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ONE

The Poet as a 'Restless' Creature: Some Yorùbá Examples

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the “restless nature” of a poet as a weird being, and some of the factors that could be responsible for such edginess. The study aims at expressing the dynamic ways a poet often gets saturated with deep imaginative feelings and emotional trauma which often result in outbursts of expression of inspirational ideas through aesthetics of language composition. This study explores poetic research and the various stages of poetic undertaking or endeavours. The paper is anchored on Formalism Theory of Literary Interpretation. It employs existing literature relevant to our study to examine how poets are portrayed as “restless beings” viz-a-viz their vital roles in human societies. Being a proactive agent of change with pragmatic revolutionary ideas succinctly captures the restive nature of a seasoned poet who often gets engaged and engrossed in deep thinking. The unique way by which a poet blends vivid imagery and relates it to his/her being lost in thought portrays the dramatic nature of the poet in transit when under inspiration. The common belief that a poet is just a mere “beggar” is the agelong basis of many ancient philosophies that have persisted in modern-day philosophies. Findings show that a poet’s positive responses to societal challenges are not afterthoughts but a natural inclination that is spontaneously expressed without fear, favour, or prejudice.

Keywords: *Restless Nature, Deep Feelings, Aesthetics of Language, Inspirational Ideas, Dramatic Nature,*

Introduction

From the time poetic words are composed, rendered, chanted, recited, or written to the point of being published, a typical poet is always very restless. Experience has proven that poetic writing is a brain-tasking philosophical and academic exercise that could be done efficaciously by a passionate poet who wishes to articulate his or her ideas in reminiscent language through endless mind struggle on abstract or concrete concepts. A poet, by nature, training, or gifting is stingy and economical in his use of language which perpetually throws his or her reader into wandering illusions that make for frantic attempts at grasping or unraveling the main themes or ideas expressed in each poem. The focal point of our study is to examine the literary prowess and artistry of a poet and the elements that aid poetic writing which is similar to putting a theoretical idea into practice for society's practical use.

A poet who has inspirational ideas or messages to pass across to his audience or readers but is limited or constrained by some artificial, natural, or man-made factors is compared to a vibrant and outgoing socialite who is inevitably incapacitated by a national lockdown, as applicable to *COVID-19*. Such an individual, like a seasoned activist poet, will become naturally, inwardly “uncomfortable” and very physically restless. Contrary to people’s expectations, the paradoxical nature of a poet, as a societal voice, is often reflected in the poet’s response to topical issues in a seemingly insensitive or absurd manner. Although poets' concern for their people holds a first place in their thoughts, it is logical to affirm that their minds would be saddened by the anomalies that are turning the tide of history; from bad to worse, in virtually every facet of life. That is why, to secure peace, poets could be confrontational or war-like in their dynamic approaches to societal issues. Therefore, the object of the poets' departure regarding cultural taboos is the opposite of

what the common men and constituted authority dread in an egalitarian society.

It is instructive to observe that the internal demonstrative protest of poets, in addition to their choice of themes and language, is what illuminates their souls and may eventually lead to a reorientation, sensitization, and regeneration of the mind away from stereotyped methods of doing things. Better still, seasoned poets with ideas and revelations to proclaim through poetic grammar, syntax, and meter to their immediate environment or the world as a *global village* would be “restless with a mission to accomplish.”

Such poets could be likened to a heavily pregnant woman in the Labour Ward, overwhelmed with contractions, internal pain, burning sensation, distress, and pressure to deliver the baby with an outburst to be “free”. She finally feels relieved from the intense physical and mental torment of her poetic burden once the child is born.

2.0 The Elements and Nature of Poetic Writing

Societal problems are primarily sociological, they inevitably concern humanity and its environment which, often, require unconventional solutions, such as going radical or philosophical for better or for worse approaches that deviate from the societal norms. As a mark of departure from stereotypes of tradition, a poet is always thinking outside the box; this is by no means a disrespect of the culture to which a poet belongs.

How a poet, as a writer, achieves this through an outburst as a pragmatic response to what he perceives as abnormalities is key in the principles of formalism. The most important factor in this principle is that any deviation from cultural sentiments, religious bigotry, or political and ethnic divide in the process of ironing out a problematic situation, especially in a scientific manner, usually

produces the desired results. A poet's approach to having a lasting solution to societal challenges can seamlessly provide a model for how to do almost everything right on ethical issues related to socio-political and economic importance.

