



THE VIABILITY OF RADIO IN THE ART OF STORY-TELLING AND CREATIVITY

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Abstract

The medium of radio is one among the electronic media seen as auditory and non-visual. However, over time, through its creative programmes, it is believed that radio is not only an auditory medium, but also a 'visual' one. This is because it allows its audience or listeners to make proper use of their imagination, whereas the characters or the speakers being heard can be imagined only through hearing of the voice(s). This unique character makes radio different from other media of communication. Due to its ubiquitous, and the cheapness of the radio, in terms of acquisition and maintenance, programmes, such as storytelling can be transmitted through it successfully. It is believed that the message of the programme will get to a mass of the audience at the same time without barriers and also bring about a social change. This paper analyses story-telling programmes on two different radio stations due to their popularity and wide audience coverage. The study bears the fact that though radio may not literally be a 'visible' medium, yet it is well equipped with the ability of making its audience 'see' and imagine things said with their inner mind's eye. Thus, making the heterogeneous audience to creatively form their own mise-en-scene through what is heard, especially in story-telling programmes.

Keywords: Radio, Electronic media, Communication, Auditory, Storytelling



Introduction

Humans as social beings cannot help communicating with others; she/he has to exchange his/her ideas, experiences, feelings and emotions with people far and near. She/he communicates with others individually and as a group through one or more sense organs. The modern society is too complex as to function only through direct communication between one individual and another. This is because most important messages must reach many people at the same time in order to be effective. In other words, a message can be communicated to a mass audience through many media. The ancient medium was through printed materials, with words and or with pictures, which communicated messages through the sense of sight only. Radio, though an electronic sound medium is one of the mass media, which communicates messages through the sense of sound only. It is seen as a powerful medium and can be used in educating very efficiently and effectively, no doubt, radio is one of the world's most pervasive mass media, reaching all nooks and crannies and heard by millions of people every minute of the day. However, some people take radio for granted and underestimate its power, forgetting the fact that it can elevate culture through its various programmes in any society, peculiarly in the developing countries. Similarly, radio is a fascinating medium, flexible and versatile. It also has a rich heritage having played very significant roles in the 20th century.

Today, radio is generally seen as the "poor relation" of society's most popular form of home entertainment perhaps because of its non-visual element (Shingler and Wieringa 1998:1). Television on the other hand, is seen as competing with home video, computer games and the internet. Obviously, radio is set apart from other media due to the fact that its form cannot be seen. As a result, its audience cannot put into use their sight organ-the eye. Judging from what has been said above, it would be observed that radio's lack of visual element rarely goes unnoticed making it incapable for the listeners to ignore or forget its 'blindness'. Consequently in the attempt to compensate for its lack of the visual element, radio substitutes it mainly through words for the missing images. Radio may be a "non-visual" medium but it is also one that can stimulate the imagination of the listener, thus making him to visualize what he hears (McLeish 1994). Lewis (1981:9) affirms that:

To say that radio is a visual medium when in one sense it is completely non-visual is to bring out the way in which radio encourages the listener's imagination to visualize what he is listening to, to create for himself the visual dimension he is apparently deprived of, to construct the settings and appearances of the characters from the clues that words and sound provide.

With these words of Lewis, this paper looks at radio as a "visual" which is viable as well as effective and creative broadcasting medium in the art of storytelling; knowing well that people will best understand the message when it is transmitted on a familiar medium which is also the cheapest to acquire, most efficient and available one to them, especially in a cultural developing and "globalized" society like ours.

The Visuality and Viability of Radio

Radio is a powerful tool of communication compared to other media due to the uniqueness of its auditory ability. It will be wrong to assume or accept that the medium of radio is well accepted to many, just as it is with television, internet, and motion picture. It must be noted that radio means many things to many people depending on the content in which they want to discuss it. The medium nevertheless, overtime, has been described as 'the blind man's theatre' that translates vocalizations into sound. Unlike the conventional theatre, there is an intervening medium in the radio itself that separates the actors from the audience (Brandt 1971:26). This is because it thrives on sound alone and all other sense organs are rendered ineffective. Crisell (1992:3) comments on this saying, 'it is from the sole fact of its blindness that all radio's other distinctive qualities the nature of its language, its jokes, the way in which its audience uses it ultimately derive'.

