ORALITY TALENT AND CREATIVITY: A SYNTHESIS

Segun Omosule (Ph. D.)

Abstract
The paper attempts a critical examination of the creative force of some writers and situates the propelling drive within orality, history, experience and imitation. Oscar Wilde locates this area of imitation within nature and praises creative artists for perfecting the untwisted works of nature. Even when Oscar Wilde tries to blame nature for its lack of design and orderliness, it is clear that nature is aglow in its supposed crudity. The thrust of the paper is that art is a universal language that thrives on representation. The basic theoretical claim of the paper is that the earliest writers such as Homer, Sophocles and Euripides dwell so much on the oral environment by exploring the supernatural infiltrations of the terrestrial reallll as the vogue is a leaning towards phenomenal elements until attention shifts to physical and mundane issues, especially those dwelling on history, the psychological sophistication of the characters, socio-political issues and the environment as a whole. From Chalice to Shakespeare, art becomes a tool for analysing individual’s romance with the society. The paper concludes that art is a means of resolving fundamental issues. In other words, art is a register of manners, conventions and norms, and the desire is to achieve cohesion in the society through the amplification of such socially desirable behaviours.

Keywords: orality, talent, creativity, literature, inspiration, environment

Introduction
Even the first group of writers whose innovation fashioned today’s art and creative endeavours rely greatly on the oral environments as their sources of inspiration. Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey are the first books ever to be published the world over. In terms of chronology, Iliad should precede Odyssey because the latter is a continuation of the former. However, it is an accident of fate that Odyssey comes first. Homer’s reliance on the oral environment and perhaps documentation of the lore of the Greek society is a testimony to the fact that hardly could anything worthwhile take place in creativity without an original phenomenon to imitate. The first bulk of primordial writers such as Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Aristophanes and other obscure writers find the
unscripted lore subsisting in the environments as great springboards they could explore while nature is the primal force they juxtaposed in the conflicts between human actors and supernatural elements.

The launcl1 pad being the inherent amusement in the conflicts between fate and individuals, and at times nature, the first writers perceive a paradox between the guardian angel of an individual and the guardian angel of another when human actors are involved in conflicts. The preceding claim amply corroborates the contents of Homer's *Iliad, Odyssey and* Sophocles' *Antigone, Oedipus Rex or Oedipus Tyrannus* (Oedipus the King), *Electra*, *Ajax, Trachiniae (Maidens of Trachis), Philoctetes*, and *Oedipus at Colonus* and critics as well as psychologists have not ceased to explore the contents of these texts in the explication of manners and behaviours.

Modern art can hardly shed the garb of attachment to Greek oral tales. The influence of Greek myths on sculpture, music, literature and computer cannot be undermined. It is the truth that these myths are the origins of religious beliefs and practices. These examples may show the inimitable web of meanings inherent in Greek myths and tales. Examples abound such as Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) which dwells on mysterious tales following the tradition of Greek writers. Jules Verne's *Voyage Extraordinaires* (1963-1905) explores science fiction and the inspiration for the creative work may have come from Greek myths and tales.

James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) is a representation of one of the principal characters named Odysseus during the voyage to Troy. Ulysses is the Latin equivalent of the proper noun Odysseus, king of Ithaca whose wife Penelope gives birth to Telemachus prelude to the Trojan War and whose ingenuity leads to the victory of the Grecian army over the Trojans. Ulysses is also the name of an interplanetary spacecraft which comes into existence in 1990 whose "mission is to measure the solar wind and magnetic field over the Sun's poles during the period of both high and low solar activity". The project Ulysses is the joint project of the European Space Agency and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) *Encarta* (1998). Other writers have not ceased to explore the mythical and the sublime in the oral tales of the Greek world. Examples are: Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931), Eliot's *The Family Reunion* (1939), and Jean-Paul Sartre's *Les Mouches* (1943); *The Flies* (1946).
Art and the desire for imitation may also be traced to the shadow as an
unnatural state that replicates the original man. Much fun could be
gained from a mere shadow, the total or systematic documentation of the
natural man could paint a picture of amusement, especially where the funny
traits of the folk come to the fore. From the point of view of kings and nobles, it
is the tilt towards total abandonment of the natural state, and by extension the
desire to imitate gods/goddesses that lead to the emergence of both comedy and
tragedy. Such creative tendencies have continued to manifest in humanity’s
display of rare creative and imaginative capabilities and these cannot be denied.

The original conflicts that have endlessly bedevilled humanity are
traceable to the relationship between the immortals and human pawns. Ample
examples abound, Thetis, for instance, is the daughter of the sea deities,
Nereus and Doris. Predictions are rife that the son that would be engendered
through her would be greater than the father. So, no one wants to marry her
because suitors are afraid that the child that she would litter would be greater
than the father. Not even Zeus would like to continue with the relationship when
he discovers that revelation after making a pass on her. Other immortals shun
her. At last she is bestowed to Peleus, king of the Myrmidons, a mortal so that the
child of the relationship, no matter how powerful, would remain a mortal after
all.