Much as a poet's history is insignificant according to formalism, communal knowledge for a poet, as a fundamental tool, is germane to tackling peculiar societal problems. By the nature of his profession, a poet as a furnace blacksmith will always think of the creative style "*àrà-àtinúdá*" that he wants to use poetic iron to make with inspirational ideas in a language foundry. Adépòjù (1972), in his collection of poems, titled, *Ìrònú Akéwì*, affirms "that a poet, ideally, engages in thinking in all his endeavors daily." Human thinking faculty, naturally, works spontaneously, especially when driven or imbued with inspirational ideas. Hence, Fálétí, in *Ọlátújní* (1982:1), in "*Dídáké Akéwì*" corroborates, that if anyone sees a poet that remains silent and totally oblivion of his environment, nobody should get angry with his nonchalance to the situations going on; simply because such a poet is seriously thinking on an issue(s) bothering him at such moment."

Omoregbe (2001:36) asserts that memory, cognition, volition, and imagination are the four main functions of the mind. How can one then subject the total human nervous system and mind, into critical and continual creative thinking without becoming restless? The ability to think through a problematic situation with a cogent solution is one of the features that distinguishes a gifted poet from other people in society. Consequently, a poet's force of displeasure, either as a remark or response, to a situation, does not only end in condemnation or destruction but draws attention to a renewal, reconstruction, transformation, development, and integration.

Poets are exceptionally creative people in every society. However, gifted a poet may be, as soon as he or she attempts to

write, obstacles or circumstances naturally appear and opposition arises to intimidate, oppose, and perhaps, discourage a poet from accomplishing a certain accomplishment. But like nature, a poet's attribute and nature is similar to a saying that, "slow and steady wins the race." Omoregbe (1993:33) underscores that "If we are observant, we would see how nature works; we would notice that nature works slowly and steadily to achieve its goals. Nature is never in a hurry, nor does it achieve any thing cheaply or easily without labouring for it."

It is adequate to say that these poetic elements and their usage: meter, tone, stanza, rhymes, alliteration, assonance, rhythm, figurative language, and enjambment among others help a poet achieve creativity and insights. Similarly, a poet often gets metaphorically pregnant as a "*language smith*" (*alágbèdè-èdè*) with magical and artistic creations to make through his creative and critical mind. By skillful manipulation of words, phrases, or sentences, which is tantamount to being economical with language, a poet will not say much but ends up saying everything with metaphorical expressions, and cinematographic or dramatic effects. The poetic license of a poet, has the assets that grant him the freedom of using grammar, syntax of his language, and meter as desired, thus logically becoming a strong factor for why poets become "restless" but productive. However, the "restless" nature of a poet comes with no physical wounds or pain. Still, it is a long-time struggle with the agony of coming up with worthwhile ingenuity in poetic construction that could be adjudged relatively well by the general populace.

It is similar to the experience of a wealthy lady who is a *fashionista* with many "new" clothes in her wardrobe who becomes fidgeting and uneasy with which one to wear for elegance, aesthetics, sexy look, or ethical values and for what occasion e.g professional cocktail party or whether the wear is acceptable for a particular classical event, among other agonizing

decisions of the mind. While a stammerer could be having a feeling of being cheated by nature to articulate, use, or pronounce a word very well, a poet, conversely, is usually overwhelmed with an array of words and mental difficulties regarding which word(s) to use or employ in a particular context. By implication, a poet could conveniently switch roles by being a white man in black skin or body or vice versa to achieve certain effects, according to the formalism principle.

Similarly, a poet could transform into a historian, teacher, preacher, a farmer, among other professions. This capacity for adaptability and readiness to adopt different choices of language, images, and themes for their depictions accounts for the eventual restlessness of a poet. Ọdúnjò (1961), in his collection of poems, titled, *Àkójopò Ewì Aládùn*, makes an absolute commitment to stay mindful of the Yorùbá cultural heritage as he plays the roles of both a teacher and preacher of Yorùbá ethical values. Awóyèlé (1987), on the other hand, in his poem titled, *Akéwì Ló Nitàn*, produces twenty-one (21) Yorùbá prose narratives in poetic forms to teach the children moral lessons on different topical issues.

As a paradigm shift from the Yorùbá norms, Ìşòlá (1981:22-30), in "*Àfàimò àti àwọn àròfò mìràn*," undertakes a significant exploration of how modern-day youths especially young men who have a bevy of ladies as girlfriends with whom they consort. These pragmatic personal romantic experiences, which no doubt, are an outpouring of the poet's outburst, symbolise trending youthful exuberance and "*romantic strength*," socially commonly perceived to be a way of life for having fun before a man finally settles down for marriage. The conscientious efforts of poets to catch up with the trending phenomenon within their climes and epochs as applicable to the environment naturally gives birth to a poet's somewhat restlessness, as considered in the selected written poetic works of the Yorùbá poets discussed above.

