From Knowledge to Wisdom

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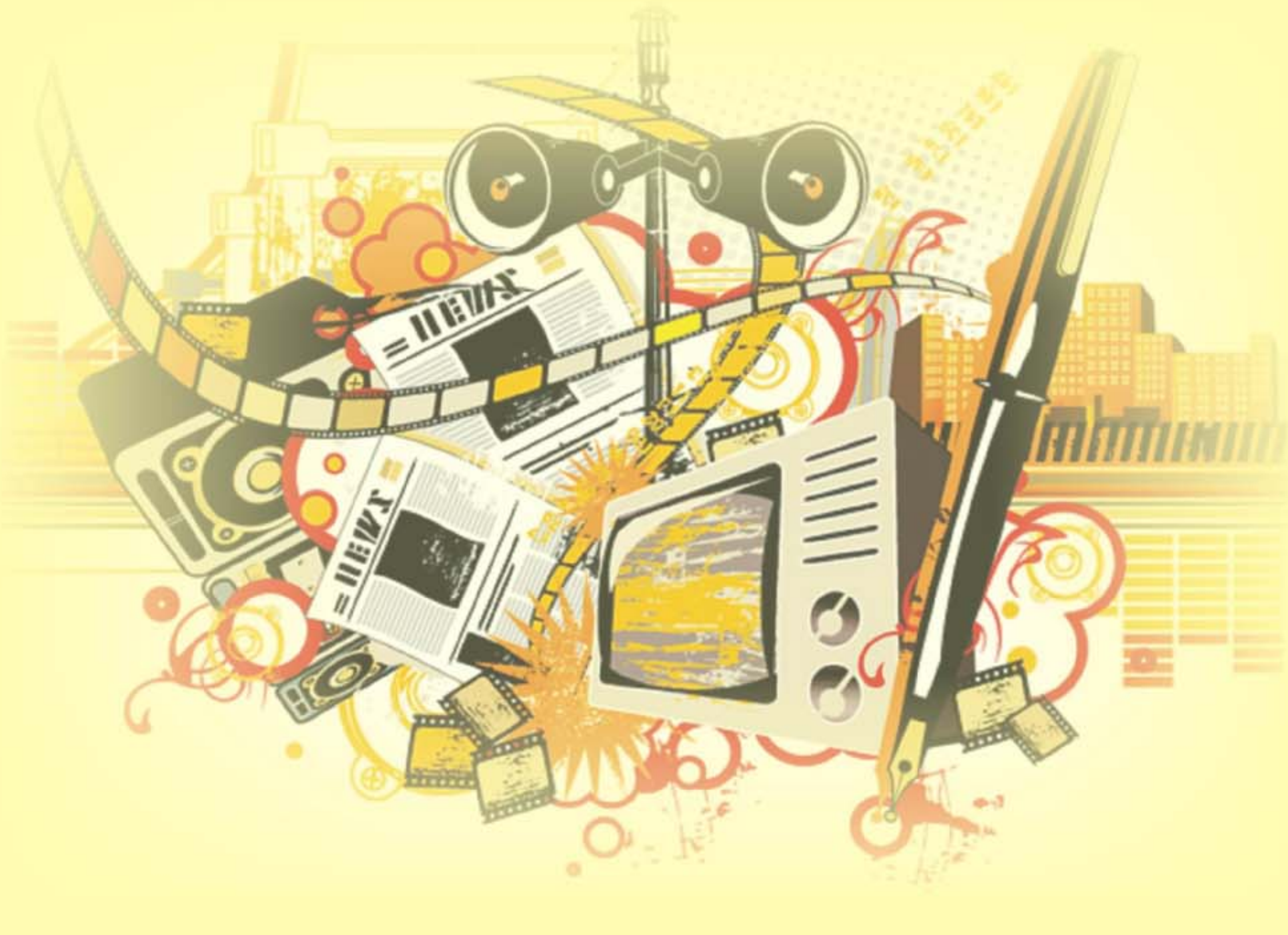

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The editors are well appreciated to the scholars who have generously contributed to the peer review of articles submitted to *Journalism and Mass Communication*.

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Contents

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The Economics of Decline in the Media Industry: Survival Strategies of American Print Media Firms and Implications for a Diminishing Print Media Industry in Nigeria*

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The media industry plays a central role in the emergence of a politically, socially, and economically conscious citizenry. This role has elevated the industry as a major stakeholder in the political, socio-cultural, and economic development of the people. This essential role, however, has come under serious threat following the emergence of the Digital Age, changing social trends, and a global economy that is in distress. This is the main reason this paper investigates the survival strategies adopted by the US print media industry to deal with the decline and see how the Nigerian print media industry that is facing similar decline can benefit from the strategies. The method of study is qualitative. We gathered data through in-depth interviews and on-site observation of the operations of the selected media organizations. We also reviewed literature provided by the media firms and the ones that are already in the public domain. Our findings confirm recent projections that the American and Nigerian media industries are truly facing economics of decline and that the Nigerian industry is worst hit. The study identified some of the strategies adopted by the American print media industry to deal with the economic recession to include introduction of online editions, use of pay wall, free online views, Search Engine Optimization, Micro-funding, etc. After thorough interrogation of the literature and results, we conclude that the Nigerian print media industry could apply similar strategies used in the US to address its own negative economic situation. We also recommend an upgrade in the media training curricula to address some of these concerns effectively leading to the emergence of "Media Entrepreneurship" as a course in Communication/Media Departments in Nigerian universities.

Keywords: economics, decline, survival strategies, Print Media Industry, Nigeria, America

Introduction

It is no longer debatable that the media industry anywhere in the world is a major nerve centre coordinating other sectors or industries and serving as a major link between one industry and others, especially between the government and the governed. The industry plays a central role in the emergence of a politically, socially, and economically conscious citizenry. This role has elevated the industry as a major stakeholder in the political, socio-cultural, and economic development of people. This also explains why the media are often

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regarded as the “Fourth Estate of the Realm”, “Watchdog of the Society”, and other similar recognitions that place the media at the heart of nation building. This essential role of the media, however, has come under serious threat following the emergence of the Digital Age, changing social trends, and a global economy that is in distress. This, we refer to in this paper as economics of decline.