These assertions have raised many questions in the minds of many. Several people have asked: "why call an entirely auditory medium 'blind'?" after all, there is, a significant difference between calling a medium 'entirely auditory' and 'blind' given that the latter implies that something crucial is lacking and that the medium is therefore inherently deficient. The question is why 'blind' and not 'invisible'? Why in other words, define radio's status as a non-visual medium in terms connoting disability and lack rather than positive attributes such as power? The repeated use of



words like 'blind' and 'blindness' in describing radio would suggest that radio's lack of visual is seen as a problem rather than an emulative attribute. What these accusations reveal is the extent to which sight is privileged over hearing. And what this suggests of radio is that it celebrates what can be heard with the ear far more than what can be seen with the eye.

To these critics, sight is regarded as a more useful and comprehensive means of perceiving the world around us than sound, touch, taste and smell. In other words, as far as these people are concerned, sight is the only sense with which one can perceive something, whereas our hearing, taste, touch and smell have limited roles to play in our perception. Similarly, Shingler and Wieringa (1998:74), explain that though the medium is regarded as 'handicapped' and 'blind', the reason for this is because 'humankind seems to have lost the art of listening'. To them, 'man relies so much on visual stimuli for entertainment and information'. They point out that 'televisions (and film) have become the focal point of many people, while radio has been marginalized'. If all we desire from the media is to give us something to occupy our eyes, then, film and television prove more popular and receive critical and in a way intellectual attention than radio. But what radio's lowly status within the arts seems to enunciate is the fact that both the power and the pleasure of the medium derive in part from allowing, even encouraging, its audience to participate in the creation of its programmes, hence enabling them to create for themselves more personal, more affective, and more meaningful images.

Certainly, radio is set apart from other media due to the fact that its form cannot be seen. By this, the audience is unable to use his sight sense. As a result, radio is categorized as more defective and incomplete than any other media. For instance, paintings, posters and photographs lack sound, and their silence ordinarily goes unnoticed. Moreover, it is unnecessary for their images to attempt to compensate for their lack of sound. They are complete in themselves and thus are praised for the qualities they possess rather than for their ability to compensate for what they lack.

Contrarily, it seems that the radio's lack of visuals rarely goes unnoticed and that listeners are virtually incapable of ignoring or forgetting its blindness. Unlike the visual arts, which require no justification or compensation for the lack of sound, radio has been constantly striving to make amends for its absence for visual elements. Several scholars have argued against the lost element of radio. For instance, a scholar like Raban (1981:80) has stressed that '..."blindness" has been cited far too frequently as radio's unique attribute'. He therefore called attention to the unsuitability of using such a word to define the medium which carries obvious implications of disease and affliction. Radio, rarely renders its listeners blind, rather, it reports from a world in full possession of its sense' and is received by 'a listening world equally well endowed' (p81).

Just like visual arts, literature also shares a basic attribute with radio. Though books, for instance may be seen as different from radio programmes in that they provide their readers with something to look at, that is, the type, the printed words upon the pages, the binding and probably also illustrations, but the true images created by fiction exist not on the page itself, but in the mind of the reader, whose task it is to interpret the meaning of the words and phrases. Not only does the reader do this, he at the same time visualizes the characters and settings with the help of the information provided on the pages. Suggestively, radio writers, producers, and actors should 'create sound, noises, voices and music which exist, in order to be unraveled in terms of our own memory and experience' (Raban 1981:81).

Sounds of radio are like the printed symbols of a book, they are there to be decoded and translated into sights, smells, tastes and textures. So, just as the written page can evoke strong visual impression for its reader, radio's "visual" sound, voice and music can similarly create vivid pictures in the mind of its listener. Hence, radio can stimulate the imagination so that as soon as the voice is heard, the listener attempts to visualize what he hears and by so doing, creates in the mind's eye the owner of the voice and or creates the picture of what is being described. This demonstrates the power of words in conjuring mental images. It is also a property of language exploited by both radio and the print media. This characteristic makes radio not only visual but also aromatic and tactile. Umokoro (1993:130) states that 'the aesthetic power of radio lies in its direct cerebral appeal to the imagination, the sixth



human sense, which coordinates the five physical senses in communicative interaction'. This affirms the fact that imagination is a vital weapon to radio listeners.