Sometimes, it is like having multiple creative roles to play, which culminate in ambiguities for readers but it is ethics and aesthetics for the poets in question. The intellectual stimulations attribute that demand breaking away from societal stereotypes are crucial to how poets philosophically engage their readers through poetic writing. A poet restlessly often fights more internal eccentricity on well-thought-out ideas and mode of expression battles without being cognizant of societal concerns. What poets have in mind is how to fabricate their ideas into reality to provide practical solutions to societal problems.

This comparison is that of loyalty and allegiance of a poet already in action to a cause or daunting task of poetic work that must be fulfilled, within a time frame. Thus, a poet has unwavering die-hard passion, and dedication to do poetry continually without fear or predispositions to cultural sentiments. Therefore, it is not an overstatement to affirm that, time and again, there are “unseen forces” that usually propel, either subtly or openly, a professional poet to chant or write and keep on writing on trends and topical issues in society, (See Ìṣòlá, 2012). It is evident that, as a poet focuses or writes about many mystifying themes peculiar to his environment, there will be direct quotations from and allusions to some relevant phenomena in the community. The implication, according to a formalism that seeks an understanding of how a poet achieves his poetic enterprise indicates that everything about poetic work is usually meticulously worked out and orchestrated by a poet's dexterity.

Every Yoruba poet who writes including the likes of Ṣóbò Aróbíodu; Afọlábí Johnson; Dénrelé Ọbasá; Adébáyò Fáléti; Afọlábí, Ọlábímtán; Ifáyemí Èlẹ̀bùibọ̀n and Ọlátúnbòsún Ọládàpò amongst others, under whichever inspiration, write stressing a measure of “restlessness” in the tone of their poems. In an attempt to grasp the contextual meaning of a particular poem, a reader must be able to read with extraordinary caution to

understand the agonizing tone, suggestive language, and emotional surge that gave birth to the poem under the “mysterious” inspiration, which may be unexplainable by the poet.

Ideally, a poet's words, phrases, or sentences create prowess, images, stanza, and ideology that could be interpreted to mean many things by the audience or readers; depending on the level of a reader's acculturation or understanding, perception, or structured interview questions for the poet through the principle of formalism theory. There is no gainsaying the fact that a surface reading or casual glance at a poet's assertion or performances may cause misinterpretations or perplexity to a reader who is not poetically inclined. The poetic ambiguities are the deliberate creativity of a poet through restless “sweat,” and sleepless nights of a poet. There are quite a lot of logical reasons that could make a poet restless in his attempt to engage in fruitful or futile efforts; depending on resilience or distractions that could truncate creativity or poetic efforts.

First, an attempt for a poet to put cultural heritage in matchless poetic rhythm and balance through emotive and powerful language could make a poet, in any culture, inflexible, weird, and restless. Second, the peculiar characteristics of being eloquent, activist, symbolic, and philosophical with language by depicting abstract concepts, in reality, could be awe-inspiring and irresistible for a poet to spontaneously communicate a piece of “new” information or ideology about life. Furthermore, a seasoned poet could hardly be contented with marginalization, dull thoughts, indolent minds, or cultural stereotypes he might consider redundant in his cultural milieu. We examine the poet's physiological trauma in locating the themes and language as a figurative vehicle to convey his creativity in a poem to his audience. The affirmations of scholars enlarge themes and offer poetic, exegetic, illustrative discussion materials that lead to a

better understanding of the subject matter as outlined in this paper. The details may not be captured but are suggestive of many possibilities available for further study of what informs, inspires and sustains a poet's acumen and line of thought as logically questioned by formalism theory.

1.0 Objectives

This paper examines the constructive dilemma and dynamics of a poet's functionality within the context of his talent, stimulation, and passion to express poetic writing in a philosophical stance context within the framework of his sociocultural milieu that is fortified with constraints and institutional bottlenecks. Against this backdrop, we examine how a poet cannot be "limited" in themes, scope, and ideology. The objectives of this paper are:

- (i) Identify the peculiar characteristics of a poet.
- (ii) Examine a logical structure or poetic fabric that a poet usually employs to excel against all odds.
- (iii) Examine scholars' worldviews to buttress or debunk our findings.
- (iv) Explore a selected Yorùbá written poetry *viz-a-viz* the implications and effects of "restlessness" on how some Yorùbá written poets assumed different professional roles and harnessed their literary talents to achieve their goals.
- (v) Explain the meaning and significance of the "restlessness" of a poet in the context of Yorùbá creative writing, as it relates to poetry as a literary genre.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

