ENG 825

ADVANCED CREATIVE WRITING

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INTRODUCTION

In this course, students will be taught the fundamentals and skills of creative writing across the three genres. Students will also be introduced to master classes, theory of authorship and publishing. In addition, the significance of creative writing across disciplines will be taught and students are to be exposed to advanced knowledge in Creative Writing with the aim to becoming critical scholars who would utilize their acquired knowledge and skills of writing for human, national, African and global development. More importantly, the course will introduce students to appreciation of creative form through highlighting awareness, especially by equipping and motivating them for a full and balanced development of their personality. At the end of the course, a portfolio of creative writing in the form of term paper or dissertation will be provided by the students.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

The development of imaginative writing with reference to poetry, drama and prose as well as the techniques of appreciation of creative work is the aim of this course. The specific objectives are to:

i. arouse creative consciousness in the students and equip them with creative writing techniques and skills through theoretical, practical, masterclasses and seminars.
ii. produce students with the advanced competence in creative work, armed with the critical tools that will enable them write and critically analyse texts appropriately and intelligently.
iii. produce competent writers and authors who will produce literary materials for readers within and outside institutions, centres and other literary spaces in Nigeria, and the outer circle of English.
iv. impart humanistic values that will help students see creative writing as one of literature's expression of man's spiritual essence.
v. train students in the art of drama, poetry, fiction and creative insight.
vi. prepare students for relevant careers in publishing, teaching, editing, journalism, cultural centres and other managerial cadres of administration and personnel management.

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Module One:
THE ART AND PRACTICE OF CREATIVE WRITING

INTRODUCTION

This module introduces students to the art and practice of creative writing. The discussion on the art covers the meaning and nature of creative writing as a discipline, and the practice covers sources of ideas for the writer, the writing routines, preparation for writing and the writing process. The aim is to expose students to the disciple and how to practise it.

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Unit 1: THE DISCIPLINE OF CREATIVE WRITING

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces students to the art and practice of creative writing through a synthesis of the discipline. The study of creative writing at a formal setting has often been an area of contestation between writers and the critics. The unit offers a working definition of the concept, its scope as a literary field, its evolution as a discipline, and its status an art of writing and reading.

1.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this unit, students should be able to

(i) Explain the concept of creative writing as a discipline
(ii) Be familiar with the scope, evolution, and history of creative writing as an art
(iii) Be acquainted with the practice of creative writing as a discipline and art

1.2 MAIN CONTENTS

1.2.1 Meaning of Creative Writing

Any act of using imagination and creativity to express written personal ideas and thoughts is considered as creative writing. Quite often, it is erroneously considered as solely a literary writing. But any professional, technical, or academic writing that contains imaginative input is considered a creative writing. It is any type of original and self-expressive writing that involves the process of creating a piece of writing aesthetically through embellishing a piece in any formal or non-formal form of literature. Quite often also, the teaching of creative writing in a formal setting, such as this course is challenged by critics. There is this belief that creativity, especially creative writing, cannot be taught. As Paul Dawson pointed out, the notion that creative writing cannot be taught in a formal setting poses 'a challenge which threatens to damn the foundational premise of Creative Writing' (2005, p6). David Lodge opined that 'even the most sophisticated literary Criticism only scratches the surface of the mysterious process of creativity; and so, by the same token, does even the best course in Creative Writing' (1997, p178).

1.2.2 Scope of Creative Writing

Typically, the scope of Creative Writing is viewed as only within the literary scope of fiction (prose), poem (poetry), or script writing (drama/play). However, creative writing is beyond the boundary of 'literature' to cover non-literary disciplines. There is no right or wrong practice of its learning or teaching; it all depends on what works for the space or time it is accomplished. Its open space is imbued with different modes of practice and many principles of writing. So, there is no sole means of instruction of creative writing as its teaching is defined by its practice and aesthetics, such as the use of workshops; which allows prospective writers to develop their art through experimenting with language and their individual creativity.

In the essay, *The Art of Fiction,* Henry James has this to say:

> The painter is able to teach the rudiments of his practice and it is possible, from the study of good work (granted the aptitude), both to learn how to

> paint and how to write. Yet it remains true […] that the literary artist would be obliged to say to his pupil much more than any other, 'Ah well, you must do it as you can!' If there are exact sciences, there are also exact arts, and the grammar of painting is much more definite than it makes a difference. (In Lodge, 1997, p173)

So, in contrast to the beliefs of some critics that creative talents cannot be acquired in a formal setting, it can be argued that as an art it can be taught**.** As David Morley opines, 'Like tennis players or athletes, singers and dancers often keep their teachers with them throughout their working life. Once writers are pushed into the world, they are left to fend for themselves […] Creative writing provides a period of 'constant schooling', and the space and time to practice in language and form' (2010, p24).

Creative writing is taught not only within the literary discipline but in many other non-literary disciplines. It is taught within the sciences and technology, clinical or medical as well as environmental or ecological fields as it creates better communications in these disciplines. It is not only taught to 'writers' but to 'readers' within these disciplines and fields as well. It goes beyond being a part of 'teaching and learning' to being better writers of fiction, drama or poetry, non-fiction or children's literature, and to creating better readers as well.

The use of the appendage 'creative' in identifying the discipline has often been challenged by critics. They argue that if other similar arts, such as 'Music, Painting, Dance, Film or Acting', do not have the appendage 'Creative' attached to them, why then should Writing be different? As David Morley argues, 'unlike these arts, a creative writer brings his talents and stand alone as he practices' (2010, p24).

1.2.3 History and Evolution of the Creative Writing Discipline

As Carol Bly stated, the discipline of Creative writing began with the ancient dramatic teachings of Aristotle (384-322BC) in his *Poetics,* which is an account of creative practices. It is there that Aristotle espouses the aim of drama and how this determines the outcome of the dramatic piece. Such an aim becomes the 'moral and Ethics code' for creative writing teachers and students and these translate to modern creative writing.

As a discipline, creative writing started as a writer's workshop. In the USA, from 1906 to 1925 there was George Baker's '47 Workshop' at Harvard and in the 1940s a strong foundation was built with Iowa Writer's Workshop. Further, as a discipline creative writing had initially been looked with degree of intellectual suspicion. But in the past few decades, there has been a rapid flourishing of the subject and diverse approaches to its teaching in 'academic' courses even outside the *Humanities* (Morley 2010).

Today, in the USA, the UK and in many other countries in the world, Creative writing courses are taught in universities and colleges at undergraduate and postgraduate levels (Morley 2010). Creative Writing course has been on the curriculum of East Anglia, Lancaster, Leeds Beckett, University of Sussex, Cambridge and many universities in the UK. Helon Habila, one of the Nigerian prolific writers, took up teaching position in creative writing at Anglia University. Other established and award winning writers such as Kazuo Ishiguro, the 1989 Booker Prize Winner and the runner up Rose Tremaine as well as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Mohsin Hamid were all students of creative writing in the US.

The discipline is not reserved to literature and other allied humanity courses; it's becoming multidisciplinary. It's beginning to get acceptance in Nigerian universities as undergraduate and postgraduate courses in creative writing are run in some universities and colleges. NOUN is a forefront pacesetter in this regard. As an academic discipline, it has not been widely acknowledged in some countries. This lack of acknowledgement is noticeable in literary studies departments, where the discipline is not recognised as a major course or specialisation. This may be an overstatement, but in most Nigerian academic institutions, a creative work is not given prominence in terms of points for academic publication in literary studies. It's a tale of 'hating the hen and loving its eggs', in a situation where a literature majored novelist or poet earns no point for his published work while another person that reviews it earns the maximum publication point in a peer reviewed paper. As David Morley generally observed,

> Rare forests of paper are given over the compacted debate, the heat of which comes down to an argument between two vested interests: a desire for the mystification of the process of writing by some writers, and a covetousness of that privilege, that process, by some critics. (2010, p15)

The major argument on considering a creative work as an academic edge in literary studies is that many prominent writers did not undergo writing training or did not even study literature as a course but have produced exceptional creative works. So, it's argued that creative writing is not a discipline reserved for the literary field or that it is not a literary feat that can be achieved by scholars in that area alone.

Writing is a subjective art that can be learned. As Nancy Smith pointed out, 'if someone has an inherent talent, then he/she can be taught the techniques that will bring that talent to fruition' (Smith, 1991). While some award winning and prolific Nigerian authors, such as Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe, have specialised in literature, others such as Ben Okri and Cyprian Ekwensi were biased in the Sciences but had produced creative works of fiction that are studied in literature courses. Yet still, the contemporary Nigerian and Commonwealth novelist, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, whose academic specialisation was in pure and social sciences, started writing before she attended a creative writing course in John Hopkins University in the US and obtained a Masters in Creative Writing.

1.3 Conclusion

Creative writing has been an old discipline that is traceable to the classic period. Aristotle's poetics has provided the foundation for the study of the mechanics of creative writing. The discipline has seen a steady growth through controversy about its position as an academic discipline and a course to study in a formal setting. Today, creative writing has gained a significant position and is taught in other disciplines, such as medicine, environment, and technology, to support students and teachers communicate effectively and study their art through creative works.

1.4 Summary

The unit has provided an introductory exposition on the discipline of creative writing, providing its meaning, scope, history and evolution. The significance of creative writing in all disciplines was discussed. The argument on whether the discipline could be learned or not depends largely on the assumption that the practice of creative writing is a skill that can be acquired or learned, and creative writers are born and made.

1.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) To what extent could you argue that Creative Writing can be taught?

(ii) Trace the evolution and development of creative writing.

(iii) Creative writing as an academic discipline has not been widely acknowledged in some countries, including Nigeria. Do you think so?

(iv) Imagine a garden. Close your eyes and visualise this garden. Write a few lines of prose or poetry describing it using all your five senses.

1.6 Reference and Further

Anderson, Linda (ed). (2006). *Creative Writing: A Workbook with Readings.* London: Routledge

Bloom, Harold (2000). *How to Read and Why.* London: Fourth Estate.

Brook, peter (1990). *The Empty Space.* Harmondsworth: Penguin

Carol Bly (2001). *Beyond Writers' Workshop.* New York: Anchor

Dawson, Paul (2005). *Creative Writing and the New Humanities.* London: Routledge

Lodge, David (1997). *The Practice of Writing.* London: Penguin

Morley, David (2010). *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Smith, Nancy (1991). *The Fiction Writer's Handbook.* London: Judy Piatkus

Oates, Joyce Carol (2004). *The Faith of a Writer.* New York: HarperCollins

Pope, Rob (2005): *Creativity: Theory, History, Practice.* London: Routledge

Unit 2: SOURCES OF IDEA AND INSPIRATION FOR A WRITER

2.0 INTRODUCTION

As the maxim goes, a resourceful writer always finds resource full environment from which to draw inspiration. Besides, Creative writers also draws from their writers' potential talents and from the masters of the art on the art. This unit expounds on sources of inspiration for the would-be-writer. The unit provides exposition on how writers can use the environment and their surroundings, and the philosophical thoughts of past writers to create their works.

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, students should be able to

(i) Explain the concepts idea, inspiration and style
(ii) Be familiar with environment and experiences as sources of inspiration for a writer
(iii) Be acquainted with masters' statements and their philosophies as the sources of inspiration for writers
(iv) Identify the essential working methods of writing a creative piece

2.2 MAIN CONTENTS

2.2.1 Environment and experience

As the renowned creative writing teacher John Gardner states, 'most of the people I've known who wanted to become writers, knowing what it means, did become writers. About all that is required is that the would-be writer understand clearly what is that he wants to become and what he must do to become it (1983: ix). This explains why creative works, both literary and non-literary, differ according to the writer and his/her environment. The concerns and the central motif of African work of fiction or poetry, for instance, differ from region to region. Likewise with other works from other parts of the world.

2.5.2 Statements by the Masters

Writers build their style as they read and practice (Morley 2010).Established authors are source of inspiration for would-be writers through their statements. They provide guidance and the requisite requirements of the art. For instance, the words of masters in works such as Strunk and White (2000) *The Elements of Style* can be a helpful source for the would-be writer to horn skills on style. As Geoffrey De Vinsauf says in *Poetricia Nova: The New Poetics,* words of masters are excellent sources of providing suggestions on how to horn the skill of creativity by 'pruning away those devices that contribute to elaborate style'. Ernest Hemmingway further says a novel or a poem is the visible part of an iceberg; the knowledge the writer brings to the creation of that piece is the submerged section of the iceberg. A writer has to create a space, which is the rest of the iceberg in which readers have to be part of the writing and be participants; they fill in the gaps themselves. Even where the space is filled up by the writer, matters are left unexplained or the language is elliptic and economical, thereby placing the readers as the fifth dimension on the four dimensions of time-space, making them active hearers and witnesses (Morley 2010.

To become a good writer, one must become a good reader of the works of the masters. This aspect of the masters' role in creative writing will be discussed extensively with relevant examples in Module Four.

2.5.3 **Working Methods and Philosophy of the Masters**

As David Morley says, biographies and autobiographies of the masters are some of the best standard guidance to find about a writer's working methods and philosophy (Morley, 20010). Further, Ben Johnson says, it's the language that most shows a person, and writing requires nerves, stamina and long listening – as well as talent and editorial discrimination from the masters. These are words from the Masters on creative writing.

The Early Romantic poets, such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge provided their philosophies in their critical work**.** John Keats also provided his own thoughts through his letters. Modern English literature provides such Masters sharing their philosophies and testimonies about their practices in journals, interviews and online blogs. Notable works providing working philosophies in English language, as provided by David Morley, are Allen, 1948; Brown and Paterson, 2003; Burke, 1995; Haffenden, 1981; Harmon, 2003; Herbert and Hollis, 2000 as well as in outlets such as *The Paris Review* (Morley 2010).

African novelists, playwrights and poets have also continuously been providing critical statements that have been guide to writers. Such statements will be discussed in Module Four.

2.6 Conclusion

Writers writing about their writing and that of others, their working methods, philosophies and statements as well as their physical, social, economic and cultural experiences have been identified as major sources of inspiration for the writer. The would-be writers invariably draw from the Masters and horn their skills.

2.7 Summary

The unit described ways in which a would-be writer draws from multiple sources in creating his work. The unit discussed how the environment and experience are significant, and how the statements on the art of creative writing from the already established masters can also provide guide and impetus to the would-be writer.

2.8 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Citing any Master's statement on the art of writing, discuss how you will use any philosophy you identify behind the statements.

(ii) Explain how the environment and experience of a writer influence his work

(iii) Does a poet or a novelist largely draw from the environment or from his personal experience in composing his poem or fiction?

(iv) Find a picture of people doing an activity, or visit a market, bus station or a playground. Spend at least five hours responding in writing to the different people and their activities. Work out your sketches on the people as characters and build a story or a poem around them.

2.9 Reference and Further Reading

Allen, Walter (1948). *Writers on Writing.* London: Dent

Brown, Clare and Paterson, Don (eds) (2003). *Don't Ask Me What I Mean" Poets in Their Own Worlds.* London: Picador

Burke, Sean (ed) (1995). *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

Freedman, Diane and Frey, Olivia (eds) (2003). *Autobiographical Writing across the Disciplines.* Durham: Duke

Gardner, John (1985). *On Becoming a Novelist.* New York: HarperPerennial

Haffenden, John (1981). *Viewpoints: Poets on Conversation.* London: Faber and Faber

Harmon, William (ed) (2003). *Classic Writings on Poetry.* New York: Columbia Univ. Press

Herbert, W.N and Hollis, Matthew (eds) (2000) *Strong Words: Modern Poets on Modern Poetry.* Newcastle: Bloodaxe Books

Ike, Chukwuemeka (1991). *How to become a Published Writer.* Ibadan: Heinemann

Morley, David (2010). *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Nabokov, Vladimir (2000). *Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited.* London: Penguin

Strunk, William and White, E.B (2000). *The Elements of Style.* Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon

Unit 3: CREATIVITY AND WRITING ROUTINES

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Creative writing, like other fields of arts such as music, painting and dance, require routines in undertaking it. In this unit, we explore what the routine entails. The identification of creativity as innate or learnt skill, the significant position of the reader and the essential features of the culture of writing are further explored.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, students should be able to

(i) Explain the concept writing routines
(ii) Be familiar with the creation of a writer from innate talent or through learning the skills
(iii) Be acquainted with the significance of the reader and audience in composing a creative work
(iv) Identify the essential features of the culture of writing

3.2 MAIN CONTENTS

3.2.1 Writers are born and made

It's believed by critics alike that writers are born and made. Writers are born with innate talents to write while others acquire the skills to do so. Some writers had never passed through any tutelage but can present a fine work of art more than those who went through training. Of course, as the argument goes on, there are students of creative writing who can writer far better than their tutors. However, some argue that all accomplished writers had models whom they read and got inspired to produce their art. Even naturally born writers go through mentoring, at the very least, to learn the technique of writing their chosen art. Some come with the knowledge of the technique but they require renewed precision that comes with trend, period or avant-garde (Morley 2010).

Creative writing has created a special place in professional and academic space in higher education across the world. Therefore, there are many writers who are made. This new discipline has offered the right atmosphere to synthesise the teaching of 'making' the creative writers by taking into cognisance their innate ability and the need to move with the vogue. Creative Writers' teachers are the first real readers and editors of their writing and to some extent to their character. That alone is enough to be taught as a creative writing, even if one is inherently born a writer. According to David Morley, writers are made through self-development, refining ability, imaginative talents through attention and memory, psychological apprenticeship, passion and vocation. It's practically a reality that authors 'can be made' (Morley 2010).

3.2.2 Reader and the submerged section of the iceberg

The reader, who is the hearer and a witness of the knowledge a writer brings to the creation of a novel or poem, is the unrevealed section of the same iceberg. The tutor of the creative writer or the editor of the work are his first close readers. The targeted audience are the second step readers. A novelist or a poet always provides a space in their creative works so that the reader can come in. This space is larger than the text itself; it is the submerged iceberg. As David Morley says, if matters are left unexplained, untold, or the language of a poem is elliptically

economical without becoming opaque, then inquiring readers will lean towards that world. Readers always fill the gaps themselves (Morley 2010). In essence, the readers become writers themselves and occupy the fifth dimension, after the fourth dimension of space and time in writing, and fill it with their experience. Space-time is what M.M. Bakhtin refers to as the chronotope (Bakhtin 1981), and something the genius Albert Einstein espouses in his theory of relativity. David Morley says that a space-time is a four dimensional space, 'with three dimensions corresponding to ordinary space, and the fourth as time' (Morley 2010). So while writing a poem, a story or a piece of creative nonfiction, a four-dimensional fabric is created and the whole space and time in the work become one. The fifth dimensional space is the submerged section of the iceberg which is left to the reader, who is very significant in the creation of the fictional, poetic or and dramatic world of characters. What the writer, playwright or the poet exposes in the writing is just the visible iceberg tip in the creative work space.

What this means is that, a creative writer is not expected to give out everything that is there; the reader has to be teased to come in through gaps and lacuna. The place of the author in creative writing is extensively discussed in Module Four Unit Three. A reader drawn into a creative piece get involved and affected as well as attached to the space. Some identify themselves there and always return to the space even after putting down the piece. Others would look at the world created by the tip of the iceberg and construct a larger life from that. The message or action in the piece may be imitated by the reader due to the 'creative radiation of that fictional self, and the accuracy of the writing' (Morley 2010).

3.2.3 Culture of Writing

Writing is a culture which is developed. When to write, how to write or where to write are all factors taken into consideration as part of the routine of writing. These routines affect different writers differently. The traditional 'way' of writing is to sit by the desk with a pen and paper (Ike, 1991), a typewriter or a computer, more preferably in a study or a quite space to compose. But inspiration and ideas can come at convenient or inconvenient occasions for different writers. There are some writers who get their ideas when they are distracted. Such writers prefer music or any sound appealing to their affective or acoustic sense in order to compose their piece. They believe music therapeutic effect has the capability to stimulate their creative thinking as conscious thoughts are blocked in the process to allow the unconscious to trickle in. As believed in creative writing process, consciousness obstructs the 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings', to borrow William Wordsworth's terms, to come in; which is why a writer being in a "trance", "getting out of this world" and "being on the cloud" are what brings in a dream-like world and inspiration for a creative piece. The distraction from the music or exercise brings about 'communication between the unconscious and conscious-quotidian mind of the writer' (Morley 2010). Once a writer goes out of the conscious stage into the stage of unconsciousness, he is expected to bring an open mind into play.

Some writers prefer movement of their body or a psychomotor equilibrium in order to compose their work. As David Morley stated, the general tip writers are given is *solvitur ambulando* – it is solved by walking (Morley 2010). When they begin to get the writers' block, they take a walk. The movement could be within a specific space or in a wider one. Some writers get their ideas as they pace up and down in a room or in the open street. Some, for instance, get the idea for writing while driving or dancing. Yet, others get their ideas as they go into sleep or while in the

loo. In whatever situation ideas come in, a writer is expected to capture and audio record or write them down.

Different established authors adopt different culture for getting an idea to write. William Wordsworth adopt the distraction through walking or exercise, by pacing up and down in his garden as he compose his poetry. But Ted Hughes' culture is to go fishing. In that moment he watches the sinker in concentration, he generates his 'flash of insight' (Hughes, 1994).

Another significant culture adopted by writers is getting a critical theory as a frame. Would-be writers quite often find it useful to have books by other authors around them so that they can 'borrow or steal from their verbal energy ... When a writer is lost or forgotten the order of lines in a *pantoum* or *sestina*, he gets the propos from other writers' (Morley 2010). The language and style of the writing is often born out of the critical theory and personal style of others. Precision of language is one important style borrowed by would-be writers to develop their good personal style. Styles are quite often assessed by the order and play with words as well as the choice of the words.

However, some writers are their own critics. As David Morley puts it, 'literary theory generally has little impact on the way creative writers go about their business… Some writers find it creatively disabling to read literary criticism; they find it stalls them in the act of making, or it alters their expectations of literature in ways which are simply false or destructive' (2010, p38). So, some writers write *for* themselves as the poet Elizabeth Bishop warned a would be writer, 'you… are reading too much *about* poetry and not enough poetry … I always ask my writing classes NOT to read criticism' (Herbert and Hollis, 2000, p105). Such writers write based on their intuitive feeling not by looking over their shoulders to please the monkey critics or readers sitting there.

3.4 Conclusion

There are different ways in which writers develop their culture of writing. Culture here means the routines they go through in order to write or get inspired. This depends on the kind of writer, those made or those born with their innate abilities and do not copy or follow the style of others. In developing these routines for writing, the significance of the reader is important. What is written is just the tip of the iceberg; the remaining submerged section of the iceberg is left to the reader to fathom by coming in to fill the fifth space of the time and space dimension. Therefore, the reader, the theory, the mode of getting ideas and the general culture of writing are important elements of the routine of a writer.

3.5 Summary

The unit examined the kinds of readers as either born with the creative abilities and those who learned the skill. Discussion on the significance of readers and critics was presented, stressing much on the reader who is also part of the writing process. Whether a writer is born or made, he needs special writing culture. A writer has to consider the readers as part of his writing and to leave the gaps and lacuna to be filled by them.

3.6 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Enumerate three ways in which writers develop their culture of writing.

(ii) Comment on the statement that writers are born and not made.

(iii) What is the significance of the reader in the writing process?

(iv) Sit still and ponder about how it's to be alive. Listen to your breath. Close your eyes and recall an experience that almost cost your life. Imagine how it would have been by now. Draft a poem or a short story about the situation.

3.7 References/Further Readings/Web Resources

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981) *Dialogic Imagination Four Essays.* Edited by Michael Holquist, Trans by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist

Herbert, W. N and Hollis, Matthew (eds) (2000) *Strong Words: Modern Poets on Modern Poetry.* Newcastle: Bloodaxe Books

Hughes, Ted (1994). *Winter Pollen.* London: Faber and Faber

Ike, Chukwuemeka (1991). *How to become a Published Writer.* Ibadan: Heinemann

Morley, David (2010). *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Unit 4: AIMING TO WRITE

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The first step is always the hard one, as the saying goes. But another saying says a journey of a thousand miles begins with the single, first, step. A creative writer, one that wants to be an author, must do some preparations to be fully ready to write. These preparation are what will make him ready to venture into the art of the writing process. This unit focuses on becoming a reader first before venturing into becoming a writer. This is followed by discussion on identifying a model out of the many that have been provided, as well as reading across time, genres and generation of writers to be fully equipped as a writer.

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, students will be able to

(i) Enumerate three ways a would-be writer can prepare to be a good writer
(ii) Identify the significance of reading other writers to become one
(iii) Determine the choice of a model and their individual talent
(iv) Espouse the reading of others across time

4.2 MAIN CONTENTS

4.2.1 Reading to become a writer

In *How to Read and Why,* Harold Bloom claims, 'Ultimately we read…in order to strengthen the self, and to learn its authentic interests … The pleasures of reading indeed are selfish rather than social' (2000, p22). Would-be readers cannot expect others to be interested in reading their work if they are not interested in reading other writers work. According to David Morley, 'To become, and to remain, an original creative writer you must first become, and be, as original reader, and pursue your individual taste with restlessness, competitiveness, and trust in your intuition'(2010,p25). A good writer of 500 words must have read 5000 words. Reading is important aspect of becoming a good writer.

Language has four basic skills that are primary and secondary, oral and written as well as receptive and productive. Even babies that begin to learn their immediate language must first begin with the listening skill, then imitate by speaking. While both skills are oral and primary, listening is receptive while speaking is productive. The secondary skills are reading, which is receptive and written, and writing, which is the last stage, and is secondary, productive and written skill. So a would-be writer must first read before writing. Precision of language is very important aspect of style that a writer must be equipped with through reading others. A would-be writer can copy or imitate multiple writers' use of the language to develop his or her unique good personal style. Therefore, reading other works is a way to prepare for writing.

