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The Nexus between Performance, Aesthetics and Philosophical Motifs in Indigenous Festivals

Yerli Festivallerinde Performans, Estetik ve Felsefi Motifler Arasındaki Bağlantı

Segun Omosule*

Abstract

The idea of expediency that is identified with the two mythical sisters that were abducted during the era of slavery and slave trade may have been constructed to sensitise folks about the need to be prepared at all times and probably informed by their social status, and without the instruments of state to enforce security, they might have been exposed to orgies such as slavery and kidnapping. The same measure may not be attributed to powerful members in view of their ability to provide apparatus for security. This exposure to economic wherewithal, however, does not preclude them from relating with the philosophical tempo of the milieu such as consciousness of the place of time in whatever they do or intend to do. Using aesthetics as a theoretical springboard, the study concludes that indigenous performances are means of regulating behaviours.

Keywords: *Indigenous festivals, Yoruba, performance*

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Dr, Department of English, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye, omosulesegun@gmail.com. ORCID ID 0000-0003-2430-2137

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Öz

Kölelik ve köle ticareti döneminde kaçırılan iki efsanevi kız kardeşle özdeşleştirilen çıkarcılık fikri, insanları her zaman hazırlıklı olma ve muhtemelen sosyal statüleri tarafından bilgilendirilme ihtiyacı konusunda duyarlı hale getirmek için inşa edilmiş olabilir. Devletin güvenliği sağlama araçları olarak, kölelik ve adam kaçırma gibi alemlere maruz kalmış olabilirler. Aynı önlem, güvenlik için aygıt sağlama yetenekleri göz önüne alındığında, güçlü üyelere atfedilemez. Bununla birlikte, ekonomik araçlara bu maruz kalma, yaptıkları veya yapmaya niyetlendikleri her şeyde zamanın yerinin bilinci gibi ortamın felsefi temposuyla ilişki kurmalarını engellemez. Estetiği teorik bir sıçrama tahtası olarak kullanan çalışma, yerli performansların davranışları düzenleme aracı olduğu sonucuna varıyor.

Anahtar sözcükler: *Indigenous Festivalleri , Yoruba, performans*

Introduction

Different artistic scripts betray the intellectual values in the Yoruba philosophical space which constitutes the preoccupation of this study. These values are categorized according to ones position in the milieu. There are varied values for the downtrodden and the rich alike. Even when both segments are drawn from the same society, their traits are hardy similar. Fallout of the inimitable web of artistic space are basic axioms that may be associated with people from the lowest rung of the society to the topmost hierarchy.

There are three basic axioms that this study considers critical in any explication of manners in relation to Africans as may be garnered from verbal art and they determine the category that everyone belongs to in the society. They range from modesty for the poor, discernment of possible distractions from lofty goals to the symbol of the last masquerade in the shrine that typifies the attitude of people to issues such as convergence at the social and ritual arenas and the pursuit of personal goals.

Everyone draws inspiration from the verbal and artistic space in relation to every endeavour. Examples of the verbal space are the proverbs that are potent means of presenting realities to the younger generations and tools for driving home claims, facts and conclusions. Proverbs are rendered at both formal and informal fora, and they constitute moral, social and philosophical charters that are written in the memories of members of the milieu. Such proverbs are concise and cryptic means of making summations that have been tested and proved to be valid all through time. The injunction on focus in the midst of distractions is not only valid in the clime but the world over. The bird and its song may constitute a form of distraction if the persona is not properly groomed in the wisdom subsisting in the environment. One wonders how a bird could play such a negative role in influencing human action. In reality, the indigenous world does not distinguish between the anthropomorphic and zoomorphic worlds of human beings and animals. It is instructive that the sages draw parallels from the zoomorphic realm in handing down instructions. This metaphoric annexation of the flora and fauna subsisting in the milieu is achievable through the deployment of useful symbols that are easily juxtaposed in the interpretation of the nexus between the metaphysical and physical realms.

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Theory of explication

The study relies strongly on aesthetics for its theoretical underpinning. Far from aesthetics being preoccupied with the search for beauty alone, the interplay of art and evolvement of behavioural traits, that may be significant in the emergence of culture, finds a referent too. It is in this regard that Dewey, J (1987) cited in Richard Shusterman (2006) is fundamental to the black man in the interwoven experience of the agrarian personality and all the animals around in coming to conclusions about reality. Whatever critics may say about Dewey, experience is a potent instrument of creativity, and these may be drawn from the environment and without which the imagination may not have a solid springboard upon which to launch its creative adventure; exhibit its similarity and emphasise its difference. Tradition and other socio-religious nuances, from which sages of every society could not be divorced, are situated within art and delivered with the accompaniment of aesthetics which may prove a ready theoretical stronghold, in this regard.