The wedding is held and it is an oversight that Eris the goddess of strife
is not invited to the wedding. She is there anyway. While there, she tries to play
some pranks with the goddesses. She throws out an apple and on the apple is
inscribed "for the fairest". It is indeed a way of displaying her anger at the
oversight. Three goddesses namely: Hera, Aphrodite and Athena contest for the
apple. They want to prove that they are the most beautiful. They approach Zeus
to adjudicate in the conflict and he declines because he is related to the three of
them. He passes the baton of judgement to Paris, otherwise known as Alexander
(Paris doesn’t know that he is a Prince of Troy). At birth, Paris is abandoned
under the care of a farmer on Mount Ida consequent upon the dream of Hecuba
his mother and the interpretation that he (Paris) would be instrumental in the
destruction of Troy,

It is during the contest that Paris is informed of his noble birth. He is
spirited away to Troy and elopes with Helen of Sparta, wife of Menelaus and
brother of Agamemnon. Back in Troy, Cassandra protests against the arrival of
Paris. However, Paris is accepted to the chagrin of Cassandra who sees the
"ision that the young man would be instrumental in the destruction of Troy in tandem with the dream of Hecuba, his mother, when she is heavily pregnant with the baby who is later known as Paris. He is accepted against the counsel of Cassandra, the daughter of King Priam of Troy who has the gift of prophecy and the misfortune of doubt as no one would ever believe her prophecies, credible as they are.

Relationship between Zeus and the Contestants

Hera is the sister and wife of Zeus. You can imagine the magnitude of hatred that would attend the Trojan War when her son named Ares is the god of war and another named Hephaestus is the god of fire. Hebe, her daughter, is the goddess of youth while Eileithyia is the goddess of childbirth. Hera is vindictive and would not forget an injury easily. She offers Paris the promise of making him a powerful ruler. He does not fall for that bait. She does not fail to show her anger at the preference of Paris for Aphrodite during the contest: "Hera aided the Greeks in the Trojan War and is not appeased until Troy is finally destroyed" (Encarta 2009). Aphrodite too is a contestant for the apple. She is the wife of Hephaestus, the god of fire and thus the son of Hera. Aphrodite is the daughter of Zeus through Dione one of the consorts of Zeus. The god of war, Ares, is her lover too. Persephone, the queen of the underworld is her rival and they are both competing for the love of the handsome Greek youth named Adonis. She bribes Paris by offering her body for him to enjoy and promises him the hand of the most beautiful lady in the world named Helen who is at the same time, the wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta. Paris is glad to enjoy a goddess and equally falls for the bait in Helen.

Athena equally competes for the apple. She is the favourite daughter of Zeus and she is reputed to have sprung "full-grown and am10red from the forehead of the god Zeus". She offers Paris the promise of achieving "great military fame". The offer does not go down well with Paris. He opts instead for the bribe of Aphrodite and adjudges her the most beautiful goddess. When Paris elopes with Helen, Athena supports the Greeks and punishes the Greeks after the Trojan War for their disrespect to her altar by killing Cassandra the Trojan prophetess who seeks safety there. Athena seeks the assistance of Poseidon, the god of the sea to send a powerful storm to destroy most of the Greek ships that are returning from Troy.

There are many contradictions in the representations of the traits of the
personalities in Greek oral tales. This is the nature of the symbolic representations of the duality of human personalities. Human beings are truly and paradoxically humane and wicked. Zeus is the god of justice and mercy, the protector of the weak and the righter of wrongs: "Stories of his escapades are numerous in ancient mythology, and many of his offspring are a result of his love affairs with both goddesses and mortal women. It is believed that, with the development of a sense of ethics in Greek life, the idea of a lecherous, sometimes ridiculous father god becomes distasteful, so later legends tended to present Zeus in a more exalted light. His many affairs with mortals are sometimes explained as the wish of the early Greeks to trace their lineage to the father of the gods." (Encarta 2009).

**Metaphors and Greek Characters**

Zeus' exploits are psychological rather than physical. The approach of the study to the aforementioned would be from a different angle. The gods and goddesses are considered from a dream-like angle. In other words, the crises are symbolic and metaphorical rather than literal. The gods and goddesses are representations of different qualities in human beings. The sexual escapades of Zeus are references to the insatiable desire of man for sex and the dangers that such unbridled quest for sex could pose to good health, morality, and fidelity in the clime. Zeus too, as an immortal, may be approached from the angle of taste and drive that can bedevil the possessor. Whatever may be valued beyond control may become a metaphor; a god. Zeus is, therefore, a metaphor of the individual whose penchant for sex assumes a divine proportion. Zeus cannot distinguish his relations from non-relations, mortals from immortals. He is the epitome of the randy-playboy in search of anything in skirts.

Psychoanalysts such as Freud (1965) and Jung (1965) have explored such qualities in human beings situating them within transcendental desires, emotions, urge, spur and drive as motivational forces behind the evolution of culture, individual goals and conventions. Sophocles' King Oedipus falls into this category and creative writers have not ceased to be fascinated by the inimitable web of meanings handed down to the human race from the oral/verbal environment and never could recover from that intricately woven tales. The nine planets, except earth, are directly named after the gods and goddesses. This development may amply show the attachment of the modern world, in terms of art and science, to myths and their verbal origins. Even
heaven and earth are significant and veritable subjects in mythology. The titans were the twelve children of Uranus and Gaea otherwise known as Heaven and Earth. Modern technology too can hardly jettison the overt attachment to mythology. For examples, some cars are named after Greek gods and goddesses such as Hercules, Odyssey, Adventure, Quest etc.

**Definition of Terms**

Orality refers to the spoken means of communication rather than the written form. Its prevalence may be traced to the pre-literate era. It is the era of the verbal means of relating with one another rather than the written form of communication. Of course, the era is devoid of technological means of relating with one another. Perhaps, the era might be said to be crude or natural, plain and unadulterated. Communication thrived through performance and artistic renditions could be verbal and scenic. Developments are recorded through songs, performances and physical displays as opposed to the written form and recordings through electronic gadgets.

Talent refers to artistic endowment especially one that tends towards imaginative and creative capabilities. Such creations may have the inherent qualities of amusing the audience and could harbour the intrinsic worth of inspiring the audience as well. Creativity and talent are intertwined as the latter is a manifestation of the former. No doubt the artistic capability may be an offshoot of training and learning with the resultant fashioning of products of art through the help of imagination.