4.2.2 Reading and the individual writer

We read to have models. Reading to get influence of the models is otherwise known as creative reading (Morley, 2010). As Mary Kinzie describes an active creative reading, 'The reader follows … the paths that were not taken by the author, but whose possibility leaves a shadow like a crosshatching on the paths that remain. To read this way keeps a poem always provisional and still in the making, which is how the process of reading absorbs the act of writing to their mutual improvement in terms of skill and understanding' (1999, p13).

Novels and poems are the easy to reach things to read, which a would-be-creative writer could lay his hands on. They offer models for writing, especially by the masters, in terms of style and building vocabulary. This is discussed extensively in Module Four Unit Four. Reading creative and non-creative fiction materials offer model for writing in terms of subject matter, information, opinion and experiences that can be fodder for an effective creative piece for the would-be writer.

Though a contestable statement, it is important for a would-be writer to allow the established authors and the masters of the art influence their writing. While some writers that are made allow themselves to be open to influence those that are born assume they have their own style and can only be an influence rather than be influenced. But imitation, as expounded by Aristotle in his *Poetics,* is an honourable and ancient tradition in writing. Socrates also said, 'Employ your time in improving yourself by other men's writing so that you shall come easily by what others have laboured hard for'. We read to get out of the blues and provide the relaxation impetus to continue writing. Reading can be used 'as a caffeine' (Morley 2010), a form of waking up and paying attention to our line of thoughts as we write. The novelist, Cynthia Ozick says, 'I read in order to write… to find out what I need to know; to illuminate the riddle' (Plimton, 1989, p295).

In addition to reading creative works by other writers, to be an effective writer, would-be writers need to read books about creative writing such as this one. There are many creative writing books and handbooks which are provided under different units in this Course book, which can be consulted. It's through reading in a discipline such as literature and Creative Writing that the reputation of neglected and forgotten authors are refreshed and restored in a new way. The study and practice of creative writing lends itself constructively through such works (Morley 2010).

4.2.1 Creative reading across time

The reading of creative works of established authors and the reading of creative writing books by critics and writers should cut across time and taste. What is considered the style or the *in* thing in the past might not necessarily be so in the present. As David Morley puts it, 'mostly cultural amnesia consigns most writing to oblivion… and while style is eternal, fashion is temporal' (Morley 2010, p29).What is a good style and what makes a novel a bestseller in a contemporary period, for instance, might not have been so in the past. What is a popular genre to choose and write through in the present time might not be so popular in the past. Writing can seem dated because of its concerns, style, its preference and references. As Arthur Koestler had earlier said, 'A writer's ambition should be to trade one hundred contemporary readers for ten readers in ten years' time and for one in one hundred years' (Koestler, 1975).

Writing can be too suggestive of a particular time or style of that time. For instance, in choosing a style, a would-be writer may focus only in what makes a work so popular and a bestseller at that time or the aspiring writing may be motivated and excited by what he/she experienced as a reader of a particular work. As Henry Thoreau puts it, 'read the best books first, or you may not have had a chance to read them all' (in Morley, 2010). It is advisable for the aspiring reader to read widely across time and genres and even disciplines to be an effective writer. The manner in which an aspiring writer reads other works voraciously is the same manner in which he/she writes his own work to be voraciously read by others. It is the thirst for your reading as an

aspiring writer that marks you out as a writer. The thirst and hunger for reading should never be considered quenched so long as the writer hopes to keep on writing.

4.3 Conclusion

Reading is important thing to do in order to become a writer. The reading should be wide, in scope and time. In order to become a writer, as many works have to be read as possible in order to produce something considerably good. It is through such wider reading that style, language and technique are imitated or learnt to produce a good piece. The reading should take into consideration what is popular across time; what makes a writing a bestseller or widely accepted is what is in vogue. A reader should make sure all these are taken into consideration: reading to become a writer, reading as an individual writer and reading across time.

4.4 Summary

The unit discussed ways to use wide reading in order to become a good writer. The unit also discussed the individualised reading a would-be writer should adopt to suit his or disposition. The reading to be adopted by aspiring writer should take into consideration the period or time of the material and how that would affect the kind of work to produce that should be in tandem with time and need or expectations of readers of the work.

4.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Enumerate and discuss three significance of reading others in order to become a writer.

(ii) What is reading across time in order to write? Give examples.

(iii) What is the significance of precision of language as an aspect of style in writing?

(iv) Get a poem, a play or a novel that you love to read and read again. Copy down three stanzas, one act or three paragraphs from the poem, play or the novel, respectively. Read what you have copied down several time. Then put down the work and create your own version of what you have read.

4.6 Reference and Further Reading

Bloom, Harold (2000). *How to Read and Why.* London: Fourth Estate.

Kinzie, Mary (1999). *A Poet's Guide to Writing Poetry.* Chicago: Chicago University Press

Koestler, Arthur (1975). *The Act of Creation.* London: Picador

Morley, David (2010). *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Plimpton, George (ed). *Women Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews.* New York: Penguin Books

UNIT 5: ARMING TO WRITE

5.0 INTRODUCTION

While the previous unit focused on aiming to become a writer, this unit concentrates on how to put on and buckle your own armour in order to write. Arming yourself with the right tools is an important step towards becoming a good writer, which this unit focuses on. A farmer or a painter must have tools for work and so does a writer. The unit focuses on gathering vignettes in a notebook or a journal, sieving and collecting ideas to be part of the work as well as the notion of 'keep on keeping on' to write despite drawbacks.

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the units, the students should be able to

(i) List and explain ways of keeping thoughts and ideas as they come up.
(ii) Identify how to write and how not to write
(iii) Describe and explain the drawback in the writing process
(iv) Identify and discuss ways to keep on writing when stuck

5.2 MAIN CONTENTS

5.2.1 Keeping a Journal for Vignette

One major way for readers to be fully ready to write is to keep record of thoughts and ideas as they come in. A writer should keep a 'journal' in a form of a notebook, a recorder or computer as ideal tools for vignettes that could always be used as a personal anthology to reread for ideas, encouragement and illumination of problems in their writing process. In the past, the journal comes in a form of a book or notebook that is paper bound but in today's world, such journal could be a laptop computer, a tablet or even a mobile handset phone, which are practical, comfortable and portable. In addition to notebooks, pens and computers, a new creative writer needs the support of dictionaries and thesaurus to locate words and precisely use them (Ike, 1991).

A Computer is the best companion of writers in the modern world of today. It provides many support to the writer, in terms of developing a strong culture of writing (see unit 4 above). It has come to replace paper and pen source of keeping information and has replaced the typewriter in the writing process. However, given the demands of a computer for 'power' and 'safety', a paper bound notebook should always come handy and be kept by the aspiring writer at all times. James Schuyler said, 'The first use of drawing for a painter is the same as that of notebooks, diaries and letters for a writer: keeping your hand in the 'page' should be dated and a new one replaces the completed/exhausted one' (in Morley, 2010).

A notebook or electronic hand-held device helps to capture the pressures, the responsibility and record of life. As a poet or novelist goes about daily life routine, he/she comes across such pressures and responsibilities from his experiences and from other people around. It is through such contacts that characters crop up, dialogues comes up and a plot develops. Unless the would-be writer has 'a sponge-like memory' such things can fizzle out as other things come up. A notebook or a hand-held device makes it easy to record down the idea or thoughts. A would be writer can capture them, as they flash by, and take them down.

There are many ways in which these thoughts and ideas come by. Dialogue can be heard or overheard while travelling, and one can capture and record them. In addition, sentences, lines

of poetry, images and paragraphs by other writers that are intriguing for one reason or another can come up while one is in any of the cultures of getting ideas and thoughts appropriate for the writer (see 3.2.3**.** above). These ideas and thoughts can also come through dreams, while you are asleep. The notebook or the hand-held device should be kept by the bedside. It is usually during the period between trying to sleep and sleeping itself that one experiences fascinating reveries that are active dreams. This is the moment to take note of all the images that have arisen, or phrases that have come up and recoded. Quite often, if these are not captured down, they are easily forgotten in the morning. So, what comes up should be recorded freely. Just as the first draft of writing is done freely, record the ideas as freely as they come in to be sieved at a later stage. With a hand-held recorder or a computer, one can as well make a voice-recording of the fleeting ideas, the moment they flashed in or by. The environment, especially where large number of people gather, is also a good place to feed the notebook or the hand-held. It's a place that can provide a fodder to feed a creative piece. Airports, bus stops, markets, schools, train stations and political or religious rally all provide the ideas to develop speech, dialogue and human conduct. It offers a parade of style and human behaviours. Heightened emotions such as fear, suspicion and anticipation not only underlie how many people speak out but how they behave to each other. A would be writer becomes an 'ethologist' and observes *how* people speak and *why* they say it that way. Characters can also be created from such places, which could be sketched/recorded in the notebook. 'Everywhere is a fieldwork, everyone is a material and everything is a quarry' (Morley 2010).

So, an aspiring writer should take his notebook or hand-held anywhere and at all the time. It should not be limited to places inherently thought as 'inspirational and beautiful' as ideas can come where they are least expected.

5.2.2 How and how not to write

As David Morley said, 'Writers …knew what they were choosing to ignore, and they composed with such panache of style that they defied their own inherited legislations' (Morley, 2010, p89). A writer earns panache in writing but may have to learn style, and can only break the laws of writing after he/she knows them. Invariably, writers are different in style and not of the same mind but there are tips and principles which all writers across the genre agree on. Each genre has its own principle and practicalities (as we shall see in Module Two and Three later in this course book). John Gardner argues that 'Every true work of art … must be judged primarily, though not exclusively, by its own laws. If it has laws, or its laws are incoherent, it fails – usually – on that basis' (1983, p3).

The following statements are provided by David Morley, and explains they 'are about how *not* to write, or they are concerned with habits of mind or of practice that you might wish to acquire in order to accelerate your apprenticeship' as a would-be writer' (2010, p90).

i. Style, above all else, is your aim, and it should show no sign of effort.
ii. Showing is more effective than telling, certainly among newer writers
iii. Your writing voice must be distinctive; it must be differentiated from its precursor or your reader will stop listening
iv. Form is a useful tool in so far as it can teach you how to break with it, or bend it, once you have mastered it, but you must master it first.
v. Striking phrases contaminate with their beauty; you must excise them.

vi. Adjectives and adverbs are the first to feel the spotlight of redrafting
vii. Clichés, archaisms and inversions must earn their place or be burned off the page
viii. Any word or phrase that distracts the attention of the reader is redundant
ix. Concrete language usually has more resonance for the general reader than abstract language
x. Audience do not wait; you must create them
xi. Know your audience; bore an audience and you will lose it
xii. You will learn more about writing if you give yourself the permission – sometimes – to write badly
xiii. There are no rules, except those you set for yourself, and they will be many and complex
xiv. For new writers, making it work might be more revolutionary and objective than making it new
xv. Clarity is hard-worn, and of first importance
xvi. Economy is all
xvii. Energy, in language, is eternal delight
xviii. All writing is re-writing
xix. The best writing is honest
xx. Only by writing for yourself can you hope to please an audience beyond yourself
xxi. An early interest in language is a mark that a person might have a talent for writing
xxii. Reading will make you a better writer, but reading-as-a-writer will make you even more fluent in style, teaching you technique and building your vocabulary
xxiii. Imitation and influence are not anxieties; they are your early allies. Be open to influence and ready even to steal from other writers
xxiv. The more you practice writing, the more likely you are to improve and find new possibilities
xxv. Write often; write when you can by any means necessary; and conduct this practice with as much ruthlessness and tenacity as your circumstances and character will permit.
xxvi. Writers are born and made
xxvii. Natural talents, and your ability to learn, play a strong role, but your own character and stamina will determine whether you endure as a writer

In addition, Nancy Smith (1991) summarised the following features of a good novel:

- A novel shows level of connectedness – a way that the world does not show that connection.
- A good readable novel has a good *causal-event-one thing leading to another*.
- A good novel has narrative – chain of events, direction of plot; description – sensory appeal; dialogue – which brings characters to life, who have inner life and drive the plot. A dialogue must further the plot, must always be realistic, relevant and intentional. Don't tag a lot of information in a dialogue.
- A good novel see the characters respond and change based on what is said.
- A novel is action layered – interesting characters do not only act but think about how they act; they should not be *vehicle* for ideas. Don't add superficial thing to paint-unnecessarily, do not invent. Do not ask the question 'what do you want your readers to

find out?' and do not unnecessarily tell us much about the character that does not have being to the story; do not create problems you can't solve in the characters.

In *Anthills of the savannah* (1987), Chinua Achebe, through his alter ego and I/eye character Ikem Nsodi, says this about the role of a writer: 'writers don't give prescriptions …they give headaches!' (p161).

5.2.3 Negative capability

As John Keats observed, when you have an idea for writing, it asks very little of your conscious attention – you do not *know* it'. This is an aspect of the mind that he calls 'Negative capability'. To Keats, 'if it does not come as easily as leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all'. As he puts it,

> Several things dovetailed in my mind and at once it struck me, what quality went to form … Achievement especially in Literature & which Shakespeare possessed so enormously – I mean *Negative Capability*, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason (Norton Anthology of English 2, p889)

Although thoughts and ideas can come in at the unconscious stage, the act of getting ideas is considered as the greatest creative effort by writers. It suggests that an original creative process is the conscious and deliberate act, rather than the thoughts and ideas derived as trance between consciousness and unconsciousness. As generally discussed by many creative writing critics and tutors, the composition of a creative piece, fiction, poetry, drama, and creative non-fiction is mostly a matter of reading and practice and most often, free-writing as a writing routine, is invariably viewed as a means to achieve a degree of fluency in expression (Morley 2010).

So, if the creative process comes in as a trance, it comes at the moment when the conscious mind shuts down, and dream or fantasy surprises one into waking, a period in which the unconscious and unconscious minds talk to each other, 'fluidly if not eloquently', which Le Murray calls 'a painless headache', and

> … you know there's a poem in there, but you have to wait until the words form' and sees it as 'wonderful, there's nothing else like it, you write in a trance. And the trance is completely addictive, you love it, you want more of it … It's an integration of the body and mind and the dreaming-mind and the daylight-conscious-mind. All three are flirting at once, they are all in concert…Sometimes it starts without you knowing that you are getting there, and it builds in your mind like a pressure' (an interview with the BBC Radio 4, 1998).

For a *negative capability*, one needs some kind of a key to open it up. This could be a phrase, a subject matter or even a tune. Writing produced in this state will often surprise because it seems better than you *know;* that is, it is *beyond* your 'conscious-untelligence' (Morley 2010). You could not have written it had you sat down with that end in mind.

The idea or concept/theory of negative capability describes the capacity for writers to accept 'uncertainty and the unresolved' in the process of getting their thoughts and ideas during the creative project. Keats asserts the position of positive capability as negative knowledge through oxymoronic correspondence between light and day in his sonnet 'To Horace'. He believes that poets and other great people are capable of accepting that 'not all can be resolved.' This is also

a principal doctrine of Romanticism which states that truths found in the imagination 'access holy authority'. It is 'a state of intentional open-mindedness' and has influenced many writers and philosophers. Keats mentioned the theory only in in his letter but the general meaning of the theory has been fixed by theorists that follow. John Dewey cited this theory saying it influenced his own philosophical pragmatics. Nathan Scott notes the significance of the theory in his book with the title *Negative Capability: Studies in the new literature and the religious situation...* Jackson Bates, also explored the approach in detail in his 1968 work *Negative Capability: The Intuitive Approach in Keats*. Author Phillip Pullman incorporate the concept in his novel *The Subtle Knife (1997)* (Morley 2010). More ideas of theorists will be explored further in Module Four.

5.3 Conclusion

In order to be fully armed to write, a writer should keep a journal or any form of recording the thoughts as they flash by. Such thoughts or ideas for a creative piece can come in different places, including while walking or travelling, meeting people in many places or even while one is in bed. Others get it while in the loo or doing some enterprises such as pacing up and down or fishing. In whatever circumstances the ideas and thoughts come in, they should be captured and recorded or noted down. This is to preserve them so that they do not easily disappear into oblivion. In addition, writing in whatever genre requires a few do's and don'ts that should be observed by the would-be writer. Most importantly, how ideas and thoughts comes in, either consciously or unconsciously are important. In whatever way, the effort of the writer is necessary in capturing them.

5.4 Summary

The significance of keeping a journal, a notebook or a handheld device is stressed in this unit in order to help a would-be or aspiring writer buckle up his/her own armour to write. The capture of such ideas should be as they come in so that they do not disappear. Writing also has some rules and guiding principles to be observed. Some theorists and writers offer such tips, which an aspiring writer should observe in order to produce good fiction, poetry, play or even a non-fiction. The understanding of how such thoughts or ideas come in, either consciously or unconsciously, require or does not require the writers' effort. The advices of writers, poets and novelists, to be observed by an aspiring writer, were also discussed.

5.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Explore and discuss extensively on the following:
   (a) Induced painless headache
   (b) Negative capability
   (c) *causal-event-one thing leading to another*
   (d) Writer as ethnologist

(ii) Why do you think a writer should armed him/herself with a Journal?

(iii) List and discuss two ways in which thoughts or ideas come to the writer.

(iv) Turn on the light in your room at night and fixed your eye on an electric bulb shining. Focus your attention entirely on the bulb until the image begins to move towards you and turns blurry. Allow your mind melt with the blurred image

until you become relaxed. Then shut your eyes and hold that image in your head. Open your eyes and write a story or a poem about the image.

5.6 Reference and Further Reading

Chinua Achebe (1987). *Anthills of the Savannah.* London: Heinemann

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Yerima Ahmed (2003). *Basic Techniques in Playwriting.* Ibadan: Kraft

Unit 6: GETTING STARTED, GETTING GOING AND KEEPING GOING

6.0 INTRODUCTION

What most writers agree with is that 'getting on with it', just placing down words, is the best advice for most writers. How does one transmute the desire to write into the will to write? This unit presents the tips for taking that important first step. David Morley's seven steps in the process of writing are some of the tips espoused in this unit.

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, students will be able to

(i) Identify the seven steps of the writing process
(ii) Explain what a writer should do at stage of preparation, planning and incubation of the ideas for writing
(iii) Explain measures to take in the development of the writing process
(iv) State what should be done to finish a draft of a creative work

6.2 MAIN CONTENTS

6.2.1 Preparing, planning, incubation

Any creative process begins with preparation. In the previous unit, we identified active reading as an important first step to beginning of any writing process. In the process of reading, activities such as imitation of the masters, research on technicality, and reflection on factual and/or statistical facts should be part of the conscious actions of the would-be-writer at this stage. Preparation through reading will improve the talent and artistic dexterity of the writer. It is in the preparation stage that a writer decides what exactly to do taking all these things into cognisance. At this stage, important questions that a would-be writer should answer are 'What am I preparing for', 'How shall I do this?', and 'Which genre am I adopting?' (Morley 2010). To be prepared is not by just answering these questions; it includes a resolve to become part of the work and live within it 'for the next few months', which requires motivation, discipline and the attitude of 'getting on with it' (Morley 2010).

After preparation comes the planning. While in the process of the planning, a writer must stress the significance of perseverance in order to continue writing in whatever genre he/she chooses. The general plan should be acts of premeditation, which is creating a mental restructuring of the whole project according to the chosen genre. For instance, if poetry is chosen, the would-be poet should outline the poetic sequence while a creative non-fiction writer usually begins with subject, not structure. A fiction writers, however, should usually plan to go ahead with their work with little planning because a work of fiction is an exploration, 'a journey without maps, or one in which the map of events is a secret held by its characters' (Morley 2010). What is required is just premeditation of a mental picture of the work not exact planning of what comes where and when. For instance, while planning for the character in fiction 'the novelist's perception of his characters takes place *in the course of the actual writing'* (Allen, 1948, p109). Characters arrive without planning for their arrival, unannounced, on the pages of a novel, and turn of plots happens. The author only deals with these surprises as the writing goes on. The prolific writer from northern Nigeria, Zaynab Alkali was once asked why she allowed her lead character Li, in *The Stillborn* (1984) returned to her husband despite the manner the husband abused their marriage. Her answer sums up Allen Bowen's remarks above that she also

perceives and knows the character as the story develops. However, there are novelists who 'premeditated' and at the same time plan the actions on every page minutely. Some ascribe flow diagrams and maps of action as if they were 'storyboarding a movie, with little chance or serendipity' (Morley 2010).

After preparation and planning the next step is incubation. This is when the idea is allowed to mature through gestation. It is a stage in which the life of the writing is 'carried on without the knowledge even of the writer' (Wolff, 2005, p156). This incubation nurtures the idea through dreams, daydreams, unconsciousness and free writing or 'writing badly'. It's the period the writer toys and regurgitate with the idea listening to it growing in all situations. As the would-be writer mulls and rolls the idea in his mind at all times, it gradually takes shape. During the process 'it feels like a form of depressive stagnation' but it's a period of 'disciplined idleness for the incoming wave of the subconscious to wash over the pages' (Morley, 2010) as the writer writes.

6.2.2 Beginning, flowing, writers' block

The advice by the author of the classic short story "The Necklace", Guy Maupassant, is just 'get black on white' for the beginning; start somewhere as the idea comes in (see Module 4 unit 4). The advice by David Morley is just to begin with a free writing and 'write any sort of rubbish for a fiction that covers the outline of plot, character sketches, description or a hackneyed sestina' (2010, p128) until a pattern emerges.

Getting 'black on white' to start a piece of writing is the most difficult of all the writing process. With the project prepared, planned and allowed to gestate, the writer is now good to go but is always held back by procrastination or uncertainty. There is no clear cut approach to beginning a creative piece. Most notable fiction writers begin the plot *in medias res*, that is at the middle, especially at the climax in a Freytag's pyramid plotting. Notable writers of thrillers admitted that they first begin the story at the climax, a point called 'situational conflict' (see Unit 2.2.5 in module 3) then goes back to recount what led to it through anachronism or flashback, or the story begins with denouement for the falling action and resolution before going to the beginning and coming to the present again.

A writer gets to a stage where 'the bag is empty', to use Sidi's words to Lakunle as he blows bombastic terminologies in Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel.* When a writer finally, 'consults the advanced dictionary' to get the bag replenish, as Lakunle replies Sidi, and finally gets 'black on white', as Guy Maupassant would say, the next process is to let it keep flowing by writing quickly and uninhibitedly. A writer should keep the discipline of daily writing, when he has the 'light on', although this would not be without difficulties. In the process, as John Stenbeck would say, 'Never correct or rewrite until the whole thing is down' (in Morley 2010, p129). Keep the momentum and be absorbed in the work through a focus on goals and writing at a stretch and keep pushing forward even when the writing pushes three steps forward and two steps backward. And because the whole work would be rewritten at a final stage, dash everything down and cover the pages. 'Remember that creative works invariably write themselves, and the invented characters have their own lives' (Morley, 2010, p129). As Seamus Heaney puts it,

> the writing flows on if the writer is writing by diving straight into deeper ends. If structure is not premeditated, it will be discovered as

> the writing progresses. Normally, the beginning and progress of a writing piece occurs some way into its writing; 'all the rest was a kind of drumming of your fingers on the desk, a process that overlap with incubation. (Morley, 2010)

There is a stage in writing when a writer lacks 'inspiration' or what is known as 'writers' block' occurs. This is a metaphor which David Morley said 'calls for deliberated inaction or a kind of panicky inertia' (Morley 2010). As discussed in the previous units, ideas and thoughts come to a writer in two forms: consciously and unconsciously. Ideas that come unconsciously are often called trance, which is often mistaken with inspiration. But being unable to finish a work may not necessarily be due to lack of inspiration because 'the process of drawing up the chair to the writing desk is inspiration', a time in which writers avoid writing to draw the will to continue. Mostly, the first two or so lines are written with the 'block' of beginning. As David Morley says, this process takes the writer out of 'the block': 'Getting started, keeping going, getting started again – in art and in life, it seems to me this is the essential rhythm not only of achievement but of survival, the ground of convinced action, the basis of self-esteem and the guarantee of credibility in your lives, credibility to yourselves as well as others' (Morley 2010).

6.2.3 Reservoir of silence, breakthrough, finishing

As the writing continuous, the pool from which the inspiration is drawn, either consciously or unconsciously, may, inevitable, go down. In order to maintain the tempo, the writer should slow down to get replenished through the 'reservoir of silence' (Morley, 2010). This is when a writer leaves the writing and go for any of the sources of getting ideas (see Unit 2), such as taking a walk. Movement through the environment can serve as a means of inspiration for the writer. During such 'silence' the writer gets refreshed with new ideas and then comes back to resume the 'fluency; in the writing. As illustrated in Unit 2, fishing is one way of getting ideas through the 'golden silence'. Ted Hughes adopts the technique of fishing to get ideas, which should be a good technique of authors drawing from the reservoir of silence. As David Morley succinctly puts it, 'Silence is itself a type of eloquence, for thinking about writing *is* writing. Idleness itself is also conducive, but less easy to get away with. You will find as you do so that the reservoir fills quickly, and words and phrases rise through it in shoals' (2010, p131).