This unique feature of both radio and literature is of course, absent from the visual arts, theatre, television and film. Where the opportunity for the viewer to actively participate in the creation of the images is denied. As a result, the viewer can only appreciate rather than actually participate in the creation of the images. The ultimate function of the media is not to give something to occupy the eye. If it is, then, film and television or internet would have been the best option. But what radio does is to allow and encourage its audience to participate in the creation of its programmes. It also enables the listeners to create for themselves personal, effective and meaningful images. This accords radio a visual medium, one that is informed by the visual world and speaks to an audience that is both visually aware and has a large stock of visual experience. Through these experiences and tasking of memory, creative programmes are drawn by producers.

Describing radio producers, Umokoro (1993:130) sees them as 'merely suggestive artists' who creatively utilize 'dialogue and sound effects in the mind of the listening audiences'. What this statement reveals is that visuals are actually the most dispensable element of any artistic, dramatic or communicative endeavor. Hence, the audience can supply these visual elements themselves, making us to agree with the fact that radio, which is believed to be the most deficient medium, is automatically not. Esslin, (1971:5), in his essay "The Mind as a Stage" claims that "the eye certainly is as powerful an organ as the ear. Yet it is through the ear that words are primarily communicated; and words communicate concepts, thought, and information on a more abstract level than the images of the world the eye takes in". Comparing silent cinema with radio, he points out that radio without physical images can evoke the visual element by suggestion alone, the dialogue can carry scenery and the costume with it and the human voice can powerfully suggest human appearance. This is to say that something such as battle scenes tend to be wholly unsatisfactory when rendered visually, whereas, in radio, each listener will automatically see his "ideal" before his mind's eye and thus be satisfied. Hence, radio pictures emerge as sharp or as vague as the individual mind is capable of making it. Radio sound can be likened to the painting brush in the hand of the designer (the listener) which can be used to design anything subject to his desire or imagination.

The medium's lack of visuals has proved attractive and even liberating for listeners in a number of ways. For instance, to enjoy radio programmes, listeners seldom have to give their full and abiding attention. Also, the invisibility of radio programmes has allowed its audience to do other things while listening, such as driving, painting, gardening, cooking etc. – virtually any activity that requires less than full concentration.

However, we must note that radio's lack of visuals has been both advantageous and disadvantageous, producing for its listeners both positive and negative effects. In short, it is an agreeable fact that there are problems involved in providing listeners with something physically to look at. However, we should not let these problems blind us by appreciating the fact that invisibility can be a positive asset in developing the creativity of producers, writers, actors and most importantly, listeners.

To overcome the effect of invisibility in radio, three devices can be utilized. They are: simplicity, repetition and consistency. By simplicity, is meant that the overall story line needs to be stripped down to a basic and easily comprehensible structure. On the other hand, repetition is necessary to constantly remind listeners of important narrative events which have taken place or yet to be resolved. This is to say that key events should be repeated or referred back to in order to keep them alive in the minds of the audience. And finally, consistency is necessary to ensure continual references to the significant themes, events and characters in the narrative exercises. All these, if used effectively will reduce audience's inattentiveness, distraction, confusion, boredom and forgetfulness.

Empirical research has since confirmed and enriched these classical arguments about radio's imaginative power. Roderio (2012a) conducted experimental studies demonstrating that descriptive sound effects and what she terms 'sound shots' in fictional radio drama significantly increase the vividness of mental imagery in listeners and sustain a measurable degree of attentional engagement. Her findings establish a direct, measurable relationship between auditory stimulus design and the quality of mental images created in the listener's mind, corroborating the position of earlier theorists such as Esslin (1971) and Gray (1981) who identified the listener's imagination as the primary



stage of radio drama. In a related study, Rodero (2012b) further demonstrated that dramatised presentation, that is; story told through active characters and multiple voices, generates richer imaginative involvement than straightforward narration by a single voice, reinforcing the importance of skilled production choices in radio storytelling. These findings underscore that radio's 'theatre of the mind' is not merely a philosophical metaphor but a verifiable cognitive phenomenon, one that producers and narrators can consciously enhance through careful manipulation of the medium's acoustic elements.