The name formalism refers to some theoretical propositions and ideas put forward by several scholars and critics. It is difficult to

nominate a single person as the father of formalism as a literary theory. However, prominent thinkers of the formalist school include Viktor Shklovsky, Roman Jakobson, Boris Tomashevsky, and Boris Eichenbaum. Formalism does not consider the author's personal history, cultural influences, and the actual content of the work itself. Instead, it focuses on the form and the genre of the writing. For example, formalism is concerned with the use of grammar, syntax, and meter in poetry. The goal of formalism is to find elements in literary text that explain how writers achieve certain effects.¹ We employed formalism theory for the analysis of our paper because of the relevance of its principles. In this paper, our major focus is on the analysis of how, through their "restless" nature, poets can achieve their goal of literary creativity. Similarly, we want to highlight the Yorùbá written poetry as a form of literary genre that demands painstaking efforts and a philosophical approach, as applicable to poets in other climes. We also want to expatiate on a few variables that could enable a poet to harness his potential through dint of hard work in Yorùbá written poetry.

3.0 Who is A Poet?

"The things that are most interesting and most worth having are impossible to define," That is why a good poem is more interesting at the twentieth reading than at the first.¹ Attempting a succinct definition for poetry is a seemingly impossible task. The reason(s) is not far-fetched: for an undetermined long time, a poet may conceive idea(s) with concerted efforts and tirelessly write an inspirational poem or collection of poems and may still not know where to start; let alone when or how it will end. But with plies of words and garbage of ideas that fills his mind must pick up the debris of the mental picture and build an artistic world and poetic structure that is habitable and constructive for societal development.

Suffice it to add that, a poet can, sometimes, write an inspiring poem within the shortest time imaginable. Similarly, it might take several years of agonizing brain tasking before a poet could come up with a tangible poem to his or her satisfaction, and recognition of the general populace. Though, a poet does not write for the recognition or approval of society, however, the audience or readers are the “clearing house” and the final consumers of the end product of any oral poem chanted or written by a Yorùbá poet.

Without resilience, a poet cannot as an accomplished personality, achieve the seemingly impossible task of poetic writing. This assertion is a universal phenomenon. Therefore, a discussion of how a poet travails, through formalism Principe, like a pregnant woman, who through painful travails, is in the labour ward with contraction to bring forth a child is of paramount importance to the study of a poet. The elements in the Yorùbá literary texts that explain how writers achieve certain effects could be located in the language usage, attributed to inspirational messages, and a poet’s level of creativity to achieve dynamism through aesthetic standards. Childhood memories and experiences, as well as youthful exuberances, pervade the themes of poems as applicable to Ịṣòlá (1981).

The famous stories, of the remote past, from our discovery, as fundamentals in oral Yorùbá poetry also manifest in written Yorùbá poems. The worldview of Adébáyò Fálétí, on poetry and poets as elucidated in Ọlátúnjì (1982) summarizes the series of challenges and the kind of erratic perspectives a poet could mostly express in his or her poem(s) on topical issues bothering on societal problems. The sharp words of warning, and scolding from a poet through coinages, imagery, and metaphorical expressions against societal maladies are often seen as being too harsh by the majority of people in society, who erroneously believe that poetic genres are weird and absurd.

But we must not miss the big picture while examining the variables in the details of a poet's "restlessness." A poet is a stylish and unbiased personality that is vocally talented like a sonorous cymbal instrument with a willing heart as an artistic *guru*. A poet, with a horse strength and pace, similar to the speed of light, who is endowed, inspired, and fully burdened with the unwavering spirit or philosophical stance to convey many topical issues through diverse themes for societal consumption, revolution, emancipation, and development. These selected inspired themes inclusively illuminate and sensitize society on the pragmatic approaches that could be employed in tackling the pockets of peculiar and perennial problems bedeviling a community or human society at large. In the context of who a poet is, Fálétí affirms, "a poet is an artist endowed with unique sensibility: the subject of grief or elation may not coincide with that of the ordinary man and this may tempt people to consider him eccentric," (Olátúnjí, 1982: 13).