After the preparation, planning, incubation, beginning, the flow and block of ideas and the golden silence, the next target is completing the work. This is also a very hard huddle for the writer, who sometimes develop the feeling of leaving the whole thing. Getting the title for the work mostly stuck writers towards the end of their work. Even if the title is premeditated and conceived before the work, as the work takes shape and the plot and characters draw away the writer to a different direction, the need to make the title work as hard as all the words in their piece become an issue. The title is the door for the reader to open into the work; and if it is not properly captured it changes the readers perception and interest. As Graham, Newell, Leach and Singleton observed, a little window to the door through which readers should peep at the interior and take the fifth space of the submerged iceberg should be created through the title. But even after arriving at a befitting title, writers still feel the work is not finished (Graham, *etal,* 2005). As Ernest Hemmingway puts it, there is no 'finishing' for a creative work, for most creative writers nothing is finished; it is abandoned. A novel is finished many times. 'A poetry collection

is sorted and resorted, ordered and reordered, until it finds a provisional shape' (Morley 2010). Many writers revise their work after publication.

6.3 Conclusion

The seven steps provided by David Morley as discussed alongside others are the essentials of the writing process. All the steps discussed pose challenges to the writer. The beginning, just as the ending is very difficult. To be able to pull out of procrastination and begin to write is difficult. The first stage requires good preparation, planning, and the germination of the idea to be fully ready to start writing. After the writing process has been started, the next challenge is 'writer's block' and sustaining the tempo and fluency to continue writing. After getting over this hurdle by pressing on to keep on going, the acceptance that everything is done and the work is finished is also another challenge. A writer should try to get started, get going, and stop when he comes to the end, which of course is another endless going on and keep going on through revisions.

6.4 Summary

The unit discussed the three basic stages of the writing process; the beginning, middle and end. At the beginning stage, the would-be writer has to make preparation, planning and get the idea gestate or germinate through different techniques. The middle stage is the stage of writing, where the flow of the idea and the fluency of the writing are affected by distraction and lack of inspiration. The last stage focuses on finishing the work. The major hurdle here is a challenge of running out of ideas and getting a befitting title that goes along with the work. A good writer must ensure to keep going and stop even when he feels he should not at the end.

6.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) List and discuss three stages of the writing process with their steps.

(ii) In what way or ways can a writer allow his ideas re-germinate and get back fluency and flow of ideas as the writing goes on?

(iii) How can a befitting title affects the ending of a creative piece? Explain with examples

(iv) Write a flash piece of play, poetry or a short story while playing a favourite song or music. Put off the music and try writing another piece. Compare the two and access the depth of creativity in each

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Module Two: Essentials of Major Creative Genres

INTRODUCTION

The module is an exposition on the three major literary and creative genres: Prose/fiction, drama and poetry. The meaning, composition and the paraphernalia of the genres are presented. The aim is to guide the students on the essential features of each of the genre they may choose to write in.

CONTENT

Unit 1: ESSENTIALS OF PROSE/FICTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In creative writing, prose fiction is the making of novels, novellas, short stories, flash fiction, pulp fiction, children's fiction and anti-narrative. These are known as categories of fiction. They are differentiated in structure and the demands made by each form. This unit presents the different categories and forms of prose fiction and their essential features. This unit also introduces the basic features and class of both prose fiction and nonfiction or faction.

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, students will be able to

(i) Describe the difference between prose fiction and prose nonfiction or faction
(ii) List and explain different forms of prose fiction as creative writing genre
(iii) Identify the distinction between the various types in terms of length and coverage
(iv) Mention some proponents of these types of genre and their works

1.2 MAIN CONTENT

1.2.1 Fiction and faction:

Writing fiction is drawing on worldly experience, fired through a research to create character, story and scenes believable as well as using own imagination. So, to write fiction, intuition and research from experiences are necessary. It is 'a fiction; so should not be hung on reality but needs verisimilitude.

On the other hand, faction, also known as creative nonfiction, is a prose that deals with realities – experiences, events, facts – yet the drive of the writing is the author's involvement in the story. It is a combination of *fact* and *fiction*, hence the coinage 'faction'. Writers of nonfiction use every literary device in the book to forward their idea well. Creative nonfiction or faction takes reality as the basis for the work. Readers are drawn in by the personal engagement of the author as well as the author's literary style and passion for the telling. A creative nonfiction shares many of the perceptual and philosophical possibilities of poetry and fiction, but it reaches out even further to readers. It teaches, to some extent, and has a purpose beyond entertainment or art for art's sake. Nonfiction are often known as *belle's lettres*, and include journals, memoirs, travelogue, biographies and autobiographies and essays.

1.2.2: Categories of Fiction

1.2.2.1 Short Story

This is a type of fiction that has the length of anywhere between 7,500 and 20,000 words and can be read in one sitting but writing it may take several sittings. A short story is built around place of order, resonance and closure. Its language, imagery and form are highly condensed and it enacts an intense transient high excitements. As Edgar Allan Poe stated, in short stories concision is everything. The classical structure of a short story is having a significant event involving the character that precipitates the story, followed by rising action until a climax, a fall in action and denouement. In a short story, there is just a single or two main characters who are usually created for the action that takes place over a short period. Good short stories have an abrupt or open ending.

Most contemporary or modern novelists begin their writing by experimenting with short story writing. It has become almost something like a rite of passage, as it is the place to break their first tooth in honing language, testing their narrative abilities and characterisation. It is these tested abilities that receive acclaims which they release or adopt in their first novels. Nigerian and commonwealth author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a typical example of such writers. Most prolific female writers from northern Nigeria, such as Zaynab Alkali and Razinat T. Mohammed, have also experimented with short stories. Chinua Achebe has also experimented with this category of fiction, especially with his *Girls at War and Other Stories.* In addition, most short story writers imitate or copy the style of previous and successful writers. Some of these master story tellers are studied in Module Four of this course book.

A narrative technique largely identified with a short story is *anti-narrative.* Richard Ford states that this is a technique that disrupts and subverts the forward momentum of a story, and even the sense of time and place. Some short stories appear to be assembled cunningly from several apparent flash fictions, which are cut up and collapsed into larger narratives. This produces 'jump-cuts in time, and rapid switches of scene like reviewing the world from a fairground Walter' such as Robert Coover's *The Babysitter* (in Ford, 1992, p350).

1.2.2.2 Flash Fiction

This category of fiction is otherwise known as short-short. It is a subgenre of the short story characterised by limited word length of anything between 250 and 1,000 words. They can be written and redrafted in one sitting. As Don Paterson writes, 'the shorter the form, the greater our expectation of its significance – and the greater its capacity for disapproving us' (2004, p189). The entire action of the story may take place within the space of a page. The shortest versions are called *Nanofiction,* and are popular on internet publishing sites. Most story competitions call for such short-short stories. Its equivalent in the poetic genre is the haiku poem. Despite their brevity, flash fictions contain characters who can be protagonists and antagonists, have conflict and rising action as well as resolution and denouement. The plots in these stories have beginning, middle and end parts. They are very popular with new writers.

1.2.2.3 Novella

This is a short novel, commonly 50 to 100 pages long. It is as concentrated as the short story but has a wider compass as the novel. Some critics have imposed a word count on where the novella stops and a novel begins. About 40,000 words is invariably the target for a new writer. In a novella, there is greater character and theme development than is obtained in a short story but there is no complications and twists of a novel. A novella shares similarity with a short story in terms of opening with a significant event and then moving back in time to provide background information. A plot of a novellas can also have twist, such as reversal of fortune or a new event in the story, as the plot develops.

Like the short story beginners chose the novella form to find their voice before writing a full-length novel. Some writers may combine three or four short stories to create a novellas. Masters of the art are source of imitation by aspiring writers. This is further discussed in Module Four of this course book.

1.2.2.4 Novel

This is an extended prose narrative with a great deal of round characters, varied scenes and a more open-handed coverage of time. In a novel, there is a longer form of dramatic structure that is marked by a voice. When choosing this category, a new writer should be more conscious with

its structure. It has psychological depth, subtle characterisation and great attentiveness to style. A novel means a writer has to show great sense of seriousness, which is what most readers and critics focus on.

There are different genres of the novel, from sci-fi, detective, horror, thrillers and romance. There are also different types of novels depending on form, which include epistolary or bildungsroman etc. Some novelists write two or three short 'trial novels' before they attempt their first novel.

1.2.2.5 Children's literature

Children literature refers mainly to stories, poetry, rhymes, folk tales, drama exclusively created for children and young people as target audience. They are mostly didactic and teach moral lessons through accounting past or imaginary events. Because they are written and produced for the information or entertainment of children and young adults, they have some special characteristic which include age appropriate contents and themes, engaging storytelling, illustration that are colourful and impressive, lessons from the story that are valuable, diverse representation, and simple language and reading level.

In the UK and other parts of English world, there is a big surge of interest amongst publishers and readers, especially for cross readership works that are read by kids and grownups. At the time of writing of Harry Potter, 70 percent of the readership is adult (Smith 1991). Notable children literature under the English literature are those produced by Phillip Pullman, J.K Rowling, with the *Harry Potter* series, JRR Tolkien with *Lord of Rings* and Mark Haddon (Morley, 2010). In Nigeria, most notable novelists have experimented with children literature, such as Chinua Achebe with his *Chike and the River* and the pioneering works of Amos Tutuola.

1.3 Conclusion

A prose narrative can be fiction or nonfiction. While fiction draws on the writers experience, research and imagination, a prose nonfiction focuses on realities that hinge on experiences, events, facts, statistics as well as the author's involvement in the story. Nonfiction also uses the embellishment of the fiction that creates the aesthetic to qualify it under fiction. There are different categories of fiction as well as that of non-fiction. Categories of fiction include the short story, flash fiction or short-short, novella, novel and children's literature. Nonfiction, also known as *belles-letters* include journals, memoirs, travelogue, biographies and autobiographies and essays.

1.4 Summary

This unit discussed the two different forms of prose: fiction and nonfiction. The categories and elements of these two forms of prose were discussed. Emphasis was placed on the difference between these forms and their categories in terms of structure, length, plot development and characterisation as well their sources of ideas and thoughts. The unit further discussed the scale upon which these categories are placed by readers and critics, as well as by new writers. Novel is identified as being on the highest rung of the ladder for the new writers, who first experiment with flash fictions, short stories or novella before graduating to the novel writing. Children literature has also been identified as moving into cross readership for both children and adult, especially with the new trend of best seller works of J, K Rowling and JRR Tolkien**.**

1.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Enumerate and discuss the features of five categories of fiction

(ii) What are the significance difference between fiction and *belle-letters?*

(iii) Can a new or aspiring writer advisably begin the writing a work of fiction with a novel?

(iv) Think about those things that you most afraid of. Write about one in a short fiction and share it with a colleague for feedback.

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Unit 2: ESSENTIALS OF DRAMA/PLAY AND THEATRE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The essential features of drama as a genre of creative writing is discussed in this unit. The history and evolution of drama and theatre as well as their categories are espoused. Their types and essential features are also discussed. Play-text as a subset and its essential features are equally discussed in the unit.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, students will be able to

(i) Discuss the history and evolution of drama and theatre
(ii) List and explain the types and features of drama
(iii) Enumerate and explain the essential features of theatre
(iv) Distinguish a play-text from drama and theatre and explain its features

2.2 MAIN CONTENT

2.2.1 Drama

Drama is the oldest form of human expression through art. It remains the modern form of literary expression, especially through films and plays. Playwrights and scriptwriters have assumed the position of the classical and Elizabethan dramatists in English literary tradition. The ancient dramatic teachings of Aristotle are what shaped the modern form of playwriting. In the poetics, Aristotle provides an account of creative practices, especially on drama, which are accepted and practised today. He is concerned with the moral aim of drama and the effects of human conduct. The Renaissance dramatist, Ben Johnson, sees this purpose in his *Timber or Belief,* 'how we ought to judge rightly of others, and what we ought to imitate specially in ourselves' (Morley 2010). Aristotle uses the theatre as a means to an end; the players are the people, and the playhouse the world in which they live and die; he is anxious to show that the effect of tragedy upon spectators is good for them. It teaches civic and human conduct. He wants to move people to strong emotion through rhetorical and dramatic strategies (Graham *etal,* 2005).

Drama was a branch of rhetoric, whose pedagogical purposes were to sharpen the skills of the future preacher and statesman by reading imitation and compositional practice. During the Renaissance, rhetoric was taught to students. The English Renaissance rhetorical exercise in dramatic composition of great dramatist such as Shakespeare are today reflected through playwriting for the stage, the television, the radio and the film. Writing plays is one of the most collaborated of the written forms. Playwrights collaborate through sourcing ideas/inspirations from other writers or researching the community for their themes and stage which they write. They create a 'performing version' of their work through actions and language (Morley 2010).

2.2.1.1 Types of drama

Two basic types of drama, based on the plot and ending, are tragedy and comedy**.**

Tragedy as a dramatic form came about through the Epic during the classical period. It is the oldest form recognised by Aristotle's definition of tragedy, which become central to the study of drama. He defines tragedy as an 'imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of play; in form of action, not narrative; through pity and fear affecting the proper purgation of these emotions'. The tragic flaw of the tragic hero, his hamartia, and the anagnorisis all come about through Aristotle's view on the tragedy as a dramatic form. During the Restoration in English Literature, there developed a form which combined epic with tragedy known as heroic drama. The hero was mostly a warrior, and the theme often involves the fate of a nation. A typical subject was the conflict between love and patriotic duty as in Shakespeares' *Anthony and Cleopatra.* Shakespeare also wrote other forms of tragedy such as Tragedy of fate as in *Rome and Juliet* and Tragedy of Character as in *Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth* and *King Lear.* In this forms of tragedy, the tragic hero experiences suffering and death because fate decrees so, or due to the hamartia, or based on tragic flaws of the hero whose downfall lies within himself or in outward conflict with opposing force. Tragedy as a dramatic form declined in the 18th C and early 19th C but a revival started in the 19th C with the Norwegian Henrik Ibsen. And today we have important tragic dramatists in English, American and African literature. African dramatists such as Wole Soyinka and Femi Osofisan have introduced the tragedy of fate and the epic or heroic tragedy in their plays (Duruaku, 1997; Graham *etal,* 2005).

Comedy: is representation, in dramatic form, of an action that begins and ends happily, but it also come to mean a presentation that arouses laughter. Aristotle's treatment of comedy was lost in his *Poetics* but it was Shakespeare who raised it to a high level and wrote comedy of many kinds. In comedy drama, the materials are selected and managed primarily in order to amuse and interest the audience. The characters and their discomfitures engage the audiences' delighted attention rather than their profound concern; the audience feel confident that no great disaster will occur, and usually, the actions turn happily for the protagonist. Within the broad spectrum of dramatic comedy, the following are frequently distinguished: Romantic comedy, satire comedy, comedy of manners, farce, and high and low comedy.

2.2.1.2 Essential elements of Drama

Aristotle's six elements of drama are characters, diction, thought, plot, music/melody and spectacle.

Plot: this is the sequence of events, situation, or conflict that must be resolved, and causes tension among characters. Plot causal effects should be credible to get the plot moving. Plot must be unified with a beginning, middle and end, following the conventional Freytag's five phases or pyramid that has the exposition, rising action (complication) climax (of conflict), falling action (denouement) and resolution (status quo). Complex plots must have peripeteia (recognition) and anagnorisis (reversal of fortune). The action in the plot arising from the hero are complex, with anagnorisis and peripeteia, with suffering and arousing fear and pity in the audience (catharsis). The action may be probable, believable or inevitable.

One way in which playwrights achieve universality is structuring the plot according to certain archetypal actions. The archetypes provide the dramatist/playwright with a ready means of connecting the past with the present and thus commenting on the human condition, at the same time it provides natural structure for the plot.

Character: in drama are secondary to plot. Characters are representatives of qualities. The chief character is the hero who should possess a moral quality and should be realistic and true to his type, to himself (consistency of character) and to the laws of necessity and probability, and should be realistic. A tragic hero has the following qualities: not too good (perfect), not too evil (who cares) realistic (true to type. character) self-consistent, fall from happiness (prosperity, glory) to misery, and have tragic error or tragic mistake (not necessarily a moral issue).

Thought: this is the theme. Many things prompt a dramatist to write the story. It is the characters who comment on the theme or ask questions around it.

Diction: is the language through which the story is presented and the plot developed. The language can be verbal or non-verbal. There is a poetic and prosaic diction in drama that have to work together.

Melody/music: this is the sound in drama. Back in the Greek plays, there is a chorus that would comment on events and – at certain moments – dance and sing. In the medieval plays, there are a lot of melody in the drama of liturgy. Melody also refers to the natural flow of events.

Spectacle: this is what/how a play looks like. The fancy costume and the design of set help the audience become more interested.

2.2.2 Theatre

Theatre refers to the staging of a written play or any performance. It comes from the Greek word 'theatron' meaning 'seeing place'. Distinction is often made between drama and theatre; drama is often categorised in the same class as play-text or written form while theatre is the performance of the written or conceived form. It is one of the most popular ancient form of entertainment in which actors perform live for an audience on a stage or in a space designated for the performance. It is traced to myth and ritual found in dances and mimed performance by masked persons during fertility rites and other ceremonies that marked important events in the primitive ages, which become formalised in dramatic festivals. In ancient Egypt, the annual play at Abydos from 2500BC – 550BC dealt with the death and resurrection of the god Osiris. In the English medieval period at about 1200AD, theatre developed in short plays performed in Latin by priests in churches, dramatising episodes from the Bible, which gradually moved out to market place. The Renaissance (Neo-classical) period ushered in the emergence of permanent structures with theatre groups such as Globe theatre where Shakespeare performed. From 19th C, theatre practices saw a great change in Europe. From 1850s through the 1880s, experiments known as naturalism and realism brought a change in the style and practice with playwrights like Emile Zola of France, Henry Ibsen or Norway and Bernard Show of England. Theatre becomes international in the 20th C. numerous experimental movements of varying duration, which included symbolism, expressionism, theatre of the absurd, epic, theatre, melodrama, improvisational theatre, surrealism, futurism, physical theatre, street theatre flourished (Graham, *etal,* 2005; Duruaku, 1997; Yerima, 2003)

2.2.2.1 Essential Elements of Theatre

Actors, audience, the space and performance are the essentials of a drama.

Actors: Actors in theatre are the characters that undertake the imitation of human experience. They can be jugglers, mimes, minstrels, puppeteers, acrobats, clowns, singers, dancers, and amateur or professional performers. The actor is the creative artist most identified by audiences with his or her experience of the theatre. Actors portray their needs and wants through believable personal behaviour that mirrors their psychological and emotional lives within the world of the play. Attitudes towards actors have varied greatly depending on the culture. For instance women were not allowed to act during the Renaissance and Elizabethan period in English drama.

Audience: the audience are the people watching the presentation by the actors. They affect the performance by providing immediate feedback such as laughter, tears, applause or silence. They constitute the auditorium that continuously interact with the stage. An audience for theatre differs from the reader of drama or play-text, or a viewer of a painting through their active participation.

Space This is otherwise called 'the theatre' where the performance takes place. Throughout history, actors have used variety of locations for theatre, including amphi-theatres, churches, market places, shrines, street corners and formal buildings (theatre or cinema). The space of a theatre is not necessarily a building but any space for the actors to perform (Barry, 2003)

Performance: Peter Brook, a paramount theatre director in Britain says that 'for theatre to take place, an actor walks across an empty space while someone else is watching. Performance is the continuous interaction between the audience and the actors on the stage. Performance assembles all, as a group at a given time and place, the actors and all the surrounding elements of light, sound, costumes and scenery, to share in the performance (Graham etal, 2005).

2.2.3 Play-text

Play-text is the written form of play, folio or script meant to be read. It is a written form and as a dramatic act it has the following basic elements: script, process, product and audience (Field, 2003). These can be expanded as characters and persona, stage direction, dialogue, themes, setting, plot, and diction.

Stage direction is important in a play text. Unlike theatre in which the audience see the stage and performers, in a play-text it has to be explained in detail by the playwright. The properties, or props, have to be described clearly for the reader/audience. The setting is also significant. Stage and props have to reflect the setting in time and location. A television set in a play that is set before its invention will be incongruous (Graham et al 2005; Yerima, 2003).

2.3 Conclusion

Drama is as old as the oral poetry and performance in the ancient time. It received special attention, just like poetry, from the classical thinkers. Aristotle provided a treatise to the dramatic form, just as Plato also discussed poetry and the poetics. As a form, religious rituals and songs/poetry are combined with drama in the ancient Greece through epic narratives and festivals. Likewise, the *polis* saw to the introduction of staged plays. There were the works of Sophocles (*Oedipus Rex),* Euripides (*Medea*) and Aeschylus (*Seven Tragedies*) which have inspired modern dramatists and playwrights**.** In the English literature, the medieval plays of morality and chivalry were introduced. The Elizabethan period saw the emergence of great dramatists such as William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe experimenting with tragedy

and comedy. In the 19th C and 20th C there was a revival of drama by the works of the Norwegian dramatist, Henrik Ibsen and his contemporaries. Just as there are different types and elements of drama, the same is with theatre. A play-text, which is a written play that is meant to be staged, also became prominent in the 20th C. Africa can boast of playwrights, in the likes of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka, J.P Clark, Femi Osofisan, Ahmed Yerima, Efua Sutherland, Tess Onwume, and Ama Ata Aidoo, among others**.**

2.4 Summary

The unit provided historical development and evolution of drama as a literary genre. The performance of drama in the ancient or classical Greek and its expansion to the English Literature and the rest of the world was discussed. The unit also provided an exposition on the different types and forms of drama. Theatre was also discussed, along with its types and elements. The unit further discussed the play-text and its distinctive feature and elements.

2.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Trace the evolution and development of drama and theatre.

(ii) Identify and discuss the difference between drama, theatre and play text.

(v) List and discuss the elements and types of drama and theatre

(vi) Write a one page scene in which the setting is a *Suya* Joint. Ahmed has no money and walks in. He sits down and spots a lady he fancies on the other side sitting alone. Write what happens (action), what the characters say to each other (dialogue) and create a conflict (plot) *indirectly*.

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Unit 3: ESSENTIALS OF POETRY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, poetry as a creative writing genre is discussed. Its types, forms and essential features are discussed. The unit discussed the poetics in poetry, its forms and techniques of composing it.

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

At the end of this unit, the students will be able to:

(i) Explain the poetics of poetry.
(ii) Describe features and characteristics of a poem
(iii) Identify the different forms of poetry
(iv) Identify the basic techniques of writing poetry

3.2 MAIN CONTENTS

3.2.1 Poetry and Poetics

It's no longer contestable that poetry has a 'cultish' followership. Very few would-be writers and students of literature 'like' poetry compared to a play or fiction. Poetry is not popular either among readers. Experiment by bringing a novel or a work of fiction, a play-text and a collection of poems and ask a group of student-readers to choose one. They will invariably go for the fiction or the play. But most would-be writers must have written a poem in their journey up, even once. They must have dabbled a few lines in a moment of muse.

Poetry is functional. We say and recite poetry every day. When we recite the national anthem, it is poetry we recite. When we express a love to the opposite sex, or we appreciate the beauty of nature or the personality of one another, write a valentine notes, birthday's messages, sing nursery rhymes or songs, it is poetry we employ to say them. Perhaps the apprehension and apathy shown to poetry is because it is mostly introduced to persons in a formal setting, where a great deal of explanation and scansion is done to appreciate it. By the time such learners 'got the point, the point is lost' (Morley 2010).

Poetry is not always personal and expresses personal feelings and emotions. Some poets write to preserve moments of significance, often small and apparently petty insights or perceptions. Observation and memory are significant in poetry. William Wordsworth defines it as a spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions. In his poem, *I wandered Lonely as a Cloud,* he captures this moment in the last stanza when he says,

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Poets write to capture and preserve fleeting moments of significant feelings or emotions, often small and apparently trifling instants or perceptions. Poems create little worlds of perceptual and temporal clarity. As Robert Frost puts it, a poem is 'a momentary stay against confusion'. Plato thought ill of poetry, urging emotional restraint as 'poetry waters what we ought to let wither' (Barry, 2003).

Poets place value on language above every other literary consideration; 'language crackles and transmutes' (Motley 2010). In writing poems, you hear, see and feel every word, space and punctuation mark intimately. Poetry goes deeper into areas in our minds and psyche that a simple prose cannot (Anon).

3.2.2 Forms of Poetry

The major forms of poetry are Lyrical and Narrative poetry. While the lyrical are short melodious and rhythmic verses, narratives are long and they tell stories. Example of lyrics are ode, sonnet, dirge, elegy, etc, and narratives include epic and ballad. The English Romantic poets experimented with all these forms. In modern and postmodern poetry, however, free verse is more commonly adopted. 'Free' means the poem is free from the rigours of rhyme, rhythm, feet and metre requirements. African and Nigerian poetry is largely free verse.

Apart from Epics and Ballads in the classical and 19th C poetry, poems are not always long. The shortest type is the Japanese Haiku. It is a poem written in syllabic and has a great influence on the Imagist poets of the 20th century. Ezra Pound is one of the leading poets of this movement. The imagist poetry does not have to mean anything significant, nor justify its existence in social and political terms. As Archibald MacLeish wrote in his poem 'Arts Poetica', 'a poem should not mean/But be' (Morley 2010). As the Imagists advise, any difficulty we feel we have with poetry are usually difficulties of expectation and, sometimes, mystification. There is no need to make more difficulty for the sake of it as one can write poems in free verse, and in many variants in-between. Free verse poems can be just confessional that are 'cold-eyed', which tell stories, and 'lock on to one object and express it to its very atoms'. An imagist poets find the poems to write as those they are capable of writing well; and to become a poet rather than a 'writer of poems', and not to write a poem nobody else could compose (Morley 2010).