Since the beginning of this Century, the economics of decline has hit the print media industry in the US. How has the US media managed this economic crisis? What strategies and alternative journalism models have the US print media industry evolved to deal with the economic crisis? Are there implications of the US experience in dealing with the crisis for a declining print media industry in Nigeria? In other words, can the Nigerian print media industry facing similar decline benefit from the practical strategies applied in the US case? These posers form the basis for this study.

The traditional print media in the US are shrinking. According to Kurpius, Metzgar, and Rowley (2010, p. 359), “what started as the gradual decline typical of a mature industry has snowballed with the ongoing economic crisis. The recession is the culprit for more than 30,000 newsroom employees who lost their jobs through layoffs, buyouts, firings, and newspaper closings between June 1, 2007 and September 30, 2009”. The Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ) did extensive studies in this area and corroborates Kurpius, Metzgar and Rowley above. In its 2009 *State of the News Media* report, PEJ predicted that more cuts are expected in the media industry and that one in five newspaper journalists would lose their jobs in the coming decade. According to the same PEJ (2009) report, newspaper advertising revenues also dropped to 23% between 2007 and 2009 to complicate the industry’s headaches. Till date, the trend has not changed as ad revenues continue to drop. The same scenario in the print media was also applicable in the broadcast media where revenues for local television channels dropped seven percent in 2008, while audience growth remains flat or declining (PEJ, 2009). A similar study by PEJ (2008) found that journalists were now more occupied by the financial problems of the industry than other primary concerns of journalism; an indication of a depressed industry.

Curran (2010, p. 465) provides further facts to back up the economic recession in the print media industry thus: “the migration of advertising to the web, compounded by the 2008-9 recession, has led to a rising number of newspaper closures, and also contradictions in news operations, giving rise to increasing alarm”. Continuing, Curran notes that between January 2008 and September 2009, 106 local newspapers closed down in Britain while in America, major newspapers like *Christian Science Monitor* and *Seattle Post* ceased print publication. The rise of the Internet also had enormous contribution to the situation as it led to the “hemorrhaging of paid jobs in journalism” (Curran, 2010, p. 465). These of course are enough reasons to worry Western journalists to shift their focus from the primary concern of journalism to their financial sustainability. And in Nigeria, the commercialization of news has become inevitable for the same reason of financial sustainability.

Kaye and Quinn (2010) further corroborate the PEJ findings thus:

> The value of news media companies around the world has crashed since the global financial crisis started to bite in 2008. In America alone, newspapers lost $64.5 billion in market value that year. Traditional news organizations are struggling to survive. But the economic downtown has only speeded up a process that has been underway for decades. Emerging technologies and changing social trends began to disrupt established media business models and practices long before the latest crisis on Wall Street. (p. 1)

The “full horror” of the global decline, according to Kaye and Quinn (2010), manifested with the crippling of mainstream media’s source of revenue, advertising. This, according to Kaye and Quinn (2010) led to:

> …decline of print newspapers and magazines, and decisions to produce online-only editions or outsource content. In the US, advertising revenue plummeted between 2007 and 2008… In 2008, American newspaper advertising revenue dropped 16.4 percent to $37.9 billion. And eMarketer estimated another $10 billion of advertising income would disappear by 2012, leaving the industry half of the size it was in 2005.
>
> Job cuts followed the decline in revenue and market valuation. In 2000, there were about 56,400 newsroom workers in the US. But that number fell by more than 15,000 between 2006 and early 2009 because of layoffs. (p. 7)

Our concern for the print media industry is based on the understanding that "newspapers are major employers of journalists and traditionally the largest injectors of news stories into the news cycle" (Young, 2010, p. 610). Continuing, Young (2010) argues that the newspaper industry in the US and UK are ailing. Her arguments are supported by a 2008 report of the World Association of Newspapers (WAN, 2008) that predicted that decline will hit the newspapers most. Emily Bell of *The Guardian*, cited in the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA, 2008, p. 4) argues, "We are on the brink of two years' carnage for Western media… of systematic collapse, not just a cyclical downtown". In a similar observation, the *Financial Times* of December 10, 2008 carried a report from Deloitte that, "the newspaper and magazine industry could be decimated in 2009" (Young, 2010, p. 610). Meyer (2004) earlier predicted that newspapers would run out of readers in 2043 and a 2006 edition of *The Economist* claimed that, "half the world's newspapers [were] likely to close in the foreseeable future".

These closures and redundancies, according to Curran (2010), are undermining quality journalism. Citing Dear (2009), Curran observes, "Local and national democracy is suffering" and "Councils, courts and public bodies are no longer being scrutinized".

With a solution mentality however, H. Batta, Ekeanyanwu, and N. W. Batta (2017) citing Lavrusik (2009) note that:

> Newspapers are struggling in terms of finances and that the underpinning issues are business-driven, structural, cultural, and related to the industrialized basis of circulating newspapers. … newspapers should do 12 things to survive: putting the web first and reporting from multiple platforms, going niche, offering unique content in print, becoming curators and contextualizers, integrating real time reporting, and restructuring internal cultures. Others include encouraging innovation, investing in mobile technologies, communicating with readers, building communities, and reconsidering the use of pay walls for high-end content. (H. Batta, Ekeanyanwu, & N. W. Batta, 2017, p. 291 citing Lavrusik, 2009)

In the European setting, Collins (2013, p. 1) observes that, "a long illness usually precedes the death of a paper; journalists are sacked, newsgathering budgets are cut, pagination is reduced, and potential consumers are excluded by price rises". He states that, *The Guardian* media group lost £129m in 2012 and that two UK papers – The London-based *Evening Standard* and *The Independent* have indicated that they needed investors to take up part of the newspapers' liabilities.