**Orality and Sundry Issues in Creativity**

In the postmodern and globalised world, the conflicts in the creative endeavours assumed other dimensions. They could be economic and social realities. The forces of demand and supply have been significant in the crises in the global society subsisting between states and the governed, between states and other competing states, and even between ideologies and their proponents in relation to other divergent views. For instance, communism and socialism defined relationships prelude to the dismantling of the Soviet Unions. Capitalism too displayed avowed rivalry with the socialist nations of the world. Karl Marx (1982) and Friedrich Engels (1982) are significant in this regard. Interpretations of policies have dwelt exclusively on the point of view of exploitation of the vulnerable class represented by the class of labour and the
caven and earth are significant and veritable subjects in mythology. The titans ere the twelve children of Uranus and Gea otherwise known as Heaven and earth. Model11 technology too can hardly jettison the overt attachment to lythology. For examples, some cars are named after Greek gods and goddesses: ilch as Hercules, Odyssey, Adventure, Quest etc.

**Definition of Terms**

Orality refers to the spoken means of communication rather than the written form. Its prevalence may be traced to the pre-literate era. It is the era of e verbal means of relating with one another rather than the written:orm of communication. Of course, the era is devoid of technological means of relating ith one another. Perhaps, the era might be said to be crude or natural, plain and ladulterated. Communication thrived through performance and artistic nditions could be verbal and scenic. Developments are recorded through ngs, performances and physical displays as opposed to the written form and :;ordings through electronic gadgets.

Talent refers to artistic endowment especially one that tends towards laginative and creative capabilities. Such creations may have the inherent alities of amusing the audience and could harbour the intrinsic worth of ;piring the audience as well. Creativity and talent are intet1wined as the latter a manifestation of the former. No doubt the artistic capability may be an Cshootof training and learning with the resultant fashioning of products of art 'ough the help of imagination.

**ality and Sundry Issues in Creativity**

In the postmodel11 and globalised world, the conflicts in the creative Mravours assumed other dimensions. They could be economic and social lities. The forces of demand and supply have been significant in the crises in global society subsisting between states and the govel11ed, between states j other competing states, and even between ideologies and their proponents relation to other divergent views. For instance, communism and soci~lism fined relationships prelude to the dismantling of the Soviet Unions. pitalism too displayed avowed rivalry with the socialist nations of the world. rI Marx (1982) and Friedrich Engels (1982) are significant in this regard. erpretations of policies have dwelt exclusively on the point of view of oitation of the vulnerable class represented by the class of labour and the
The Creative ingredients may dwell on political and religious conflicts. Democracy and totalitarianism, finding expression in the Western world and the Arabian setting, may constitute potent creative ingredients. No doubt, wars are fought on a daily basis in the desire to foist religious hegemony on contiguous state; and the consequent resistance from adherents of democracy. Economic and political issues are considered and interpreted from two basic angles of religious doctrines and fundamental Islamic perspectives. Billions of dollars and pounds are spent annually in order to curtail the spread of religious extremism across the world yet wreaking human and capital toll.

Sexist and interpersonal relationship may constitute potent creative ingredients. Writers have examined the themes of love, marriage, broken hearts and diverse issues relating to matrimony. However, the postmodern challenge may relate the acceptability of homosexuality, a negation of the original culture; a strange and emerging trend in the global society characterised by same sex marriage necessitated by biological deviation from the behaviours of the preponderant culture and the awareness of the rights of the few members of the class of identical and unfamiliar attraction. Such struggles and negation of rights may be considered in the creative endeavours of writers to the chagrin of the alarming majority but amounting to a fundamental approbation of the right of the minority to basic freedom.

If one still doubts why Greek writers make ample use of the chorus, it should be clearer now that the need to fashion an objective, unadulterated situation to which constant recourse could be made informed that device. The chorus becomes an embodiment of the knowledge of the enclave, as well as the foibles and strong points of every character. Projections are equally salient to them and constant comments are made upon the refraction of fleeting time. In other words, their unsympathetic disposition may capture reality in its crude form, and present same to the audience. It is on this basis that both the past and present could hold equal potentiality for the roving eyes of the chorus.

Most Greek plays exhibit leanings towards supernatural infiltrations of the terrestrial realm. Homer's Odyssey and Iliad; Aeschylus' Agamemnon, The Eumenides, and The Libation Bearers; Sophocles' King Oedipus and Antigone all point to the primal leanings towards the world of gods/goddesses for
motivation and thematic hallmarks in their creative endeavours. The recourse to the world of the immortals may be traced to the monotony of the physical realm that the unexplored world of the spirits becomes an attraction. The longing may not be divorced from the belief of the era, and till today, fleeting traces of the thematic preoccupation of the Greek era could still be apprehended in the creative endeavours of writers such as Doris Fred, Ola Rotimi and a host of others.

The controversy between the place of art in relation to nature assumes a new dimension when viewed against the argument of Oscar Wilde (1965). The fact that nature imitates man receives authorial boost from no less a critic than Wilde (1965). You may not bother your head with the attempt by him to twist the truth, as men of letters are wont to do when faced with the necessity of exhibiting their intellectual ingenuity, but the truth is that man perceives an incongruity in nature that he attempts to redress. That, no doubt, informs the need for creativity in whatever guise. How then can Wilde (1965) assume that nature copies from man even when nature precedes the latter? (17),

Whatever may seem the argument of Wilde (1965) about the place of nature in creativity, it is true that the first creator is nature herself and that man borrows his penchant for creativity from her. The undeniable fact in Wilde's claim, however, is the fact that "nature" lacks 'design'. Whatever he means by that! Yet, nature seems aglow in its cmdity, especially in the tilt towards negativity. For why is poetry (drama, prose and poetry) desirable except for the amplification of frequent catastrophic descent of human beings into the beastly state! Thus, the recognition of these detestable states makes poetry a mother of necessity, so that such ills can be corrected, and a refined state of mind may be fashioned through art.