This implies that at the point of inspiration and poetic engagements, a poet easily gets intricately charmed, focused, and "fully possessed" by the unknown power of nature, elements beyond ordinary or physical phenomena, as asserted by Ìşòlá (2009). "The realm of nature speaks a wordless language that can say very different things to different people."² The society, therefore, needs a clear and better understanding of a cultural milieu if it wants to gain deeper insight into the messages not created by a poet that are figuratively coded in poetry. And, in response to tackling peculiar societal problems, a poet's behavior, worldview, disposition, utterances, or writing gives people the benefit of conviction to the reality of his being an insane person. So, rather than hearing the sounds or words conventionally spoken at the daily conversation level, a poet naturally, is often at "other realms" entirely, only listening to the rhythms of creation and logical voice(s) of reason at a symbolic metaphysical realm.

The issue of utmost concern in formalism is how a poet, as a writer, gains a deeper knowledge of the universe and achieves a supreme sense of logic, orderliness, and poetic beauty. Similarly, for a poet to achieve certain theoretical and philosophical effects that would positively impact lives, he or she must write in a deftly sketched manner on both ethical and aesthetical values that could contradict societal norms and values, defy human logical reasoning and aesthetically embellish abstract or physical concepts. A poet, by training, observation, emulation, self-built, through experiences, exposures, expertise, and professionalism, must be able to be informed and research into trending issues and write on them and redefine them in an unconventional way that demystifies each concept with a view to tackling societal problems.

Amid a poet's "restless" endeavors, his or her work of art, like a broken chain, is left with little or no hint, which often leaves readers with many agitating questions or critical gaps to fill in his poems. It is not only a poet that is "restless" in the art of poetic composition or write-up but, on many occasions, the keen audience or attentive readers also are. Essentially, a poet often leaves his readers more worried, concerned, and/or confused with coinages, and ungrammatical sentences, spiced with poetic rhymes and meter in an attempt to get attentive readers connected with his or her line of thought, at a deeper level. Therefore, a surface reading will automatically create a measure of misinterpretations, and informative errors through a vibe of "restlessness" unintentionally created by the poet for his or her inquisitive readers as well.

6.0 The Proactiveness of Yorùbá Poets and Grandiloquence of Yorùbá Written Poetry

The theoretical propositions of the earlier Yorùbá poets are quite different in forms and contexts from the elements in the

contemporary literary texts. The 18th century marks a good beginning and starting point of the written Yorùbá poetry, (See Ọlábímtán 1974 & Fọlọrunṣọ, 1998). In virtually all Yorùbá written poems, especially in the 18th century, we have the code of the use of language with proverbial sayings, idiomatic expressions, and oral elements that are well-employed to embellish Yorùbá written poetry. There was no neophyte poet among the earliest written Yorùbá poets in that they were all close to nature, tradition, and elderly people within their respective communities.

Déńrelé A. Ọbasá, one of the earlier Yorùbá written poets affirms that he was eliciting data from the Yorùbá oral genres and verbal arts materials for decades before he eventually harnessed them creatively to embellish his poems that were published by his Printing Press, Ìlàré Printing Press, (See Akínyemí, 1987). “Indeed, the concept of *Omolúàbí* is weaved into the system of education that pervaded the traditional system. It is an informal training that begins from childhood from the family and immediate community,” See, Oyèbádé, 2021:91). The poets’ affinity with nature afforded the privilege and ability to possess a good command of Yorùbá language, either in spoken or written forms as well as ‘*native intelligence*.’ The copious examples of breaking grammatical, and syntactical rules as applicable to poets having poetic license could be found in the Yorùbá written poetry.

This attribute makes the poetic works of the early Yorùbá written poets significantly different from some modern-day poets. They were motivated, to display their skill and talent by free volition and to showcase their personal quirks, Yorùbá cultural heritage, and its philosophical viewpoint with passion without consideration for monetary gains. They relentlessly reveal the most detailed descriptions of topical concepts in the Yorùbá culture. Just as every Yorùbá poet is unique in style and thematic focus, their priorities also differ greatly. This is especially evident in the works of Ègbá poets who broke orthography and

grammatical rules by using their dialects in written poetry without being ashamed. The Ègbá written poets “restlessly” faced a seemingly impossible task, a feat which no person has ever performed, by breaking language protocols in this form in the creative work of poetry that was published, (See Oyèwálé, 2023).