The primal origin, for instance, may be characterised by sages whose intellectual endowments are significantly fulfilling, rational and valid till the moment; and these endowments may have crystallized in the art, constituting the festivals, oral tales, proverbs and the lore of the people generally. It is significantly true that there is a nexus between aesthetics and the philosophical underpinnings of indigenous environments, and these are instrumental in whatever modern attribute might be found in the age of Internet. Aesthetics is, thus, a valid instrument in unravelling the culture of expediency, a tool for reconciling with the visible and invisible contradictions of existence, and a means of measuring emotions. Aesthetics provides the reason for the conscious delay, as a show of majesty that typifies modern Yoruba and African social classes and the environment generally in recent time. The delay in appearance may be meant to achieve some effects chief of which is the recognition of the dichotomy in all things. It may be meant to achieve suspense as everyone looks forward to the emergence of the nobles at the arena. Drawing from Collingwood cited in Gordon, Graham (2006), the experience that is portrayed in the work of an artist is not personal, but collective. It is the experience of the community. (139). A critical examination of the oral environment reveals that collective ownership of ideas is the hallmark of indigenous people. All the collectives constitute what mould individuals over the years. This experience may be tantamount to what Kant considers to be garnered through “sensibility” and |understanding.” The interplay of “sensibility and understanding which leads to sensation to be grasped as ordered under a concept” is what Kant terms experience. (Crawford, Donald, 2006: 56).

Drawing from Plato’s (2006), stratification of society along “the ideally just individual and the ideally just city-state”, it is expedient that the values that would be available to individual members of the society would be different depending on their classes, knowledge of peculiar subjects and lack of knowledge of some specifics by the people in the lower rungs of the society. Taste and manners are bound to be different and as class distinction is salient to societies, manners are bound to be different. This is perhaps what Emmanuel Kant has in mind in his “division between sensibility and understanding.” (Crawford, Donald, 2006: 56). Dwelling further on the difference between sensibility and understanding, Crawford, reveals

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that "sensibility is the passive ability to be affected by things by receiving sensations…" while understanding is non-sensible; it is discursive and works with general concepts, not individual intuitions; it is the active faculty of producing thoughts." (56). Therefore, views must be tailored along relevance to each stratum of the society. Imputing Kant's concept of taste to the different appeal to diverse folks in the milieu, it is assumed that the folks and the high ranking members of the milieu may have different taste or appreciation of every performance. Differing pleasure may elicit different taste in the categories of audience depending "on the pleasure one feels in apprehending it…" (58).

The hallmark of verbal scripts is the inherent capability of transforming individuals, potent in entrenching and engendering behaviours and human traits; and thus capable of eliciting emotional appeal to different people as may be informed by native intelligence and the societies that individuals may keep. Aesthetics provides the possibility of a script being significantly meaningful through appeal to the emotional sophistication and intellectual prowess of members of the society. It remains debatable if a script that presents a reality of equal length to members of the audience may not elicit diverse reactions from individuals. This is because the capacity for interpretation may vary and the aesthetic taste too may inform different reactions. The inherent pleasure or intellectual grain in it may make it look beautiful to some members of the audience. Kant cited in Donald Crawford (2006) postulates that the beautiful may not be wholly subjective as others are likely to find pleasure in it but avers that, "not everyone will in fact agree with us." (58). In other words, the reality to an individual may depend, to a very large extent, on aesthetic discernment which critics may term taste from which Kant's allusion to "understanding and sensibility" cannot be divorced. Again, the deployment of language is fundamental in the achievement of co-referentiality if the artistic "intercourse" that Tolstoy alludes to "is to be achieved." (Leo Tolstoy, 1965: 301). The paper recommends sound knowledge of the language of the environment in order to enter into a mutual agreement with the underlying beauty of the scripts if Kant's "subjective universality" were to be achieved. In which case, where it is not considered fully beautiful, it is accepted as "pleasing."

Indigenous performances are far from presentations of the philosophical aura of the milieu in abstract forms. Rather, they are practicable declarations couched in tales that are brought to the full glare of the audience at the arena. As scripts, everyone interprets the underlying meanings from angles of relevance. As folktales, they are memorable and become handy when dealing with similar life threatening challenges. It is in this regard that Leo Tolstoy (1965) becomes a credible referent; as the he succinctly defines art as "one of the means of intercourse between man and man." (301). Tolstoy (1965) further identifies the union that must be established between the artist and the audience if emotional correspondence is to be achieved between them. According to him, "...art causes the receiver to enter into a certain kind of relationship both with him who produced or is producing the art, and with all those who, simultaneously, previously, or subsequently, receive the same artistic impression." (301). This is what Kant considers to be "subjective universality." It is assumed that every member of the audience is groomed in the art of the milieu or is currently receiving an

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informal training depending on the number of years of tutelage at the arena. This probably explains the reasons for the expression of excitements at every stage of the performance and the recognition of the underlying charter it has become to the society at large and consequently the reason the scripts are performed from age to age.