No doubt, those foibles in characters are universal types, and they may be condemned and discouraged when extra-care is taken to isolate and reconstruct man against his usual tilt towards the dungeon: Art becomes a universal language, capable of diverse interpretations towards sustaining a natural state that tends towards the immortal. Countless examples abound of such works of art that are geared towards the reversal of the odious, the unnecessary, and at best, antics that are considered inimical to the glorious state.

Characters are hardly concerned about the fatal consequences of their actions. The Haw in nature, as Wilde (1965) says, may be adduced (or the same
pitfalls in characters, and they hardly can admit this. Thus, art becomes a periodic newsletter where the challenges, constituting the scenes of individuals, may be revealed, reconstructed and amplified. For how else would nature have instructed the folk except through the folk themselves! The imitations of the flaws come in the form of representations, and the ultimate is the moral education of folk in the tilt towards a society that reveals a symbol of a celestial bliss.

It is imperative that writers bring symbols to bear on their enterprise as Homer achieves this through several incongruous conflicts especially within the framework of the diverse conflicts in *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Yet, what cannot be denied is that Homer identifies tragic flaws at two levels of human and supernatural. Yet, a postmodern interpretation may quickly trace the human flaws to the psychological state of the characters whereas the supernatural dimension has no basis other than such environmental input/distractions. To a postmodern critic, Paris' choice of Aphrodite's gift of her body and the love of Helen lack any supernatural underpinning. Rather, Paris' personality needs a feminist boost above the lure of empire and military prowess. It is not surprising that he falls headlong for Aphrodite's gift, where Aphrodite becomes an emotional stir to savour an uncanny delicacy. Thus, a lesson becomes handy for humanity about the possible lure that is attendant on life's bumpy-highway, finding expression in infatuation and the fatal consequences.

Agamemnon too is a symbol and bears the brunt of the self-perpetuating disposition of human beings, and never the curse of Thyestes. For man is already plagued with a curse he inflicts on himself as a result of his own action and the susceptibility to emotional reactions. Thyestes too incurs the wrath of god/the golden rule for sleeping with Atreus' wife; and where such an untoward action may not be detected, the curse of blood may be a silent plague that may only be remitted through confession. It is unbecoming of Agamemnon to have initiated the killing of his daughter named Iphigenia on the order of Artemis in order to have a smooth sail to Troy. As if the earlier murder of Thyestes' children by Atreus when he pretends reconciliation is not enough, the last straw is launched when the heir of the family offers Iphigenia as sacrifice towards prosecuting a senseless war.

No doubt, the lure of office becomes a veritable theme; and this becomes apparent when viewed against the backdrop of the desire by
Agamemnon to maintain his political prowess. The possible fear of being dubbed a weakling probably motivates him to spend so illueh on the Trojan War at the expense of his own life, daughter and marriage. It is natural for power to discountenance any form of cowardice, no matter the consequences. In the attempt at asserting himself, and possibly defend his father’s lineage, Agamemnon’s perception of fairness becomes twisted. Aeschylus’ desire in *Agamemnon* is to present the various conflicts so that humanity may digest the various consequences of indiscretion.

It may not be very clear why Clytemnestra would subscribe to a murderous pact with Aegisthus in the murder of Agamemnon. The death of Iphigenia may be a possible reason. Yet, more deadly is her resolve to engage in an amorous relationship with Aegisthus which consequence is the murder of Agamemnon. Clytemnestra, as a diplomatic force too could not remain content with her total abandonment by a professed husband for that long. If the chilly cold is not enough to stir her to revulsion, the feeling that her man might be enjoying himself on the "Plane of cringy Troy" with booties of war makes her susceptible to rebellion. At best, the alliance with Aegisthus proves her susceptibility to revenge over her abandonment in order to prosecute a driftless war. The feminist ethos therein lies in the call (or illutual trust and proximity among couples.

The argument, therefore, is that the parallel presented by these Greek tragedies are didactic instruments for the enforcement of the religious tempo. And when such conflicts are digested, the moral lessons stir one to the amplification of that which is civilized, moral and just. Where such excessive attributes of interference from the gods and goddesses may not be totally applicable to a postmodernist’s deconstruction, the partial fear of god and the all-encompassing fear of reprisal from the law of the land may groom man to be serviceable, pliant and fluid in his relationship with whatever conflict may beset him. Imitation thus becomes a salient instrument for instructing man in order to divert him from his beastly traits.

Aristotle’s model must have informed such creative constructions. The quest by Greek writers is the imitation of both human and supernatural lorees and their scripts are meant to instruct and divert the audience. In deference to Aristotle’s recipe, the myths are divorced of their Jil’less imports and the characters infested with life, flesh and blood. Consequently, the foibles in
human beings are equally salient to these gods/goddesses. Just as the surgeon embarks on his business with such meet tools, the writer purses his goals with equally worthy materials. Among such tools may be found the myth—a quasi-scientific explanation of the phenomenal world, peopled by both beings of physical state and spirits that are devoid of concrete forms. The means through which the end may be achieved include: innuendoes, exaggerations, metaphorical allusions and similes. Where distortions are rife, they could be traced to the over-application of mythical ingredients that some may doubt the reality of such creative endeavours. And like Chekhov (1965) says:

Writers are the children of their age, and therefore, like the rest of the public, ought to surrender to the external conditions of society. Thus, they must be absolutely decent (245).

