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Attn: Dr. Fatima Binta Ibrahim
Department of English
Faculty of Arts, University of Ilor
Ilorin – Nigeria.



Dear Contributor:

ACCEPTANCE OF YOUR SUBMISSIC

Greetings from IJESPPA – USA

I have the pleasure to inform you that your research paper titled: THE TRADITIONAL AESTHETICS, MYTHICAL ICONS AND CULTURAL NUANCES IN NIGERIAN ORAL LITERATURE, submitted for the summer edition of the **INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND PUBLIC POLICY IN AFRICA** has been accepted for publication. We were unable to include it in our 2011 edition due to the delay in the peer-review process.

While looking forward to include it in our next publication this summer, IJESPPA wishes to thank you for your interest, support and patience. If you wish to discuss further any issue relating to this *Acceptance Letter* or your submitted materials, please feel to contact me via email; IJESPPA@GMAIL.COM

Kindest Regards

W E Obiozor

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ABSTRACT

The critique of mythology and metaphysics in literature done here, is aimed at an exposition of universal literary subjects, beyond the physical world, assembled and used for contradictory and inconsistent logics of human nature. The belief systems, faith, philosophies, occultism, mysticism, spiritual and crystal powers are registered in persons events, places, space and time in literature across settings. The purpose is to shapen and redirect man's mind and abstract reasoning ability. The argument here is that divine sources, idealism and fundamental principles are crucial cultural materials that enhance the writer's imaginative consciousness. The same materials serve as instruments for social dynamics as the world of man cannot exist outside his mind. Hence, part of the finding of this critical review is that, concrete realities of existence are systemized by mythically unified structures and the non-verifiable beginning of man. The conclusion, derived from the functional explicitness and persistent reflection of mythologies and metaphysics in texts, is that these two concepts have become the dripstone for new formations and practices.

Introduction

In the simplest possible terms, metaphysics involves abstract reasoning of being and knowledge on the fundamental principles of nature in the organization of the universe. Mythology is a study of myths in oral tradition involving popular beliefs and assumptions based on heroes of culture, used to explain the logical beginnings of humanity. And there are various branches of metaphysics; i.e academic, pure, applied, casualty, space, time, possibility, occultism, supernaturalism spiritualism, traditionalism, religious, cosmology, cosmogony, ontology, theology, teleology, mysticism, epistemology etc Cosmology for instance, deals with the world as the totality of all phenomena in space and time. Cosmology is the origin of the universe, a specification of the evolution of man i.e Charles Darwinian (1809-1882) school of thought. Teleological metaphysics dwells on the purpose of the universe while epistemology is a branch of metaphysics that deals with the theory of the study of knowledge and belief system.

Ontology is on the classification of the physical into mental, psychological and philosophical entities. Theology is the study of religion, the divine, crystal power, faith, healing, spiritual nature. All other aspects of metaphysics can be proved only under natural and invisible abstraction. In academic metaphysics propounded by Aristotle, physics is probed to discover the laws given physical and concrete evidences. But Aristotle is observed to

have thought of what ideas and concepts and attributes could be used to interpret the formalized and verifiable categories of physical proves. Other metaphysicians are Socrates, Plato, David Malet, Armstrong, Immanuel Kant, Albert Einstein, David Hume, Francis Bacon, John Lucke, John Donne, Samuel Coleridge, Lucretius, Omar Khayyam, Dante, Goethe, Robert Browning, Bernard Shaw etc.

George Thomas White Patrick (1924:7) defines metaphysics using philosophy as a paradigm, thus:

> Metaphysics is quite synonymous with philosophy. Strictly however, metaphysics is applied to problems of the world, of reality, of God, of purpose, of casualty, and Of mind… logics, ethics and aesthetics.[1]

Most importantly is Patrick's emphasis on the metaphysical subjects as elements beyond the physical realm applicable to physical nature of objects, events, places and existence. His argument is that the world does not exist outside the mind. Hence, as further observed by C.Hugh Holman (1972:162)

> Philosophies traditionally start with metaphysics; a theory of the essence of things, of the fundamental principles that organize the universe. Metaphysics is suppose to answer the questions; What is the nature of reality? … in what respect does metaphysics differ from science? Metaphysics is sub-divisible into ontology; the theory of being in itself and cosmology, the theory describing the origin and structure of the universe.[2]