Taine, Hippolyte's (1965) reference to the environment and the psychological antecedents of the artists are credible factors in the expression of an emotion. Consequently, the sum total of the environment, the taste, axioms and belief system are crystallised and presented in plain forms and most significantly with minimal and necessary verbal renditions in the case of indigenous oral performances where the sight and ears are important in reconstructing the spectacle. Beauty or what is known as aesthetic effects may not be the sole determinant of the emotional correspondence between the artists and the audience. There is interplay of cultural unity or the awareness of the strangeness in the spectacle for emotional interrelatedness to be achieved. Dances, movements and gestures take the place of verbal presentations, but the audience is not in doubt about the meanings and information that are passed through these. Using Collingwood R. G. (1938) as a springboard, the presentation in sculpted art and indigenous performances are emotions of both the artists and the environment. The two may not be easily divorced from each other without a great disservice to the milieu of the artist and that of the audience which are necessary ingredients for the recognition of the emotion as an expressive art. (141).

A departure from the preceding argument is the holarchic interpretation that "aesthetics are functional." According to the school, aesthetics are devised in order to meet the yearning of the people for whatever may be troubling them. The inferences from the foregoing, therefore, are: the awareness of specific needs confronting the artists which may equally be salient to members of the audience as to recognise the fulfilments inherent of specific yearning for satisfaction. Through oral performances, therefore, the needs of the artists correspond with the goals of the audience. At the time of the recognition of the missing gap, members of the audience come to term with the presence of an object or a spectacle with potentials to satisfy their peculiar crave. Schiller considers aesthetics to be a situation where "will and desire are brought into harmony." (Donald Mackay Wonderly, 1991: 236). It is not in doubt as this is where the need for satisfaction of the individuals comes to the fore. The reality in the preceding claim may be fulfilled when boredom necessitates thirst for entertainment and the fulfilment is attained through deployment of carefully composed scripts that are drawn from the milieu but that may have the ingredients of satisfaction as a result of the removal of the scripts from the normal life arena.

Textual analysis

Ifa is the metaphysics of the people and it is considered to be the first language. Inherent in the texts are lessons on patience, tolerance and restraint from anger or any form of indiscretion generally. For the purpose of this paper, three texts will be examined as constituting the potent means of indoctrinating the folks: *Eji Mogbe* is an *Ifa* chapter among some indigenous

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African people. It has several tales that are capable of educating, sensitizing and instructing the people. Inherent in other *Ifa* chapters are admonitions with potentials to engender the culture of a gentleman in individuals. The specific verse in this regard is based on anger and its consequences. The verse narrates the anger of the tree and its resolve to fall on the river, and the preparedness of the river to wash the tree away. *The tree gets angry and falls on the river. The river gets angry and sweeps the tree away*. The tree and the river are bosom friends. Perhaps, as a result of flood that covers the domain of the tree or any other reason, the tree gets annoyed. It falls on the river notwithstanding the bond of friendship between them. The tree has forgotten the nourishment it derives from the river over the years. The river too, out of the same annoyance, is unmindful of the proximity between it and the tree in providing shade for it in the time of heavy sunshine. It did not exercise any moral scruple and sweeps the tree away. The analysis will address in specific terms the faces of the indiscretion between folks, towns and nations.

The second account is drawn from the lore of the folks and it is very popular among the lower class in indigenous societies. It is simply a piece of advice on the need to jettison the chirping bed (distractions) while the personality is on an important mission. Birds were very common during the era when technology had not infiltrated the serenity of pastoral life. It was, therefore, not out of place for birds to sing their sonorous songs which might distract the attention of travellers who could be pursuing lofty goals, dreams or tasks. The beauty of the songs might be apparent, that would not be as important as the task at hand. The admonition is that the missioner should not listen to the songbird (*Olubo rire, ma re ti eye*). Everyone pursues a dream and another. In the course of these goals, distractions are rife that can derail, obstruct and truncate the pursuit of these lofty dreams. The indigenous philosophy relates such potent and possible stumbling blocks with the bird and the songs. It warns man to be wary of such beautiful short term side attractions that may be pleasing to the sojourner but precarious to the achievements of life enduring businesses.