3.2.3 Techniques of writing Poetry

The technique of writing poetry is built around diction, rhythm, sound and imagery Poetry is about aestheticism or beauty; in terms of the words or the cadence. There are basically two broad aestheticism achieved in writing poetry: verbal beauty and musical beauty. The aesthetics of poetry is wound around them. 'Poems are verbal contraptions: perpetual-motion machines made of words and 'each word has little music of its own' (Koch, 1999).

Verbal beauty is achieved through the use of diction and imagery. It's through the perfect choice and use of diction and imagery that the verbal beauty of poetry is achieved. Diction includes the choice of words. Imagery is the use of literary tropes and figures of speech. Rhythm and sound create the musical beauty of poetry. The musical beauty of a poem comes about through its sound and rhythm. Sound include consonance, assonance, alliteration and onomatopoeia. Rhythm in poetry is achieved through metre, feet and rhyme.

3.3 Conclusion

Poetry is the least popular among the three main creative writing genres. It has few writers, or even readers in today's world of readers. But it has been the most populous and 'masculine' form of creative expression in the past. With the rise of the novel in the 19th C, the popularity of poetry waned and it was reduced to a fetish position. It is only the poets that read other poets; other readers prefer 'watching' drama/plays or reading fiction. However, poetry has been with us every day; it is functional. We say, hear and do poetry, albeit without conscious effort. Poems are usually short. Out of the two major forms of poetry, lyric and narratives, what was prevalent is the lyric, which has as well changed form to be in free verse. The technique of composing any form of poetry is through its verbal and musical beauty. Even African free verse must have elements of diction, imagery and sound.

3.4 Summary

This unit presented a discourse on poetry and poetics. The nature of poetry as well as its technique and forms are discussed. The adoption of free verse from the emergence of the Imagist poets to the African poetry is also discussed. The unit also discussed the aesthetic nature of poetry through verbal and musical beauty.

3.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Identify and discuss three nature of poetry.

(ii) Discuss the verbal and musical beauty in poetry.

(iii) Identify and discuss the distinguishing feature(s) between the Imagist and African poetry

(iv) Read Wole Soyinka's "Telephone Conversation" and perform it with a colleague.

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Module3: Elements and Technique of the Major Literary Genres

INTRODUCTION

The module focuses on the techniques of creative process in all the three genres of fiction, drama and poetry. The basic elements that make each genre distinct as well as advices to use them effectively are presented.

CONTENT

Unit 1: ELEMENTS AND TECHNIQUES OF FICTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

What distinguishes the three major genres of creative writing are their techniques and characteristics. This units explains the unique form and elements of a prose/fiction.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, students will be able to

(i) Identify and explain the different forms and structure of fiction.
(ii) Identify and explain the style of writing fiction
(iii) Describe the basic elements of fiction
(iv) Describe the structure of a novel or short story

1.2 MAIN CONTENTS

1.2.1 Form and Structure of a story

The terms 'form' and 'structure' are often interchangeably used because it is almost impossible to separate them in the act of writing. But while form in fiction is the formulation of the way the work of fiction is written, the structure of a work of fiction is the frame of the work that covers the design of all the actual action; how incidents are placed and when; where to position and resolve conflicts; whether to write the piece as a third-person narrative or first person narratives or from the point of view of each of its several characters, among others. Jane Austen first drafted *Pride and Prejudice* as an epistolary novel. Also, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie first drafted *Half of a Yellow Sun* in a first person point of view before changing it to a multiple focalisation; and Mohsin Hamid also drafted the *Reluctant Fundamentalist* as a first person before changing it to a second person, a style not frequently used. Quite often, the form of a fiction will take shape after several drafts.

1.2.2 Style and Language

Style is more of an unconscious process that worked into a creative piece after the first draft. Language use is very significant form of style in fiction writing. Any word or phrase that distracts the attention of the reader from the text is redundant and so would be removed. Usually, concrete language has more resonance for the general reader than abstract language, and editing usually takes care of this. This is a process of polishing a style. As George Orwell writes in "Politics and the English language", 'when you think of concrete object, you think of wordlessness, and then, if you want to describe the thing you have been visualising, you probably hunt about until you find the exact words that seem to fit it' (1946/2000, p138).

A good fiction writer always clears away verbosity and false language in his work to get a good style. George Orwell offered six rules for nonfiction, the purpose of which was to keep the language alive for the reader, and which are useful for style and for editing fiction writing for a good style:

(i) Never use a metaphor, simile or figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
(ii) Never use a long word where short one will do.
(iii) If it is possible to cut word out, always cut it out.

(iv) Never use passive where you can use the active.
(v) Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
(vi) Break any of these rules sooner than use anything outright barbarous.

As a writer, you can create your own rules and principles of writing as your own style.

1.2.3 Character, narrator and focaliser

Character is story. As John Gardner puts it, character is the heart and mind of the story – it is what makes it live. 'What count is … the fortunes of the characters, how their principles of generosity or stubborn honesty or stinginess or cowardice help them or hurt them in specific situations. What counts is the character's story' (Gardner, 1985, p43). Further, Elizabeth Bowen explained that 'the novelist's perception of his characters takes place *in the course of the actual writing of the novel.* To an extent the novelist is in the same position as the reader as regards the creation of the character. But the perceptions of the novelist should be always just in advance. 'The ideal way of presenting character is to invite perception' (Allen,, 1948, p109). There is force and precision behind the creation of fictional or dramatic characters that are admired or cherished (Morley 2010).

An author can create characters by fictionalising himself, drawing from the aspect of his personality. Characters can also be assembled from various elements of observed people. But there should be believability in their characterisation. They should be presented in such a way that one can identify the trait from other people around. They should elicit surprise as to make the reader ask, 'what type of person is this?' Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie succeeds in creating such a character in Father Eugene, who loves through persecution in *Purple Hibiscus.* More importantly, characters can simply be invented. Thing to note about invented characters in fiction are their type, gender, age, name, relation to other characters, appearance, mannerisms, speech patterns, personality, background, private and professional life, strength and weakness; passions, professions, obsessions; where they live, who they live with, family they come from, and disposition of being happy or otherwise (Morley 2010).

An author may not necessarily be the narrator. The narrative always follows the main character, who is the person the story is about. The *viewpoint character* or *focaliser* may or may not be the main character but the story is seen and heard through their lens. A novel may have more than one such viewpoint character. The narration is done through the focalisation and the author may rely on them to move the story along and tell the truth of it. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie experimented with focalisation in *Half of a Yellow Sun,* in which the narrative voice is dispersed among Ugwu, Olanna and Richard as the three primary focalisers, thereby ensuring that the narrative structure on different characters decentres Adichie's authorial voice. Chinua Achebe also did the same in *Anthills of the Savannah.* The three main characters in the novel take alternate points-of-view or focalisation to narrate the story. The eighteen chapters are narrated by these three main characters and a narrator. Some sections of the novel are in the first-person, from different points of view, others in the third-person, while some of the chapters are focalised or titled with the names of the characters as 'witnesses'. Chapter One is titled 'First Witness – Christopher Oriko' and Chapter Four is titled 'Second Witness – Ikem Osodi, while Chapter Ten is titled 'Impetuous Child' using Ikem as the focaliser. Beatrice also narrates two chapters

and leads others through her focalisation. An author can also invent what is called an 'unreliable narrator', who is usually a character monitored and soon distrusted.

1.2.4 Setting, environment and 'showtime'

Setting is a stage for character. More than that, it is four-dimensional and can be used as a character – that is, it must convince; it can never be generic or backdrop. David Morley says, 'Even if the setting is fantastical, it isn't interesting to write about it if it's not real, if there isn't a dimension of reality there, particularly a psychological reality' (Morley 2010). Setting as a place is more than a location; it is mood, history, other people's lives. For instance if landscape is familiar of understandable to readers, there is tendency that they become attracted to the story as their trust will be gained. A writer may then choose to make landscape a place of strangeness but believable, or a landscape that adds colour to the story.

Environment is significant in setting a story. A carefully observed and vivid natural landscape carries its own precise connotation, edges for wilderness and the unpredictable. In some fiction, you might write the setting as an antagonist. Time and weather affect setting, and will affect character, but they are not the 'machines of the gods', the *deux ex machine* (Morley 2010)

Showtime is writing immediate action to let the reader experience the action. It is not *telling* but *showing* the story. The story should be so exhibited that it will *tell* itself. Showing could not only be on characters it could also be on the action of the story. The difference between telling and showing, according to Monica Wood, is that while showing involves 'using vivid details and engaging the senses…painting a bright descriptive picture for the reader', telling is 'uninspired narrative that only serves to explain what is going on in the story' (1995, p.55)**.** Telling is not immediate; rather than being shown it is telling the reader about the story. Showing is more dramatic, and a dramatised fiction is more engaging. A story in a novel that is entirely told would not be interesting to readers as the one that shows would do. An example of 'showing' is in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus,* when she 'shows' the reader how the children in Aunty Ifeoma are chatty comparing their eagerness to 'catch' the conversation in the same manner a chicken Kambili remembers picking grains. The description between the chatty nature of the children and the chickens eagerly picking grains produce an 'immediate' fiction. Two registers could be identified in the passage: what the characters do and what they say. This immediacy contrasts the behaviour of Kambili and that of the children in terms of finding voice, which is shown rather than told. This scene has a setting, which has different characters with different characterisation.

Showtime is achieved with characters, recoding what the characters do and say, and recording where it takes place with a dialogue to demonstrate conflict *indirectly*. There is a difference between experiencing vicariously and being told about it (Smith, 1991).

Authorial address mostly destroys immediacy; it pauses the pace of the plot development as there would be a collapse of the sense. The only exception when an author uses authorial address is when he/she wants to vary the rhythm of his writing, when he needs to include a good deal of repetitive action or when he wants to include plot developments that are trivial enough not to need showing. As Nancy Smith would say, 'Show the reader how a character feels by the way he behaves, and often less directly by what he says. Dramatizing is showing. If you show them something, readers will believe you and if you dramatise your material it will have impact on them' (Smith, 1991)

1.2.5 Plot, archetype, pacing and development of story

Plot is *not* the story; it is a series of events you have devised, and these events may not even occur linearly. 'It is an Ariadne's thread you follow through a labyrinth of scenes' (Morley 2010, p165). David Morley further says,

> A writer finds a page as an open space. Writing a story creates a four-dimensional landscape in that space. Space and time become one – a continuum. Within that continuum, you must choose one strand of narrative that you intuitively feel will lead you through the landscape. The insistent strand of narrative is your plot, and it will lead you through the maze of narrative possibilities that open, move around, and close behind you in a sequence of discrete but connected scenes. (Morley 2010, p165)

What this means is that because a novel is lengthy in all forms, it requires something to develop the story and create scenes that are true to life, or at least, carry verisimilitude however fantastic the setting or the story. The traditional plot, according to Gardner, is that in which 'a central character wants something, goes after it despite opposition (perhaps including his own doubts), and so arrives at a win, lose or draw' (1985, p54).

As with all writing, pace is critical. Passages of emotional intensity are alternated with comic relief to relax the reader. The use of language, especially sentences also creates the needed pace. Consider creating a scene with two friends talking and reminiscing about their past lives. The pace should be gentle and slow. It should also include interludes of interior reflection, and gestural and descriptive moments. The pace may be expressed in terms of long sentences with plenty of qualification. But where the scene is to elicit fear, as in thrillers, the pacing should be different, and shorter, simple sentences should be employed. Consider this extract and capture the fright from the sentences:

> *It was dark. The old Lady was alone. The place is very quiet. Nothing can be heard. The old Lady could almost feel it. A sense of evil. She listened. Silence. Oppressive silence. Suddenly a knock. The window! She culled up. Another knock! Culled up even tighter. A shiver. "Help!"*

In addition to the short sentences in this extract of a scene of high tension, there are sentence fragments, short phrases, plenty of mono syllables, and exclamations. When a pace is slowed, it shouldn't last more than half a page,

Conflict is very important in the development of a plot. Fiction, especially novels, depends on *situational conflict* – a moment of chance or change – as a triggering event (Smith 1991). It hooks the reader right from the start. Select two types of situational conflict: your characters might find themselves in a crisis which they did not choose, and which requires their action, or they may find themselves in a self-made predicament. For most people, it is only during a crisis that we discover how little we know of ourselves, and of others, and basic qualities of character are always the first to emerge. A good place to begin a story is at what Robert McKee calls 'the inciting incident' (2003, p181), and which Robert Graham said could be – the death of the character's mother, daughter or a high chase or tension (Graham *etal* 2005). Coming up with an inciting incident is a good way to start planning your plot. What illuminate a novel are its scenes, the stages on which small dramas unfold.

Myths and legends also offer better means of developing plots. Retelling them can be done by combining great stories and create a new one based on their archetypal frames. The plot of Ola Rotimi's *The Gods are not to blame,* as a novel, is an adaptation of Odysseus Rex that is an epic narrative.

1.2.6 Dialogue, voice, tag and attribution

Dialogue in fiction is different from ordinary everyday conversation. This is because what is acceptable in the oral is not in the written literary form. Literary dialogue does not always have all 'hesitations, repetitions, fractured grammar, fragments, *uhhms* and *errs* and all other unofficial alphabet of sounds and additives that feature in daily conversations' (Smith, 1991). The dialogue in fiction is crafted, cleaned up, shaped and articulate. The only exceptions are when characters are under great emotional stress that such peculiarities of ordinary conversations are used in literary dialogue.

The maxim that dialogue should be realistic, doesn't mean to suggest "naturalistic" assuming that the nearer to normal daily speech in fictional dialogue the better and more convincing. Cliché and platitude of natural speech should be avoided. Like all utterances, dialogue is expressive of both the individual's personality and the social context in which they operate (Smith 1991). While 'Pidgin is for those identified with the 'painful slowness of half-literacy' Chinua Achebe adopts for his lower characters dialogue in *Anthills of the savannah,* (Achebe, 1987, p.129), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Zaynab Alkali adopt the use of Igbo Language and Hausa language terms, in *Purple Hibiscus* and *The Stillborn,* respectively, in the dialogue of their characters.

Dialogue can begin anywhere in a story but should not be more than half a page. Some would-be writers are hesitant about writing dialogue. The advice is always read good dialogue from other good writers/masters and set yourself a limited number of characters in a recognisable location and write down their talk.

Dialogue is voice. Each character or person has an individual 'voice' or particular vocabulary and verbal mannerisms that identify and distinguish them from other people. This, however changes based on situation. Bakhtin illustrates this with the anecdotes on the peasant, who 'prayed to God in one language (Church Slavic), sang songs in another, spoke to his family in a third, and when he began to dictate petitions to the local authorities through a local scribe, he tried speaking yet a fourth language (the official-literate language, "paper" language) (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 295). The voices change according to circumstances.

A writer should always have 'ear' for characters voices as well as the nuances for such voices. Dialogue belongs to characters not the writers. While some writers create dialogue for their characters as alter ego, expressing their views or opinions, political, religious or philosophical, others create characters who speak differently from the author (Smith, 1991). Dialogue is multipurpose; if ridicule is aimed jargons should be used to elicit that. Chinua Achebe does that with the Pidgin English while Adichie employs Igbo language jargons to achieve that in their fiction. The key to good dialogue and successful scenes is *that more than one thing should be going on at the same time.* Dialogue is contextual; it is more than the words that the characters say, it exists in the context of the whole story and the whole scene. Characters are communicating not just through speech, but through gesture and pose and mannerism, and dialogue is only one element in rich communicative context (Smith 1991).

A good dialogue gives immediacy to fiction; it shows things as they happen. Listening to dialogue puts the reader on more intimate terms with characters, draw the reader to share dilemmas and predicament, headache and triumph. In dialogue, *tags* or *attribution* are significant in advancing the dialogue and pace of the story. These are achieved through practice. Nancy Smith provides the following advices:

- *He says, she says* can be a problem. Some hesitant writers try and avoid repetition of the common verb 'to say' by using alternatives such as reply, respond, answer, articulate and many more exotic alternatives such as aver/concur for agree, or ejaculate/expostulate for explain. The art is to keep it simple; don't be frightened of repetition; make your voice so distinct you don't need constant attribution.
- The general rule is: reduce attribution to a minimum. You could use more descriptive/image based attributions such as *murmured, whispered, wept, sighed, smiled, hissed*. You could also create a dramatic pause by placing the attribution at a middle of a sentence or speech. e.g *No, he hissed, I will not have it*. Attribution can also come at the beginning of a line of speech. e.g *He stood up, and looking in her eyes said, very slowly, very quietly, 'I'm going to kill him*.
- A poor dialogue resorts to the endless adverb and the adverbial phrase to gloss speech. e.g '*Get out of my sight', he shouted angrily* (Smith, 1991)

1.2.7 Theme and subject matter

As John Gardner writes, 'Nothing … could be farther from the truth than the notion that theme is all' (1995, p40). While the theme of a story may be money, the subject matter may be 'money is the root for all evil'. A writer may choose to write about love, as the theme, but the subject matter must follow a story line of 'love is blind', or 'love is bliss' and this is exposed on a love tangle between rich and poor etc. Even in contemporary romance genre, which we know will have a 'happy ending', there will still be an underlying theme: *True love can overcome mistrust of the opposite sex*, for instance, or *revenge is bitter, not sweet* (Gardner, 1995).

Themes are the philosophy of the fiction, which are the summation of how characters behave' in the face of conflict. It is about a writer's obsession. As Isherwood has said. Every writer has certain subjects that they write again and again and … most people's books are just variations on certain themes. Very few good writers begin with a theme and then writes to its order. They focus on details rather than big ideas. Every story must have a theme, an implicit message of some kind, otherwise it is not worth the telling. Nancy Hale, in *The realities of fiction,* says 'the illusion if life is best rendered when it is supported, just as the real lives are, by a framework of purpose which, in the novel, is called theme' (in Smith, 1991).

1.2.8 Narrative strategies, point of view, voice and tone

As David Lodge opines, one of the most common signs of a lazy or inexperienced writer of fiction is inconsistency in handling point of view (1992, p28). Through point of view, a writer demonstrates his stand in relation to the created characters. He outlines what he wants the readers to know about the characters and who tells their stories. Points of view include first, second and third person, which is I, you, he/she. Second person is less common, although offers the challenge of speaking with yourself as an author, such as 'a schizophrenic other' or 'the elderly or youthful version of yourself'. Mohsin Hamid experimented with this point of view in

the *Reluctant Fundamentalist.* The technique allows him to address the reader, although this *you* may represent any character which the speaker engages in the story.

'You' is more distant to the reader than 'I', yet 'you' always feels like it could be conversation. A first person narrative has a purpose-built narrator, 'I', and 'I' can be the writer, a person spinning a story, a main character (the protagonist) or another character. The trick is closeness; a reader will read the word 'I' and come to the story through the *eye* of the character. They become the character, and the story may even begin to feel autobiographical, so wrapped up is the reader in the relationship. Thus, first-person narrators simulate reality and utter subjectivity and authentically tell somebody's story or the story of the main character because they are observing the person. They are the 'witness of events or the re-teller of them' (Smith, 1991)

The third person point of view can be as objective as a camera, recording only what is seen or heard, and even engaging with the thoughts or feelings of characters; or it can be as engaged as if the characters were dear to you. Camera-like objectivity can be too distancing for the reader so, generally, you should choose to talk about your characters as if you know them. This 'godlike authorial viewpoint, or Third-person Omniscient, popular among Victorian novelists, can seem strange to a present writers as the reader finds it hard to identify with a creator loitering on the edges of the world of their book' (Smith 1991)

Narrative Voice has little to do with 'finding your voice', although you might choose your own natural voice for your first stories. It is the voice of the character who tells the story, and that will include their dialect, idioms, manner of speaking, and their choice of language. Although neglected, *tone* is as important to capture correctly. Tone is the story's attitude to the world of the story and its events and characters – the attitude and style of the narrator, too. It will greatly affect the way a reader perceives the story. When in a workshop a fellow writer says that a story 'does not quite work', usually it is best to examine the tone and narrative voice, before working on the more obvious fault lines within point of view (Smith 1991).

1.3 Conclusion

Writing fiction requires some techniques. Notable are the form and Structure of a fiction, the style and the language adopted, the creation of character, the narrator and focaliser. Setting, environment and show time are also important technique of fiction. More important are the plot, theme, dialogue voice, tag and narrative strategies. The maxim 'show don't tell' is achieve by how well they are used in a fictional narration.

1.4 Summary

This unit discussed the technique of writing fiction. Skills in developing elements such as form and structure of a story, style and language, character, narrator and focaliser, setting, environment and 'showtime', plot, archetype, pacing and development of story, theme and subject matter dialogue, voice, tag and attribution as well as narrative strategies and point of view were discussed and explained. A would-be writer should take cognisance of these technique as he/she prepares his work.

1.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(1) Consider these examples provided by Robert Graham and decide which one tells and which one shows, and which among the two creates immediacy in showtime:

(i) Jimmy was in love with Jane

(ii) Every morning Jimmy waited at his bedroom window for the moment when Jane would emerge from the house opposite. And each day as she walked out to the bus-stop, he would stare as she walked by and sigh when she disappeared from view.

(2) List and discuss ten essential elements of fiction that a writer can observe as technique of writing fiction

(3) Identify and discuss the difference between narrator and focaliser.

(4) Write a short sketch of 600 words on any imaginary character. Do not include the feelings of the character but 'show' it through conveying his/her emotions through personal details on their appearance.

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Unit 2: ELEMENTS AND TECHNIQUES OF DRAMA

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Drama and theatre are realised through performance. Play is equally performed but is mainly written to be read. There are, therefore, necessary technique required for writing and performing these dramatic forms of creative genres. Drama or play is differentiated from the other genres through its form and structure. A play is written in Acts and scenes, rather than in chapters and paragraphs, as in prose fiction, or in stanza and lines as in poetry. The classical drama form that survived to the present form of play has five Acts, and quite a number of scenes. Each Act with its scene focus on different unit of the presentation. Drama or play is rendered through the actions of the characters, so dialogue and movement are very important. Because they are meant to be an enactment, the language of the playwright on describing the action of the characters and the arrangement of the stage is mainly in the present tense. This unit focuses on presenting the essential elements of these forms as part of the technique of writing or presenting plays and drama or theatre.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, students will be able to

(i) Determine the nature of drama, theatre and play-text
(ii) Identify and explain the elements of drama
(iii) Identify and discuss the technique of presenting drama and theatre
(iv) List and explain the features of a play-text

2.2 MAIN CONTENTS

2.2.1 Elements of Drama and Play

2.2.1.1 Theme, subject matter and action

Theme is the main idea of a presentation. Themes can be major and minor. The major theme is always obvious because the main action revolves around it; the minor or sub-theme is appended to it. It is through the theme that a playwright or dramatist gives his perspective on an issue. Such issues could be corruption, revenge, greed, etc. The theme is presented as a story and a particular theme can be dramatised by many playwrights. A story in a play can be meaningless without a theme and a theme can be literal or symbolic. Action is the most important aspect of drama/play. What makes up the plot is the action that occurred in the past and the one that takes place. The past action is realised through anachrony. While theme is the idea of a story, a subject matter is the topic of discussion in the story. In many plays, the title explains the subject matter. Usually the subject is subsumed and is highlighted through events, incidents and the action in the play. Action in drama is presented through characters who are involved in performance of the play (Yerima 2003)

2.2.1.2 Dialogue, Character and Language (tenses)

Dialogue is significant in presenting the plot; through dialogue characters reveal themselves and the themes. Dialogue is used for exposition and characterisation, so it must involve action, so as not to be static. Dialogue also advances the action and reveals apposite information about the plot development and about the characters. Dialogue is realised through the diction of the

characters. Unless in special circumstances, ordinary pauses and hiatus in ordinary conversations or speech should be avoided or minimised. But in the theatre of the absurd, there is *non-sequotor* in the manner characters exchange their dialogue. Dialogue can also include soliloquy and monologue. Soliloquys are becoming out fashioned but monologues are created in modern plays. The monologue, like the dialogue, helps to reveal character and propel the plot. Characters could be human beings, animals or abstract qualities. They live on stage as they act out story. They translate and interpret the idea conceived by the playwright or dramatist. There should be verisimilitude in the creation of characters; their consistency and motivation should be considered. Characters are also created with foils (Duruaku, 1997).

Language in drama is both spoken and non-spoken. Spoken language include the speech of the characters and the language chosen to present the play/drama. The manner in which the characters speak is important element of dramatisation. Simple present is generally the language a playwright uses to present stage direction and narrate/explain the action of the characters. In addition, other subgenres (heteroglossia) can be included, such as songs. Non-verbal language is realised through the actions of the characters. This includes gestures, facial expressions and other forms of action that help to convey the desired message. Unlike a novelist, a playwright has no time and space to describe events, settings, atmosphere and characters vividly. Therefore, non-verbal language is adopted to reveal things that cannot be said, such as thoughts, hopes and aspirations of the characters, through their performance. Other important information are given through the actions of the characters and the audience and through stage direction.

Characters are classified by their use of language. In English Renaissance drama, dramatists such as William Shakespeare insert the genre of poetry in the language of the characters. High poetry is used for the highly rated characters or major characters while simple prose is used for the speech of the minor characters. In Nigerian plays, there are mixture of Pidgin English, Standard English and the use of local/native language of the characters in the plays.