The emphasis of this critic is that all philosophies are well grounded in metaphysics. Metaphysics offers the logics for philosophizing. Philosophers

interpret life of their people and not merely describe it. And they do this according to existing standards generated over time immemorial. Thoughts develop from the natural mind and gives philosophical tendencies. Examining the cosmos, Immanuel Kant (1781) one of the first philosophers to integrate aesthetic theory into a unified and comprehensive philosophical system of perception, likens time to a stream divisible into three parts;

> The present, the past and the future the present being real in experience, the past constructed in memory and the future anticipated in imagination,. The present however is not a knife-edge or instant! It actually has duration. In this moment of duration, there is indeed a 'before' and 'after' but for most parts, our before and 'after; our yesterday and tomorrow are ideal constructions of space.[3]

Metaphysical applications are therefore not only individualistic but also optimistic. Metaphysics underlies everything in life.

Joseph Campbell (1949) describes myths as an embodiment of explanations (i.e etiology) that justifies an earlier history of the society, a religious belief, ritual or natural phenomena.[4]

Campbell considers Westminster review of 1830 as the first attestation of myth. He says it was a widespread but untrue or erroneous story or belief involving reverential admiration on the basis of collectivity. Similarly, Roland and Barthes on (1957) adds that: True myth may be defined as the reduction to narrative shorthand of ritual mime performed on public festivals generated by many cultural needs[5]

Myths are in essence, depictions of historical events. They justify the current existence of a territory, connecting people with universal truths. For instance, the symbolic meaning of a mythical story for the culture explains the major reason why they survive as long as they do. And this, is observable from the beginning of Homer in his mythopoeia soon after when the medieval romance also turned myths into poetry. Generally in the 1950's, the French structuralist, Roland Barthes published series of semiotic analyses of some modern myths and their process of creation.

In Africa, Isidore Okpewho (1979) view myth as; "The quality of fancy which includes the creation of configurative power in the human mind in various degrees of intensity"[6]. To him, when mythical stories have some chronological and interpretative arrangement of actual events and are casually recollected, they have strong functional purpose that they serve he people that use them. Kofi and Myidoh (1962:28) in Ghana analyses the mythical formulation process in two parts; mythmaking and myth breaking".[7] They also associate myth with primordial times and relate it to present human activities of birth, death, creation, divination phenomena and others. In the Yoruba setting of Nigeria, we have the myth of Ogun.[8] Myth affects the cosmo-materialism and partial belief of man between the teretial and ceretial existence which Wole Soyinka (1976) is the functional essence of man"[9]. In the societies where myths are found, they are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past, linked to the present and connected with future occurrences.

Myths are derived from adventures and settlement troubles and sagas and are therefore, audience specific from one place to another and passed on by one generation to another, in moderated forms. This is why George Frazer (1922) better refers to myths "assemblages of human monuments and cyclical patterns of human activities, put together in poetic, prosaic and dramatized forms from time immemorial".[10] There is the Agikyyu myth in East Africa often used by Ngugi Wa Thijongo in his works. The Tanzanians refer to the Majimaji myth in revolutionary movements, as the source of power for the people. Mazisi Kunene (1980:19) of South Africa sums up mythical observations in the following words:

> Change is possible only through myth. Myth can create an acute vision defining in a familiar cosmic term the future possibilities of a society and this is why they fall into the acceptable changing social order.[12]

Applied Metaphysics And Conceptualised Mythodologies In Literature

The two terms; metaphysics and mythology have various uses in literature. Though in recent times, many critics opine that with modern atmosphere and change in social life, our world should no longer be the world of etiology, religion, rituals etc. It should be noted however, that the social, political and literary contents of modern world demands for the interpretation of self knowledge, beliefs, life itself, its values, purpose, meaning, moral source, basis and most essentially its destiny or future. O Hence, progress is easily

determinable through the knowledge of the universe and the psychology of man. George Patrick (1924) buttresses this thus:

> Idealism as a term covers all philosophies that agree in maintaining that spiritual values have a determining voice in ordering the universe. Naturalism is the view that all these values emerge and begin to vindicate their reality in the process of development. For naturalism, we are finding Nature to be an immensely more complicated affair than in the innocent days of Herbert Spencer and the early Darwinians. Many idealists these days do not believe that the world is dependent upon the mind, nor the product of the mind, nor a manifestation of the absolute, nor made of mind-stuff. It is sufficient to say that spiritual values are the significant things, that is, the 'real' things in the universe and that they have a determining voice in its ordering.[13]

The above hypothetical proposition by George Patrick presupposes that all theories including the emergent postulation, strive for righteousness and truth. And since the world is 'biocentric and psychotropic', righteousness is measured through certain heavenly patterns probably charted in the unknown'. The mechanism for progress still falls on these patterns, which it finds indispensable. Reality and value/idealism are therefore indispensable. Ideas serve as 'imaterialistic' instruments. Truth is reality and metaphysical literature is the art of living wisely and happily.

In a further examination of the word 'life'; Harold Barday (1986) gives a more relevant definition as follows:

> Life is the peoples collective endeavour to live and come to terms with their science and all their social institutions, including their system of beliefs and rituals. [14]

And in his introductory reading in aesthetics, John Hospers (1969:21) implies the interrelatedness of the mind (audience's attention), literature (aesthetics) and metaphysics. He says:

> An object is aesthetic only when it holds the audience's attention… Hence, aesthetics includes the general metaphysics of the lives of a people [15]

Aesthetics also involves the pre-historic belief of a set of people i.e their mythical basis.

To Claude Levi Strauss (1963):

> Myth is a structured system of signifiers, whose external networks of relationships are used to map the structure of the sets of relationships. The content is infinitely variable and relatively important [16]

Most of the textual illustrations below will indicate cases of euhemerism; the process of rationalization of myths i.e putting themes formerly imbued with mythological qualities into pragmatic contents.

For instance, Albert Lord (1973:246)[17] observes contemporary south Slavic epic song in Yugoslavia to have been composed from the past and moderated. He refers to this epic as "an oral-formulaic involving a stock of fixed images, epithets and conventional, expressions which the composers must have kept firmly in mind. Epics are long heroic narrative forms generated from myths. And another example of folk epics are 'the Iliad' and 'the Odyssey' by Homer.

There is also the old English Beowulf, the East Indian Mahabharata and John Milton's Paradise lost. Materials used in these myths, such as the characters, events and settings are historical, highly fictitious and fabulous. They are employed in such a way that they represent meanings independent of the action in the surface story. Such meanings may be religious, moral, political, personal or satiric. For further typical example is Spencer's The Faerie Queen and Bunyan's Pilgrims Progress. The later describes the efforts of Christians to achieve a godly life by triumphing over inner obstacles In Africa, examples of myth are in Mazisi Kunene's Emperor Shaka of Zulu in south Africa, the Maji maji myth of Tanzania, the maumau myth of Kenya and the Agikuyu myth used by Ngugi wa Thiongo as a reinforcement for the revolutionary movement of the East African people.

With myths and metaphysics, certain dramatized forms exist. Characters are placed within related ancestral webs and beliefs in which they must act according to customary demands. For instance, the reality of corruption in our contemporary society is negated by the intuitive and imaginative consciousness of the characters that react to situations and events. This is why conflicts are heightened when characters are to relate to the outside world. Rich backgrounds become complex in such a situation and cultural contrasts make the characters become confronted with disastrous dilemmas. The scenes of Wole Soyinka's The Interpreters for specific example create a contrastive juxtaposition between the ideals and reality. Kola, Bandele and Sagoe, after the

tragic death of Sekoni, believe that they fail and are dominated by the trivialities of life because they do not follow the requirement of their divine sources. Mythical and metaphysical themes are to direct the characters' consciousness and remind them about their limitations as humans. The characters' problems are their inner selves and their relationships with their sources.

Hence, C.Hugh Holman (1972) describes a dime novel as follows:

> A cheaply printed paperbound TALE of adventure or detection … are short novels dealing with the American Revolution, the civil war, the frontier lurid crime and spectacular detection and sometimes exemplary actions of moral instruction for the young. The first time novel was Malaeska; the Indian Wife of the White Hunter by Anne Stephens [18]

Generally as a result, metaphysical and mythological texts have the following features. They consist of simple dictions. They are characterized by commonplace imagery, dominance of thought, and use of nature as background for infinity. They interpret nature in imaginative sympathy. They set human emotions and action in their historic coloring of nature.