It may be assumed that the ingredients of creativity are the prevailing oral and literary sensibilities of the age, and writers may not abandon them without catastrophic consequences on their relationship with the audience. This is so especially when much symbolic relationship seems to exist between writers and readers for a corresponding interface to bloom in the former's creative undertakings.

Writer's imagination is let-loose upon beholding a world that is characterized by tragedy. This perhaps, accounts for the emergence of supernatural anecdotes in various literary constructions, especially where strange forebodings emanating from peculiar apprehensions of reality could blossom to several environments without coordination. Any such items could become authentic from which several such fables could emanate in the course of time. Wole Soyinka explores the oral environment in A Dance of the Forests (1960), Kongi's Harvest (1967), and Death and the King's Horseman (1975) and the books are based on the indigenous environment of the writer. Soyinka too could not detach himself from the attraction of the Greek myths. He composes a poem entitled: "Ulysses" (1972). Lord Tennyson has a poem from that character too entitled: "Ulysses" (1842).

The recourse to supernatural elements in Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, Aeschylus' The Oresteia, Sophocles' Oedipus the King and Antigone and Euripides' Medea and Alcestis transcends the realm of the fable. The truth is that the elemental forces dot every isle, and equally strange beings among the populace could behold and interact with them. No matter the name one may give
to this development, the truth is that human beings are strangely endowed. However, the blame for excessive deployment of the superhuman ingredients may be traced to unhindered application of those creative materials that a feeling of outrage overwhelms the readers. It is not perhaps known to the artists what amount of metaphysical infiltration should be applied to their tales to the extent that the ample deployment of creative cosmetics to tales makes them absurd, fantastic and exaggerated.

Attention later shifts to more realistic challenges. From Chaucer to Shakespeare, creative writers dwell much on the physical and spiritual components of existence. It is obvious that Chaucer's subject matters and themes are meant to capture the shortcomings of the era. Shakespeare too explores history and dots his creative efforts with metaphysical infiltrations, typified by the beliefs of the period. Even Thomas Hardy could not but exhibit his personal challenges in the treatment of his heroes and heroines such as *Jude the Obscure*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, and *The Return of the Native* to mention but a few. Thus, writers' business becomes quite indistinguishable from the socio-political crises that both Taine (1965) and Gustave (1965) lock horns with each other over the reality of art being a projection of both the environment, the psychological antecedents of the writer or the claim that creativity may be impersonal and largely artistic and the plausibility of explicating texts from such angles. The critics seem to have their strong points, and except for the sheer display of intellectual prowess, art may not be removed from the milieu and the feelings of the writers at the moment of composition. Other terrains may be science fiction and explorations of the realm of the unknown. Science fiction makes Taine's postulation admissible.

Creativity becomes an artistic preoccupation whose ultimate is the revitalization of the environment with salient norms, in obvious imitation of the primordial efforts of the ancients. Its thrust is the documentation of values that are considered instrumental in turning around the fortunes of a people. Within such amplified mores are those tacitly infused values. The aim is to instruct the folk towards divulging them of their beastly inclinations. Thus, the goals of creativity may not be different from the attempt at indoctrinating the people. It may be assumed that every creative effort is a form of address to some conceivable contradictions that may require resolution in the immediate future.

Oral art too seeks such resolutions of spiritual and physical conflicts on
the plane of performances. It is within such a level that festivals and other
genres of oral art may be situated. If the efforts are geared towards resolving
such societal anomalies during the pre-literate era, creative direction cannot be
different in a postmodern world. The quest may not be different among creative
writers across the world. John Dlyden's poem entitled "The Medal" which
dates back to 1682 fulfils the same artistic yearning for purity, excellence and
decorum. "The Medal" from the point of view of an iconoclast becomes an
orchestrated display that does not portray the baseness in the inner man.
Consequently, art becomes an exploration; a potent navigation of the
consciousness of the folk and their leaders. The double standard in the persona
is unveiled; and the selfish pursuit of the individual is juxtaposed with the
collective need of the society. As a result, art is a synthetic model by which
trends and developments could be measured. Dryden's poem as an attack on the
society and individual presents art as a missile that fulfils parochial sensibilities
as opposed to an innocuous representation of reality.

This fulfilment of measurement of artistic goals soon turns to a
historical significance where the challenges and achievements of the era could
be unearthed. No wonder, therefore, critics find interspersed in literary efforts
such basic manners and landmarks as if art is an offshoot of history. Shakespeare's
Macbeth, Julius Caesar; King Lear and other texts readily come to mind. Art becomes a means of recording the activities of rulers from where
lessons may be learned and history could not be divorced from such creative
endeavours.

Indeed, it may be pretty difficult to remove art from history. In every
splattered ink of the creative artist are such significant ingredients from which
the history of the milieu cannot be divorced. Except for the absence of the
minute details, especially in such endeavours where the folk are involved as
potent instruments of transformation, cohesion or rebuttal, literature cannot be
completely divulged of its annexation of history. However, the vital area of
demarcation remains the affinity to the drudgeries of everyday life whereas
history is concerned with the documentation of warfare, institutions and hardly
inter-personal issues such as love, the negation of love, as well as the elevation
of emotions to the level of the sublime that art celebrates.