All of these are indicative of a global economy in recession which has obviously manifested in a global journalism crisis and decline. However, one may ask why the peculiar attention to the American print media industry? The answer is simple: One major export of the US to the developing world is its media system/structure, which supports societal freedom and a democratic culture. Therefore, most nations that have embraced American type democracy have also embraced American type media system. Nigeria is one developing nation that embraced both American type democracy and media system (Ekeanyanwu, 2013). The implication of this is that the decline in the US print media industry has started manifesting in very dangerous dimensions in the Nigerian print media industry because of the similarities in ownership, structure, and general operations of the two industries.

The following statistics help argue this thesis that the decline in the US is also manifesting in Nigeria. In 1980, the circulation strength of ten leading newspapers in Nigeria was 631,000 (Ugboajah, 1980) while by 1995, the figure rose to 1,065,000 (Maja-Pearce, 1995). However, by 2009, the decline set in. A study commissioned by three media-related associations: Advertising Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), and Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) in 2009 shows that the "top seven newspapers in the country – *Punch, The Nation, The Sun, Vanguard, Guardian, This Day, Daily Trust, Tribune, Champion,* and *Compass* – have a combined daily sales of 176,202 copies" (Brandwork Nigeria, 2009). This is not all. All the newspapers covered in the study reported above, have combined circulation strength of 300,000 copies per day. This is happening in a country with population strength of over 170,000,000 people and literacy level above 40 percent.

Beyond these statistics, a careful observer of happenings in the print media industry in Nigeria will note the declining circulation strength and sales, loss of revenue and impact, and closures caused by inability to break even. In a recent study, Ukonu, Ani, and Ndubisi (2013) found that the Nigerian print media industry has suffered a major setback with the emergence of digital forms of news dissemination. In other words, they observe that the Internet and social media for instance, have eaten deep into the market share of the Nigerian print media industry. These become very worrisome especially in Nigeria where newspapers play significant roles in the socio-political development of the nation (Ekeanyanwu, 2013).

The current authors, as part of the execution of a Grant received from the Tertiary Educational Trust Fund (TETFUND) sponsored study, recently established the fact that the Nigerian print media industry is still in economic recession or decline. The authors studied four mainstream and national-based newspapers in Nigeria (*Guardian*; *The Sun, Daily Trust* and *Leadership*) to reach their conclusions. The findings of the study are published in H. Batta, Ekeanyanwu, and N. W. Batta (2017) and Oyokunyi, Ekeanyanwu, and Aniebo (2017). These studies therefore serve as the background to the current effort to study the US print media industry and identify potential or possible strategies that could help the Nigerian print media industry come out of the woods even if the industry players are yet to appreciate the long-term implications of a reclining industry.

Why is the US print media industry the specific industry to investigate for possible clues to rescue the Nigerian print media industry? First and as earlier stated, the Nigerian press shares common history with the US media system because the latter influenced the discipline and practice of the profession in Nigeria. The Western type media system has been the dominant media system in Nigeria before and after the country's political independence.

Second, the early indigenous scholars in the discipline who shaped media education and practice in Nigeria where mostly trained in the US or Western type universities. When they returned to Nigeria, they helped shape media education and practice and the footprints are still visible decades after.

Third and most importantly, since the emergence of the decline in the US media, efforts have been made to address the situation. This led to some new ways to support the traditional media firms. Some of these include Aggregation, Search Engine Optimization, Hyperlocal media, Dayparting strategies and sponsorship models. Other strategies adopted include Microfunding and Micropayments, Collaboration between mainstream media and citizen journalists, narrowing a media focus with Niche and Passion content, and Partnerships.

Based on these, it is obvious that the US print industry is addressing its own decline. However, the literature on how these strategies are being implemented and the various levels of success remain scanty. This is the main reason the current authors choose to investigate some of the conventional print media firms in the

US to identify the strategies adopted to deal with the decline and the levels of success achieved. It is also the ultimate aim of this paper to seek ways to domesticate these strategies within the Nigerian print media industry to address similar economics of the decline in the Nigerian media industry.

An Overview of the Three US-Based Print Media Firms

The New York Times was founded as the *New-York Daily Times* on September 18, 1851 and published by Raymond, Jones, and Company (The New York Times Company, 2017). The newspapers running vision is captured thus:

> We shall be *Conservative*, in all cases where we think Conservatism is essential to the public good;—and we shall be *Radical* in everything which may seem to us to require radical treatment and radical reform. We do not believe that *everything* in society is either exactly right or exactly wrong;—what is good we desire to preserve and improve;—what is evil, to exterminate, or reform. (The New York Times Company, 2017)

In 1857, the newspaper shortened its name to *The New-York Times* and by 1890; it dropped the hyphen in the name. *The New York Times* is an award winning media firm in the United States having won up to 122 Pulitzer Prizes, more than any other newspaper in the US (The New York Times Company, 2017).

The second news media firm studied is *The Los Angeles Times* "which was first published on December 4, 1881, as the *Los Angeles Daily Times* under the direction of Nathan Cole Jr. and Thomas Gardiner" (*The Los Angeles Times*, 2017). A historical account in *The Los Angeles Times* (2017) notes thus:

> *The Los Angeles Times* was first printed at the Mirror printing plant, owned by Jesse Yarnell and T.J. Caystile. Unable to pay the printing bill, Cole and Gardiner turned the paper over to the Mirror Company. In the meantime, S.J. Mathes had joined the firm, and it was at his insistence that the *Times* continued publication. In July 1882, Harrison Gray Otis moved from Santa Barbara to become the paper's editor. Otis made the *Times* a financial success. In an era where newspapers were driven by party politics, the *Times* was directed at Republican readers. (p. 3)

The third news media firm studied is the *Chicago Tribune*, which was founded in 1847 as a daily newspaper based in Chicago, United States of America. It is owned by Tronc, Inc., formerly Tribune Publishing (Wendt, 1979). It is the "eighth-largest newspaper in the United States by circulation [and became the second-largest under Tribune's ownership after the *Chicago Tribune*'s parent company purchased the *Los Angeles Times*]" (Wendt, 1979).