The early Yorùbá written poets “restlessly” engage in healthy rivalry in poetic competition without prejudice or conspicuous religious gullibility. Some of them employ descriptive methods in writing their poems while some follow dogmatically after the foreign pattern. Similarly, some adopt oral tradition over the style in which the poet wrote them due to the subject matter or themes they wrote on. Other features that distinguish the early poems from the modern ones is that each of their poems is somewhat lengthy and their readers could easily lose focus. Supernatural-human dynamic is found in the way and manner by which language has been used in most Yorùbá poems. “Many would acknowledge that the ideas about language and literature were élitist in the last half of the eighteenth century,” (Smith, 1984:vi). Smith (1984:vi) asserts further “The concept of encoded in theories of language, dictionaries, and grammar was brought energetically to the fore when non-classically educated writers attempted to gain a place in ‘civilization.’ In the first generation of the Yorùbá written poets, the poetic understanding of their writings was dark through the choice of diction, coinages, archaic words, coinages, philosophical and metaphorical expressions that are relentlessly far from the understanding of this generation. When a poet is bold, either as an activist or revolutionary leader through poetic work, then his “restlessness” becomes a norm.

As strange as it may seem, especially for a poet, it can be extremely difficult to change from such a lifestyle. It is important to affirm that it is not only the “restless” nature of a poet that enables him to write poems very well but also the many variables that were earlier mentioned and explained in detail. Being

“restless” could only spur a poet to want to do more than normal, and be engaged by focusing on the essentials through inspiration. To this end, any book that would rightly be of use and relevant for the analysis of poetry must be able to expatiate on the nitty-gritty of a poet, poetry, and other related matters. Boulton (1982: ix) captures it well:’

A poetry book which can be used in the classroom needs to be honest and sensible...It is also practical and written by someone who has never allowed classroom work to dull her original response to poetry.

There is no gainsaying the fact there are quite many amazing concepts that one could learn from poetry as a way of life. The assertions in the prefaces of some Yorùbá written poetry like Ọdúnjọ (1961) and Ịṣọlá (1981), Ọlátúnjì (1982) among others are testaments that support the “restless” nature of poets, students, and critics in every clime and epoch. It could be affirmed that this peculiar attribute, for the sake of creative work and its analysis, gives insight to a poet on what to write and helps readers understand the work of poetry and appreciate the nature of a poet as a “restless” unique being.

7.0 The Emotional “Torture” in Poetic Inspiration, Composition, Rendition & Writing

The unusual artificial “headache” of a poet always gives birth to poetic composition in their minds through the rhythms of nature or “unknown” voices that dictate sometimes what to write, the order which must be followed dogmatically, religiously, or otherwise would be a missing mark if a poet deviates from the wind of inspiration that imbues his poem in the first instance. An extract from the poems of Dennis Brutus (1982:3) and Onwuchekwa Jennie (1982:8) are our main sources of evidence in

this section. Brutus (1982), in his poem titled: “*Sometimes A Mesh of Ideas*” writes:

Sometimes a mesh of ideas webs, the entrenched
mind the assenting delighted mental eyes;’ of
forged and metallated words makes musical
clangor in the brain; and sometimes a nude and
simple word...

Much as poetry is a protest against anomalies or human indifference to injustice; it could also be used to pragmatically or logically engage an individual’s mentality on how to tackle personal knotty issues bothering the human mind. Consequently, we could affirm that a poet is not just a busybody, a fanatic of insane ideology, or an alarmist but a solution provider to ethical issues within society. Àlàbá (1993:2-3) counsels that individuals should explore the idea of reading or listening to poem renditions. He asserts:

Tori béwì kéré bá ò rí rú è rí, Aboyún ọ̀rọ̀ ní n bẹ
ní kù un rẹ̀.

Ewì lẹ̀ wẹ̀rò òmùgò tí à n rò lẹ̀wọ̀, Kó bá ni sọ ọ̀
dọgbọ̀n tó jinná gidi....

No matter how small a poem might seem, There
is a deeper meaning embedded. A poem can
analyze our illogical thoughtlessness, Transform
it into useful insight...

There is no doubt the fact that man is confronted with decision-making on various issues daily as established in the excerpt. The poet, Àlàbá in one of his poems titled: “*Ìwúlò Ewì*”, rightly, claims that poetry could enlighten human beings amid confused ideologies, disillusionment, and pressure to make rash decisions that could mar one’s reputation or dignity, jeopardize personal

life, political or career development or survival. The gospel truth in this poem reveals that we shall do well to read, memorize, digest, analyze, and inculcate or imbibe certain logical principles being expressed in poems. Suffice it to add that society must not be deceived by the idea that poets can achieve social injustice in the world, as a global village. Such intricate issues can only be minimized to the barest minimum or resolved as a collective responsibility with individuals contributing their quotas for societal growth and development; just as poets are stakeholders.