Taine's (1965) postulation becomes a veritable launch-pad. Equally
apposite to the affiliation between art and the milieu from where it is drawn is his
position that art is a "translator" of contemporary manners and customs and the
sign of a particular state of intellect". John Dryden's position in "The Medal" attests to that element of bias in artists. He fails, for instance, to exemplify those negative traits in the persona that one wonders if his treatment of the persona has not revealed his own political affiliation to a section of the community. The paradoxical position of an artist makes art an instrument of vengeance while equally satisfying patrons and chastising opponents: "the conclusion derived from this is that, through literary monuments, we can retrace the way in which men felt and thought many centuries ago" (254).

The genre of prose fiction reveals this ambivalent preoccupation. Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre is narrated in the first person point of view. All through the novel, the voice of the narrator is audible, that one finds it difficult to distinguish her from the heroine as well as the writer. The inherent subjectivity betrays the bias in the episode and undermines the intellectual probity that should be displayed by a work of art. Where a party tells her own story; one wonders if she may present reality from the perspective of the voiceless party. This limitation explains how much reality could be presented through a work of art. As for the intellectual summations, the result, may not be in doubt; after all, critics will unveil them through significant information that the artists try to hoard.

Drama sketches too thrive on the same weaknesses associated with other genres. The strength is exaggeration by which reality is assigned a hypothetical configuration. The inherent distortion in that flicker of reality stirs the revulsion in the audience, especially where the subject displays a flagrant negation of justice. That same creative spur, when directed towards known traits that are inimical but harmless to inter-personal relationship inspires laughter. On that basic stuff, comedy but largely subject to the manipulation of the artists. The Yoruba folktales and Onomaseyi, for instance, remain artistic records of creative ingredients. The author(s) may not be visible in the composition, as nothing betrays the presence all through the tales. However, basic summations are inherent in them that may be applicable to people all through time. In other words, such tales are timeless and symbolic measurement of human traits.

Whatever perceivable truth may remain in creativity requires a dexterous savoury of the delicacy of untruth to match an equally under-hand arrangement that is encoded with language. The art of composition may not be
subject to any visitation from the muse. Rather, story-telling, like lying, is a
skill that is learned and brought to an ennobling position through usage. There
is not much difference between creativity and lying as a vice. It is doubtful if a
good liar would not thrive better if he shifts his ground to creativity. A liar may
draw attention to falsehood and accord it the needed condiments to make it a
potent ingredient of reality. Consequently, the emphasis on a robust
imagination makes creativity a subject that is inextricably tied to imagination.

Yet, the gulf separating orchestrated-reality from illusion may not be easily discernible, especially where language is appropriated to confer the
needed authenticity on the composition. The status of imagination may be
situated within two levels, and each foot between the realm of dream and
transient vision. Poets perceive strange forebodings that they attempt to capture
and document in their fleeting essence. The smarter the poet are in the design
and illumination of such fleeting thoughts with the ingredients of reality, the
better the delivery of the overwhelming considerations that continually call for
attention.

The deployment of the web of intricacies associated with each creative
efforts places training in its perspective. It is the case that creative artists are
familiar with the peculiarities of their trade, and could, like a forger, dexterously
twist the seemingly 'inappropriate raw material to a potent product that no
prospective buyer can ignore. The training may be formal or otherwise; for like
a baby who grapples with every socio-cultural item in the environment on his
way to maturity, the artist embarks on his creative task with his mind fully
propelled by those norms, styles and nuances of the business.

Style, however, is tied to the artist's psychological state. Ample proofs
exist where the state of mind of writers directs their artistic course. No doubt,
different poets parade diverse psychological conditioning. Thus, a regimented
heart tends towards tragedy, and he bears no bilge of remorse for being so. Such
mind seems deeply regimented towards perversion even when the individual
may not be crooked. Yet, his logical mind, perhaps, concludes that existence is a
foundation that may not admit anything glorious. A subtle dismissal of positive
trait becomes visible here. Like Gustave (1965), the conclusion represents the
helplessness of humanity about any possibility of shedding the garb of
negativism in a world where vices jostle for attention. The triumph of the
crooked, reign of perversion and elongation of the unjust cannot convince such a
tailored mind of the tilt towards comedy. Flaubert Gustave's Madam Bovwy.
The more vivacious mind favours comedy. The development arises out of open-mindedness. This mind cannot withstand the sight of blood without much backlash in this serene state. Thus, the traces of humour in their trickling state represent a reversal of the order and thus a projection of a serene, enlightened and liberal mind that is attuned to the concept of universal brotherhood.

The logical conclusion seems to be that both serene and liberal minds exemplify reality in its paradoxical categories. No doubt, this seems the truth; as both the ugly and beautiful states are exhibited by nature, except that an uncurtailed inclination towards the opposite may mar existence and obliterate its flagrance. Tragedy and comedy are thus potent representations of reality, but both are tainted by exaggerations.

Writers have no magical capability and they don't pretend to possess one. They draw their ingredients from their societies; and they may equally be capable of those flaws themselves. Yet, like a scribe, attention demands the record of such visible kines. Homer's preoccupation in *Iliad* and *Odyssey* manifests this stupefaction; and whatever revulsion modern readers may harbour on the contradictions in terms of conflicts, suitability and possibility on such metaphysical infiltrations of the terrestrial realm may be blamed on time and never their plausibility. Writers, therefore, fulfil the yearnings of their environments. At best, they represent a scribe to the milieu and combine inaccurate record of beliefs, practices, manners and conventions with the rare capability of imposing their styles on the readers/audience. Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* reveals the challenges of the era, but its universal feminist appeal makes it a powerful force for explicating conflicts in a postmodern era.