These three US-based newspapers were selected because they are among the leading newspaper firms in the United States that have visible strategies to address the decline in the industry. The extant literature on how these newspaper firms are dealing with the decline in their individual firms are also available in the public domain. The business executives of these firms also agreed to participate in this study to further substantiate some of the findings gathered as part of literature review.

Problem Statement

The print media industry all over the world relies heavily on advertising revenues first and readership network to sustain its operations. The 21st Century reality is that print news organizations are losing advertising revenues and their audiences because of the digitalization that emerged in the beginning of the Century. Meanwhile, the new online news providers that are "stealing" traditional print media audiences and advertising revenues are unable to develop business models to support comprehensive and quality news coverage and distribution.

The questions arise: How will quality journalism be funded and sustained in the long term? Will traditional print media firms remain viable in terms of meeting their obligations as business entities? The current digital platforms that helped fast track the decline, how far will they go and how long will they last? The other alternative methods of newsgathering and dissemination developed in the US, how will they be funded in the long run?

In reality, the US print media industry is already addressing these questions but the outcome, success or failure rates, models of implementation, etc. remain scanty in the literature. However, the effort and strategies being applied in the US print media industry to address its present decline are worth our scholarly attention especially for a Nigerian print media industry that appears to be also grappling with a similar economic situation. This central problem informs this investigation and the selection of the US as the research location and Nigeria as a potential beneficiary of the findings of this investigation.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the survival strategies adopted by the US print media industry to deal with the decline in the industry and to see how the Nigerian print media industry that is facing similar decline can benefit from the strategies. In specific terms, this paper aims to achieve the following:

(1) Identify and explain the indices of decline in the US and Nigerian print media industries.

(2) Identify the survival strategies or alternative newsgathering and dissemination models adopted by the US print media industry to deal with the decline in the news industry.

(3) Determine the implications of the identified survival strategies on the Nigerian print media industry that is facing similar decline.

Research Questions

(1) What are the indices of decline in the US and the Nigerian print media industries?

(2) What are the survival strategies or alternative newsgathering and dissemination models that have evolved to address the decline in the US print media industry?

(3) What are the implications of the identified survival strategies on the Nigerian print media industry that is facing similar decline?

Significance

This project is important to the US and Nigerian print media industries in many ways. First, the study serves as an external assessment of the operations and strategies evolved by the US media industry to address the economic recession. The review helps evaluate the US operations and performance.

Second, this is a sort of social responsibility project. If the identified strategies are effectively mobilized in the Nigerian media industry, the US will of course take the credit having evolved the strategies, supported this study and offered technical assistance in adapting the strategies in Nigeria.

For Nigeria, we have observed that the Nigerian media training institutions appear busy training students for a fast disappearing industry. No serious attempt has been made since the economic recession in the media industry set in to address the situation theoretically through a comprehensive review of the curricula used for training media professionals in Nigerian higher institutions of learning. This study may therefore refocus the training curricula in Nigeria to begin to address this decline. We therefore expect that the curriculum reviews will lead to the emergence of "Media Entrepreneurship" as a course in Communication/Media Departments in Nigerian universities. Such a course does not exist for now.

Fourth, some elements in the Nigerian print media industry are still in a state of denial over its declining fortunes. This study may offer the industry reasons to come out of that situation and face reality. In essence, the Nigerian newspaper industry will be offered solutions and models it can adopt to remain in competitive media business.

Method

This study is largely based on the qualitative paradigm. Therefore, we made use of in-depth interview as the major instrument of data gathering. Qualitative research is preferred when the intention is to determine and theorize about significant issues that largely affect a human population or concern a social phenomenon (Jamshed, 2014). Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick (2008, p. 292) further support the use of this method of research when they argue that qualitative methods, such as interviews, "provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative methods such as questionnaire".

We gathered data through in-depth interviews of two Business Executives of the selected newspaper firms and on-site observation of the operations of the firms. We also reviewed literature provided by the media firms under investigation and the ones that are already in the public domain. We selected *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and the *Chicago Tribune* because they have evolved different strategies to deal with the recession in the industry. They were also selected because of their circulation strength, reach and sustainability models that were appealing to the current researchers.

With the help of three Research Assistants (RAs) that were engaged and trained on arrival of the Lead Author in the United States, interviews were organized and conducted with the two Business Executives, contributors, and community members of the selected media firms, most of who elicited confidentiality clauses from us before agreeing to speak. Additional interviews were carried out as the data gathering process intensified. We also conducted online search on platforms such as Guidestar.com and the websites of the firms to get some vital information about the firms. The team also reviewed documents published by the selected media firms as part of the data gathering technique.

We applied the grounded theory as a framework for our analysis, "following the lead of Geertz (1973) and his use of 'thick descriptions'" as applied by Kurpius, Metzgar, and Rowley (2010, p. 363) in their study on sustaining Hyperlocal media. The interview protocols were standardized but with a lot of flexibility to follow up on issues that emerged in the key interviews. Adopting Kurpius et al. methodology, "one protocol was developed for people within the organization and another for community members and citizen contributors, but both followed similar lines of questioning. This format allowed conversations to progress naturally, with an emphasis on obtaining a person's point of view" (Kurpius et al., 2010, p. 363).

All the interviews lasted for about 45 minutes and were recorded and later transcribed. Supplementary notes were also taken by the lead researcher and the RAs to forestall any recording failures. The results are presented as part of literature, noting that the fundamental issues that the study sought to unravel, using the Research Questions as guide, were mostly obtained from extensive search and review of literature. The interviews merely confirmed what we already gathered in literature and published documents about the state of the newspapers and what they have done and are doing to address the decline. We also found out that the business information the firms did not want to talk about were also not on any public domain, thus, signposting the literature review as the main source of data that have been presented and discussed here.