A poet is just like someone who has a clear-cut poem visualized, created in a vision to save his or her people from entanglement but is simply trapped and short of words to express an imaginary or realistic dilemma with a vision for peace, tranquility, and fairness in treating all and sundry. A poet often endeavors to tackle every perceived injustice, oppression, or subjugation by the “powers-that-be” or “*cremè dè-la-cremè*” in society. As usual, with this great passion and burden in mind, a poet often paints a predictive picture of an ideal situation, through his or her philosophical stance for people to key into his or her far-reaching understanding of the past which blends into a description of the futuristic plans. Living in an ideal situation, under equity and justice, is a goal that the majority hardly feels possible, especially when under an oppressive political leader or military junta.

A typical poet with an undiluted idea often presents topical issues of life from an agonizing and emotional point of view linguistically. It only takes special insight and a philosophical mind to decipher and comprehend the burden and burning desires of a poet in poetic verses. This is more reason why poetic rendition (oral poetry) and writing (written) often appear to be extremely difficult to appreciate and understand by some people we may describe as neophytes. Poetry, in form and context, is like logic or additional Mathematics, which requires extra effort to be able to comprehend its grammar, syntax, as well as meter, and other

related elements in the genre. They may be so described in the sense that the language of the poem, according to formalism, is perceived as “vernacular” or “strange” to a reader of a poem. Thus, it becomes seemingly difficult to relate well with the poet’s language, and point of view, on a life-changing approach to socio-political, economic, and cultural problems. The ability to relate well with a poet’s “restlessness” means to see the internal or external conflict a poet is fighting for the emancipation of his or her people, whether it is the political system, cultural sentiments, religious bigotry, or imbalance in social stratification.

The restlessness of a poet also demonstrates how rare it is for a poet with a clear message to be able to perceive obstacles or tolerate delays in accomplishing his objectives through certain effects effectively and efficiently. Beyond this, his restlessness is frequently caused by the complex nature of a poet’s duties and the pressing desire to complete tasks on time. In a way, a poet is given a difficult duty that they must complete quickly and with unwavering determination.

Therefore, a clue on analyses of how inspiration transpires into written poems is embedded in poems. So, like a pregnant woman who is due to deliver a baby, under uncontrollable contraction, a poet is usually “restless” until his written literary text communicates his message with emphasis on positive transformation as a testament to fruitful efforts. The significant role of being observant, as a poet, when it comes to correcting some anomalies in society cannot be overemphasized. Thus, a poet is a closer observer of nature to enrich his or her creativity and what is going on in his or her immediate environment or even beyond the shore of his or her society, as a comparatist. Therefore, a poet is a creative writer beyond borders; regardless of the language being employed for his literary endeavour.

In the process of examining or addressing some emergencies in society, a poet might be seen as a cantankerous, and be sued for libel or litigation. Again and again, throughout history, poets have always faced serious opposition and criticism from people he or she may be fighting for, either as activists, historians, revolutionary or visionary leaders. Such experience will continually be the perfect experience for a seasoned philosophical poet who has a unique message (s) to pass across to people who are seemingly indifferent to the ills of society or are not people of his like mind. Consequently, we need not be surprised if a poet does not live to tell the story of his or her positive impacts, as contributions to societal development. It is one of the supreme sacrifices that poets can and have been paying, consciously or unconsciously for the freedom and redemption of the people. The most important thing, to a typical poet, is not amassing wealth but leaving a good legacy of a good name for posterity. The legacy of being a “wordsmith” (*alágbèdẹ̀ ọ̀rọ̀*) is sufficient to be remembered since this task is accomplished in the life of a poet, through literary texts, in any clime or epoch.

8.0 Past in Retrospect, Present Predicaments and Projecting into Future: A Poet’s Preoccupation

The reasons why poets are “restless” are not far-fetched: ideally, a poet would by intuition probe the past, endeavour to tackle the present predicaments bedeviling society, and perhaps under whichever inspiration, project into the future. Each one of a poet’s themes illustrates aspects of societal problems in a specific pattern in which each successive event links to the one before via contemporary corresponding. Essentially, a poet must be able, by professionalism, to identify societal problems, attempt to proffer solution(s) to the problems, and make pragmatic suggestions on how to forestall re-occurrence in the future.

Therefore, a poet's writing or poetic compositions often contain subjects that are connected to current events, outmoded notions, or cultural ideals that the poet may find objectionable. As a human being with limits, poets occasionally come to a crossroads when their beliefs about life or how things should be handled may be dismissed as "confusion" rather than as solutions to problems. However, some events will always highlight the importance of poets in human society because of their unique abilities to provide information, insights, useful ideologies, and practical experiences, among other things, that can greatly aid in the development and transformation of society.