2.2.1.3 Setting, Scenery, time-space

Setting is the space, atmosphere and what can be sensed in the action. A drama setting is realised by what is heard, such as sounds and silences. A setting is also what is seen and felt by weather and the environment. Shakespearean drama, such as *The Tempest* and part of *Othello,* occur at sea. Creation of such setting on stage is a direction that a playwright must observe. A story set in a desert, a riverine area or in a fantasy land must depict the atmosphere. Settings influence and affect the mood. Costume, as part of props in play and drama, tells a lot about the setting in terms of culture, weather, social status and pageantry.

Scenery is based mainly on the action that takes place on stage. It includes the spectacle and stage props. A playwright must take cognisance of props in each scene and dramatic environment for the play. It is what creates verisimilitude and enhance meaning, clarify emotions, moods and depicts the environment for the dramatic action. This also includes cognisance of the period and the locality/environment (Graham, etal 2005).

The scenario in a play, drama or theatre is created to suit both the setting and the time-space. Using a television or aeroplane in the 19th century is incongruous, while a mobile phone in Nigeria in the 1980s also presents a vague scenario. Time-space is very important in setting a scene for a play based on vision and space (Yerima 2003).

2.2.2 Elements of theatre

For a theatre to take place, actor walks across an empty space while someone is watching.
Theatre includes performance of the actors or the creative work in production. There is always a continuous interaction between the audience and the stage in theatre performance. Actors, audience, the space and performance are the essentials of a theatre.

Actors: Theatre has different kinds of actors: jugglers, mimes, minstrels, puppeteers, acrobats, clowns, singers, dancers, amateur or professional performers. Their costume, language and action in performance are what make them stand out.

Audience: the audience affect the performance in theatre through participating in the performance with their feedback such as laughter, tears, applause or silence. Audience are separated from the actors; they sit at the podium while the actors are on stage.

Space This is the stage and the podium. In the past, the space for performance was open space, then market places, shrines, street corners, amphi-theatres and today the emergence of cinema has and theatre houses are the space.

Performance: this is the action and the continuous interaction between the audience and the actors on the stage. During performance, the stage comes to life and all props and stage directions are observed (Graham, etal 2005).

2.3 Conclusion

Both drama/play and theatre are realised through performance. While theatre is purely about the performance, plays and, to some extent, drama are put down in written form as scripts or folio. Through the ages, drama and theatre have witnessed changes and metamorphosis. Films and television performance are all part of the dramatic or theatrical tradition. Performing or writing plays or drama require some considerations. These are the elements that stand out, which are the characters, plot, language and dialogue, setting and scenery, as well as the action of the characters to translate the theme. Theatre, being all about performance, must have actors, audience, the space and performance as its basic essential elements.

2.4 Summary

The unit described drama, play and theatre as close ally in the production of dramatic acts. Both are realised through performance but plays are mostly written to be read or performed while drama and theatre are mainly realised through their performance. The elements of drama and play to consider while creating the genre are the characters, the plot, the theme, setting, the language and dialogue as well as the characters' action. In composing theatrical performance, things to consider are the characters or actors, their costume and the setting, the space for the action and the act of the performance.

2.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Provide a convincing argument on the distinction between a play, drama and theatre.
(ii) Identify and discuss five essential requirements for a drama and a play?
(iii) Mention and explain five essential requirements for theatre performance.
(iv) Sketch a one act play and read it aloud to a colleague. Take the feedback.

2.6 Reference and Further Reading

Duruaku, A.B.C (1997). *A Handbook on Drama and Theatre.* Owerri: Colon Concepts

Graham, Robert, Helen Newell, Heather Leach and John Singleton (eds) (2005). *The Road to Somewhere: A Creative Writing Companion.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Yerima, Ahmed (2003). *Basic Techniques in Playwriting.* Ibadan: Kraft

UNIT 3: ELEMENTS AND TECHNIQUES OF POETRY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit focuses on elements of poetry, which are necessary requirements to use in composing or appreciating a piece of poem. The structure of a poem is different from that of a novel or a play. A poem is rendered in lines, stanzas, cantos and even books. This depends on the length of the poem and its poetic form. Common lyrical poems are short; but narratives are usually long. This unit focuses on the basic elements that build a poem.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, students will be able to

(i) Identify and explain the basic forms and structure of a poem.
(ii) Mention and explain ten basic elements of composing a poem.
(iii) Discuss the technique of writing poem.
(iv) Identify and discuss what creates aesthetic quality of a poem.

3.2 MAIN CONTENTS

3.2.1 Versification and poetic form

Versification has to do with format of a poem. Line is the basic component because it is the distinguishing feature of a poem. A stanza is identified based on the number of lines in the poem, and the rhythm, based on the metre, is realised by the number of feet in a line, and rhyme is realised at the end of each line. Where the line breaks, the point of enjambment becomes crucial. This means that where a line breaks, the point of enjambment is played off against sentence (syntax), and punctuation (Morley 2010).

The basic forms of poetry are narrative and lyrics. The choice a poet makes with the form and structure of poems is what invariably shapes what is written. Knowledge of a form of a poetry is important for a would-be poet before delving into writing it. This is because a knowledge of the thematic or subject matter concern of the different forms is important. While epics recount heroic deeds and ballads tell a story, a sonnet is generally associated with love as its subject today. Writing a good sonnet recounting contemporary war would surprise and subvert the form (Graham et al 2005).

Modern poetry is written in free verse. Free verse does not signify free poetry. The ‘free’ in ‘free verse’ refers to the freedom from fixed patterns of metre and rhyme; but writers of free verse use poetic devices like alliteration, figures of speech and other imagery (Morley 2010).

3.2.2 Diction, symbolism and imagery

A poem, according to William Carlos Williams, is ‘a small (or large) machine made of words’ (Williams 1976). A poem largely focuses on using words to describe ‘the thing’, whether subjective or objective. As Ezra pound espoused, ‘use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation’. He further cautions using superfluous word or adjective, which does not reveal something and state that in poetry, adjectives seldom act as ‘intensifiers’ as linguist call them; they actually dull the image, ‘by mixing abstraction with concrete’, which is not the best way of expressing a more general creative writing maxim “show, don’t tell’ (in Jones, 1972).

Symbolism is using an object or a word to represent an abstract idea. An action, person, place, word or object can all have a symbolic meaning. African poetry is repellent with symbols, especially the apartheid and negritude poetry. Negritude poets, such as Léopold Seder Senghor, make use of the flora and fauna for African or black symbolism and imagery. Apartheid poets, such as Dennis Brutus, also adopt varying colour images for symbolic representation of racism and segregation in their poetry. The Romantic poets, especially W.B Yeats and P.B Shelley use lots of symbolism on nature in their poetry, A good example is in Yeats *The second coming* and Shelley's *Ozymandias.*

The word 'image' is quite often used loosely in discussions of poetry. Robert Sheppard and Scott Thurston suggest simile as the best choice, and use the tenor of only things you can see. Imagery is descriptive language that appeals to the five senses, namely the details of taste, touch, sight, smell, and sound (**Sheppard** and Thurston in Graham *et al* 2005).

1.1.1 Sound, Persona, voice

Sound in poetry is achieved through the use of consonance, assonance, alliteration and onomatopoeia. In poetry, onomatopoeic words are mimetic. They are closer to the object they describe and are intimate with the thing in their lives to such a degree that words and even bits of them can sound just like the object they stand for. As David Morley observes, the word 'grind' has something of real life about it; the same thing with 'whisper' and 'slap' which mimic their own meanings. All good poet explore the fact that words are mimetic (Morley 2010)

A persona, from the Latin word for *mask,* is a character taken by a poet to speak in first-person poem. Often times, the speaker in the poem is the poet. So, a persona poem is a poem in which the poet speaks through an assumed voice. Also known as romantic monologue, this poetic form shares many characteristics with a theatrical monologue: an audience is implied; there is no dialogue; and the poet takes on the voice of a character, a fictional identity, or a persona (Graham, etal 2005). This is found in the works of Ezra pound and T.S Elliot. In Elliot's "The Love Song of Alfred Prufrock", readers find the voice of the poet cloaked in a mask; a technique that Elliot mastered in his career (Morley 2010). Wole Soyinka's "Abiku" and J. P Clarks "Abiku" all use persona to present different side of a view on the same subject.

Another word for persona is voice. It is the voice, characteristics, and attitude adopted by an author to present the poem. Other times, the speaker can take on the voice of a persona – the voice of someone else including animals and inanimate objects. Voice sings within a writer's poems. The poem possesses that voice, or is possessed by it. A poet's voice is a metaphor for spoken voice, but is not the voice of the poet. In order for a would-be poet to find his/her voice there is a need to find a style. When a style is adopted, the writing voice becomes distinctive; it must be differentiated from the voice of others before now, otherwise the reader 'will stop listening' (Morley 2010).

3.2.3 Tone, mood and atmosphere

Tone is significant in poetry. It is the attitude of the poets towards their subject matter, which can reflect their personal opinion or channel their feelings on a particular idea. Tone is achieved through word choice, punctuation and sentence structure. If tone in a spoken voice can express

emotions, so can tone in writing. Tone may be hopeful, bleak, romantic, cynical, sarcastic, solemn, fatalistic, nostalgic, dramatic, ardent, sullen, light-hearted or cheerful.
The mood of a poem is the overall feeling it conveys to the reader. Mood is conveyed through figurative language and literary devices, eliciting whatever mood the poets evokes. Words that describe tone can as well describe mood, longing, nostalgia, terror, passion, frenzy. While mood is mostly felt by the reader, the atmosphere relates to the mood. Panic is the mood of "African Thunderstorm" by David Rubadiri.

3.2.4 Metre and rhyme, rhythm

The rhythm of poetry is what creates its cadence and music. This is what engages the reader. Rhyme may also produce the same effect and keep the lines of the poems in the readers' memory. Poems are made up lines that do not usually reach the far side of the page. A metre is measured in terms of a foot in a line, and notables are iambus, trochee, dactyl and spondee. It is the combination of these aesthetic elements that make a poem stand out from prose or a play. While this is true in classical and 19th century poetry in English and parts of Europe, in the late 20th century and the 21st century, poetry does not necessarily have to rhyme and be in metrical form. Robert Sheppard and Scott Thurston opine that although a metrical theory is a fascinating subject, it can operate as a block to new writers. They observe that a dedication to rhyme and metre often produces weak poem as the limited available words distort the meaning of the poem in search of words to thyme (in Graham et al, 2005).
Ezra Pound cautions poets that 'As regard rhythm, compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome' (Pound, 1972). A metronome is a device for measuring equally spaced beats, very useful for learning to play a musical instrument but too regular to use in real performance. As Ezra Pound explains, 'Don't chop your stuff into separate 'iambs' - Iambs being the metrical feet also known as the "ambic". It is common with the Romantic poets who combine it with five feet metre in a line to produce iambic pentameter. As an Imagist poet of the modern period, Pound advocates what is sometimes called 'free verse'. 19th and 20th century poets judiciously experiment with this form. There is a misconception that free verse has no rhythm. All languages, especially English language, have rhythm, but not all languages have regular metre. Some languages, such as Hausa, are rather tonal. As Charles O. Hartman opines, 'Free is properly a synonym for "non-metrical" and it follows that the prosody of free verse is rhythmic organisation by other than numerical modes' (Hartman, 1980). One guideline from Ezra Pound is to remind the poet that 'your rhythmic structure should not destroy the shape of your words, or their natural sound, or their meaning. Breaking the line is always a challenge. Enjambment is the option, it is a process of breaking a line while continuing the sense (Pound 1972)
Rhyme is not necessary according to the imagist and the 20th century poets. 'A rhyme must have in it some slight element of surprise if it is to give pleasure' (Pound 1972). Many of the first poems we learn are nursery rhymes. These are meant for the children. Although audience are chosen carefully, many would-be writers produce rhymes that are far too rude to reprint (Morley 2010)

3.3 Conclusion

The distinguishing feature of a poem is its aestheticism achieved through diction, imagery, sound and rhythm. It is these technique of getting the verbal and musical beauty of a poem that a would-be poet should focus. However, while diction, sound and imagery have moved on through generation to the present one, some of elements of rhythm are significant but not necessary. Diction has to do with the beauty of words, their choices and 'smithing' them to make them concise and apt. Imagery is achieved through literary tropes and symbolism. These techniques are copiously adopted in the Modern Imagist and African poetry. However, rhythm that is achieved through metre, feet and rhyme is not necessary to this latter class of poets. But sound, through the use of assonance, onomatopoeia, consonance and other devices is still found in their poetry.

3.4 Summary

The essential features and technique of composing poetry are discussed in this unit. Specifically the form of poetry as well as its organisation through discussion on versification and poetic form, diction, symbolism and imagery, sound, persona and voice; tone, mood and atmosphere, as well as metre, rhyme and rhythm were presented. The discussion presented hints and advices to the would-be poet aspiring to write in the genre.

3.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Discuss the basic features that distinguish poetry from other creative genres.
(ii) Identify and explain ten basic features to consider in composing a poem.
(iii) Identify and discuss the basic elements that produce the aesthetics in poetry
(iv) Skim through any anthology of poem and write down the opening sentences of 10 poems. Read these lines over and over. Then write another poem from these lines.

3.6 Reference and Further Reading

Carlos, Williams (1976). *Selected Poems*. Harmondswoth: Penguin

Graham, Robert, Helen Newell, Heather Leach and John Singleton (eds) (2005). *The Road to Somewhere: A Creative Writing Companion.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Hartman, G.O (1980). *Free Verse: An Essay on Prosody*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

Morley, David (2010). *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Pound, Ezra (1972) 'Imagisme' in P. Jones *Imagist Poetry.* Harmondsworth: Penguin

Module Four: MASTERCLASSES

INTRODUCTION

This module is for masterclasses. It is geared towards providing tutorial feedback on the structure and composition of creative writing, supported by information on, and discussion of, writing about writing by some of the 'the 'masters' of fiction and poetry, whose ideas have been absorbed into the literary language and are still employed in contemporary creative work. The unit will look closely at ideas of writers as critics as they were originally expressed and discuss their relevance to the practice and study of creative writing. This will cut across, postcolonial and English literature.

All would-be writers should be aware of what they do as writers in the modern world; the more they can move across the theories of writing and criticism the better as they would not allow the 'monkey critic' of their works sit on their shoulders without a knowledge of the mechanics of their criticism

Many of the best and famous African and English writers have also been among the more insightful critics. Among those are Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thing'o, Salman Rushdie, Favon Boland, Virginia Woolf, William Empson, Robert Frost, George Orwell, Ezra Pound, T.S. Elliot Ben Johnson, Matthew Arnold, John Ashbery, Les Murray, Margaret Atwood, Paul Muldon, Sir Philip Sidney, Ben Johnson, John Keats (from his letters), P.B Shelley, S.T. Coleridge, William Wordsworth, and so on. Authorship is viewed from the perception of some of these writers/critics, especially on meaning and their works looked from within. The extracts from such critics/writers on fiction and poetry will be analysed during contact hours or the facilitator can ask students to present seminar papers taking the points espoused by these 'masters' for fiction or poetry discussion and assessment.

Whether in the classes or through individual study, the students should have the following guide in mind when formulating their responses:

(a) What works for you about the piece of the extract?

(b) Specify what does not work for you from the extract.

(c) Make one specific suggestions that will improve what the masters pointed out, if any

CONTENT

Unit 1: Contemporary contexts and creative theories

Unit 6: Tutorial Feedback Presentations

Unit 1: CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTS AND CREATIVE THEORIES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit provides critical arguments on the use of language in postcolonial creative writing. Particularly it focused on the discourse on the use of the English language for narration in the postcolonial novel. The polemic is between accepting or rejecting the use of the colonial language for narration and discourse in the African novel. Students are expected to study the different stands on the use of language and take a stand for discussion in masterclasses/seminars.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, students will be able to

(i) Identify the basic polemic on language use in postcolonial creative work
(ii) Analyse and discuss the points raised by postcolonial critics and writers on the use of language
(iii) Mention and explain the difference of point of views raised by the critics on the use of language in the African novel.
(iv) List and explain strategies of using the English language in the postcolonial novel

1.2 MAIN CONTENTS

1.2.1 Language abrogation and appropriation

One of the central motif for the polemics in postcolonial writing is about the use of the colonial language in postcolonial creative work. As Ismail Talib S. quoting Paulina Alberto (1997), 'Britain's most powerful battle standard in its competition for the domination of new continents against local inhabitants was Standard English' (Talib 2002, p. 8). It is this hegemonising role of British English that is often seen as a means of cultural hegemony and domination by many critics in postcolonial theory (Rao 1938; Lindfors 1975; New 1978; Brathwaite 1984; McLoughlin 1984; Kachru 1986; Ngugi 1986; Ashcroft *et al* 1989; Ashcroft 1995; Juneja 1995 etc). In their *Magnum Opus*, Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin postulate two strategies for resistance in postcolonial theory: Replacing Language as textual strategy and Re-placing the Texts as a means of liberation of post-colonial writing (Ashcroft *et al*, 1989, p38-109). The latter technique comprises addressing colonialism and silence, colonialism and authenticity, radical otherness, marginality, appropriating frame of power, and postcolonial intertextuality by writing a counter text. The former is a strategy to subvert or reject the use of the English language in postcolonial theorisation through either *appropriation* or *abrogation*.

1.2.1.1 Appropriation

In postcolonial theorisation, appropriation is a strategy to subvert, not reject, the so-called Standard English language of the coloniser by the formerly colonised nations. It is a process of subjecting Standard English to the demands and requirements of the place and society where it is used. When asked whether a postcolonial writer from Africa could use English as proficiently as the native speaker, Achebe says, 'I hope not'. He says, the English such writer should use must be able to 'carry the weight of […] African experience […] a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surrounding' (Achebe, 1988). The English language should be appropriated to suit the colonised language's grammar,

syntax and vocabulary, which eventually creates various 'speaking voices' (Ashcroft, 1995, p. 117). In other words, the dominating English language is made to bear the weight of the texture of the new experiences it encountered in the colonies by appropriating it, according to Ashcroft *et al*, with an english with a small 'e' (1989, pp. 118-123). Other postcolonial writers, such as Tunji Braithwaite and Salman Rushdie, also share the belief that the English that should come from the colonies through creative writing process should be different. In his writing, Chinua Achebe attempts to 'igbonise' the English language, while Rushdie suggests an '*in*glish' that has an Indian accent. Braithwaite suggests combining the Caribbean continuum as a process of Nation and Language (Talib 2002)

Code switching is one technique in the postcolonial appropriation of language which occurs when a speech switches between two or more language codes. It occurs when, for instance, the narrator reports in Standard English but mixes the English with other macaronic languages in the speeches of the characters (Ashcroft *et al*, 1989, p. 72). The formulation of Pidgin English in the novel spaces of most Nigerian writers is an example of appropriated language techniques adopted in order to resist hegemony. Creole and Rastafarianism are other examples of macaronic languages used by novelists from the Caribbean. When asked about her mixture of Igbo and English in her novels, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie said she has read novels written in the English language though she was not English and that did not stop her from appreciating the story. So, resisted even glossing her Igbo terms, which is by either giving their equivalents side by side or at the end, but always allows readers to also learn the Igbo terms in context as she did with the English language. Further, Adichie sees the hegemonic status of the English language on the postcolonial writer and reader when she says,

> What is worrisome is not that we have all learned to think in English, but that our education devalues our culture, that we are not taught to write in Igbo and that middle-class parents don't much care that their children do not speak their native languages or have a sense of their history. (2006b *Half of yellow sun*)

It is this hegemonic status of the English language that Ngugi wa Thiong'o strongly opposes and suggests *abrogation* over *appropriation.*

1.2.1.2 Abrogation

According to Ashcroft *et al* (2000), abrogation is the 'rejection by post-colonial writers of a normative concept of 'correct' or 'standard' English […] and of the corresponding concept of 'dialects' or 'marginal variants' (Ashcroft et al, 2000, p.5,). Ngũgí wa Thiong'o goes as far as to totally reject the use of the English language in the narrative discourse of his novels and instead adopted his native language to write his fiction. He called on those wishing to read his work to translate it to their language or learn his language as well. This suggests a radical decolonisation of the English language by suggesting rejecting it and adopting the indigenous languages because of colonialism's:

> destruction or deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature and the conscious elevation of the language of the coloniser. The domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonising nations was

> crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonised. (Ngũgí, 1994, p. 16)

Ngugi's call for abrogation has been criticised by other critics on the basis of the heterogeneous nature of the African continent. It would be difficult to have a single language, even within nations, to write, and which could be understood by all. The colonial language is still considered as a stabiliser and the point at which all languages meet and understand one another.

1.3 Conclusion

The polemic on the use of the English Language still continuous. Most writers in Africa have chosen to appropriate the colonial language rather that abrogate it. In that way the English language remains in communion with the community from where the story comes from, and this has created a distinct English different from the English of the centre.

1.4 Summary

This unit presented discussion on the polemic about the use of the English language as the language of the postcolonial novel. The two basic techniques adopted by the African novelists to resist the hegemony of the English language are appropriation and abrogation. While the former is subverting the colonial language through different techniques, the latter is about rejecting it. These contentions have been part of critical debates among writers and critics. It is apparent that most writers have accepted the subversion rather than the rejection of the colonial language for their novelistic discourse.

1.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Identify and discuss the basic polemic on language use in postcolonial theorisation.
(ii) List and explain the different points raised by the critics on language use in the postcolonial novel.
(iii) Identify and explain the distinction between appropriation and abrogation.
(iv) Identify and analyses the use of appropriation in Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah.*

1.6 Reference and Further Reading

Achebe, Chinua (1988) *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays.* London: Doubleday.

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi (2006). *Half of a Yellow Sun*. London: Fourth Estate.

_____ (2006b) 'The Stories of Africa Q & A with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie 'In the publisher's excerpts at the end of *Half of a Yellow Sun.* Fourth Estate

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (1989*) The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature*. London: Routledge.

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Kachru, Braj B. (1986) *The Alchemy of English: The Spread, Functions and Models of*

Non-Native Englishes. Oxford: Pergamon Institute.
Lindfors, Bernth (1975) “The Blind man and the Elephant” in Jones Eldred D (ed). *African Literature Today No 7* New York: Africana Publishing Company.
Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1994) *Decolonising the mind: the politics of language in African Literature*. New York: James Currey,
Rao, Raja (1938). ‘Foreword’ in *Kanthapura:* Bombay: New Dimension
Talib, S. Ismail (2002) *The Language of Postcolonial Literature: An Introduction.* London: Routledge.

Unit 2: WRITER AND THE TRADITION OF WRITING

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Critics and writers across the English literature have produced treatise on writing and the art of writing. This section focus particularly on extracts from the Masters on tradition, culture, and the writing tradition. These are to be presented for discussion in the Master classes contacts between the students and the tutor. They could also be used as homework and individual study and the responses submitted to the tutor as term paper of seminar.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, students will be able to

(i) List and discuss five fictional or poetic writing tips provided by the masters of the art

(ii) Mention and discuss creative theories on fiction and poetry as espoused by the masters of the art

(iii) Identify and discuss what the masters say about culture and tradition

(iv) Identify and discuss what writers say about writing in their field

2.2 MAIN CONTENT

2.2.1 Tradition and Culture

(i) 'The tradition is a beauty which we preserve and not set a set of fetters to bind us' [Ezra Pound, p91]

(ii) 'Cultures evolve and things change, of course' [Adichie: African stories Q & A]

2.2.2 Writer and Writing

i. The Irish poet Seamus Heaney, writing of T.S Elliot on vocation of writing, believes 'vocation entails the disciplining of a habit of expression until it becomes fundamental to the whole conduct of life' (2002, p38)

ii. Phillips writing about the writings of Ernest Hemingway said on inaction to writing, 'there are no alibis … You have to make it good and a man is a fool if he adds or takes hindrance after hindrance after hindrance to being a writer when that is what he cares about' (in Phillips, 1984, p59).

iii, 'A scrupulous writer, in every sentence that he writes, will ask himself at least four questions, thus: What am I trying to say? What words will express it? What image or idiom will make it clearer? Is this image fresh to have an effect? And he will probably ask himself two more: Could I put it more shortly? Have I said anything that is avoidably ugly?'

[George Orwell, 'Politics and the English Language' Norton Encyclopaedia of Literature 2: p 24682]

v. On rewriting and pruning, as all wring is rewriting, and so all rewriting is another form of writing, Ernest Hemingway says, 'The lost essential gift for a good writer is a built-in, shock-proof lie detector. This is the writer's radar all great writers have had it'

vi. Robert Frost says– 'No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise for the writer, no surprise for the reader. For me the initial delight is in the surprise of remembering something I didn't know I knew' (Barry, 2973)

vii. Virginia Woolf on fiction provides these in *Selected Essays or Collected Essays of Virginia Woolf*:

(a) 'My belief that men and women write novels because they are lured on to create some character which has … imposed itself upon them has the sanction of Mr Arnold Bennett …The foundation of good fiction is character-creating and nothing else … style counts; plot counts; originality of outlook counts. But none of these counts anything like as much as the convincingness of the characters. If the characters are real the novel will have a chance; if are not, oblivion will be its portion….'
[from 'Is the Novel Decaying?' *Woman's Essays, (*p.69)]

(b) The writer seems constrained …. To provide a plot, … comedy, tragedy, love interest, and an air of probability embalming the whole impeccable that if all his figures were to come to life they would find themselves dressed down to the last button of their coats in the fashion of the hour …. Is life like this? Must novels be like this?
Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being 'like this'. Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms' and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there; so that if the writer … could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style … Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. It is not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with the little mixture of the alien and external as possible?'
[From 'Modern Fiction' (*The Crowded Dance of Modern Life*, pp. 6-8)

(c) Do not dictate to your author; try to become him. Be his fellow worker and accomplice. If you hang back, and reserve and criticize at first, you are preventing yourself from getting the fullest possible value that you read. But if you open your mind as widely as possible, then signs and hints of almost imperceptible fineness, from the twist and turn of the first sentences, will bring you into the presence of human being unlike any other. Steep yourself in this, acquaint yourself with this, and soon you will find that your author is giving, or attempting to give you, something far more definite. The thirty-two chapters of a novel – if we consider how to read a novel first – are an attempt to make something as formed and controlled as a building: but words are more impalpable than bricks; reading is a longer and more complicated process than seeing. Perhaps the quickest way to understand the elements of what a novelist is doing is not to read, but to write; to make your own experiment with the dangers and difficulties of words, recall, then, some event that has left a distinct impression on you – how at the corner of the street, perhaps, you passed two people talking. A tree shook; an electric light danced; the tone of talk was

comic, but also tragic; a whole vision, an entire conception, seemed contained in that moment.