Storytelling and Creativity in Radio

Storytelling is a vital aspect of culture that can be used to educate, inform, entertain and most importantly, to correct societal ills. Hence, it serves as an efficient and effective weapon in bringing about positive or desirable changes especially in a developing society. Today people seldom find it convenient converging at a common place, such as the market places or village squares, to participate in the art of storytelling due to reasons varying from tight schedules to finding it unnecessary to meet at the orthodox venues of the enactment. While other reasons are linked to religious, educational or social factors. But as technological development or Information Communication Technology (ICT) has taken the center stage of human consciousness, several inventions have emerged. Among these innovations are the mass media of communication of which radio, a unique and dynamic medium is among. We must note, however, that radio and storytelling are basically aural and less visual therefore, it will not be out of proportion if storytelling is taken out from its original round or arena form to the modern environment due to their common features. John Storey (1993:5) citing the German playwright, Bertolt Brecht, writes that:

Good or bad, a play always includes an image of the world...There is no play and no theatrical performance which does not, in some way, affect the dispositions and conceptions of the audience. Art is never without consequences.

Brecht's point can be generalized to apply to all cultural texts which include storytelling, Telling stories through the medium of radio provides an avenue where society listens, thinks and imagines in public in front of itself. Thus, through stories, the societal ills are artistically and creatively narrated for the people to listen to, visualize and eventually get up for positive change, this is why the story however must be told in a manner that it will arouse the imagination of the listeners through its 'heightened or distorted' imageries.

Generally, in the act of narration, a narrator or teller needs the artistic combination of his voice, gestures and songs/music in order to pass across a meaningful story to his audience. This is to say that a teller needs to see his audience physically for proper understanding. But narrating tales in radio for instance, some of these general working elements or tools may not be needed since the medium's form is basically invisible. As a result, radio producers can embrace invisibility as a positive asset and seek to exploit some of the advantages radio has over the screen and the stage. Therefore, the only vital instruments need in radio are the narrator's flexible and clear voice, sound effects and probably songs or music at the background.

The absence of the physical audience in the studio does not hinder the storytelling experience. All that the teller needs do is to imagine his audience seated in front or around him, while he addresses them as if they are physically present. Radio, however, often transcends and defies the natural laws of time and space, creating vantage points which would be impossible in either the theatre or in life. Radio storytelling session can provide listeners, not only with new perspectives but also with new insight, in this respect, radio is more like cinema and television than theatre. Radio can construct narratives which cut between scenes that have no actual physical (geographical), or temporal connection.

The marriage between radio and the art of storytelling is not inappropriate, because both radio and the art (storytelling) have privileged access to the mind, and all that exist there. 'The stage of radio is darkness and silence, the darkness of the listener's skull; (Gray 1981:49). In other words, radio story sessions are presented fully, not in broadcasting or recording studio, but in the minds of the listening audience. More than any other medium, radio involves the listeners in the creative process and makes them do much of the creative work for themselves particularly in terms of creating the mise-en-scene (i.e. the sets, costume, make up, the physical appearance and movement of the characters). The audience is able to do this effectively because of its intimacy with the medium.



For radio to involve its audience in the creation of its mise-en-scene, it should not only draw its listeners close to their sets, but it must be granted access to the inner recesses of their minds. Since the audience is familiar with their environments by the virtue of looking, the stories will alert their minds by supplying them with images. This in other words is clearly one of the most satisfying forms of entertainment designed to relax the body while stimulating the mind. Example of programme with narrative techniques which serve as vehicle for social comment and satire among others is “Gbankogbi”, a public enlightenment programme on Positive FM, Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.