The third script is associated with the masquerade, her performance, and rank among others. The arena parades masquerades who may want to display their performative dexterity to the admiration of members of the audience. The setting is an open space that provides opportunity for each masquerade to entertain the audience through dancing, acrobatic display and show of preternatural skills such as offer of prophecy, revelation of uncanny secrets that may be troubling the individual or the greater society. Masquerades in the *Ugbo* environment, for instance, are known to be capable of dancing on ropes, jumping on the top of roofs and emitting fire on their opponents when disenchanted with the behaviour of an opponent. The festive season is usually associated with such opportunity to converge on the arena and folks look forward to the time and remember the previous years with nostalgia.

The smaller, less experienced masquerades are eager to show off their skills as well as their costumes. Their appearance would motivate them to early arrivals at the arena. They would dance and display to the admiration of the audience and their supporters. All the while, the established masquerades would be busy in their shrines or dressing-rooms and would come out when the performative dexterity of the smaller masquerades would have been

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expended that they could not be distinguished from members of the audience. Fallout of the cultural observations are the two salient axiom in the *Ugbo* milieu that (*egungun yo ko jade, iran ghen gho gbeyin ni*) meaning that the first masquerade on the dance floor would turn a spectator at the peak of the performance. The second axiom which may have been a product of the same convergence on the arena during festivals constitutes a potent conclusion that (*egungun nla ye keyin ugbale*) the most powerful masquerades would be last to leave the shrine for the arena.

Analysis

The lateness in arriving at the arena may be borne out of social status, feeling of importance and desire for applause from the audience. It may be tied to their busy schedule and behind-the-scene preparations to enhance a hitch free performance. It is in the light of these that the claim of Parvathy, G (2015) may be corroborating the significance of the critical exploration that the cultural postulations and artistic firmament of the Ode Irele and the Yoruba/Ugbo milieux "…are not complete fantasy, and to some degree at least, ask to be taken seriously" (71). The wisdom behind the late arrival at the arena may be meant for the completion of the epilogue's segment. It is the case that the traditional theatre in indigenous Yoruba milieu is usually introduced through music, drumming, and dancing by the trainee artists who may play lesser roles in the actual scripts, but whose activities are reserved for the arrangement of the stage, drumming, singing and packing the stage at the completion of the performance.

Salient to the verbal artistic space is the perceived institutionalization of art as a tradition that encompasses different aspects of the life of every member of the physical and artistic space as well as the spiritual, religious and ritualized manifestations of the fundamental essence of existence. In succinct term, art becomes not only representational but the instrument through which inter-generational link may be measured and perpetuated. Through this medium, knowledge of the peculiar artistic environment becomes regular, uniform and permanent through the instrumentality of performance subsisting in festivals, tales, legends, proverbs and other means by which knowledge could be imparted. Artists become the custodians of the seeming fluid art that transmits knowledge and information and suggests panaceas for mind-boggling contradictions in the milieu. It is in this cas that art becomes normative and as Udefi Amaechi (2013) claims, it "admonishes instead that we should work within the norms of truth and rationality accepted by our society" (154).

Wars arising from boundary disputes are faces of such indiscretion. As neighbours, exogamous relationships would have been salient to them. In this respect, the place of land and possessions should have been reduced to insignificance. Yet, such fundamental bonds are easily forgotten and possessions that are supposed to be irrelevant are brought to the fore and elevated above humanity as to b the cause of conflict. The resultant war may devastate the bond and blood of kinship whereas lands that should be celebrated in providing nourishment and succor to people rather than being elevated above what it is meant to be: a gift that

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transcends the possessor will outlive all who lay claim to it. The same land will receive the dead folks arising from the crises. The land will not tell the warring factions the different history of the folks who once laid claim to it but have been forgotten. The deaf and dumb land is the greatest storyteller; like the enigma it is, it will not divulge its knowledge but keeps a record of human indiscretion.

Husband and wife have different positive vibrations that may attach them to each other over the years. The masquerade tells you to remember the different moments of pleasure and happiness, the tears that led to happiness, the cold that led to warmth, the thirst that led to satiation and the hunger that culminated in abundance. That explains the reason the masquerade dances back and forth. This is to show that the past has an input in the present just as the end is a product of the beginning. Equally tied to the arrangement of the order of appearance where smaller masquerades open the stage is the division of the physical and metaphysical worlds of indigenous people. The life of everyone is compartmentalized into three: morning (*owuro*), afternoon (*osan*), and evening (*irole*). An individual may achieve his breakthrough very early in life. This is synonymous with the "morning." His breakthroughs are destined for the early part of his life. He comes into wealth without much struggle. Some of the *early risers*, a synonym for quick breakthrough may not retain the wealth all through their existence. Several reasons are responsible for this. Inexperience may play a major role in the misuse of the wealth.