But when you attempt to reconstruct it in words, you will find that it breaks into a thousand conflicting impressions. Some must be subdued; others emphasised; in the process you will lose, probably, all grasp upon the emotion itself. Then turn from your blurred and littered pages to the opening pages of some great novelist – Defoe, Jane Austen, Hardy. Now you will be better able to appreciate their mastery'

[From 'How Should One Read a Book?']

viii. Elizabeth Bowen provides the following on the elements of fiction. Students are to discuss with the Tutor/ facilitator the depth of their assertion and exposition on the art of writing.

(a) Plot

- 'Plot is 'a story' in the nursery sense is = lie. The novel lies, in saying that something happened that did not. It must, therefore, contain uncontradictable truth, to warrant the original lie.
- Story involves action. Action towards an end not to be foreseen (by the reader) but also towards an end which, having *been* reached, must be seen to have been from the start inevitable….
- What about the idea that the function of action is to express characters? This is wrong. The characters are there to provide the action….
- Plot must further the novel towards its object. What object? The non-poetic statement of poetic truth….
- The essence of a poetic truth is that no statement of it can be final.

(b) Character

- The character is there (in the novel) for the sake of the action he or she is to contribute to the plot. Yes. But also, he or she exists *outside* the action being contributed to the plot.
- Ruling sympathy out, a novel must contain at least one magnetic character. At least one character capable of keying the reader up, as though he (the reader) were in the presence of someone he is in love with. This is not the rule of salesmanship put a pre essential of *interest.* The character must do to the reader what he has done to the novelist – magnetise towards himself perceptions, sense-impressions, desires …
- *Physicality,* characters are always almost copies, or composite copies. Traits, gestures, etc are searched for in, and assembled from, the novelist's memory. Or a picture, a photography or a cinema screen may be drawn on, Nothing physical can be *invented….*
- Greatness of characters is the measure of the unconscious greatness of the novelist's vision. They are 'true' in so far as he is occupied with poetic truth. Their degrees in realness show the degrees of his concentration.'

(c) Dialogue

- Dialogue requires more art than does any other constituent of the novel. Art in the *celare artem* sense…. Why? Because dialogue must appear real without

actually being soi …. <it> must crystalise situation. It must express character. It must advance plot….

- Speech is what the characters *do to each other* …. Each piece of dialogue *must* be 'something happening'

(d) Angle

- Angle has two senses – (a) visual, (b) moral

a) Where is the camera-eye to be located? (1) In the breast or brow of *one* of the characters?.... (2) In the breast or brow of a succession of characters? This is better. It *must,* if used, involve very carefully, considered division of characters…. (3) In the breast or brow of omniscient story-teller) (the novelist)? This, though appearing naïve, would appear best. The novelist should retain right of entry, at will, into any of the characters….

b) Moral angle. This too means, pre-assumptions – social, political, sexual, national, aesthetic, and so on ….

- Pre-assumptions are bad. They limit the novel to a given circle of readers ….
- Great novelists write without pre-assumption ….
- The conviction must come from certainty of the validity of the truth the novel is to present…..
- The direction of the action of the poetic truth provides – in fact, *is* - the moral angle of the story.

[Elizabeth Bowen: *Pictures and Conversations: Chapters of an Autobiography, with other Collected Writings* (London: Allen Lane, 1975)

ix. Ezra Pound has the following excerpts on the language of Prose:

(a) The language of prose is much less highly charged, that is perhaps the only availing distinction between prose and poetry. Prose permits greater factual presentation, explicitness, but much greater number of language is needed. During the last century or century and a half, prose has, perhaps for the first time … arisen to challenge the poetic pre-eminence. This is to say, *Coeur Simple,* by Flaubert, is probably more important than Theophile Gautier's *Carmen,* etc.

(b) The total charge in certain C19 [19th C] prose works possibly surpasses the total charge found in individual poems of that period; but that merely indicates that the author has been able to get his effect cumulatively, by a greater heaping up of factual data; imagined fact, if you will, but nevertheless expressed in factual manner….

In *Phanopoeia* we find the greatest drive toward utter precision of word; ….

In *melopoeia* we find a contrary current, a force tending often to lull, or to distract the reader from the exact sense of the language. It is poetry on the borders of music and music is perhaps the bridge between consciousness and the unthinking sentient or even insentient universe.

(c) All writing is built up by these three elements, plus 'architectonics' or 'the form of the whole'…'

[Ezra Pound: *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound,* Edited with an Introduction by T.S. Eliot (New Directions, 1968; 1st published, 1918)

x. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie provides the following on writing novel in an Interview on *Half of a Yellow Sun*:

(a) **On narrative points of view**

'I have always been suspicious of the omniscient narrative. It has never appealed to me, always seemed a lazy and a little too easy. In an introduction to the brilliant Italian writer Giovanni Verga's novel, it is said about his treatment of his characters that he "never lets them analyse their impulses but simply lets them be driven by them". I wanted to write characters who are driven by impulses that they may not always be consciously aware of, which I think is true for us human beings. Besides, I didn't want to bore my reader – myself – to death, exploring the characters' every though.

(b) On Inspiration for the story

'I read books. I looked at photo. I talked to people. In the four years that it took to finish [*Half of a Yellow Sun*], I would often ask older people I met, 'where were you in 1976? And then take it from there; it was from stories of that sort that I found out tiny details that are important for fiction… Still, I have a lot of research notes that I did not end up using because I did not want to be stippled by fact, did not want the political events to overwhelm the human story.'

(c) On the Process of Writing

Why write?

I write because I have to. I write because it is the only thing I truly care about doing. I write because it makes me happy when it's going well.

When?

Whenever the story comes. I generally prefer night time because it is quieter

Where?

At my desk in my bedroom. At the dining table. In the bathroom.

[T.S. Elliot wrote fifty lines of the "Waste Land" in a seaside shelter in Margate. JK Rowling wrote the first drafts for *Harry Potter* in an Edinburgh café. Find zones yourself, and write in them, and from them].

How?

With a computer [Not pen]… In silence not with music.

On fear to go on

I don't have a writing fear – that my computer and all my backup will be stolen and pages and pages of completed manuscript would be left existing only in my head.

The writing itself was a bruising experience. I struggled to maintain many fragile balances. I cried often, was frequently crippled with doubt and anxiety, often wondered whether to stop or to scale back. But there were also moments of extravagant joy when I recognised, in a character or moment or scene, that quality of emotional truth

Model?

Chinua Achebe.

Achebe's trademark is compassionate irony – he respects his characters but at the same time is amused by them and expects the reader to be so ….

Favourite novel?

One Hundred Years of Solitude [by Gabriel Garcia Marquez]

Inspiration?

Everything [Environment]

(d) On choice of character for the narrator to 'shadow'

Ugwu [in *Half of Yellow Sun*] was inspired in part by Mellitus, who was my parents' houseboy during the war; in part by Fide, who was our houseboy when I was growing up. And I have always been interested in the less obvious narrators. When my mother spoke about Mellitus, what blessing he was, how much he helped her, how she did not know what she would have done without him, I remember being moved but also thinking that he could not possibly have been the saint my mother painted, that he must have been flawed and human. I think Ugwu does come to act more and react less as we watch him come into his own … Richard was more difficult choice … Biafran 'outsider'… to be human and real – and needy?

(e) On art of narrative/writing

- In addition to the classic 'show don't tell' … fiction needed to have 'emotional truth' … a quality different from honesty and more resilient than fact, a quality that existed not in the kind of fiction that *explains* but in the kind of fiction that *shows.* All the novels I love, the ones I remember, the ones I re-read, have this emphatic human quality.
- [A good fiction] would have the kind of character... brave enough to engage subtly with politics [as it may]. African countries are… how passionately people believed in ideas that would eventually disappoint them, in people that would betray them, in futures that would elude them… about what happens when the shiny things we once believed in begin to rust before our eyes.
- Successful fiction does not need to be validated by 'real life'; I cringe whenever a writer is asked how much of a novel is 'real'.
- If fiction is indeed the soul of history, then I was equally committed to the fiction and history, equally been keen to be true to the spirit of the time as well as to my artistic vision of it. While writing *Half of a Yellow Sun*, I enjoyed playing with minor things: inventing a train station in a town that has none, placing towns closer to each other than they are, changing the chronology of conquered towns. Yet I did not play with the central events of that time. I could not let a character be changed by anything that had not actually happened.

  [From 'The Stories of Africa: a Q & A with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, 2006 (London: Fourth Estate)

xi. Ezra Pound provides the following excerpts on the art of writing poetry:

(a) 'There has been so much scribbling about a new fashion in poetry, that I may perhaps be pardoned this brief recapitulation and retrospect…. Agreed upon the three principles as following:

1. Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective

2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to presentation
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of a metronome'.

(b) A few Don'ts

- An image is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time. I use the term 'complex' rather in the technical sense employed by the newer psychologists, such as Hart, though we might not agree absolutely in our application.
- It is the presentation of such 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art'

(c) Language of Poetry

- Use no superfluous word no adjective which does not reveal something.
- Don't use such an expression as 'dim lands of peace'. It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer's not realising that the natural object is always the *adequate* symbol
- Go in fear of abstractions. Do not retell in mediocre verse what has already been done in good prose. Don't think any intelligent person is going to be deceived when you try to shirk all the difficulties of the unspeakably difficult art of good prose by chopping your composition into line lengths.
- Be as influenced by as many great artists as you can, but have the decency to either acknowledge the debt outright, or try to conceal it.
- Don't allow 'influence' to mean merely that you mop up the particular derivative vocabulary of some one or two poets whom you happen to admire ….
- Use either good ornament or no ornament.

2.3 Conclusion

Great writers, novelists and poets across the literature in English world have talked about their writing and writing in general. They have offered hints on what makes a work of fiction or poetry great. Their words are to be put on a marble for the would-be writer to model after them or to appreciate their work in depth.

2.4 Summary

This unit presented excerpts from the masters of fiction and poetry. This cuts across English and African literature. Their points on all the elements and technique of presenting a good work of fiction or poetry were presented. The aim is for the students to study and discuss the points raised. The points may also provide a stimulus for their own works as aspiring writers or as a means for appreciating or criticising the works of the masters and of others.

2.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Identify two novelists from the quoted masters and analyse their postulation on writing fiction

(ii) Identify any tip on writing poetry and discuss the points raised.

(iii) Taking any exposition by the masters on fiction writing, where can you place your own writing?

(iv) Considering any postulation provided by the great poets, how can you assess your own poetic writing?

(v) Read and provide a structural analysis of Ernest Hemmingway's *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*

2.6 Ref**erence and Further Reading**

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi (2006). *Half of a Yellow Sun*. London: Fourth Estate.

_____ (2006b) 'The Stories of Africa Q & A with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie 'In the publisher's excerpts at the end of *Half of a Yellow Sun.* Fourth Estate

Bowen, Elizabeth (1975) *Pictures and Conversations: Chapters of an Autobiography, with other Collected Writings/* London: Allen Lane

Candace, Schaefer and Rick Diamong (1998) *Creative Writing Guide.* (Addison-Wesley)

Ezra Pound, Ezra (1968) *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound,* Edited with an Introduction by T.S. Eliot (New Directions, 1968; 1st published, 1918)

George, Orwell (1946). 'Politics and the English Language'. *Collected Essays Vol. IV.* London: Secker and Warburg.

Janet Vurroway (2006) *Imaginative Writing.* London: Longman

Paul, Mills (2006) *The Routledge Creative Writing Coursebook.* London: Routledge

Unit 3:PRINCIPLES OF AUTHORSHIP AND CREATIVITY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit focuses on the *place* of the author. The unit presents an understanding of how the notion of authorship has changed over the years. In the 40s and 50s, the relationship between theory of creative writing and criticism has become closer, and reveal interdependence between the theories. The 60s and 70s has ushered in a new creative activity and theory in the English language. Through ages, there is a debate about the 'death' of the author. A knowledge of theories on the art of creative writing include examining the perspective of leading thinkers on its genres. Ideas of four of these great thinkers on the creative writing and authorship are presented for discussion in master classes.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, the students will be able to

(i) Mention and explain different theorists and their theories on authorship.
(ii) Identify and discuss the place of the author in a work of fiction or poetry
(iii) List and discuss different theorists on authorship and creative writing
(iv) Explain their position in relation to the function of an author.

3.2 MAIN CONTENTS

3.2.1 T.S. Eliot: Tradition and the Individual Talent

Thomas Stearns Eliot, generally known as T.S. Eliot (1888-1965), a poet, essayist, playwright, literary critic, publisher and editor, was one of the greatest English Modernist poets of the 20th C He was born in Missouri America but moved to England, thus renouncing his American Citizenship in 1927, and adopting British citizenship. This background check on him is necessary due to the confusion of whether he is an American or English writer and critic. T.S. Elliot was Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948.

In his 1991 essay 'Tradition and the individual talent", he argues and emphasised the impersonality of the author, although he believed in the poet as an important source of the written text. This has shaped generations of poets, critics and theorists and is studied in modern literary criticism. In this essay, T. S Elliot emphasises the significance of history to creative writing, especially to the understanding of poetry. He insists that poetry should be 'impersonal' by being separate and distinct from the poet's personality. The concept of 'tradition' in Eliot's term in this essay is two-fold:

First, it relates to a 'historical sense' of the past and the present. A tradition as he views it, is a past creative work which creates an order. This order is then altered by a new tradition that alters or modifies the past one to be in existence. As he says, 'the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past'. The poet, as Eliot sees it, must be familiar with almost all literary history, immediate past, distant past, his literature and that of other nations. He insists on past canonical works as standards of greatness in creative writing. Special awareness of this past is not enough, according to Eliot. There should be 'self-sacrifice' from the side of the poet in erasing any trace of personality from the poetry and becoming mere medium of expression as true art has nothing to with personal life of the artist but with

comprehensive knowledge and deep study of the past and the present. As he states in the essay, "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality".

Secondly, tradition relates to the idea of archaeology as tradition is viewed in English sense of the word but not in living or dead writers. When a poet is praised, quite often it is on those aspects of his work in which he is distinct from others. The readers or critics then discover him as an individual with peculiarities. The manner he differs from those that come before him become noticeable. Without acknowledging his individuality, the assumption would be that his prowess may be those in which 'the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously.'

Think over the position of Eliot on the poet and relate it to the African author or poet. Can you say his theory is appropriate for the latter?

(Poetry Foundation)

https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69400/tradition-and-the-individual-talent

Tradition and the Individual Talent by T. S. Eliot | Poetry Foundation

3.2.2 Roland Bathes: The Death of an Author

One of the great thinkers on creative text and literary criticism is Ronald Gerard Bathes (1915-1980), a French literary theorist, essayist, philosopher and critic, whose postulations focus on the relationship between, and positions of, authors and readers. One of his best work is his 1967/1968 essay "The Death of the Author". This essay espouses the place of the author and the reader in literary production and appreciation. The traditional criticism of a creative work views the author in the same manner as a parent who conceives and bore a child. This implies that the author is the sole creator of all meanings in the text and that he existed before the novel, the play or poem as a text, which may be obvious. But to Bathes, both the writer and the text exist simultaneously. Anytime a reader reads the texts, he is engaging with the writer, notwithstanding the period the text was written. Barthes contests the idea that an individual called an author can be the originating locus of a text or artwork. Rather, he suggests writers (or artists) rework existing forms and ideas, because a text is a 'tissue of signs' and these signs only become meaningful when the reader engages them to exhume the meaning 'not in its origin but in its destination'. Bathes argues that a novel or a poem comes to life once it is published and so open to multiplicity of interpretations.

So, an interpretation of a literary text is beyond its creator. It allows for multiple meanings provided by the reader, rather than single intended meaning of the author to the text. Bathes used novels and literary texts to illustrate his idea. He begins with *Sarrasine*, written by Honore de Balzac and questions the speaking 'voice' as either belonging to the author, to the reader or to that of humanity. The work influenced development of post-structural literary theory in the 1970sand the 1980s.

Bathes theory on the author and the reader has been criticised by many literary critics. Some argue that denying the importance of author's intentions and his background to the understanding of the text is limiting. They focused on the significance of the historical and cultural context in which the creative work was written. Some view may be shared in

appreciating African literary work, which would not be fully appreciated without the author's background and cultural context that inspired the novelist, the playwright or the poet.

Do you think a reader can appreciate the poems *Abiku* of Wole Soyinka and that of Clark without being told anything about the background of the poets? Would you understand Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Chinua Achebe's *Things fall Apart* without a background to their historical context as colonial apologias and the colonised, respectively. Would reading *Half of a Yellow Sun,* give proper meaning without reading the history of Nigeria's civil war? In African literature, the significance of relationship between the author, text and reader cannot be overlooked. It's is a triple relationship as each is important in creating the text's meaning.
https://interestingliterature.com/2021/10/barthes-death-of-the-author-summary-analysis/#

3.2.3 M Foucault: What is an author?

Paul-Michel Foucault (1926-1984) was a French philosopher, writer and literary critic. His main works focus on the relationship between knowledge and power and the manipulation of social control through their combination. His work is considered as part of literary theory, critical theory, feminism and cultural studies, among others. He is well known in creative writing art for his 1969 essay 'What is an Author?' It is written in response to Roland Barthes essay, the 'Death of an Author'. In this essay, Foucault avoided the polemics about 'death of the author' and 'intentional fallacy' and instead argues that all texts are written but not all are discussed as having "authors". This suggests that while authors can be attributed to some texts, some texts cannot have authors attributed to them. He views authors and their texts as objects and challenges that idea of an author being the 'source' of his works and whose original intentions are given legible expression in them. He uses the term 'author function' – a concept that replaces the idea of the author as a person, and instead refers to the 'discourse' that surrounds an author or body of work. Scientific texts, for example, are valued more for their content rather than their 'authorship', while in the case of literary texts authorship becomes the most interesting aspect of the work.

Foucault challenges traditional notions of authorship and introduces a new perspective on the creation and interpretation of texts. The essay continues to influence literary theory and criticism, encouraging scholars to revaluate the significance of the author in understanding and analyzing texts. He challenges this traditional understanding of authorship by examining the factors that influence the creation and interpretation of texts and argues that texts are not solely the product of the author's intentions or genius but are shaped by various external forces. Foucault's essay aligns with poststructuralist theory, which emphasizes the instability and multiplicity of meaning. It rejects the idea of a fixed, authoritative author and instead focuses on the interplay between texts, readers, and social forces. Foucault's work has been influential in shaping poststructuralist approaches to literary analysis.

Critics argue that Foucault's dismissal of the author as an individual creator overlooks the personal experiences, intentions, and agency of authors. They contend that understanding the author's biography and intentions can enhance our understanding of texts. Additionally, some argue that Foucault's emphasis on the social construction of authorship downplays the importance of individual creativity and innovation in literary production.

The sociology of literature, especially in African literature, is very significant in creating and understanding of literary texts. Literature being a mirror or reflection of society must rely heavily on the external forces such as social, historical, and cultural contexts.
An Analysis of Michel Foucault's What is an Author? - 1st Edition - Ti (routledge.com)

3.2.4 M.M Bakhtin: Discourse in the Novel

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975) was a Russian philosopher, literary critic and scholar who worked on literary theory, ethics, and the philosophy of language. Bakhtin has influenced criticism and reading of different disciplines as diverse as literary criticism, history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology and psychology. His greatest contribution to creative writing is significant, especially his 1941 essay 'Epic and Novel: Towards a Methodology for the Study of the Novel' in which he compares the novel to the epic. In "Discourse in the Novel," Bakhtin introduces his idea of heteroglossia, and other interrelated concepts such as polyphony, chronotope and the carnivalesque.

Bakhtin sees the novel as "the only genre born of this new world and in total affinity with it" (Bakhtin 1981, p7). He sees the novel as the most apt form for literary expression in the modern world and insisted that literary study must neither be "formal" nor "ideological," but that form and content are unified in discourse. He says insistence on style which leaves out the sociology of discourse, is limiting and abstract. Both style and the sociology must be in dialogical interaction. "The novel as a whole is a phenomenon multiform in style and variform in speech and voice" (Bakhtin 1981, p7).

In *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics,* he offered a thorough analysis of the works of the Russian writer, Fyodor Dostoevsky to further develop the concepts of polyphony and heteroglossia. These concepts represent a holistic picture of Bakhtin's central notion of dialogism and dialogical process in the novelistic discourse. Bakhtin does not support authors retaining any essential 'surplus' of *meaning,* but only that indispensable minimum of pragmatic, purely *information-bearing* 'surplus' necessary to carry forward the story' (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 3) on the characters. Bakhtin equally rejects the dialectic as a way of conceiving the structure of the novel, for the dialectic is a way of recognizing conflict and contradiction only to resolve them ultimately. The dialectic might only be appropriate to the monologic novel' (Dentith, 1995, p. 42).

'Polyphony' is a concept Bakhtin derived through a metaphor of music - *poly* (many) and *phonus* (sound). To complete the musical image, the author of a polyphonic novel is like the concertmaster who orchestrates all other sounds and voices and directs their interactions. Bakhtin states that in a polyphonic novel, there is not just one narrator, but many 'consciousnesses', which tell the story through different ideologies and ideologemes. Polyphony is to 'voices' in narratology as to heteroglossia is to linguistics, and they always question the author's position in the novel. So, rather than establishing an author*itative*, single voice as the sole valid discourse in a novel, an author of a polyphonic novel allows conflicting voices, views and languages to interact concurrently within a single discourse.

Bakhtin states that in a dialogic novelistic discourse heteroglossia occurs due to the 'the Tower-of-Babel mixing of languages that goes around any object' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 278). Each language is heteroglot, according to Bakhtin, with many offshoots that come about through a

particular type of people's experience. These are mainly acquired through their association and interaction within their particular social groups, within their professions, peer groups, region or classes. Heteroglossia is a complex mixture of languages and views which are always in dialogue, as each language is viewed from the perspective of the other. It is the interplay of 'unofficial voices' that challenge and threaten 'official language' in any culture through centripetal and centrifugal power relations (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 272-273). It is through looking at this social heteroglossia of utterances from different cultures that the theme or content of a novel is located. As Bakhtin further reveals, a sociolinguistic stylistic analysis reveals the 'movement of the theme through different languages and speech types, its dispersion into the rivulets and droplets of social heteroglossia, its dialogisation – this is the distinguishing feature of the stylistics of the novel' (Bakhtin 1981, p. 263).

Bakhtin's theory is apt in the study of Nigerian literature. Due to the heterogeneous nature of the country. Bakhtinian dialogical reading of the Nigerian novel is a valid framework because it allows the coexistence of multiplicity and diversity of viewpoints without closure. It is more apt for reading the Nigerian feminist fiction, which is multifaceted, and is better read and appreciated in a dialogical and critical narrative analysis of African heterogeneous literatur**e.**

3.3 Conclusion

An author is any writer whose work has been published. The place of the author in relation to what has been published has been the centre of debates. T.S Eliot's theory sees the impersonality of the author but believes that the poet is an important source of the written text. Roland Barthes contests the idea that an individual called an author can be the originator of a text or artwork and M Foucault suggests writers (or artists) only rework existing forms and ideas, and that all texts are written but not all are discussed as having "authors". He suggests that while authors can be attributed to some texts, some texts cannot have authors attributed to them. Although Bakhtin recognizes the existence of an author, he does not support authors retaining any essential 'surplus' of *meaning*, but only *information-bearing* 'surplus' necessary to carry forward the story forward. He sees an author as an orchestrator of multiple view points and voices but not the almighty authoritative figure. These theories are important to would-be writers to be able to identify their position as authors from the different theoretical perspectives.

3.4 Summary

The unit present discourses on authorship from different thinkers, philosophers and literary theorists. Thoughts of T.S Eliot in his essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', Roland Bathes in 'The Death of an Author', M Foucault in 'What is an author?', and M.M Bakhtin in 'Discourse in the Novel' were presented and discussed. Each of these theorists has different perception on the relationship between an author and the text.

3.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Identify the polemic on authorship across generation and identify with any of the thoughts on the place of an author

(ii) Is the author dead in the modern novel? Discuss with examples

(iii) Mention and explain four theories on authorship.

(iv) Is your work of fiction driven by you and your personality as the writer, the reader, and the historical background/past, the society, or by your characters?

3.6 Reference and Further Reading

Bakhtin, M.M. 1981. 'The Epic and the Novel: Towards a Methodology for the Study of the Novel' in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981) 'Discourse in the Novel' *Dialogic Imagination Four Essays.* Edited by Michael Holquist, Trans by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist

Dentith, Simon (1995) *Bakhtinian Thought: An Introductory Reader*. London: Routledge.