‘Inspector Bamidele’ is the title of one of its several serials which condemns corruption in its entirety and promotes hard work. Though, it has simple storyline, yet, it possesses a lot of suspense which is sustained throughout the narration. This particular serial is unique because it touches on every stratum of society. It teaches everyone, especially young people, that good name is better than lots of gold or silver.

The story started by introducing a young college graduate known as Bamidele, who got a police job. On his employment, he promised to be hardworking, transparent and faithful to the ethics of his profession. Thus, upholding justice at all times as far as duty is concerned. He also determined not to be influenced by anyone irrespective of the post or position. In fact, he was really out to create a lasting and positive impression, consequently, this however accorded him recognition by the Commissioner of Police who recommend that he should be promoted to the post of Deputy Inspector of Police three years later. This post he maintained till the time he was put in charge of a robbery case that involved a notorious chief known as Dangama who was arrested but awaiting his fate in court.

Just about two weeks to his trial, two nicely dressed gentlemen visited Bamidele in his office. These men who introduced themselves as Dangama’s relations offered Bamidele some huge sum of money and pleaded that the case be withdrawn from the court, promising that as soon as Dangama is released, Bamidele will be rewarded with a car of his choice. Unfortunately, Bamidele rejected their offer and swore to see that justice prevail.

As if this was not enough, three days later, a young lady known as Yeti visited Inspector in his apartment. She was sent to appeal to Bamidele’s emotion by luring him to bed and later ask for Dangama’s release. But all to no avail because the young police officer had made up his mind and would not allow himself to be influenced, Yeti shamefully left the police officer’s apartment knowing that all her pranks failed, she then arranged with her gang to see the Inspector of Police who is Bamidele’s Immediate boss to persuade him to release Dangama and see to it that Inspector Bamidele was suspended till the case was over. The Inspector did exactly as they requested having received a rewarding gift from them. Some weeks into the suspension, Inspector Bamidele came in contact with Yeti who taunted him and later informed him about all that had transpired between them and the Inspector since he (Bamidele) refused to act when he had the opportunity. Wanting to get more information, Inspector Bamidele played along as he pleaded with Yeti to beg the Inspector on his behalf. Obligated to assist, yeti informed him of a meeting that would be held with the Inspector in her house the next day,

Come this fateful day, as Inspector Bamidele gained entrance into the venue of the meeting where he met the Inspector and Yeti in hot romance, nevertheless, as the discussion started, the Inspector informed Bamidele about the plans to call him back but advised him not to be over zealous with his duties, stressing that he must sometimes break the law for him to achieve his life dreams. Based on this, the Inspector demanded that he (Bamidele) would have to sign an agreement with him that he would give him fifty percent of his salary on his resumption. But unknown to them, Bamidele recorded all that transpired in the meeting in his mobile phone which he made available to the Commissioner of Police who later investigated the matter and took his report to the Inspector General of Police for further action.

In the end, justice prevailed as Inspector Bamidele was recalled and promoted to the post of Inspector of Police. His boss, (the Inspector) was dismissed from the force after serving a two-year jail term for aiding and abetting crimes. While Dangama and his gang were arrested and sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment. Not only was Bamidele rewarded, he was also given a special assignment to head the Criminal Investigation Department at the police headquarters because of his courage and overall performance.



It is evident that in listening to a story as we have above, through radio, allows ideas to be put into our minds, ideas that can pervade our daily activities and dreams. If listeners however, are to let radio invade their minds and use their imaginations, it then means that the audience has some kind of trust for the medium and the art, but the comfort that is derived from the process is heavily reliant on the person narrating the tale. Because in the art of narration, stories can be distorted or otherwise become unobtainable in life. Characters can be carved and be painted in a way that befits the narration. Therefore, it is the role of the narrator to ensure that enough images are created for the listeners to imagine what he is saying. An instance is clearly demonstrated in “Sisi Tito”, another public enlightenment programme on OGBC 2, now Gate Way radio 2 FM , Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. This programme was purposively chosen as a case study because of its ability to educate, entertain, inform and satirize the society through its imaginative and creative stories.