For more examples, Ken page, a metaphysical writerو who authored several books, is discovered to have used his novel titled Heart and Soul Healing to fine tune spiritual therapy for over 1000 clients. And Heart and Soul Healing has been highly praised by a variety of other metaphysical authors including Doreen Virtue and Orunvalo Melchizedek. [21] In Africa, Elechi Amadi's The Concubine (1966) as a home example, the village medicine man (dibia) poured out some gin as libation and muttered as he dropped each on the ground;

God of the night, take this;
Gods of the earth, take this;
Ojukwu the fair, take this,
Amadioha, king of skies, this is yours. And
You ancestors, small and great,
Guardians of this compound, take this [22]

Besides, the sea king remains the super force in the novel. In Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart (1958) [23] also, the spirit world is well represented in the affairs of the State. The ancestors' presence on earth is personified in the Egwugwu masquerades that perform during the festivals of the yam. Other metaphysical confrontations demanding for the use of spiritual incantations can be deduced from the dialogue between the Elesin and Mr. Pilkings in Wole Soyinka's Death and the King's Horseman (1975) when the Elesin Oba chants as follows:

> I feel my spirit eagerness, The kite makes for wide spaces and the wind creeps up behind its tail. Can the kite say less than thank you, the quicker, the better but wait a while my spirit. Wait for the coming of the courier of the king [24]

Myth and history are presented as curing mixture to be used to shapen the contemporary situation and future reality. In his Many Colours make the Thunder King, Femi Osofisan regenerates the Yoruba legendary experience of Sango, the great warrior who spits fire at the slightest provocation, after his acquisition of magical prowess. Sango's legend became the mythical material employed by the playwright to picturise the insatiable nature of man in the

endless aspiration for more power health, popularity and fame. Igunnu (masquerade), who is the storyteller, is characterized as the mediator between the king and the unseen forces. In Morountodun, Osofisan uses traditional tales by moonlight forum.

This forum is flavoured with Nigerian middles. The storyteller and his children-audience are presented in a circular sitting forum with use of the opening formular 'alo' and the audience response 'aalo'. Also in the re-naming of Titubi as Morountodun, Marshall uses chants to placate between the dead and the living. Let us listen to this:

Marshall:

> Now I call on this earth
> I am standing on (takes gourd from kondondi and pours libation. He softly chants an incantation ...) I summon the seeing eyes of our ancestors and you my dear friends standing... I name her Morountodun [19]

This native festival motif is one of the dramaturgies used in the play to display a typical traditional and physical mystical environment. The aim is to facilitate the exactitude and essence of man's metaphysical belief and existence in his future development. And this is accentuated by Benjamin Ray (1976) thus:

> Sacred images whether they be gods, ancestors, sacred actions or things, make up the traditional universe. Such images enshrined and communicated in myth and ritual, provide a network of symbolic forms, uniting social, ecological and conceptual elements into locally bounded cultural system.[20]

In European literature, early Elizabethan domestic tragedies also specialized in murder stories taken from contemporary bourgeois life. The tragedies preoccupied this time with the sentimentalism of that age. Examples are George Lillo's The London Merchant (1731) and Edward Moore's Gamester (1753) in which the tragic hero is a gambler who because he was falsely accused of murder, takes poison and dies.

In poetry, metaphysics creates a linguistic model (logical or conceptual structure) to serve as a basis for further refinement. In England, the metaphysical poets are said to be "a loose group of British lyric poets of 17th century."[25] Among them, are: George Herbert, Thomas Tranferne, Henry Vaughan etc. Their concerns are metaphysical ideas i.e. the concepts that can be referred to beyond the physical realm. They concentrate on the elevation of the individual mind, spirit and inner being. Their work appeal to the reader's intellect rather than their emotions. Their style is characterized by wit, subtle argumentation, reflections and meditations. Most importantly is metaphysical conceit moving through the lives (the ridiculous pride of man in his nothingness). Conceit is a general style used by the metaphysical poets such as Andrew Marvel when he compares man's soul with a drop of dew. Also, Saint