The products of the preceding category are known to have many friends and enemies thronging around their thresholds. Their inexperience will make it difficult to discern the friends from the enemies. The result is that they either die early or lose the wealth to misfortune. Arrogance may also be a valid factor in the loss of wealth. There is the tale of a young man who becomes very rich and rides on his horse and waves at his ritualist without the knowledge of hindsight that he must alight from the horse to greet the moulder of his destiny. The priest got pissed off and he lost his fortune. The master did all he could to scuttle the wealth. The resort to promiscuity may equally be another reason for the descent from wealth into poverty. Women are fond of successful people. A young man who is not discernible enough to identify a gold digger from a true lover may mistake a gold digger for a true friend. The enemy within either the opens the door for the enemies outside the gate or she afflicts the man with spiritual negativity.

The *late riser* which is a synonym for the one who comes into fortune in the middle of his life may have been derided and insulted early in life. What is important is the fact that he comes into riches in the middle of his life. Care and restraint should be deployed in retaining the wealth. Otherwise, he may lose everything to revelry and uncoordinated quest for women and unfriendly companions. It is noteworthy that these two categories of successful people seldom retain their wealth all through their lifetimes. It is not unusual to see them keep late nights. They return home in the middle of the night or keep late hours. They drive when they are drunk, and drive recklessly. They may be mistaken for criminals or get involved in accidents. Such is the life of a young man who comes into easy wealth.

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The last category involves the metaphor of rejected stone. He is the metaphor of the *Ifa* persona named *Ohagunleja*. His early and middle life are characterised by absolute poverty. He may not have a pair of trousers when his mates are already successful. His destiny is captured in *Irohun Meji*, an *Ifa* chapter that captures his travail in succinct term: the erstwhile gloomy situation is now mixed with the balm of unqualified bloom. His unruffled disposition over the years in the face of folks that are mocking him may have arisen from a subtle knowledge of his aura; which is all he needs to cultivate contentment. He is aware of his peculiar nature and the need to jettison desire for quick lucre. His wife may have left him and dismissed him as a failure. She is, however, ready to stage a comeback as the fame of her estranged husband is blown like wildfire at the savannah. The erstwhile gloomy situation is captured thus:

Oju pan koko, ma fo.
Oro gbo'ne yigi yin ne no.
Oro ye ba pa omo, se yin oma no.

The eyes are red hot as the charcoal's ember, but without losing its sight.
The life threatening situation withdraws its fatal snag.
Whatever does not kill man will absolve and elevate man.

Indigenous folktales contain scripts that teach the virtue in patience as the reward is the eventual bliss if only the needed endurance could be injected into ones' existence. The red eyes cannot be smiling. They are saddled with difficulties that are inclement to behold, and as such, the eyes are not known to comfort.

Every society harbours salient truths that are fallout of the harmonising efforts of artists over the years and such may be considered transcendental. The quest for self preservation may have informed the desire of *Tete* to embark on a survivalist quest in the face of the uncertainty, insecurity and kidnapping galore that characterised the era of slavery and quest for slaves. The desire to stay alive is transcendental and nothing could be compared to it. The desire to eat which would provide energy to run before being captured and with enough means of survival may amount to what Wonderly (1991) considers to be "desire". The motivation for the desire is informed by "force". According to Wonderly (1991), "desire" has many manifestations across cultures and may be defined as "the psychological manifestation of drive" which "is an affective state having both conscious and preconscious aspects" (193).

The axiom to jettison the bird and its song too may have been necessitated by expediency and the evil of procrastination towards self preservation. There is a "desire" by the people to maintain a secured enclave where the people are not only supplied their needs but may be adjudged happy in the pursuit of their domestic and filial chores. The desire is propelled by "force". The need to disregard the songbird and the lyrics, whatever affective contents might be inherent in it, is borne out of preservation. This "drive" equally has another term and it is called "signal" (Wonderly, 1991: 193-194). It is significant, therefore, that the search for

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security may be classified under transcendent desire. This desire equally informs the haste to eat because any eventualities such as kidnapping that actually became the lot of the sisters in the search for food could confront them.

The desire by the masquerade to come late to the arena in order to elicit applause may assume paradoxical implications when imputed to the social-cultural environment. Lateness to any gathering is a negative trait in that delay may impact negatively on the ceremony and this development has become anathema to modern society and thus, an attitude that is denounced as a symptom of irresponsibility. The earlier tales of the two sisters and the indifference to the songbird as well as the disposition to expediency are two sides of the same coin. They constitute positive anecdotes that may enhance regeneration of the society; and cultivation of positive behavioural traits among members of the larger society typifies the academic and business world where time is considered to be everything.