Poetry Foundation. 'T.S. Elliot; Available from https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69400/tradition-and-the-individual-talent Tradition and the Individual Talent by T. S. Eliot | Poetry Foundation

Interesting Literature. 'Roland Barthes' Available from https://interestingliterature.com/2021/10/barthes-death-of-the-author-summary-analysis/#

Smith, Tim (2018) 'M. Foucault' Available from An Analysis of Michel Foucault's What is an Author? - 1st Edition - Ti (routledge.com)

UNIT 4: WRITING STYLES: READING THE MASTERS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is a seminar-based class aimed to develop would-be writer's creative writing skills alongside the study of the techniques of authors, past and present, Text will be analysed in the class by the students. The unit provides some guidelines for the analysis under the different genres. The tutor may decide on expanding the text to be studied or require the students to provide extensive analysis of the elements and techniques of a writer in the genre of their choice, which is to be presented as seminar paper in the class.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, the students will be able to

(i) Study and analyse the elements and composition of a short story
(ii) Study and analyse the features of a given play
(iii) Describe and discuss the composition of a poem
(iv) Appreciate and critically analyse any given creative work

4.2 MAIN CONTENTS

4.2.1 Seminar One: Style in Fiction

As espoused in Module Two Unit 1, short story is the first step for a would-be writer of novels and to write short story well, the style of the masters is a good way to start. Students are expected to bring Guy de Maupassant short story, *The Necklace* and Chinua Achebe's *Girls at War and other Stories* for discussion and analysis. They are to focus on the stories' plot development and ending, character development, language, elements of surprise, irony, among others. Once discussion is open up in the class, which is mandatory, each student will play an important part. Discussion to include the following for each text:

(a) *The Necklace*

Background of Guy de Maupassant considered as the father of the short story to be discussed. The tutor should explain why the choice of the short story is based on the reputation of the author; the themes and story, and the basic elements of the short story observed. Discussion to focus on what the story is, the message, the moral angle through which Maupassant tells the story, the plot development and the twist at the end, the setting, irony and symbolism as well as the sketching of the characters.

(b) *Girls at War and other stories*

Background of Chinua Achebe considered as the father of African literature due to setting pace with his *Things Fall Apart* to be expounded. Achebe's reputation as the greatest African novelist and the critical acclaim he received on his work to be discussed. Critical reception of his short story by other writers, such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, as having 'an emotional power that accumulates in an unobtrusive way and stuns the reader at the end… there are sentences in them that will always move me to tears' (2006b), should further be explored from the story.

4.2.2 Seminar Two: Style in Poetry

(a) Ode to a Nightingale and *Ode to Autumn*

Discussion to focus on the forms and feelings in the two poems of John Keats**.** This should be in conjunction, and by comparison with, other English romantic and modernist (imagists) poets.

The discussion on the poems should consider individuality, voices of feelings, subject matter, and Keats' awareness of art, poetic identity and creative imagination.

Discussion on the form to focus on the Ode (lyrical), which has been around since Horace. The structure of the Ode to study should include its structure of having more than one stanza and all the stanzas have the same metre and rhyming scheme. In addition every line in an ode rhymes with at least one other line in the same stanza. Different types of Ode should be studied, which include Horatian, Pindaric or Irregular Ode, to which Keats Odes are to be used as examples. The major concern of Keats in his Odes to be discussed should include his perception of the conflicting nature of human life, i.e the interconnection or mixture of joy/pain, intensity of feeling/numbness or lack of feeling, life/death, mortal/immortal, the actual/the ideal and separation/connection.

Keats focus on the concrete sensations and emotions, from which a reader draws a conclusion or abstraction, should be another area to discuss. His theory of synaesthesia, which is the prominent uses of imagery that are contrasting is another area to highlight in the poems. Discussion on the imagery should include physical sensations: sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell, temperature, weight, pressure, hunger, thirst, sexuality and movement, and the manner in which he repeatedly combines different senses in one image by attributing the trait of one sense to another should be studied, among others. Examples of synaesthesia in "Ode to a Nightingale" are in line 8-9 (stanza I), line 3-4 (stanza II), line 8-9 (stanza IV) and line 2 (Stanza V). The functions of synaesthesia is to produce the poem's sensual effect and by combining sense normally experienced as separate suggests an underlying unity of dissimilar happenings, the oneness of all forms of life. The endings of the poems are also important, which relate to his idea of negative capability, and which he denies as 'when man is capable of being in uncertainties, mystery, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason'. Other approaches or ideas on poetry by Keats should also be discussed, which include the "Chameleon poet", "the Vale of soul-making", and "the mansion of many apartments".

The distinction between the "Ode to a Nightingale" and "To Autumn" should also be part of the discussion. The views of critics/poets, such as Harold Bloom, on "To Autumn" as 'the subtlest and most beautiful of all Keats odes', 'a close to perfect as any shorter poem in English language' or Allen Tate's view that 'it is a very nearly perfect pile of styles' having 'a little to say", should form part of the discussion. Keats' theory of "Beauty in Truth" is more evident in the poem and should be discussed in relation to what other critics/poets said about it.

(b) *Abiku* and *Abiku*

The session should also include discussion on the study of the poem 'Abiku' by Wole Soyinka and the same 'Abiku' by J.P Clark and discuss their forms, structure, thematic concerns, tone, mood, atmosphere and their differences.

4.2.3 Seminar Three: Style in Drama

(a) *The Gods are not to Blame* and *Greek*

The discussion should geared towards study and analysis of a play based on archetypes. Discussion to concentrate on technique of use of archetypes to create plot structure. This is by structuring the plots according to certain general experiences or an original pattern of a race or people's lives. The use of vulture, eagle, laurel and olive branches, for example are all archetypal

symbols used in stories throughout the world. Dietrich and Sundell postulation of using the following archetypes in plotting a story should be discussed: (i) Oedepus archetype (sons as replacements of father such as Faulkner does in a short story *Barn Burning* and Ola Rotimi does in the play *The Gods are not to Blame*) (ii) The Search for the Killer (the blood brother) (iii) The search for the salvation (or 'The Holy Grail') (iv) The search for the Hero (v) Descent into Hell (vi) The Double (such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Fyodor Dostoyevsky's psychological double) (vii) The Scapegoat (viii) the Prodigal son (rebel) and (ix)The Madonna and the Magdalene (prostitute with heart of gold).

(b) *Greek*

Steven Berkoff's ***Greek*** should also be discussed in relation to the Oedipus archetype, taking into consideration the exposition by Dietrich and Sundell (1974) that 'whatever the designation, each archetype provides the writer with a ready means of connecting the past with the present and the use of commenting on the human condition, at the same time that it provides a natural structure for the plot. And if this archetype is truly rendered, the writer may strike deep into the mind and heart of his reader. The point of it all is to see the particular, yourself, in the universal' (pp117-118)

4.3 Conclusion

There are certain styles of writing that can be imitated or modelled from the masters. The short story genre is the best subgenre in fiction that can be discussed in one sitting. The students have the chance to study a well-known short story and discuss what makes it successful. The same is to be done with a play and poetry. Each of the genre has some special features that are going to be discussed, and which would assist the would-be writer in his chosen genre.

4.4 Summary

The unit focused on seminar discussion and presentation on selected texts of fiction, play and poetry. The short story by Guy de Maupassant and Chinua Achebe are to be discussed in the first seminar. The poems of John Keats as well as Wole Soyinka and JP Clark are to be studied in poetry seminar two, while the play of Ola Rotimi and Steven Berkoff to be studied under Seminar Three on drama. Each seminar is to focus on specific elements of the respective genre from which the texts are studied.

4.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Students are to write an adaptation of short story, poem or a play by following the technique of a chosen genre studied/discussed in the unit. The work is to be presented in rota, and when a student's work is not being presented, they are expected to give, and learn from the feedback on the analysis of the work.

(ii) Choose any approach or ideas on poetry by Keats and write an exposition, which should include either (i) Negative Capability, (ii) The chameleon poet (iii) The vale of soul-making, (iv) The mansion of many apartments or (v) Beauty and Truth.

(iii) Choose any archetype and write a short five Act play, which should be either (ii) The Search for the Killer (the blood brother) (iii) The search for the salvation (or 'The Holy Grail') (iv) The search for the Hero (v) Descent into Hell (vi) The Double (vii)

The Scapegoat (viii) the Prodigal son (rebel) or (ix)The Madonna and the Magdalene (prostitute with heart of gold).

4.6 Reference and Further Reading

Achebe, Chinua (1972) *Girls at War and other stories.* London: Heinemann

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi (2006). *Half of a Yellow Sun*. London: Fourth Estate.

_____ (2006b) 'The Stories of Africa Q & A with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie 'In the publisher's excerpts at the end of *Half of a Yellow Sun.* Fourth Estate

Bloom, Harold (2000). *How to Read and Why.* London: Fourth Estate.

Deitrich, R.F and Sundell, Roger H. (1974). *The Art of Fiction.* 2nded. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, Inc.,

Guy de Maupassant (1884) *The Necklace.* Available from https://www.the_diamong_neclace.pdf

J.P Clark, 'Abiku' and Soyinka 'Abiku' available from https://www.scribd.com

Keats, John Selected Letters (Oxford World Classics)

Steve, Berkoff (1989/1980) 'Greek', *Decadence and Other Plays.* London: Faber and Faber

Rotimi, Ola (1968)*The Gods Are Not to Blame.* Oxford University Press

Unit 5: WRITING WORKSHOP

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is a follow-up on the study of poets, novelists and playwrights. It is a writing workshop and group discussion to be done through games, tasks and activities. This is a prelude to publishing a work that will target publishers. Writing workshops through games create circles for survival. It is important for a would-be author to engage in games within a circle and community of honest friends who can be his/her first editors, readers and critics.

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit, students will be able to

(i) Explore and practice some writing games for their writings
(ii) Identify and try different games that can be used on their person
(iii) Discover how to use different sources for writing games
(iv) Identify and discuss the significance of writing games

5.2 MAIN CONTENTS

5.2.1 Writing Games

Writing games help the writer hone skills and replenish inspiration. This comes in different ways. First, writing games often make use of objects that are concrete such as a miniatures or set of pieces for character sketches. The objects can come from the environment. The environment and the experiences of the writer are good fodders for a creative work. A literature is the reflection of the society in which it is written. It recreates the social, political, cultural and even economic life of that society. The human experiences in the society are equally captured in any form of creative writing, be it literary or otherwise.

Ecphrasis, which is writing a creative piece with the aid to a piece of visual art, or the use of a visual art, sculpture or film as stimulus, is one popular stimulating tradition in creative writing using concrete objects (Morley, 2010). For the Ecphrasis writing game, even living objects are used. As we explored, a writer is greatly influenced by the environment and from experiences through all his senses (Ike, 1991). Drawing from these sources, however, is driven by continuous observation, which comes with time. Determination is also a force that inspires creative work. Writing games can also use abstract stimulus.

At the end of each unit in this Course book, there are writing games for the students to practice as activities and Tutor Marked assignments.

5.2.2 Mirror

Ecphrasis writing games can be employed for developing styles. One way to do this is through the mirror exercise, through which the writer uses the five senses to awaken the six sense and the unconscious to replenish the thoughts and ideas when they begin to dry off. A writer must have a self-belief in order to write something that can impress at least himself, from his experience. Writers portray their needs and wants through believable personal behaviour that mirrors their psychological and emotional lives within the world of the play. As an exercise that can bring out these needs and psychological and emotional lives, David Morley suggests this writing game of mirror:

> Look in a mirror, and try looking in your eyes for no less than ten minutes. If you flinch, make sure you turn back to the mirror when you are comfortable again. Maintain as much direct focus as possible. After a while, you will begin to notice certain new things about your face and your whole appearance. The way your dress, the way your style your hair; these say something about you and the decisions you take about the way you conduct yourself. Make further notes of what you have discovered. After you have done that, look again in the mirror but try to see yourself as another person, maybe another age even. Draft a poem, a story or a short prose biography, which is about somebody, who is recognisably you, but who has a different past and future. Situate your writing in the present day, using the first person 'I', and use as many of the observed details about yourself as possible. Do not make anything up. At this point try placing the piece in the third person 'he' or 'she' changing the verbs and possessive articles accordingly. Once you have finished, put the writing to one side for three weeks, returning to it to complete the project (Morley 2010, p34).

The aim of the game is to help the writer use the senses to know several dimensions of him/herself, to be able to see several dimensions of the people he/she meets, and to be able to read them and their many layers for creating characters and plot for his/her work.

5.2.3 You are a story

From the exercise above, even the self can be used for ecphrasis. From the self, a writer knows a great deal about character, thoughts, want, and knowledge. The self-study helps writer to know his drives and hindrance. A writer can ask a colleague to study him/her and give feedback. A writer can create schedules that try to do away with negative detractors and explore the positive enhancers from the exercise. Again David Morley offers a Writing Game using the self as a story:

> Make pairs. Each person draws or paints the other while simultaneously being drawn or painted. Draw what you see; invent nothing. Do not show the subject what you have drawn until they have also finished. Then exchange drawings, and write a poem of ten lines, or a flash fiction….of two paragraphs as a direct and immediate response to (a) what you see as you look at this drawing of yourself, or (b) how it felt being scrutinised. (Morley, 2010, p144)

The perception on self by others may be different from the perception of self from the mirror exercise above. It may also depends on the time of the day, on the view of the other as well as their good attention to detail. The game objectifies the procedure of writing as a performance of one's self and selves. Writing is therapeutic. A writer can think about a vivid experience of fears and conflict, or a childhood experience that haunts. This can be written into a creative piece. (Graham et al, 2005; Smith, 1991).

5.3 Conclusion

Writing workshops and games are good ways to get inspiration, ideas and thoughts for creative writing and getting published. The workshops create community of writers to help each other in their work. The games can come before, in the preparation and planning stage, or it can come during the writing process, especially when ideas begin to dry up and the writer slips into having

a writer's block. The environment, through the use of physical objects, can be used for the games. The writer's senses are stimulated through either abstract or concrete objects around. The writer can as well use self to get stimulation for the writing.

5.4 Summary

The unit discussed the significance of writing games to the writer during the writing process. The environment and the self were discussed as means of getting stimulus for the writing through the games. The mirror and the self were used as some of the examples of the writing games.

5.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Mention and discuss two writing games that a writer can use.
(ii) Mention and discuss two significance of using writing games in the writing process.
(iii) Take three elements of character, place or particular era and start writing from there in any genre.
(iv) Think of any game that stimulates the senses and use it to write a creative piece.

5.6 Reference and Further Reading

Graham, Robert, Helen Newell, Heather Leach and John Singleton (eds) (2005). *The Road to Somewhere: A Creative Writing Companion.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Morley, David (2010). *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Ike, Chukwuemeka (1991). *How to become a Published Writer*. Ibadan: Heinemann

Smith, Nancy (1991). *The Fiction Writer's Handbook.* London: Judy Piatkus

Unit 6: TUTORIAL FEEDBACK PRESENTATIONS

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is a tutorial feedback to be presented by the students. A schedule for the tutorial is to be provided by the Tutor/Facilitator. The students are to make the presentation during contacts. Attendance is mandatory. Students are free to choose a genre for the presentation, which should be in a form of seminar papers

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, students will be able to

(i) Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding on theories and essential techniques of the creative genres by producing a creative work

(ii) Demonstrate understanding of how to produce a work of fiction by writing one and presenting it to be appreciated

(iii) Compose a collection of poems, a play or a short story and analyse its composition based on its features

(iv) Appreciate and use feedback and criticism on their completed work.

6.2 MAIN CONTENTS

6.2.1 Seminar Paper I: The Short Story

5000 work of fiction with a short introduction to place the piece in context. It can be a part of a novel, a complete short story or a flash fiction. The students should take into consideration all the elements and techniques of fiction studied in this Coursebook. The seminar is to be presented in class and to be assessed by the tutor/facilitator.

6.2.2 Seminar Paper II: A drama/play Sketch

Students to present part of a play in progress or a sketch of a five Act play to focus on any archetype. The plot should be developed based on Freytag's Pyramid, and the candidate-playwright should map the dramatic plot rising of the story as a Theoretical introduction. The work is to be presented to the class for discussion and assessment by the Tutor/Facilitator.

6.2.3 Seminar Paper III: Poetry

A collection of not less than (10) poems, which should not be something that has been presented in any session of this course. The creative piece should not be a reflection on any technique but *exploring* the technique of any writer as inspiration. The paper requires a Critical introduction situating the form and influence to the writing of the piece. The poems and the Critical introduction are to be discussed in class and assessed by the Tutor/Facilitator

6.3 Conclusion

As a preparation to be writing independently, students will be given the opportunity to try producing pro-finished creative piece for appreciation by members of the class. The purpose is also to give the students the editing skills as well as the nerve to absorb shock of critical review of their work and to be able to eventually deal with rejection, and revising.

6.4 Summary

The unit presents a hands-on attempt to produce a creative work. It covers the fiction, play and poetry writing task chosen by the students.

6.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

Students to write all the three seminar papers and present at a time of contact, which is to be determined by the tutor/facilitator.

6.6 Reference and Further Reading

Amanda Boulter (2005) *Writing Fiction: Creative and Critical Approaches.* London: Palgrave
Casterton, Julia (2005). *Creative Writing: A Practical Guide (3rd Edition).* London: Palgrave
Cox, Alisa (2005). *Writing Short Stories: A Routledge Writer's Guide.* London: Routledge
Mills, Paul (2006) *The Routledge Creative Writing Coursebook.* London: Routledge
Steel, Jayne (2007) *Wordsmithery: The Writer's Craft and Practices.* London: Palgrave
Wood, James (2008). *How Fiction Works.* London: Jonathan cape

Module Five: Getting Published

INTRODUCTION

After the completion of a creative piece, the next hurdle is getting the manuscript accepted for publication. This module is an exposition on editing the work, pitching it for publication, advices on getting the work accepted and taking part in literary activities. It also focuses on the relationship between creative writing and other disciplines.

CONTENT

Unit 1:PITCHING

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Given the rigours and challenges of publishing, especially the issue of rejection, getting published is a hurdle that any would-be writer has to pass. To 'pitch someone' is try to persuade the person to do something. The term 'project pitching' is making a persuasive case for a project idea in a professional setting, something like convincing colleagues, managers or potential investors that the project is worth accepting. This unit focuses on pitching your work with publishers. It includes the processes as well as spaces to meet publishers and convince them that your creative work is publishable.

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit, students will be able to

(i) Explain the terms publishing and publishers
(ii) Identify outlets for literary and creative writing competitions
(iii)Identify and recognise an different disciplines in which creative writing flourishes
(iv)Prepare a work for the publishers

1.2 MAIN CONTENTS

1.2.1 Publishing and Publishers

The time lag between finishing a book and the book's publication is usually delayed. Many writers admit that the process of composing their work is intrinsically more personal and satisfying than publishing. This is due to the rigours of publishing and production routines. The demands of publishing does not end with production but moves on to marketing the work. Publishing is an open space, and an art form in itself, sometimes an art of politics (Morley 2010, Graham, *et al*, 2005). After completing their work, many writers undergo a psychological, even physical, leave-taking Quite often, would-be authors are left to their peril, but this is a stage that requires 'pitching' taking the world head-on. The publishing industry, from the small presses to the international corporations, is a vibrant business that changes. As societies change, the literary expectations also evolve and change.

1.2.2 Creative writing competitions

There are many national and international writing competition, which can be a breeding ground for would-be authors to be noticed and get published. These competitions are held annually and are open to everyone. However, there are some that are gender specific, especially women writing competitions. Some of such competitions are run by magazines, radio stations and blogs. Would-be authors should be searching for announcements for the competitions from such sites, which often provide deadlines for submission.

A general advice is for the would-be author to study the rules and guidelines for each of such competitions, as each has its own requirements. Being successful is abiding by those guidelines, especially the number of words, the format and style, and themes required to write about. Another advice is to study past entries and winners and get the hint about what 'gets in'. Winning such competitions is a step towards recognition and acceptance by publishers. BBC World Radio provides such outlets as BBC Drama. Most recently, the BBC Hausa female category competition,

Hikayata, has offered Hausa females the opportunity to experiment with flash fictions albeit in the Hausa language. Magazines and newspapers in England, such as *The Mail on Sunday, Stand magazine, The Sunday Times,* and *Woman's Own* are all outlets for literary competitions for short story, poetry, part of a novel and drama in the UK. (Graham, R, 2005)

Other outlets include the ISF-UNESCO World Tales Short Story Competition launched in 2020, organised by The Idries Shah Foundation, targeting teens with themes on challenges of our age. Others include *Atlas Shrugged* Essay Competition open to all high school, college and graduate students worldwide, among others. All a would-be author need to do is search for competitions on the internet and many entries would come up (Smith, 1991)

In Nigeria, literary associations such as Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) and LGG prizes for literature are given through competitions annually. Pawners Paper's Spoken Word and poetry Contest is another competition forum. Apart from the cash prizes, winners can get their works published and become widely known

1.2.3 Websites/Blogs

There are lots of sites and blogs, as well as announcements for writers' retreat on the web. Some of these sites in the UK provide resources relating to creative writing and support the development of creative writing of all genres and in all educational settings (such as http://www.nawe.co.uk/scripts/WebObjects.exe/nawe Site/) and in the US there is http:///awpwriter.org. There are online writing webs, which are communities of writing in the UK. A good example is www.trace.ntu.ac.uk, www.nickbantock.com, and www.griffinandsabire.com Others are British Electronic Poetry Centre (at www.soton.ac.uk, and http://www.writersdigest.com/101sites/2003_index.asp

Chimamanda Ngozi experimented with short stories on web outlets. Some of these stories include, *You in America* (2001) and *Ghosts* (2004) in Zeotrope (http://www.zoetrope-stories.com/extra/issue38/adichie.html); *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2003) in Zeotrope (http://www.all-story.com/issues.cgi?action=show_story&story_id=191); *My Mother, the Crazy African* in In Posse Review (http://www/webdelsol.com/InPosse/adichie_anthology.htm); *The Grief of Strangers in Granta* in Granta 88, Mothers 2004 (http://www.granta.com/extracts/2217); others include *Tomorrow is too far* (2006) in Prospect (http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/article_details.php?id=7208&AuthKey=037916efd3ab6cbaf4c7ed47aca230ad&issue=o); and *The Time Story* (2006) in Per Contra (http://www.percontra.net/2timestory.htm).

Would-be authors should explore the webs, literary blogs or attending retreats to get their stories published. It gives the needed exposure.

1.3 Conclusion

Completing a creative work does not end the would-be author's creative writing struggle, getting the work published is another huddle. Again, if the work is published, marketing the work is yet another challenging task. There are various ways in which a would-be author can get a work accepted for publication. Getting exposed through writing competitions and creative writing websites and blogs will make the needed exposure and competence for the aspiring author to be noticed.

1.4 Summary

This unit discussed the preparation to get published. After completing work, the next hurdle is meeting the publishers. Taking part in writing competition will make the would-be author noticed and being accepted by publishers. In addition, using writing websites and blogs as sure way to be noticed and get the work accepted is discussed.

1.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Search and list ten publishing houses in Nigeria.

(ii) Search and list ten literary competition webs and blogs in Nigeria

(iii) Explain and discuss what a would-be author do after completing his/her work.

1.6 Reference and Further Reading

Blake Carole, (1999). *From Pitch to Publication.* Basingstoke: Macmillan

Graham, Robert, Helen Newell, Heather Leach and John Singleton (eds) (2005). *The Road to Somewhere: A Creative Writing Companion.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Morley, David (2010). *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Smith, Nancy (1991). *The Fiction Writer's Handbook.* London: Judy Piatkus

Unit 2:MAKING YOUR WORK PUBLISHABLE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit presents the etiquette for getting a work published. The unit also explains the pragmatics of getting a work published. The role of agents and editors in the publishing process are also explained. Where an aspiring author failed to get published, the alternative means of publishing are espoused, including their pros and cons.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, the students will be able to

(i) Identify and discuss four etiquettes of publishing
(ii) Mention and explain four major pragmatics of publishing
(iii) Explain the significance of an agent in the publishing process
(iv) List and explain three alternative means of publishing

2.2 MAIN CONTENTS

2.2.1 Etiquette of Publishing

How can a writer get a finished work accepted for publication? Whether one is sending the work to an online outlet, a magazine, participating in a competition or any other publishing outlet, there are quite some etiquettes to observe. David Morley identifies five:

(i) Always send your best work.
(ii) Know the kind of work that a magazine or publishing house prefers and submit writing that suits that taste.
(iii) Do not send the same work to different magazines or publishers at the same time.
(iv) Enclose a stamped addressed envelope with sufficient postage to allow the return of your submission [if not online].
(v) Always send out several pieces of work, and keep these circulating, adding new work when you can and correcting old work when it gets returned, so that when one of them returns with rejection note you can still retain some hope of acceptance. (Morley 2010)

Rejecting your work does not mean rejecting you; all you need to do is improve it to the publisher's taste. Do not take it as personal but follow the advice of the editor to improve the work. Keep on revising the work rejected until you get it as right as the editor, agent or the publisher that raised observation on it wants it. The advice an agent or an editor gives on changes to the work is merely what she or he believes will improve the chances of a manuscript being published.

No agent, editor or publisher is going to come knocking on your; you have to knock on theirs. Unless you become established as a writer, no editor or agent will notice you. Ironically, a would-be writer always finds it difficult to get an agent without being published; likewise it is difficult to get published without finding an agent. Agents usually go for writers whom they think will be or have been successful, if not immediately then eventually. An agent sells the work, negotiates a contract on behalf of the would-be author and get the best deals from the publishers. What the would-be author have to do is to take the three Ps as a guide to get the best

deal for their work to be published – practice, polish and persevere. They will pay dividends at the end (Morley, 2010).