“Sisi Tito”, in one of its serials titled “The Landlord”, emphasizes two of the societal problems polygamy and unemployment. The presenter skillfully narrated the story by making, vivid some of the vices waging war against society. Via irony, the narrator painted the society with colours, making the audience understand and identify these problems and possibly find solution to it themselves. The problem of polygamy is not a recent one in our society. It can date back to the “primitive days” when men were allowed to marry more than one wife at the same time. Today, especially in the developing countries, polygamy is said to have rendered some men and women perpetual single parents, hence causing their children to grow up living with one of their parents this singular act, on many occasions, have caused psychological trauma on the children concerned. And most of the time, these children have grown up with the belief that they cannot have settled home, talk less of raising children in a family where there is love and care. Thus, the issue of family ties is but a fantasy to them.

“Sisi Tito”, with the serial titled, ‘The Landlord’ shed light, not only on polygamy and unemployment, but also on prostitution which is as a result of these two vices. The story commenced by introducing Yomi and Bolatito, the major characters in the story on their way to one of the most populous hotels in Nigeria where they lodged for the night on their way from a national park. The first noticeable thing that welcomed them was the battery of ladies that were standing at the entrance of the hotel waiting for men that will engage them for the night.

As Yomi and Bolatito pondered on this, they reflected on the future of the Nigerian youths, especially the prostitutes who endanger their lives and personalities due to frustration from families and the society in general. The problems of polygamy, however, have contributed a lot to lack of parental care, abuses of different kinds and high rate of unemployment when we consider the increase in population. As a result of these, societal ills, such as prostitution, armed robbery, rape, violation of human rights and murder, have been on the increase.

Bolatito, giving an instance during her lamentation, recalled the case of a landlord who due to old age was unable to satisfy his three wives sexually, and as a result, lost them to other men’s bed. Not only did he lose control over them, his wives, through unhealthy rivalry, began to consult different herbalists in order to hurt one another. This was vividly displayed when Iya Komgo and the other wife jealously attacked Iya Bobo because she was sharing more of their husband’s bed time treasure. The narration eventually ended as the landlord dismissed these women after one of them contacted HIV/Aids, leaving their children to bear the consequence of single parentage. Consequently exposing them to several ills which are threat to national unity and development.

It must be noted however, that stories like these, find quick access inside the listener’s mind, it becomes more intense than when the listener watches the teller narrates the story before his eyes as in film or television this explains why radio programmes are doubly internalized. Gray (1981:51) confirms it by saying that the sound is internally inside us while the realization of the story takes place inside the listeners’ heads. We must note that the relationship between the medium and its audience is unusually intimate, not only is it intimate, it is also participatory in that the listeners allow their imagination to be guided by what they hear and also work with the medium to complete the fantasy it has set out to construct.

However, as noted above, every art work is usually accompanied with purpose(s). A creative art like storytelling is not left out. Stories are in similitude of a mirror that reflect, not only each member of the audience, but also the values, attitudes and standards of behavior in the society of which the audience is a part. Whether the audience or



society is directly affected by the art of storytelling to initiate a process of change or not, the art, especially the one that audience chooses to enjoy straight from their vehicles, offices or living rooms (storytelling), generally encourages change by enabling the audience to perceive, appreciate and accept the change taking place in the society.

The art of storytelling through the medium of radio can be a potent force, not only in changing, but also in building and “managing” a society or a nation at large. Creative narrative does not rely only on its message or even meaning; it also has the ability to create an “enabling force” which makes the audience desire taking the bull by the horns and bringing about a social reformation. Telling of stories provides a means of building consciousness as well as mobilizing and inflicting on a struggle for social change.

It is incontrovertible that radio has an abiding power of influencing societal and cultural attitudes. Thus, it forms and determines taste in fashion, language and society’s general attitude to life. Most scholars agreed with this, especially when radio is seen as having a high potential of creating “myth” from the existing myths, legends, folktales and other folk way of the people. The point being made is that the art of storytelling, through the most persuasive medium, has an immeasurable effect in society, that is to say, through stories, people are taught or reminded of the ideal by making them learn from the reality. The audience, in other words, is expected to imagine a model society through the tale or narration and desire to work with the ideal world that has been provided through the story. Though, we must understand that a listener or each member of the audience has the right to understand or interpret a story the way he or she feels. It is either he or she is attracted or repelled, hence a radio programme is expected to create reactions in the audience through feedback.