Robert Southwell and John Donne (perhaps the most famous of all the metaphysical poets) in his 'Death be not proud'. Donne looks beyond and attempts to erase his image from the mirror in front of him so that it can reflect "the not-now and not-here image" and as such foreshadow existentialisms. The psychological and philosophical essence of metaphysical poems can be exemplified in John Donne's

The Divine Poems (1978), John Donne formats many religious doctrines that negate man's spiritual re-assertion. He opens a stanza with;

> If faithful soules be alike glorified
> As Angels, then my fathers soule
> And adds this even to full felicitie,
> That valiantly/hels wide mouth o'rstride:
> (viii)

Donne compares faith with glory and likens the two concepts to Angels and his fore fathers in picturesque and visual image. This critical reasoning is symbolic of abstractism the unseen and the immeasurable criteria used for judgement. He contrasts the good and the bad in astonishment. He exerts tension in the readers mind when he goes further in concessional statements;

> But if our minds to these soules be described
> By circumstances, and by signs that be
> Apparent in us, not immediately
> How shall my minds white truth to them be try'd?
> (viii)

He ends the last line in rhetorical question because the answer is apparent. The tone of his poem is confusion in the search for more knowledge. This is pre conceived in the frequency conditional adverb if, and question forms like 'how'. Even his conclusive lines are full of doubt. i.e

Supremacy of the unseen is consistently put paramountly in view. As years of uncertainty roll by, the poet becomes worried about parameters for judging man. He envisages the life hereafter in biblical diction. The poem has the dominance of thought as characteristic of all metaphysical poets. Infinitiveness is one of the undertones of the poem. The attempt to give meaning to his life and total existence fails at each point.

He assembles words in a very resourceful manner so much that the reader gets great pressures of meaning bulging out in symbol in more accurate terms as follows:

> A symbol is a single item, even something as traditionally fraught with meaning as a smoke or a rose, symbolic meaning is confirmed by something else in the story just as a point needs a second point to define a line. Reading for symbols them becomes a matter of connecting the dots, so to speak, to form patterns, through repetition and explicit statement [26]

In relation to the African context Niyi Osundare, for instance, proposes a reinforcement of social dynamics using mythical rhythms of hope. Myth in his poetic collection becomes the efficacious instrument for enhancing stability and progress i.e symbolic and metaphoric philosophies of realities are skillfully

crafted into modern occurrences. In this sense, the poet becomes a human solicitor. Chiedu Ezeanab (1989) observes Osundare's 'moon' in Moonsongs as a demythologized natural object, which pilots the affairs of the state in a dynamic history. He adds that;

> ... the skirmish between the mythical metaphor (moon) and reality (history) is an indication of changes, transformations and instability of the communal structures.[27]

The moon is not only demythologized but mythologized and metaphoristically personified as in the following lines of Osundare's Moonsongs:

> The madding moon
> Has sold the stars
> Sold the rocks
> There is a bickering banter
> In the budget of the sky
> The moon plundered the gold
> Drained the diamonds
> And battered its silvery one Moonsong
>
> (viii)

In the stanza all the natural elements stars, rocks, sky, diamonds e. t c are used as everlasting material sources of strength.

And this phenomenon is better realized from Harold Schueb in (1990) summation below:

Materials and methods of composition
And images from past and present
Representations, of fantasy; and reality
Worked together and artfully crafted
Into rich metaphorical parallels in
Performances that enlist the emotions
Of the members of au audiences. That
Past, the parading of the culture
Continuous to exert its influence on
The shaping of the present, giving,
A mythical hearth a traditional context
And a nascent form [29]

Scheub specifically reinforces the fact that myth and man's inner mind are repository elements for regularizing and controlling happenings in the universe, whether past, present or future.

Conclusion

Metaphysics and mythology have remained essential pragmatic elements of any literary discourse. Most literary postulations are spiritual and secular. It becomes quite obvious therefore that any form of literature that eludes the and unchanging necessities of nature will not have its philosophical and psychological in-depth. There seems to be an established parallel relationship between literatures, metaphysical writer goes beyond the physical to redesign society deeply rooted in abstractism. Only by this means, can the theory of realism materialize.

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