The beauty of the Homeric era is the emergence of a web of conflicts from which other worthwhile designs are fashioned. The principle of cause and effect informs this, and this probably explains why a piecemeal reconciliation of the crises is prevented especially in the Oedipus saga. The furies of Apollo and Diana are unleashed on the race of Amphion, and the race is almost completely annihilated. The result is the emergence of Laius as the king, and the machinery for the fulfilment of the prophecy that his son would kill him and marry Jocasta, his wife. Before then, the birth of Oedipus triggers off the struggle with fate. The baby boy is given to a goat-herd to be destroyed on Mount Cithaeron.
Contrary to the order, the boy is handed over to a servant of Polybus, the king of Corinth; a man he meets on the mountain. Little Oedipus becomes a member or Polybus' household. Merope, by design is barren; and Oedipus' presence resolves her quest for a child. So, a transitory relief is found by both Laius and Polybus to the nagging problem that confronts them till Oedipus becomes aware of his foreign origin and consults Apollo's oracle at Delphi. The singular revelation from the oracle, hypothetical as it is, propels all to further crises.

Unhappy man, keep far away from your father!
If you meet him, you will kill him.
Then you will marry your mother, and have children who will befated to crime and misfortune (150)

The revelation becomes a pawn to creative artists who explore it all through time in an endless examination of its aftermaths. Sophocles' Antigone dwells on the struggles between Eteocles and Polynices, on one hand and Antigone herself and the state, on the other hand. Thus, the emergence of a conflict bordering on indiscretion or outright manipulation of a supposed destiny beckons on other conflicts that will trigger off other crises. The claim seems to be that humanity thrives on an endless gyration that the seedlings of the present have their foot both in the crises-ridden past, and the unsympathetic future.

The tie with the medieval style becomes visible. It is slightly obvious during the renaissance era. Its hallmark is Francis Petrarch (1304 - 1374). His rhymes express his feelings rather than the projection of any metaphysical influence on human actions. Giovanni Boccaccio (1313 - 1375) too typifies the era as Roman is brought to the fore. The reliance on the metaphysical is soon consigned into the dungeon of irrelevance. Medieval era fashions a different preoccupation and the major concerns are chivalry, romance and allegory. The artists of the era are influenced by the prevailing atmosphere. No doubt, the folk direct the affairs of the creative world.

Postmodern effort marks a total severance from the murky past. Artists' preoccupations now centre on the inner mind, and the heroes and heroines are adjudged responsible for whatever consequences rear their ugly heads through their indiscretion. Characters are thus to blame for their mistakes. Justice no longer belongs to the gods and goddesses. Rather, human action is adjudged worthy or otherwise, depending on the degree of conformity to unwritten
universal law of synthesis. A step further from the psychological state of mind is the prevalence of technology as a potent means of tracking the misdeeds of perverts among human beings. Devices have been installed in most metropolitan cities to watch and keep vigil on the activities of the criminal-minded among the people. They have nowhere to hide. Justice may no longer ooze from divine intervention as humanity cannot exercise the restraints to wait that long but from carefully packaged rules and regulations of every society as may be informed by satellites whose beams could record misdeeds as culprits are brought to book at once.

African scholars, for instance, present an interesting aspect of the consistent recourse to tradition for creative ingredients. Whatever comes out of such effort is no sooner harnessed than the environment, setting, or milieu that gives birth to such appreciation is discarded, denounced and castigated. The common negative terms in reference to the unencumbered past include: barbaric, superstitious, idolatry etc. The truth, however, is that all modern religions are elevated superstitions. They reveal a core of adherence to the appreciation of the unusual.

If there is a tilt today in the bulk of literature of the pre-literate era, it should not be regretted, especially when man and his endeavours are in constant twist and twirl. The reality of a planet always in locomotion is that the mobility suffers no abandonment. The currents of change sweep creeds and beliefs, practices and conventions in this traditional gyration. Whatever fate must have befallen such primordial practices may further subject post-modern doctrines to the same litmus test of change.

This critical endeavour may receive pedagogic acclamation when viewed from the immortal voice of the enfant terrible of literature: Gustave Flaubert. He presents a picture of a confused intellectual, as he tends to be guilty of the same fault he sordidly tries to castigate. The revulsion of Flaubert Gustave with the environment and psychological situation of the poet which he denies any relevance in creativity may be excused too, especially when no man may seem the end of humanity nor an idea, no matter how impeccable, as time surreptitiously confers on them the eventual garb of irrelevance. If, according to Gustave (1965), "no horizon perceived by human eyes is ever the shore, because, beyond that horizon lies another, and so on forever", it will be preposterous for him to condemn the environment and psychological state of the poet in the composition of the script. No doubt, some poetic endeavours may
seem to fulfill this negation; yet, not in its totality because the effort itself may not be divorced from the intellectual and psychological well-being of the author and the category too may be located in time and space.

Where a particular work of art seems not to celebrate any known development, the psychological framework of the poet may have conceived such a barren milieu, especially in its subtle gyration within both known and imaginative terrains. Therefore, the expression is a subject of a synthesis. In other words, nothing is original as imitation is salient to every task no matter how novel. Should it not be clear to Gustave (1965) that reality is a dynamic preoccupation and may be an offshoot of some stereotyped considerations! The poem of Mazisi Kunene entitled: "Europe", is a reflection of the invisible from, the visible. In other words, the primordial experience as well as other modern/post-modern developments may have unconsciously filtered into the realms of the reality the poet portrays. Whatever one may say of the hurried effort at finesse, an occasional drift into such pre-conceived claims is garnered especially by the critic whose sight is propelled by such diversity of knowledge, vision of the encumbered amid a synthesis of the undisclosed.