Results and Discussion

This section on results and discussion is based on the Research Questions that guided the data gathering process. Since this study is largely qualitative, the data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings are merged to bring out any theoretical underpinnings and highlight major concerns with specific focus on the objectives of the study.

Summary of Responses to Research Question One

What Are the Indices of Decline in the US and the Nigerian Print Media Industries?

The decline in the American print media industry is real because of dwindling advertising revenues and free readers who continue to crave for quality journalism without plans to pay for it. As we have already observed, quality journalism is expensive to produce and consumers have started scouting for alternatives rather than staying committed to the traditional newspaper.

The survival of American newspapers in the second half of the 20th Century was largely tied to advertising revenue. According to Professor Robert Picard of Jonkoping International Business School in Sweden, who is reputed to be one of the world's most eminent media economist,

> Advertising sales accounted for 71% of newspaper income in 1956 compared with 82% by 2000. The category proportion of advertising also changed. By 1950, retail advertising made up 57 percent of advertising revenue, national advertising 25 percent and classified advertising 18 percent. Half a century later, retail and classified were nearly equal in terms of their contribution (44 percent and 40 percent respectively) and national advertising provided only 16 percent of total advertising revenue. These shifts made newspaper more dependent on classified employment, automobile, and real estate advertising that tend to be more cyclical and respond more to changes in the economy than brand advertising that makes up the bulk of television advertising. (Cited in Kaye & Quinn, 2010, p. 6)

Professor Picard (as cited in Kaye & Quinn, 2010, p. 6) further argues that, "the newspaper industry was dependent upon advertising for the bulk of its income across the five decades but that dependence grew stronger during the final quarter of the century". This argument is further supported by the Project for Excellence in Journalism in its 2009 State of the News Media Report thus:

> Newspapers have often used the cover price as a tool to manipulate circulation figures and advertising rates. So, they have always been reluctant to raise the cover price for fear of losing readers and having to charge lower ad rates. Circulation at US newspapers peaked at 63.3 million in 1984. By the end of 2008, US weekday newspaper circulation had dropped to a combined 48.6 million. The declines in the print newspaper circulation, which had begun to accelerate alarmingly in the late 2003, only became deeper in 2008. (PEJ, 2009)

The global financial crisis of 2007-2008 also had enormous negative impact on the American print media industry. The greatest impact of this crisis was the crippling of the mainstream media's primary source of income, advertising, and reduced the options media companies had for borrowing money to expand (Kaye & Quinn, 2010). This loss of income facilitated many negative events in the media industry in the US and forced in changes that many companies may have anticipated but never expected to happen so fast. Some of these changes included decline of the traditional print newspaper, and the decision to produce online-only issues or outsourcing of content generally. Kaye and Quinn (2010, p. 7) capture this situation better thus:

> In the US, advertising revenue plummeted between 2007 and 2009, marking the first three-year decline since the Great Depression of the 1930s. In 2008, American newspaper advertising revenue dropped 16.4 percent to $37.9 billion. And eMarketer estimated another $10 billion of advertising income would disappear by 2012, leaving the industry half the size it was in 2005.

To further explain the US situation, Saperstein (2014) observes that US newspapers are struggling to survive in the age of technology. Noting that, “in 2013, total revenue within the newspaper industry decreased by 2.6 percent representing over a billion dollars in lost funds. As a result, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* have all experienced major losses, with each of the papers cutting anywhere from 20 to 100 newsroom jobs…” He adds that, “from 2006 to 2012, the number of working journalists in the United States decreased by 17,000” (Saperstein, 2014, p. 2). To survive in the age of technology, Saperstein suggests that, “innovation in the news industry will involve changing not only the traditional journalism model, but also incorporating changes into its business technological and marketing sectors as well” (p. 4).

Providing more details of the decline of the newspaper industry in the West, United States inclusive, Barthelemy et al. (2011) note:

> Markets where print newspapers are more dependent on revenues from advertising were more severely affected by the economic recession. Worldwide, advertising comprises 57 percent of overall newspaper revenue while circulation makes up 43 percent. In the US, newspapers generate on the average 73 percent of revenues from advertising, and sell their print copies at lower prices. In Germany, newspapers generate 53 percent of their revenues from advertising. In the United Kingdom the average is 50 percent. From 2008 to 2009, newspapers’ ad revenues declined 25 percent in the US, 22.1 percent in the UK and 2.2 percent in Brazil. By contrast, they increased by 10 percent in Egypt and Lebanon and by more than 13 percent in India. Newspaper circulation fell by 10.6 percent in the US, 5.6 percent in Europe and 4.6 percent in South America; and grew by 1 percent in Asia and 4.8 percent in Africa from 2008 to 2009. (p. 36)

Professor Jay Hamilton of Duke University, another notable media economist, was quoted by Kaye and Quinn (2010) of having observed that by the start of 2008, the market valuation of America’s publicly traded newspaper firms had dropped to $23 billion relative to the end of 2004. This amounted to a devaluation of about 42 percent. During the same period, non-newspaper Internet firms enjoyed 43.7% of local online ads while print newspapers only managed 33.4 percent. The immediate effect of these declines was the loss of print media jobs in America. For instance, in 2000, there were about 56,400 newsroom workers in the US but between 2006 and 2009; only 41,400 of such jobs were left because of layoffs (Kaye & Quinn, 2010).

These declines have continued unabated till date leading to an industry that is now a shadow of its former self. More newsroom jobs have been lost from 2009 to 2017 and the ad revenue during this period has also continued to drop. This was what prompted Emily Bell, who is the Director of Digital Content for British Content, *The Guardian*, to note thus: “this is systematic collapse, not just a cyclical downturn. Even the surviving brands will have to go through a period of unprofitability”.