Several far-reaching summations may be drawn from the tales. The birds and their sonorous songs are appealing and satisfying to the people with discerning mind. This may be inconsequential to people who have no interest and innate quality for appreciating aesthetic materials and may have missed vital instructions from the songbirds by way of warning. The alluring songs may serve as a distraction as well; and the traveller may derail from the focus. Existence is symbolised as a journey and may at times be equated with a crossroads that becomes a maze, a labyrinth that is puzzling, enigmatic and intellectually tasking. It takes confidence, consistency, wisdom and grace to accomplish the journey when several debilitating challenges confront the traveller who can easily miss the way and be consumed by life threatening beasts on the highway of life. These are images of stumps on the highway that may bruise the toes of travellers except meet rituals, sacrifices and care are deployed at the outset.

The philosophical thrust, therefore, is that the mission may not be accomplished if the individual is preoccupied with the bird and its songs. While the task may be permanent, the bird and its songs are transitory. They satisfy the moment and any reliance on them for anchor may be flimsy, ephemeral and insubstantial. The bird may fly away and the song may freeze without any trace of it. It is the inherent philosophical leaning of the actions in the Yoruba milieu that serves to educate, sensitize and acculturate the individual with such empirical claims that are fundamental to a successful existence. The bird and its songs are symbols of every form of entertainment that can sever the voyager from accomplishing the task at hand. Everyone appreciates the sonority of the bird's songs. The bird should be left at its business while the individuals pursue their own goals oblivious of the bird and its songs.

The journey motif in the tale is far from a regular movement to a particular destination. It is rather a reference to existence and the associated movements which the people associate with the image of a journey, existence on a mere travel and humanity as travellers whose journey are latent with some positive and negative forebodings. The success or otherwise of such a journey may be tied to the ability for discernment, exercise of discretion and unreserved commitment to the task at hand. *Idigbe* readily comes to mind. It is a simple tale in the oral

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compendium of the people. It is specifically located in the *Ifa* corpus which captures reality as may be imputed to individual members of the milieu. The persona in *Idigbe* has a bone to pick with his father and the latter sends him on a mission to a far away journey of no return. He reaches a crossroads and it becomes difficult for him to decide the way to go. Through tact, a traveller unconsciously reveals the exact road to *Igbo*-his destination. He survives the threats inherent in the journey and returns home successfully, particularly because of the rituals and sacrifices he deploys before embarking on the journey.

The crossroads takes the African artistic firmament as the core, a metaphor for the root which stands as the foundation of artistic performances prelude to western education and beyond, especially with the romance of creative writers from the continent with the core that provides veritable inspiration and springboard in the intellectual endeavours which have not been fully utilised partly due to shallow intellectualism and the fear of being considered anachronistic in outlook. African art remains the standard from where the unidirectional echoes in modern times are drawn. It is the standard; the sustaining myth that determines the degree of conformity, derailment and departure from the original ennobling yardstick and to which recourse is made whenever a monumental severance may be detected. It is the myth, the root; and any detachment of the people from the social and moral foundation may leave society intellectually malnourished and orphan-like. It is doubtful if there could be modern art in the academic point of view without the original model or parallel which remains the archetype and indeed the prototype from where recent developments may be provided credible parallels.

The core is the beginning and the application of the scripts through genres such as poetry, drama and prose amount to the tributaries where the branches are infiltrations from concepts that are alien to the continent but that are vehicles towards isolating the core, all the same. Myths are, therefore, creative and artistic attempts towards affirming historical and fantastic antecedents but the explication and appreciation of such theses may take psychological recourse. The artistic appeal in indigenous tales, myths and festivals is timeless and may take different forms. They are tools for regulating behaviours and instruments through which axiom may be authenticated depending on the meanings that is attributed to them as the years come and go and new moral issues rear their ugly heads, and the gauge through which the moral tempo may be adjudged successful or otherwise.

The crossroads and songbirds amount to recognition of the puzzle in any endeavour that may befuddle strangers. Any wonder why indigenous art is misconstrued by western critics and Africans alike, who castigate it as ritualistic when it is a haven for the beautiful, the ennobling and thus the unparalleled meeting point of art, religion and philosophy! The crossroads is a representation of the maze in thought, activities and artistic inclinations of the people of Africa that critics may not cease to imagine the source of such glorious, all-embracing and motivational web of system that may unravel significant traits, attributes and individual peculiarities. The maze is significantly enigmatic and the pivot that drives the system is all-encompassing. Indigenous festivals may be difficult to categorise under a strict sub-genre because of the diverse contents and segments latent in them: a performance may

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be a melting pot of various sub-genres such that ritual, divination, incantation and myth can be delimited from it. Consequently, it is difficult to demarcate one sub-genre from another without basic inter-relatedness.