If one understands the agonizing pain a poet passes through during creative ventures, which eventually produce a literary piece, one will appreciate better that they wield great power of language, intuition, and intelligence in the "psychic world." Bringing past events into present reality or existence is one of the daunting experiences of a poet, as applicable to a typical Yorùbá poet. Similarly, the ability to "diagnose" accurately and make assertions with accuracy, facts, and figures, without mincing words, is a great task that a poet has to accomplish without fear or favour. But, more importantly, the art of projecting into the future, by a poet is tantamount to what a true prophet would do in prophesying; which must come to pass as predicted. More often, a poet could allude to the pre-scientific era of the antediluvian world, even though the present situation might be his major preoccupation whilst he may also project into the future, perceptively or naively.

Therefore, amid societal confusion, and disillusionment, a poet has to raise a "red flag" with alarm to sensitise society about impending danger or warn on how to salvage a critical situation through his literary text. In the midst of this, the attention of the people in a society may be diverted by many variables, such as pleasure, economic activities, political propaganda, and religious

bigotry among others which may make the poet's words go unheeded. The hurly-burly of societal events could also make a poet more aggressive and "restless" in an attempt to persuade, rebuke, and/or abuse; as the case may be to achieve his goals of information dissemination. A poet, in reality, carries a demanding message, moving, without taking a step, from place to place with his literary texts by acting spontaneously as being inspired.

As "restless" as a poet may be, he would hardly lose sight of what matters, justice and equity for the masses are his priorities. (Ọlátúnjí, 1982) is the subject for study on Bizzar's nature as a poet. What we observe, too, is an example of a technique a poet uses called "intellectual virtues." This is subdivided into four main intellectual faculties: *episteme* – (knowledge), *nouns* – (intelligence, intuitive reason), *phronesis* – (the ability to deliberate well on matters concerning the human welfare); and *terme* (skill, art), *Sophia* – (wisdom, theoretical excellence) (See, Mautner, 2000:278). These skills, as a form of poetic styles, are well employed and logically portrayed in some of the poetic works of Adébáyò Fálétí in Ọlátúnjí (1982) and Adéjàjù (1972).

Conclusion

A day in the pragmatic efforts of a poet is symbolically like a thousand years for a poet who might be "restless" to get pen to paper poetically to be published for a wider readers' consumption. In this paper, we have established that poetic gift or inspiration for creative works can bring a poet into the limelight and stardom. Be that as it may, it could also lead to his or her Waterloo, for being outspoken against the "the-powers-that-be." Invariably, being "restless", which society might perceive as a weakness or defect can bring people into a revelation of the critical issues within the society that need to be tackled headlong by all stakeholders. The feeling of being in a comfort zone which often makes people resign to fate and hope

in a hopeless situation is what a poet can hardly bear or come to terms with. Hence, he becomes “restless” to correct as quickly as possible any observed anomaly. Just as Emeritus Professor Niyi Òṣúndáre describes Professor Wọlé Ṣóyínká as “*A rí má le è dáké, Èni Ògún*” (The one cannot keep his peace at sight of any form of oppression, subjugation, an anomaly in the society, the man of Ògún), finding shows that a poet rarely gives up his feelings but takes delight in keeping all extremely complex and mutually interwoven trending issues on topical affairs under watch. Using Yorùbá poems written in Ègbá dialect as an example, we also affirm that if we understand poems, especially those written in indigenous languages, we must first appreciate that no language should be referred to as “vernacular language.” So, it is argued that a poet in his capacity, as an activist, a social commentator, a philosopher, or an oral artist, is a solo voice against any form of oppression. Rarely do the authoritative messages of a poet go down well with the majority of society. A poet, in the process of trying to sanitize society from moral decadence for rapid development, naturally, makes more enemies than friends which ultimately could lead to his demise. This unpleasant task, from the historical point of view, could lead to the demise of a poet or work like revolutionary magic as applicable to a Yorùbá parlance, “*Ó kùdèdè ká gbéwì d’Òyò, Ọba Jáayín tẹrí gbaṣọ*,” meaning that (We nearly reached Òyò with our satirical poetry, King Jáayín committed suicide.) A poet is intensely interested in passing a message that will transform society; therefore nothing else matters, his life is inclusive.

End Note:

¹<https://www.google.com/search?q=formalism+theory&oq=for malism> (Accessed on 14/7/2024).

² *Adult Sabbath School Pamphlet*, “This We Believe” Bernad E. Seston (Ed.) England: Stanborough Press. p6.

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