The same situation is applicable in the Nigerian print media industry as Oyokunyi, Ekeanyanwu, and Aniebo (2017) noted and further corroborated by another related study by H. Batta, Ekeanyanwu, and N. W. Batta (2017). The two related studies used four mainstream Nigerian newspapers to conclude that the Nigerian newspapers are suffering from decline and that this may continue beyond 2020 unless something positively dramatic happens to change the fortunes of the print media industry in Nigeria. For example, Oyokunyi et al. (2017) who studied three of the four newspapers on the specifics of their economic challenges found out from *The Sun* that:

> ...since the country has no functional plant that manufactures newsprint, the challenges of forex/high exchange rate has become a torn in the flesh of the print media in Nigeria, as this has increased cost per ton. The second specific challenge from the perspective of *The Sun* newspaper is that most print media today, including *The Sun*, are struggling to pay staff salaries and allowances as at when due because of dwindling ad revenues and low circulation figures. *The Sun* also suggested that even when the firm receives too much or certain kinds of ad, that this affects space for editorial content and the consequence of a preference given to advertising space over editorial content is that many stories that are of interest to the reading public are not given adequate coverage. This could eventually result in many readers switching to other forms of media for their daily news needs. *The Sun* also suggested that the high inflation in the country has dramatically increased both its recurrent and capital expenditures to unmanageable proportions. (p. 318)

Continuing, Oyokunyi et al. (2017) also found out the *Guardian* and the *Leadership* newspapers share similar economic circumstances thus:

> The *Guardian*, on its part emphasizes that the specific economic challenges centre more on finance, occasioned by the biting economic situation in the country. According to the newspaper, because of the unfriendly business environment, there have been high incidences of drop in readership, low sales, and dwindling ad placements from individuals, governments and organizations. The challenges of funding therefore affect many traditional areas of engagements by the organization. These include training, staff motivation, and engagement of experts in relevant fields. Lack of these eventually leads to gradual decline in quality of publications.
>
> The *Leadership* concurs with what *The Sun* said about the harsh economic climate affecting its business activities and admits that the firm has been affected by economic recession, rise of the online/new media, and dwindling advertising revenue. These, according to the newspaper, have resulted in the inability of organization to pay workers salaries as at when due. (p. 319)

In a similar vein, Batta et al. (2017) who studied the *Daily Trust* newspaper to find its specific economic challenges note these about the newspaper:

> For *Daily Trust*, readership has not suffered greatly. In 2008 for instance, *Daily Trust* Sunday circulated about 10,000 copies but in 2016, its circulation had risen to 40,000 copies. Today in 2017, *Daily Trust* circulates between 35,000 and 40,000. It could do much more than this if potentials are maximized. A major setback for *Daily Trust* has been the insurgency in the North East. Insecurity in that part of the North which is really the main base of the paper has killed economic activities in the region and hampered the capacity of people to buy/read newspapers.
>
> …The most crushing challenge is the hike in the cost of printing materials: ink, newsprint, spare parts, and engineering experts who are often sourced from abroad. The difficulty in accessing foreign exchange for these needs is telling. *Daily Trust* has been compelled to increase its cover price from ₦150 to ₦200, but newsstand sales or cover price of newspapers never covers any cost. In other words, sales of the newspaper copies are usually inadequate to sustain running or production costs. Another major issue is that ad revenues are never enough. (p. 302)

These two studies served as background to the current effort and inform the conviction of the present authors to investigate the American print industry that has undergone similar decline and by so doing, find clues that could help address similar economic situations in the Nigerian print media industry.

Analysis of the Responses on Research Questions Two and Three

Survival Strategies Adopted by American Print Media Industries and Implications for Nigerian Print Media Industry Undergoing Similar Decline

The major highpoint of this study is to identify the survival strategies employed by the American print media industry to address its decline and critically analyze how the Nigerian print media industry that is undergoing similar economic challenges at present could leverage the strategies and get the industry out of the economic recession.

It is also important to point out that some of the strategies are still debatable today as some industry experts continue to argue that they are wrong while some think such were right moves to stabilize a failing industry. In November 2003, the then President of the Tribune Company, Jack Fuller, argued that the most stupid thing the American newspaper industry did was to give away content on the web for free. This argument is supported by the "Free" author, Anderson (2009) cited in Kaye and Quinn (2010, p. 10), who argues,

> We have built a country-size economy online where the default price is zero – nothing, nada, zip. Digital goods – from music and video to Wikipedia – can be produced and distributed at virtually no marginal cost, and so, by the laws of economics, price has gone the same way, to $0.00. For the Google Generation, the Internet is the land of the free.

In their own interrogation of the above argument by Anderson (2009), Kaye and Quinn (2010) state that, "the global financial crisis may be helping to spread the 'Free' business model because when the economy is in recession people look for free options". This again justifies Anderson's view that when people do not have money, $0.00 becomes a very good price. Anderson concludes his argument when he predicted, "an accelerating shift to free open source software and free web-based productivity tools such that Google does. The web has become the biggest store in history and everything is 100 percent off" (cited in Kaye & Quinn, 2010).

Jack Shafer, the *Slate* editor-at-large, however, argues that newspaper consumers are not entirely against paying for content. He cites the following examples to buttress his points:

> The *Wall Street Journal* and the *Financial Times* offer a hybrid model of some free content combined with a pay wall for other types of information. Both *The New York Times* and *The Times* in the UK are able to charge for their famous and addictive crossword puzzles. *The Sun* newspaper in the UK charges users for sending text messages to them, at 25p per text, with updated information about general news, celebrity gossip, and sports news. Users can also subscribe to receive texts about their favorite soccer teams. *The Sun* also offers texts with betting tips on horse racing.

Having established what this section hopes to achieve, we now analysis our findings of what the selected US-based newspapers did to stay afloat in the midst of decline and conclude with what we think the Nigerian newspapers still battling economic recession could learn and do to stay afloat as their US counterparts.