The indigenous milieu achieves fundamental summation of existence in relation to humanity and must have deployed environmental summation of existence in relation to humanity and creatures, life-changing phenomena and some life-dependent materials to imbue members with fundamental principles that are intrinsically tied to the accomplishment of a task. Among such life threatening, motive scuttling and indispensable stumbling blocks on the highway of life are women, peer-groups, unrealistic ingenuities, quest for easy way to success and the corresponding boomerang. A lack of such disciplines and others may be accommodated as society develops and new conflicts rear their ugly heads.

Two fundamental goals are associated with the two characters in the tale of the two sisters. Success in any endeavour may be garnered piecemeal as it is equally be tied to time, age and opportunities. The nature of growth too is gradual and the traveller may embark on the mission with a step at a time. The gradual but consistent movement may further the experience of the traveller and thus a piecemeal conquest of distance. The tales amount to what Hegel (1965) considers to be "alienation. This form of alienation involves basic internalisation of the values that are interest in the whereby and this becomes 'representative discipline" (73). Diverse areas of alienation may be found in the acquisition of foreign languages and the individual, according to Inwood (2006) " in eventually integrated into the culture or "mind" of the time, and made into what it is for time, a proper human being"(73).

The symbol of accepting whatever may confront the individual with equanimity and philosophical calmness until the right time for redress becomes the height of self-consciousness, unruffled calmness and acceptance of time as an instrument of conquest and freedom, growth and quest for justice, awareness and redeeming the injuries of the past, and empowerment and elevation to the rightful position. The serenity involved in the persona named *Osepeletu* whose wife is abused in his presence on his way to the coronation ceremony is a lesson on accepting what cannot be immediately redressed. Indigenous scripts at the arena seem to be incoherent because reality may not be a straightforward script that could be apprehended and measured at will. Rather, the incoherence in the performance of indigenous scripts is a demonstration of the timeless nature of the scripts that are not time-bound and, therefore, meant for timeless appreciation. In other words, no conclusion seems to be made by festivals during their performances nor the actors and actresses during their activities. Rather, the conclusions that are salient to individual members of the audience depend on the appeal they could make upon beholding the spectacle.

The same fate befell the two sisters. War came and they were taken captive. While the elder sister had foreknowledge of the uncertainty that characterised human world and the need for action, the younger sister displayed significant negligence and was captured without a bite from her labour. Reward in any form, comes in bits and pieces and the quest for a wholesale delivery may leave the traveller without any trace of it at all. At another plane, the need for patience may amplify the justification in waiting and the fact that it is the "feet"

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that are in a hurry and that the "head" which is synonymous with "destiny" can never be stampeded. The "feet" may be symbolic of agility, swiftness, dexterity and promptness which may negate the nature of destiny that gently unwinds the lot of individuals without being forced to accelerate its crawling pace.

The masquerade too is a product of the journey. Even when he wears a mask, he is tied to utter helplessness which is the lot of other ordinary people in the milieu. He cannot perform beyond the confines of the arena. He has a short life span and may be given a dose of the inhumanity that mars the ability of everyone. He has a dual nature. He is human and divine. As an actor, he has the stage to himself and the presence on the stage is transitory. He stays for a while and disappears at the end of the performance. He may leave when he gets tired. Even when he seems to be agile enough to continue with the dance, the drummers and singers may get tired. As a divine personality, he is capable of possessiveness and may relay secrets that are mind boggling with uncanny exactitude. Other phenomenal contingences may force him to abandon the dance. The spirit of the dance may abandon him as well. The moment the masquerade puts on the costumes, he ceases to be human. He becomes a spirit. He can relay messages and recommend antidote to diseases.

The emergence of the masquerade is a journey that confers departure from the shrine/dressing room to the stage. The stage may be theatrical or symbolic of existence. In whichever case, a dance/performance is salient to him and he must quit at the end of the ceremony. The journey motif equally finds expression in the motif of a market that is bubbling with life at the peak of the transaction. Gradually, the articles of trade are sold and everyone leaves for home. Some may inform their fellow traders when they are leaving. This group is synonymous with the people who may die in groups, possibly through accidents or some natural catastrophes. The greater number of buyers and sellers leave without notice.