2.2.2 The Agent and the Pragmatics of publishing

One way to get published is to 'write a good book' (Smith, 1991). If it is good, it will definitely be accepted by an agent or the publisher and it will get published. A good agent is the key to get published. A good agent promotes you and convince others such as the editors, publicity departments and the publishers, about your work. A good agent is an adviser on what will and what will not sell. Once your work is accepted, you will receive a formal contract from the publisher. It is the responsibility of the publisher to get the ISBN (International Standard Book Number) for the book. In Nigeria, this is obtained from the National Library, and all publishers, worthy of their salt know the processes to get the number. The contract signed will contain a number of clauses and will be signed by both the publisher and the would-be author. The author and the publisher will then agree on an advance fee, if any in the contract, which is a sum of money paid as part of the expected accrued royalties. However, first-time authors rarely receive an advance. The royalties are in percentage terms of the published price (Smith, 1991).

Another means of getting published is through 'book packaging'. This is a process in which the author relinquishes his copyright to packaging companies that take care of printing and selling the book but pay the author a one-time price. This means the author will not get any royalty. Some authors go for this with the idea that the sum given to them by the company would be as much as they anticipated in royalties. Other such packaging companies would publish without paying any sum to the author; the target is for the author to get noticed so that future opportunities of publishing with reputable publishers would come.

Before sending in a work for publishing, a would-be author should check libel and plagiarism. A libel is caused on a living person. If there are such thing as to make a living person be held up to hatred, ridicule or contempt, there would be a court action. For a work of fiction, authors should be absolutely sure none of the characters beer resemblance with persons living in a character that is defamatory. Plagiarism is stealing someone's work. Although there is nothing new under the sun about what an author writes, and there are models and works of masters imitated, nonetheless, a would-be author must ensure his line of story in a play or novel or lines of poetry are not exactly stolen from another work.

Another thing to take note while publishing is multiple submission of the same manuscript to different publishers. This should be avoided as it is considered a controversial practice. Manuscript can be sent to another publisher after rejection by the first publisher but not at the same time. The controversy comes up when both publishers have accepted the work, which means they cannot all publish it.

For any work published, there is always a blurb at the back of the book. This is not to be written by the author but by the editor, unless the author is asked to do so. The editor and the publisher are also responsible for 'hype', a short form for 'hyperbole' that means vigorously promoting the book through a big advertising campaign in the media, through the author's appearance on TV and chat-shows, radio programmes and touring nations for book signing sessions. With a good hype, a book can become more successful than it deserves to be (Smith, 1991).

2.2.3 The small presses and alternative publishing

An author who is unable to find a reputable publisher to accept his work several times or is unable to pay packaging companies to see it in print, usually takes up some alternatives. The alternatives are small presses, vanity or subsidy publishing, self-publishing, or online publishing.

First, small presses are means of survival for unpublished authors. New authors set up small presses to become their own publishers. If they succeed, they become the publishers of their allies and friends. Most of the great English authors run or are supported by small presses. As David Morley said, Virginia Woolf and Leonard Woolf ran the Hagarth Press from their home and published works of many of their friends and associates (Morley 2010).

Secondly, vanity publishing requires either paying a small amount or the work will be published but with no royalty. It includes the packing, in which the publishers would not pay any royalty. Thirdly, self-publishing is another alternative, in which the author publish through desktop technology and get the printed copies through a local printer. The effect is very few book retailers buy such books and sell them; and this comes with financial costs. Most often, it takes time before the work is actually even printed, and when the work comes out it usually appears badly done. This is also known as electronic publishing, which offers different kinds of outlet through the web. All a would-be author needs to do is to create a web page and fill it with a few biographical notes and text of the book. The work would get published there and readers pay with their credit cards to download it. This alternative method of self-publishing is growing in popularity given that desk-top publishing and internet publishing is increasing globally. The author takes care of everything from writing through to selling (Smith 1991).

One major challenge in alternative publishing is creating readers and audience through marketing the book. Alternative means of publishing lacks the process of 'hype' enjoyed by publishing with reputable publishers. The consequence is making the authors that published through such outlets having no readers, no distribution but give them the notion of 'at least my book exists'. While some authors find the alternative means a successful way of publishing and getting noticed, others see it as beginning with a wane light that may forever dent the image of the author as unprofessional. (Smith, 1991)

2.3 Conclusion

The process of publishing is not a smooth ride as the writing process is not either. There are etiquettes of publishing which require the aspiring author to follow. The significance of agents and editors is another important thing a would-be author should take note. They make the work good and they link the author with the publishers. When an aspiring author fails to get accepted by a reputable publisher, the next step often taken is to go for alternative publishing. But while such alternative means get the work published, they often make the author and his work lose face-value, and dent the future image of the author as quasi professional.

2.4 Summary

The unit discussed etiquette for publishing, which include getting the work good enough to be accepted, identifying and locating agents and editors, going for the best publishing and maintaining the three Ps - practice, polish and persevere. The unit also discussed the issue of role of the agents in getting the work published and other pragmatics of publishing, which include getting an ISBN, the blurb, hype for the book, plagiarism and libel. The other focus of

the unit was on small presses and other means of alternative means of publishing. The pros and cons of such self-publishing and the future cost on the would-be author's career were discussed.

2.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Mention and explain four etiquettes of getting published?
(ii) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of alternative publishing.
(iii) How can a would-be author avoid libel and plagiarism in publishing?
(iv) Explain the following terms:
   (a) Hype
   (b) Three Ps
   (c) ISBN
   (d) Blurb
   (e) Plagiarism
   (f) Libel

2.6 Reference and Further Reading

Ike, Chukwuemeka (1991). *How to become a Published Writer*. Ibadan: Heinemann

Morley, David (2010). *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press

Smith, Nancy (1991). *The Fiction Writer's Handbook.* London: Judy Piatkus

Unit 3:PUBLISHING AND EDITING

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Editing is an important segment of the publishing process. An editor is the one with the final touch, and the one that understands what the readers want to read. This units discusses the role of the editor in the publication process. The setting up of editing outlet is also discussed, which is an avenue for authors to hone their skills and to bring up those not up to the level of success they recorded.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit, students will be able to

(i) Identify and discuss the relevance of editor in the publication process
(ii) Discover the processes of setting up publishing outlets to support aspiring authors
(iii) Discover the process of setting up editing outlet to support aspiring authors
(iv) Identify and assess the significance of writing workshop groups and classes to support authors in editing and publishing

3.2 MAIN CONTENTS

3.2.2 Editing and editor

A good editor is the one that makes the final touch to get the quality of a work desired. After all the challenges of getting the manuscript ready, it is the editor that clears all the mess and get it fully ready. An editor knows when and if the manuscript is ready for publication. He knows this through professional familiarity or by just a hunch obtained through great deal of experience on the job. Metaphorically, an editor puts his hand on the shoulder of the writer, especially when an avalanche of revising invariably spoil the work through 'over-exacting- retrenchment– cutting it … so that its interior logic begins to stutter, or paring the language over-beautifully so that it becomes falsified and etiolated' (Morley 2010). A good writer always becomes a friend to the editors, watching and learning from their editor job.

A more significant role of an editor is to write the blurb. The editor, alongside the publisher found, take care of the 'hype', that is, the promotion of the book. With a good hype, a book can become more successful than it deserves to be (Morley 2010).

3.2.3 Setting up publishing and editing outlet

Setting up an editing outlet is one of the sure ways for a new author to gain the editorial endorsement of what to submit or to be accepted for publication. Would-be writers either become editors or are helped by writer-editors to get the experience and to publish. T.S. Eliot edited the journal *Criterion* and published his own poetry there. He also helped edited the work of fellow Modernists, such as James Joyce and Wyndam Lewis, to get noticed by the audience and got published. The poet Ezra Pound also produced a magazine *Blast* that brought lots of authors and their works to the limelight (Morley 2010).

Becoming an editor is not by application but through getting pleasure in reading and appreciating their own and others work. This is mostly taken up in outlets such as magazines, radio and TV programmes as well as newspapers. Some writer-editors create a physical outlet

while others set up virtual open space for new writing, using the internet. In that way, would-be authors would get the audience and the taste by which their works will be recognised.
Are there such efforts in Nigerian publishing space?

3.2.4 Writers Circle

There are more writing groups, workshops, classes and courses all over the world. A forum such as this course would invite a writer to speak to the class. It gives an aspiring writer and author ideas, feedback, time to write and motivation, and most importantly the 'permission to be a writer' (Heather, 2005). Writer's courses and groups offer everybody the opportunity to gain from the skill and experience of others, and give them a helpful 'leg-up' into the writing world (Smith, 1991). Although, as William Wordsworth would say poetry is a recollection of emotion in tranquillity, writers do not need to be 'lonely, palely loitering creatures' (Smith, 1991). Even Wordsworth himself, and other Romantic contemporaries such as John Keats and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, spent plenty of time talking to others; reading each other's drafts; discussing ideas in person and by writing letters. Mary Shelly, the wife of P.B Shelley and the author of *Franskeitein,* describes how she began writing the novel after a group of her friends agreed that they would each write a story and read it to each other as they went along. (Heather L., 2005). John Gardner said about Ernest Hemingway that his best way to becoming a writer was 'to go to Paris where many of the great writers were and study with the greatest theorists of the time and one of the shrewdest writers, Gertrude Stein, Joseph Conrad, though we tend to think of him as a solitary genius, worked in close community with Ford Madox Ford, H.G. Wells, Henry James and Stephen Crane' (Gardner, 1999).

Established authors usually give writers workshop for aspiring authors. John Gardner's *On Becoming a Novelist,* provides excellent tips on writing workshops and classes, which is inspirational and useful to would-be novel writers. Paul Hyland (1993) *Getting into Poetry* is as well a good reference for would be poets (Heather, L, 2005). Contemporary Nigerian authors offer such workshops to reading circles. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Sefi Atta, Helon Habila and many authors give talks generally about writing and specifically about their writing in many reading groups and circles.
As an aspiring writer from Nigeria, try to locate and be part of such fora.

3.3 Conclusion

For an aspiring writer to get published, the significance of an editor should be recognised. Editors make the work complete. An aspiring author should as well experiment with editing. Editing and publishing outlets have been established by renowned authors. They use the outlet to support other upcoming authors and their allies. Editorial skills can also be obtained through writing workshops, courses, classes and reading groups. An aspiring authors should explore the opportunities in such outlets.

3.4 Summary

The unit espoused the significance of editor and editing in the publication process. The unit also stressed the significance of setting up editing outlets by aspiring authors. Writing workshops, groups and circles are also avenues for editing works and getting the skills of editing which aspiring authors should explore.

3.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Identify and discuss the relevance of editor in the publication process
(ii) Mention and discuss the processes of setting up publishing and editing outlets
(iii) Identify and assess the significance of writing workshop
(iv) Identify and discuss writers reading groups and editing spaces in Nigeria.

3.6 Reference and Further Reading

Morley, David (2010). *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Gardner, John (1985). *On Becoming a Novelist.* New York: HarperPerennial

Heather, Leach (2005) 'Writing Together: Groups and Workshop' in Graham, Robert, Helen Newell, Heather Leach and John Singleton (eds) (2005). *The Road to Somewhere: A Creative Writing Companion.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Smith, Nancy (1991). *The Fiction Writer's Handbook.* London: Judy Piatkus

Unit 4:CHALLENGES OF PUBLISHING

4.0 INTRODUCTION

There are many challenges that a would-be author faces to finally get the finished manuscript accepted and published. This unit presented some of such challenges.

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, students will be able to

(i) Identify and discuss three challenges faced in publishing
(ii) Discuss the various ways in which an aspiring author faces rejection
(iii) Mention and explain the significance of readership in the publication process
(iv) Assess and discuss nature of publishing houses and readership in Nigeria

4.2 MAIN CONTENTS

4.2.1 Publishing challenges and rejection

One of the greatest test for a creative writer is the 'quality' or how 'good' or 'bad' his or her writing is. Where an author gets several rejections and is unable to get a major publishing house, he or she goes for community publishing through reading circles and arts centres that organise group publishing. The assurance of publication rises the expectations of the would-be writer in such a forum. That is why most creative writing tutorial centres provide a linkage for the aspiring author to meet with publishers, agents and editors. The creation of publishing opportunities to creative writing students should be encouraged in all fora, including this forum at the NOUN.

A second challenge is coming to limelight. When writers get published, they are encouraged or supported to market the published book. But when they are published where they do not get 'hyped', the work may end up gathering dust in their shelves, creating works without readers.

There are few or no reputable publishing houses in Nigeria that can support aspiring authors. In the early period, most established authors in Nigeria got published in standard publishing house such as Longmans, Heinemann, and Penguin etc. These publishers had marketed Nigerian writers and their works over decades. They had the resources to push the work with wholesalers, reviewers and bookseller prior to launch, and to market it so strongly after the launch. Such publishing houses have publicity departments, whose job is create a 'buzz' (Smith, 1991) about the book, talk it up within and outside the company, push it to distributors, libraries and award organisations and rise their expectations making the book a bestseller.

But today, a new author has a few or no such opportunities of his work taken up by these big publishing houses. After publication the work in alternative outlets, a new author still needs the publicity and marketing of the work. And if eventually the work received good reception, the new author would not have the chance to be taken out on tours, get involved in reading the work, and signing copies of the work. The major thing an aspiring author should do, according to John Singleton, is 'smile' and 'keep smiling' (Graham, *et al*, 2005, p251).

Other challenges are cultural and social pressures. There are issues of censorship in some parts of the world in which an author is liable even to death for any libel. Salman Rushdie is still facing threat of death after publishing *The Satanic Verses.* Due to cultural and religious codes, an author cannot write about sensitive issues. In northern Nigeria, fictional works in the Hausa language, which were published through packaging and self-publishing, were confiscated and

the authors prosecuted. As Glenna Gordon stated, fictional works written under the novella romance genre are regarded as taboos when they contradict the cultural codes that request modesty on issues about love and sexual or social relationships. Such restrictions always ensure that the content does not contradict the Hausa cultural and Islamic religious injunctions. Gordon interviewed Sa'adatu Baba Ahmed, a female writer whose novella was confiscated and burnt and asked her why her text failed the screening. What she revealed captures the conservative cultural ideal about morality in the region: the fault was the description of a mere physical contact between a wife and her husband, when the husband wipes away tears from the face of his wife (Gordon, 2011, np). That fleeting physical contact between the sexes is felt to encourage premarital sex among young readers. The Islamic *Hisbah* censorship board created in 2001 in Kano state always ensured the contents of these novellas conform to cultural and Islamic religious dictates in the society. As part of cleansing those fictional works that failed the screening test, the censor board burnt many of such fictional novellas confiscated from the markets in 2007 (Whitsitt, 2002).

4.2.2 Writing and Readership

Choosing a genre that readers are most interested in is a sure way of getting a manuscript accepted. Readers are attracted by a fresh voice and a fresh view on a subject matter. A good writer should always enable the reader gets into a new perspective on a new theme or subject matter. Generally, accepting and publishing a work is influenced by the readership. But readership changes constantly, and publishers and literary agents attempt to predict the future trends. This also influences the acceptance of a finished manuscript.

In Nigeria, readership affects publishing. Very few people buy plays, novels or collection of poems to read for pleasure. Most books are bought for specific academic purposes. Poor readership is a big challenge for new authors.

4.3 Conclusion

Writing a creative work is one thing and getting it published is another. There are many challenges faced by aspiring writers to get published. Some of these include quality of a work to be accepted as well as social and cultural pressures. Absence of opportunities to publish with international and standard publishing houses is another challenge. More importantly, readership is a major challenge. Without readership, the whole process of publishing would not be successful. This is more pronounced in Nigeria, where there is poor reading culture.

4.4 Summary

The unit explored the challenges aspiring authors face to get their work published. Apart from producing a quality work, the social and cultural pressures are considered as factors. In addition, poor reading culture affects the publication of books, especially creative or literary works.

4.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) What are the probable challenges that an aspiring author would face in Nigeria?

(ii) List and explain three challenges of publishing.

(iii) Identify and discuss any community publishing or group publishing outlet in the world.

(iv) List and discuss the available publishing outlets in Nigeria

4.6 Reference and Further Reading

Gordon Glenna (2011) *Diagram of the Heart*. Red Hook Editions

Graham, Robert, Helen Newell, Heather Leach and John Singleton (eds) (2005). *The Road to Somewhere: A Creative Writing Companion.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Ike, Chukwuemeka (1991). *How to become a Published Writer.* Ibadan: Heinemann

Morley, David (2010). *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Smith, Nancy (1991). *The Fiction Writer's Handbook.* London: Judy Piatkus

Whitsitt, Novian (2002) "Islamic-Hausa Feminism and Kano Market Literature: Qur'anic Reinterpretation in the Novels of Balaraba Yakubu" in *Research in African Literatures,* 33 (2,) Indiana University Press

Unit 5: CREATIVE WRITING ACROSS DISCIPLINES

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Quite often, creative writing is attributed to the discipline of literary studies only. This unit discusses the range of influence and sway of creative writing in different disciplines. There is creativity of writing in the sciences, medicine and the environment. The position of the practice of creative writing in the curriculum is also discussed.

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, students will be able to

(i) Identify and discuss the practice of creative writing in the sciences
(ii) Discover and discuss the various ways in which creative writing crosses into other disciplines
(iii) Identify the place of creative writing within the academic curriculum
(iv) Identify and assess the opportunities creative writing give as vocation

5.2 MAIN CONTENTS

5.2.1 Creative Writing and Science

Creative writing is not restricted to the discipline of literature alone. There are many great writers of fiction and poetry whose discipline is not in the literature. In addition, a beautiful creative writing can come through any discipline. Science is one such disciplines in which creative writing can flourish. Popular science requires the same creative and technical skill as the writing of creative nonfiction. In fact, it is creative nonfiction, and the skill with which it is composed that have been responsible for 'melting many of the falsehoods that have iced up between the arts and sciences, not least the idea that scientist cannot write well' (Morley 2010). The belief was that scientist are not worried about writing down long and beautiful terminologies, but simply putting down the result and findings from the lab. But a use of creative writing in science course might contribute to greater public understanding of science and technology. The study and practice of creative writing make a better scientist because courses in creative writing encompass popular science and nonfiction. The Science fiction has opened up great areas of inventions and creations. As is noticed, sci-fi films and the creative inventions of the future have opened up new horizons for sciences and medicines. As Max Perutz, a popular science writer, observed, 'Imagination comes first in both artistic and scientific creations' (2003, p204).

5.2.2 A Crossover Discipline

'Writing across discipline' is the programme to help students synthesise, analyse and apply course content across discipline. Writing is a form of knowledge creation, and imitation is an honourable and ancient tradition in writing, and the arts, as it is in science and other forms of knowledge (Morley 2010). Because of the significance of creative and critical thinking, many universities in Europe employ creative writers and their students to work directly with undergraduate students and postgraduate researchers in the department of medicine, business, biology, computing, engineering and physics. Their presence is partly predicated on the need to help new scientists and business people to write more clearly and engagingly. This is because a

creative writer has composition and generic skills. They help such students begin to think more laterally in language. This results in having science students becoming better in their writings, communicating their findings more clearly, and benefitting from human contact and creative play as researchers (Morley 2010).

Literature and medicine is a programme introduced to U.S. medical schools in 1972. The aim of the course is to contribute to medicine through choosing texts and methods from contemporary and culturally diverse writers, novels, short stories, poetry, and drama. The targets are the physicians with the aim to develop their skills and to understand both human dimensions and practice of medicine. The texts and methods are meant to fulfil the five broad goals of including study of creative writing in medicine: 1) Literary accounts of illness can teach physicians concrete and powerful lessons about the lives of sick people; 2) great works of fiction about medicine enable physicians to recognize the power and implications of what they do; 3) through the study of narrative, the physician can better understand patients' stories of sickness and his or her own personal stake in medical practice; 4) literary study contributes to physicians' expertise in narrative ethics; and 5) literary theory offers new perspectives on the work and the genres of medicine (Med. in Lit.).

The use of such literary texts and methods of teaching has offered physicians the opportunity to understand the 'concrete particularity and the metaphorical richness of the predicaments of sick people and the challenges and rewards offered to their physicians' (Med. in Lit.), which has greatly improved human competencies of doctoring, which are a central feature of the art of medicine. National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) has identified the significance of the study of literature in medicine and devoted postgraduate course in the area. ENG 801 is devoted to this field, with the aim to expose students to the interdisciplinary connection between literature and medicine. Students are introduced to literary texts that represent physical and mental pathology and the manner in which the texts narrate ethical issues in the medical profession and acquaint the students with the diverse human conditions expressed through literature. Such texts are produced by physician-writers, patient-writers and non-physician writers.

Just recently, University of Abuja introduced a postgraduate MA Literary Studies programme comprising Clinical Literary Studies and Environmental Literary Studies. Clinical Literary Studies involves the area scope of literature and medicine. Environment and Literature has to do with ecology and environment, which has been studied under eco-criticism.

5.2.3 Writing Across Curriculum

Writing across curriculum is based on the understanding that each discipline has its own conventions of language and style and that these conventions must be taught to students so that they might successfully participate in academic discourse. A study of creative writing fosters critical thinking and offer students the skill to be critical writers and readers.

All good writers are creative. When a textbook in philosophy or zoology is written clearly and entertainingly, with an eye on the audience, it becomes an act of creative writing. When we do something extra ordinary, we use the term creative. So creative writing cuts across all disciplines.

5.3 Conclusion

The range of the creative writing discipline coverage into other areas is widely acknowledged since about half a century ago. Creative writing has impacted the study of sciences, especially medicine and the environment. Creative writing is also realised in all disciplines across the curriculum, especially in producing creative non-fiction and effective communication, as well as critical writing.

5.4 Summary

The unit discussed the positive effect of the study of literature and creative works across disciplines. The employment of literary texts in fiction and poetry has been in existence in the sciences and medicines. The unit discussed the manner in which scientific findings and results can better be expressed through effective communication in writing. It has also been seen in ecological sciences, where fiction is used to protect and preserve the earth. Creative writing has also been influential in producing critical learners and readers as well as effective communicators.

5.5 Activities and Tutor Marked Assignments

(i) Identify and discuss the practice of creative writing in the Sciences

(ii) Discover and discuss the various ways in which creative writing crosses into medicine and other disciplines

(iii) Identify and assess the opportunities creative writing gives as a vocation

(iv) Identify and discuss the works of any five physician-writers, patient-writers or non-physician writers that have contributed to the field of literature and medicine and environment across the world, including Nigeria.

5.6 Reference and Further Reading

Gardner, John (1985). *On Becoming a Novelist.* New York: HarperPerennial

Heather, Leach (2005) 'Reading as a Writer' in Graham, Robert, Helen Newell, Heather Leach and John Singleton (eds) (2005). *The Road to Somewhere: A Creative Writing Companion.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan

'Medicine in Literature' available from "Medicine in Literature"[MAJR] - Search Results - PubMed (nih.gov)

Morley, David (2010). *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Perutz, Max (2003). *I Wish I'd Made You Angry Earlier.* New York: Cold Spring Harbour Laboratory Press.

Smith, Nancy (1991). *The Fiction Writer's Handbook.* London: Judy Piatkus

Module Six: ASSESSMENT
(Portfolio on Creative Work OR Creative Theory)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The module is entirely on writing Term Paper, Dissertation or Final year project. The guidelines and criteria for writing the portfolio are outlined. The philosophy of the dissertation is candidates will now work independently on their portfolio of creative work or create a theoretical work as dissertation. The candidate will be supported through meetings with their supervisors.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

(i) Be acquainted with how to write the project work
(ii) Note the frequency of supervision and seminar contact
(iii) Note the number of words or length of the project work
(iv) Note the format and structure of the portfolio or the project work

Unit 1 TERM PAPER/ PROJECT/DISSERTATION SEMINARS

Assigned students will meet with their assigned project supervisors to discuss and agree on their dissertation topic in seminars. This should also cover the framework of the critical discussion and the aspect of the creative piece. The discussion should include approaches to planning their work together with any issue of concerns. A prospective writer will present the plans on the final year dissertation as a form of proposal defence. The supervisor and the candidate have to agree with the topic and structure before approval of the topic. In the same vein, candidates writing Critical work for their project should agree on the topic with their assigned supervisor.

Unit 2 PLANNING YOUR PORTFOLIO

The facilitator will discuss with the students the requirements for the portfolio. The meetings with the supervisors are mandatory. This should be in a form of Critical Introduction and a Creative Work of fiction, poetry or a play. The Critical introduction requires the candidate to situate the context of the writing and review the critical theory underlying the work. As part of the Creative work, the candidates may choose to write a part of a novel, a collection of poetry or a part of play as part of the creative writing section of the portfolio. The work can also be a 20,000 word critical dissertation on any aspect of authorship and creative writing. Whatever a candidate decides to write on must be discussed and agreed with the supervisor

Unit 3 STRUCTURE AND FORMAT OF THE PORTFOLIO

The candidate will be required to work independently with a view to producing at least a 15,000 word work of creative writing. The Critical introduction should not be more than 5, 000 words, while the Creative Work may be a collection of poems, a linked collection of short stories or a section of a novel or a play. A candidate may not include as part of the Portfolio any piece of work already submitted as part of assignment for writing practice or for master classes.
Candidates are to follow other guidelines of NOUN in the process of writing the project work.