Our general observation of the subject, interview with employees and customers of the firms, and review of literature as well as other relevant documents, especially the book by Kaye and Quinn (2010) on, *Funding Journalism in the Digital Age: Business Models, Strategies, Issues and Trends* and the most recent publication by Usher (2017) on, *Making News at The New York Times*, provided certain strategies that were commonly applied by the print media firms to address the decline that set to destroy the industry.

First of the newspapers is *The New York Times* (NYT). *The New York Times* began publishing daily on the World Wide Web on January 22, 1996, "offering readers around the world immediate access to most of the daily newspaper's contents". Since its online launch, information from the website and later corroborated by the Business Executive during the interview shows that:

> The newspaper has consistently been ranked one of the top websites. Accessing some articles requires registration, though this could be bypassed in some cases through *Times* RSS feeds. The website had 555 million page views in March 2005. The domain *nytimes.com* attracted at least 146 million visitors annually by 2008 according to a Compete.com study. *The New York Times* website ranks 59th by number of unique visitors, with over 20 million unique visitors in March 2009 making it the most visited newspaper website with more than twice the number of unique visitors as the next most popular site. As of May 2009, nytimes.com produced 22 of the 50 most popular newspaper blogs. NYTimes.com is ranked 118 in the world and 32 in the U.S. by Alexa (as of June 4, 2017) (The New York Times Company, 2017).

When we interrogated further information from Usher (2017), and Kaye and Quinn (2010), it was obvious that The NYT has undergone many changes to address the decline in the industry. For example,

> *The New York Times* was made available on the iPhone and iPod Touch in 2008, and on the iPad mobile devices in 2010. It was also the first newspaper to offer a video game as part of its editorial content. In 2010, *The New York Times* editors collaborated with students and faculty from New York University's Studio 20 Journalism Masters program to launch and produce "The Local East Village", a Hyperlocal blog designed to offer news "by, for and about the residents of the East Village". In 2012, *The New York Times* introduced a Chinese-language news site, cn.nytimes.com, with content created by staff based in Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong, though the server was placed outside of China to avoid censorship issues. (The New York Times Company, 2017)

With the free fall experienced in advertising projections and revenue at the peak of the decline in the US, The NYT reverted to a pay wall again in 2011. This pay wall helped the newspaper to rake in several hundred thousand subscriptions and about $100 million US Dollars in revenue as of March 2012 (The New York Times Company, 2017). The newspaper also launched a food section, which was supplemented on the web by properties for home cooks and for out-of-home dining. By 2008,

> *The New York Times* created an app for the iPhone and iPod Touch which allowed users to download articles to their mobile device enabling them to read the paper even when they were unable to receive a signal. In April 2010, *The New York Times* announced it would begin publishing daily content through an iPad app. As of October 2010, *The New York Times* iPad app is ad-supported and available for free without a paid subscription, but translated into a subscription-based mode in 2011. In 2010, the newspaper also launched an app for Android smartphones, followed later by an app for Windows Phones. (The New York Times Company, 2017)

The NYT also had a free email alert services it offers to its customers but by May 2003, it began charging for this News Tracker Email Alerts (as it was called). The News Tracker Email Alert Services enabled subscribers to list specific topics or keywords that they are interested in and that are likely to appear in news stories. Whenever such keywords appear in NYT story, it sends an email alert to the subscriber at agreed intervals. This service provided some modest revenue for *The New York Times* until Google launched its own version with Google News and offered the services for free. This made the NYT payment approach unsustainable. Eventually, the NYT had to revert to a free service model.

The New York Times also had a popular segment on its website called CalendarLive which showcases entertainment, culture and lifestyle events. Because this section was very popular with particular visitors as indicated by the traffic at the site, the NYT placed a pay wall on that segment. This brought in additional revenue but also crashed the number of visitors to the site.

The NYT also did a similar thing with its top op-ed columns by putting them behind a pay wall under the banner *TimesSelect*. This arrangement was regarded as the most watched paid content experiment in the newspaper industry. In two years, the firm made $10 million US Dollars from subscriptions until it was sabotaged through the blogosphere. The firm later reverted to a free service but began attracting enough advertisements to augment for the revenue lost from the pay wall to free content.

The NYT also laid off staff and continued to slash other operational costs to walk its way back to economic health. This helped but also came with its own challenges like reduction in quality and variety of content available to the loyal consumers.

Nikki Usher, in his seminal work on, *Making News at the New York Times* published in 2014 and reprinted in 2017 chronicled how the NYT took another progressive step forward with the creation of the Continuous

News Desk (CND) in 1999, “an effort to bring together the print and web newsrooms”. CND’s function was to update content for the web with wires and some original reporting, while other reporters worked on the main story for print. This effort culminated in the integration of the print and online newsrooms where print reporters eventually took up the responsibilities of web tasks and others would be principally devoted to the production of the website and its associated activities (Usher, 2017).

The NYT continued in this integration till date by making sure its traditional print reporters saw the benefits of the web and most importantly, its potentials in the 21st century. We can conclude, from the benefit of our interaction with this firm that the integration between the print and the web worked well at the NYT. This is the major reason why Usher (2017) thinks the NYT is the “undoubtedly the leading online newspaper in the world. It was fifth most popular news site in the world after Yahoo!, MSN, CNN, and the BBC, and saw thirty million unique visitors a month. The NYT had one of the most nimble, quick, stable, and interactive news site in the world (Usher, 2017, p. 39).