Art, in general affects the society in the same way as society affects the arts. When the conventions of society change, it consequently affects the conventions of the arts too. Invariably, when the society alternates over time in behavioural pattern and culture which include the norms, values and the arts, the society changes. Consequently, in reflecting the life of the community and its ethics, the art (storytelling) helps man to become conscious or aware of his environment. In other words, storytelling can be used to breakdown traditions which constitute an opposition and impediment to progress. For changes to occur in any society the medium through which the revolutionary message passes through must be creative enough in order to achieve the intended goals.

Since the inception of radio programming in Africa and Nigeria for instance, several changes have occurred through creative and continuous programming. And when the audience gets familiar with the medium of communication, there is likely not going to be a misconception because accuracy and expertise might have been channeled through it. This is to say that radio is one of the most accurate, efficient and creative media of this age. Telling stories through radio has extended the sense of hearing beyond its natural limit, it has allowed for deeper and more scholarly studies to emerge.

Listening to stories and many other arts in this category would bring about change in the society. That is, as the art penetrates the sub-conscious of the audience, it forces the society into recognizing its real condition and it explores how it can be changed for better. Thus, it is not enough simply to express problems through imaginative stories in radio without linking it to the underlying causes. To preach change is not enough until it actually leads to change in the real sense of it.

For creative story-telling programmes to thrive, it requires a good deal of an imaginative mind, a sensitive ear and a suggestive voice of a narrator who is used to the requirements of the highly specialized medium of communication – the radio. We must note, however, that to use radio well requires concentration, close study and experience.

The scholarly literature on radio in Africa affirms and extends these conclusions in ways that are directly relevant to the Nigerian context examined in this study. Gunner, Ligaga and Moyo (2011) argue compellingly in their landmark edited volume that radio is ‘Africa’s medium’ uniquely positioned to build publics, sustain cultures and create communities across the continent. They demonstrate through a wide range of case studies from across Africa that radio, particularly through drama and storytelling formats, has consistently served as a space where communities listen, debate, imagine and negotiate their social realities. Their collection highlights that radio’s intimacy and its oral character make it especially resonant in societies with deep traditions of oral storytelling, rendering it far more

than a mere broadcaster of information but a living extension of oral culture itself. This insight applies with particular force to the Nigerian programmes analysed in this paper, where the storytelling format clearly functions as a bridge between indigenous oral tradition and the modern mass media environment.

Ligaga (2005) similarly demonstrates, through her analysis of the Kenyan radio drama Ushikwapo Shikamana, how development-oriented radio drama in Africa packages its social messages within realist, soap-opera-like narrative frameworks that listeners experience as reflections of their everyday lives. By blending entertainment with moral instruction, such programmes engage listeners emotionally and imaginatively, drawing them into the narrative world in ways that make the desired social lessons personally resonant. This approach is entirely consistent with the method observable in the Nigerian radio serials discussed in this paper: 'Inspector Bamidele' on Positive FM and 'Sisi Tito' on Gateway Radio 2 FM both employ recognisable social situations like corruption, polygamy, and unemployment within dramatic storylines precisely in order to activate the listener's imagination and social conscience simultaneously. Such programming demonstrates that when radio storytelling succeeds, it does so not by instructing its audience from above but by drawing them into a shared imaginative space where they can identify, empathise and reflect.

Conclusion

Radio serves as a vital medium, not only for entertainment, information and education, but has also thrived as an important and viable medium which has the potential to develop or enhance the imagination of its audience through its creative programmes. The act of telling stories is a vital aspect of the people's culture particularly in the developing countries which must be passed via a channel that is the closest and the cheapest to the people- the radio. From the study, it can be concluded that radio can be seen as a good medium of storytelling today due to the fact that the heterogeneous audience get the story at the same time and make more use of their imagination to visualize or create for themselves the mise-en-scene through the voices and sounds they hear far more than any other electronic medium. In other words, radio is one of the most creative media of communication.

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