period and the celebration of Badagry Day. I was in constant contact with Mr. Seyon Akran, the son of the present Akran, paramount monarch in Badagry Town. With the timing of performances, the requirements of my course of study and the constraints of funding for this research, my fieldwork could not be carried out over a prolonged period of time. I had to make the most of the early 2014 long vacation period, when I spent a period of one month in the field.

Even the few rare performances in Badagry are usually done with many performers from Benin Republic. An interview with one of the key performers in Oyono's *mase* groups, who was from Benin Republic, posed a challenge. I do not speak Ogu language well enough to conduct an interview in Ogu; my respondent on the other hand could not express himself in Yoruba nor could he speak English. With Benin Republic, being a Francophone country and Nigeria an Anglophone one the barrier of communication stood between us and therefore, I could not proceed with that interview. Thus, at the next stage of my research, I will take both French and Ogu classes before embarking on my fieldwork.

In addition, transferring the interlocking percussion-instruments parts in Ogu rhythm to the drum kit could be achieved only to some extent. The drum kit in timbre would never sound like the combination of several *pli* with *ogan*, *aya* and the other percussion instruments. It was also no easy task to find jazz musicians who could interpret the Ogu rhythm mostly in multiples of three, which is not the most common time feel in jazz music.

Another issue was that the band members were pushed out of their comfort zone having to improvise over the chord changes, tending towards modal jazz for its lack of iim7 – V7 progressions as well as less used time signatures in jazz compositions. Many of my band members imposed their prepared licks on the prevailing changes. This situation improved over the months as the musicians became more familiar with the music.

### **Accent and ghost notes: A disclaimer**

Within the confines of acceptable practices in Euro-American musical scenes, performers interpret the same piece differently. To the jazz musician, accents describe the notes that are emphasized while ghost notes describe the less-emphasized one. Based on this understanding jazz musicians playing the same piece are likely to accent different notes and ghost different notes except that there is an indication of accent on particular notes on the score. This practice is responsible for the different inflections by different jazz musicians in the performance of the same piece. In a similar manner the practice of accenting some and ghosting other notes occurs in descriptive writings. The account here documented being from the perspective of an *emic* researcher may not be without prejudice and some bias. However, accounts of this sort are usually vital to the in-depth understanding of a people's cultural practices as it is largely interpreted within the context of its culture. Guided Syncretism, as an approach to the renewal of Ogu musical culture is my personal suggestion to the revitalization of a waning musical tradition: it should not be taken as the only possible way of cultural restoration.

### **CONCLUSION**

I have established that there is a gap in the documentation of the history of Badagry-Ogu people, particularly from the perspective of *emic* researchers. The gap in the documentation of the history of Badagry by Badagry indigenes may not be unconnected to the events in history that have informed the condescending attitude of Badagrians towards their culture. Drawing inferences from my childhood experience, I described how Badagry-Ogu children were socialized to accept the subservience of their culture, and as such many of us repudiated our heritage.



Using Standpoint Theory, I explained how group membership could shape individual's perspectives and how differing perspectives could be sources of conflict and marginalization. To forestall further decay in the loss of aspects of Badagry culture, I recommended the idea of Guided Syncretism, which deliberately retains certain aspects of the traditional music being syncretized. Notably, I have employed Guided Syncretism as a tool of cultural preservation: the form of it, which I have discussed in this thesis, will add to rather than reduce the music to which it is applied. As harmony is added to Badagry-Ogu music, which in its natural state, has not been found to possess any harmonic content, the resultant musical style retains the uniqueness of the traditional Ogu music whilst it becomes more accessible to non-Ogu people. Accessibility is achieved first through the recording of the pieces I arranged and the notation of it on Western staff notation, which is widely understood across the globe.

The role of music as a transformational tool cannot be overemphasized. Music, being a vital component of culture, plays no minor role in the socialization process of many a society. Fela Kuti's music, for instance, played a major role in shaping the thought pattern of Nigerians as he opposed the tyrannical military governments of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s in Nigeria (Tame 1984; Veal 2000, Allen and Veal 2013). Turino (1998) also described how nationalists employed a local musical genre to foster internal cohesion in Zimbabwe. *Mbira* music rose to national prominence in the 1960s and latter, became world acclaimed from the 1970s. In both instances cited above, there was either the adoption of Western musical instruments, Western harmonic intervention or both to the African musical styles, thus making for wider accessibility. The approach of employing music in transformation forms the locus of my Guided Syncretism, which presently is at the embryonic stage and still requires critical examination for its standardization. Given the reality of cosmopolitanism, Guided Syncretism offers a method of retaining the values of Ogu culture while making use of Western musical elements and instruments, which have become available in postcolonial African societies.

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