The same uncanny claim may be made of all poets. Taban Lo Liyong in "To Susan Suntag, with Love" is another example. To deny the ever-flowing recourse to the environment and the poet's state of mind will amount to reaping a bumper harvest without acknowledging the concerted tillage and nurture of the seed to maturity. No doubt, human beings are slaves of whatever endeavour they may now seem to have perfected. The dither in reference to perfection may be excused from the same realisation of the futility of ascribing perfection to human efforts because goals are subject to the constant twist of ingenuity when lucidity often beams its light on the obscure, as knowledge and inventions may typify.

Even where language seems to conjure basic emotional reactions, it is credible to trace such emotions to the environment. This is because some signs, symbols and codes are templates towards arousing communal emotional reactions. The case of art for art's sake may not remove creativity from some associated norms, practices and psychological reactions that are equally traditional to the setting. Stretched to another divide, it is imperative that some words are associated with certain emotional reactions over the years, and their meanings are pre-determined. It is not out of place, therefore, for such
comparisons not to reveal the primordial quests for satisfaction. Nwankwo's (1990) lends his voice to the inter-connectivity, existing between both the oral and written poetry in Africa: "all have now come to recognise the acts of oral and written poetry as a synchronic reality, rather than a diachronic reality" (314). Critics may find synchronic dimension of meanings to be situated within literary and metaphorical interpretations. In other words, this clue refers to what is termed "structure-specific". Signs, codes, symbols, and language are brought to bear in this regard.

The plausibility of Nwankwo's (1990) statement cannot be denied. However, it is an aberration on his part to limit the reality of both the oral and written poetry to the synchronic dimension. Even when modern men and women still chant such poems in the rural and urban settings, it should be understood that the possibility of some poems being extinct cannot be denied. Again, some compositions exhibit traits that could delimit them within a particular locale, time and development. Equally contradictory in the analysis of Nwankwo (1990) is the fact that oral items are products of several verbal renditions that may have influenced their modern compositions.

The poets' imagination too is conditioned. It is tied to the environment; and except an extra mile is traversed to transcend the precincts of the setting, the poet's imagination may only gyrate within the limited confinement of the environment. Thus, it could be argued that whatever landmark seems to be celebrated as product of post-modern reality has its roots in the mythical past. Is it, therefore, the case that a folklore material in print that could be diachronically located ceases to be folklore item? Ben-Amos (1975) seems to miss the mark in this regard. His elimination of the tag of folklore from "a song, a tale or a riddle that is performed on television or appears in print..." simply because "there is a change in its communicative context" may not be valid (14). The historical developments of a setting may be employed by creative writers in fiction and drama sketches, but such change of garb may not totally remove the script from the historical material it is; and critics may easily situate such creative endeavours within the realm of environment it belongs.

Even if salient severance is the case between the Homeric age and postmodern era, basic values have deeply influenced creative artists. The excessive reliance on the metaphysical realm yields to the currents of what this paper terms the "liable consequence". In other words, individuals play suitable
parts in a script that parades a role for everyone; and suitability for either the serene or bizarre depends on the emotional state. In the place of the Oedipus' anger with the ultimate manifestation through his ego, a serene disposition makes the individual fashionable, stable and solid.

Flaubert Gustave's (1965) position becomes apt especially the situation of an artist within a perceptible frame. This practice is what Eliot refers to as the impersonal theory of explicating poetry from the perspective of synchronic dimension of meaning.

An artist must be in his work like God in creation, invisible and all-powerful; he should be everywhere felt, but nowhere seen. Furthermore, art must rise above personal emotions and nervous susceptibilities (132).

Thus, from the point of view of Flaubert, all those traces of authorial intrusions are deviations from the norms of literary tradition. Even when Flaubert considers this release of emotions from the poet on the work, and though capable of condemnation, may not be enough to consign such efforts into the abyss of irrelevance. They may even be strong points in the explication of such texts. If Eliot borrows extensively in the composition of the Family Reunion from the environment or history, it would be preposterous to deny the possibility of extracting significant meanings from a diachronic explication of the text.

Conclusion

Eliot's position on the subject of creativity has become a theoretical foundation to critics over the years. However, this paper unravels several contradictions in the paper entitled: "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1950). This inconsistency stems from Eliot's denial of the environment as well as its affirmation as potent factor in the composition and explication of works of art. Minimal attention has been paid to this issue as it is the subject of another scholarly paper. However, the environment that Eliot tries to disparage equally constitutes the subject matter of his book entitled: The Family Reunion (1939). The reference to tradition makes his essay and whatever strength might be inherent to it susceptible to a denial and approbation, negation and affirmation at the same time. The relies greatly on the oral environment in his creativity, the allusion to the environment is a tacit admission of a tradition from which
constant recourse could be made. The individuality of a creative artist may refer to the stretch of imagination subsisting in the ability to deploy the language with the help of symbols and images that pretend to be different because they are unique but at the same time a form of embellishment of a subsisting poetic practice, tradition or environment. Eliot is never impersonal in his approach to his creative efforts in The Family Reunion and The Cocktail Party (1949). If he wants the artists to be aware of history in the composition of texts, he should equally expect critics to have a strong sense of history in the explication of such texts. The Greek literary environment subsisting in myths and the estrangement of Eliot from his first wife may be fundamental clues to the web of meanings in The Family Reunion and The Cocktail Party (1949). William Shakespeare's reliance on Plutarch in the composition of Coriolanus, Julius Caesar, and Antony and Cleopatra is a manifestation of the extent to which artists could rely or detach themselves from the verbal or written environment. These environmental ingredients can only sharpen and whet the creative appetites of artists, no matter how hard they try to deny these.

References


Freud, Sigmund. The Complete Intraductol] Lectures on Psychoanalysis.