The philosophical rumination of existence as either a journey or a visit is a movement from the realities of the milieu, as it exhibits the consciousness of the people in their reactions to existence. The journey motif in the tale of the two sisters betrays uncertainty and lack of direction and futility of existence being nothing more than a journey to the unknown and a return journey to the unknown and both are clouded in myths and dreams. The simple reason for the identification of reality through environmental creatures may find justification in Michael Inwood's (2006) claim that the individual is like a mind who "…in order to know itself, must draw a boundary between itself and what is other than itself" (72). Dwelling on Inwood (2006), therefore, it may be claimed that the reason for the tales that are identical and meaningful to the environment is borne out of the fact that "a single human being does not acquire self-knowledge on its own. It does so in consort with other minds, together with which it forms a linguistic and cultural network" (73) and this knowledge informs the presence of creative scripts that may condition folks to be civilised, cultured and properly grounded in surmounting the task of existence.

The art of indigenous people, one may surmise, is borne from the depth of knowledge, and equally inherent in the tales are recipes for conquering inclement environment, taming

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their aggressive inner beings and reconciliation with the physical and spiritual state of nature. If they found themselves stuck in an environment that they could hardly redress, it was imperative they grappled with the realities of the narrow enclave and the challenges of the larger global society. Expediency and the need for caution may dictate the way to go and the well cultured individual may not be easily caught in the web of indiscretion. The credit for all these may be laid on the threshold of the verbal artistic space that has provisions for mitigating challenges that may beset the individual on the rough road of life. The uncertainty of existence is couched in the tale of the two sisters. It is expediency, therefore, that can capture that foundation and redeem the individual from the attachment to materialism such as the symbol of food and the lurking marauders may portray.

Existence is the symbol of a journey and sudden nightfall; one must be brave and show exemplary prowess to survive in it; after all, it is cowardice to leave existence forcefully through suicide. Existence is a mythical marketplace known as *Oja Jigbomekun* where earthly and celestial beings converge on for transacting business. Attempts are made by some people to locate the market at *Asewele-Oja* but this is a ruse. It is a market where goods may be bought at substantial amount during *Ifa* initiation but with the hope that *Orunmila* would recompense such initiate fourfold. If existence is a visit to a mythical market known as *Oja Jigbomekun*, a positive utilisation of the visit may be amply compensated while alive and during reincarnation. The market is a tripartite-structure consisting of morning, afternoon and evening. Patronage depends on choice, and goods are bought at catastrophic consequences. The exit depends on the entry just as the exit is informed by the desire of the buyer.

There is the inevitability of death and the African society amply prepares everyone with a sound knowledge of the end especially through symbols such as equating existence with a market that is subject to a timeframe while survival is just a gamble and it depends on forces within and without. A bold approach to it is captured in the symbol of the trip to the farm or market; it may last but a day while transition takes eternity; one must be as bold as the pregnant woman awaiting delivery of a baby; even when her attendants panic, she remains undaunted and unruffled in view of the inevitability of the exercise. It is the submission of the milieu that indifference must tend the question of the end of any individual; and whatever becomes of the realities thereafter may not be enough to be much squabble to the man in transition.

Conclusion

The African artistic firmament parades empirical summations that transcend climes and tongues and could withstand time and epochs. This study uncovers such scientific claims that tend to negate the epoch-conditioned claims and traditions in the western world. The uncritical examinations of oral African scripts, over the years, are partly responsible for the negative outlook of successive governments and policy-makers in the design of curriculum. The literary use of language, allusions and metaphorical references are vintage African oral literature within the moral and intellectual ethos of the environment through which

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deviations from acceptable standards may be measured and appropriate sanctions invoked. The journey-motif and the songbirds find expression in life's stumbling blocks, and perhaps stump on the busy high way of existence. The journey takes the image of a destiny, and the society considers accomplishments with a mission that is successfully completed. Such a missioner may have written their names in gold and thus become a reference point. The inability is complete of journey may become individuals on the need for decision, dedication, and forthrightness. This journey-motif finds expression too in the association of existence with a highway and every living a walker. Each person may be full of lofty dreams which the highway represents. However, everyone branches at his own destination and this might be dictated by strength, the capacity for accomplishing the mission and individual's degree of attention to the songbird.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement:

This is a research article, containing original data, and it has not been previously published or submitted to any other outlet for publication. The author followed ethical principles and rules during the research process. In the study, informed consent was obtained from the volunteer participants and the privacy of the participants was protected.

Araştırma ve yayın etiği beyanı: Bu makale tamamıyla özgün bir araştırma olarak planlanmış, yürütülmüş ve sonuçları ile raporlaştırıldıktan sonra ilgili dergiye gönderilmiştir. Araştırma herhangi bir sempozyum, kongre vb. sunulmamış ya da başka bir dergiye değerlendirilmek üzere gönderilmemiştir.

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