The second newspaper is *The Los Angeles Times*, which took many proactive steps to address the economics of decline. The newspaper redesigned its content and style as well as many other strategies that are captured below:

> The paper’s content and design style was overhauled several times in attempts to increase circulation. In 2000, a major change reorganized the news sections (related news was put closer together) and changed the “Local” section to the “California” section with more extensive coverage. Another major change in 2005 saw the Sunday “Opinion” section retitled the Sunday “Current” section, with a radical change in its presentation and featured columnists. There were regular cross-promotions with Tribune-owned television station KTLA to bring evening-news viewers into the *Times* fold. The paper reported on July 3, 2008, that it planned to cut 250 jobs by Labor Day and reduce the number of published pages by 15 percent. That included about 17 percent of the news staff, as part of the newly private media company’s mandate to reduce costs. In January 2009, the *Times* increased its single copy price from 50 to 75cents and eliminated the separate California/Metro section, folding it into the front section of the newspaper. The *Times* also announced seventy job cuts in news and editorial, or a 10 percent cut in payroll. (*The Los Angeles Times*, 2017)

Further interrogation of published documents already in the public domain shows that, “despite the circulation decline, many in the media industry lauded the newspaper’s effort to decrease its reliance on “other-paid” circulation in favor of building its “individually paid” circulation base — which showed a marginal increase in a circulation audit. This distinction reflected the difference between, for example, copies distributed to hotel guests free of charge (other-paid) versus subscriptions and single-copy sales (individually paid)” (*The Los Angeles Times*, 2017).

The third newspaper we studied is the *Chicago Tribune.* Like the other media firms we studied and analyzed, the *Chicago Tribune* also downsized through layoffs and buyouts. In fact, the layoffs and buyouts in the Chicago Tribune were unprecedented and worst compared to the other newspaper firms under investigation. The two business executives interviewed also confirmed the firm has lay-off many employees with the most recent happening in 2017. They also stated that the lay-offs did very little to change the fortunes of the company leading to the further cover price increases.

These strategies worked for sometimes for the media firms until something else crops up in the industry to erode its viability. This is the major reason most of the strategies had short life spans in the organizations. However, these setbacks did not deter the print media firms from continuing to evolve strategies to address their economic challenges. These efforts led to the following strategies that have been commonly adopted, applied, or ongoing with various degrees of success in the organizations. They include:

First is a concerted effort being put together to get Aggregators like Google to pay for the right to provide a news link service with links to news media websites. The idea that is driving this concern is simple. Google for example does not provide news content online but could lead its customers to where the news is. For this linking services it provides, Google gets a lot of traffic on its sites and with lots of traffic comes in advertising revenue. The logic is that advertisers who pay Google are only interested in the visitors who come to Google not necessarily where they go after. But the fact is that Google is selling what it does not produce. Most news visitors to Google are not really interested in Google but merely using it as a gateway to their various news sites or news contents. This attitude makes Google a heavy traffic site and so attracts advertising revenue.

It therefore makes sense to ask Google to pay as an Aggregator, not as a news provider. Google has fought back claiming its activities are legal under "Fair Use" and has refused to pay. All the newspapers support this strategy but none has taken drastic steps to force Aggregators like Google to pay. In essence, Aggregation has not started bringing in the needed extra revenue but the efforts are ongoing. The Nigerian print media industry should also begin to think in this line and join the conversation and be more practical on how it can raise revenue from those who send potential readers to its online news sites.

The second strategy is the optimization of search engines to drive traffic to a firm's website. It is called Search Engine Optimization (SEO). SEO is a key survival strategy for the news media industry. This strategy is put in place to make sure news aggregators, search engines, bloggers and anyone else who can redirect traffic to ones news website are able to scroll the news headlines of these news organizations. In other words, the news firms package their news stories in a way the news aggregators/search engines could locate them and thus redirect traffic to the news firms. In the industry, traffic equals page views and the more page views the news site gets, the more advertisers are interested in advertising on such heavy traffic sites. This consequently leads to more revenue for the news media firms.

It is, however, ironic that the same news aggregators the news media firms complain about that they are reaping where they did not sow are the same aggregators they want to pick up their stories so they can increase the traffic on their sites. This explains why the thorny relationship between the news media firms and the news aggregators is a complicated one.

What is important for the Nigerian media industry is to see Search Engine Optimization as one of the many revenue streams that the industry could exploit to its advantage; the complicated relationship between the news firms and the news aggregators notwithstanding.

The third strategy some of the media organizations have applied to stay afloat is to engage in Hyperlocal coverage. Hyperlocal coverage is a type of coverage that gives a particular community or locality depth so that the members of the community will be interested in the newspaper because of the interest the newspaper has for them and their affairs. Hyperlocal, from an editorial point of view, means:

> News reporting that more closely reflects the everyday lives of residents in a particular community – things like opening of a new grocery store, a minor car crash or kids' football league results. Hyperlocal news coverage has become fertile territory for citizen journalist projects, with sites popping up by the hundreds. (Kaye & Quinn, 2010, p. 44)

Hyperlocal coverage obviously attracts news sources of funding to the media firm no matter how small. What the firms did to take full advantage was to ignite the interest of the community that was hitherto rarely in the news and made them the news. This brought in new readers and secondly, small businesses and firms within the locality that could not advertise in the mainstream media because of cost and reach, now found an outlet to reach their target customers in the community where they operate. In other words, the media firms did not just offer the target communities an opportunity to read stories about their communities in the mainstream media, they also offered low-cost advertising space to small businesses and individuals within these target communities to reach their target customers through the media.

Literature analyzed and interviews conducted show that Hyperlocal news coverage was a huge success in encouraging local or community journalism. However, it had mixed commercial success. New streams of revenue came in through this strategy via the new readers and small business advertisers that were encouraged to advertise. But with time, it became creatively difficult to continue to satisfy these "local readers" as we prefer to call them, leading to dwindling interests and readership.

The Nigerian print media industry can take full advantage of Hyperlocal coverage to leverage many of the rural areas or communities not reached by the mainstream media. As a nation, Nigeria is made up of more than 300 ethnic groups or nationalities, each with its linguistic and cultural differences. The media firms could take advantage of this huge heterogeneity to target specific localities or communities instead of continuing with the over centralization that the Nigerian media industry is well known for.

The next strategy adopted by the US print media firms is the reinvention of the Classified Advertisements that were the media's main source of revenue until the economic recession set in. The media firms are now innovatively attracting classified advertisements since the pursuit of mainstream advertisements is no longer forthcoming. The media firms have therefore shifted focus based on the reality that mainstream adverts are no longer available as before because advertisers are cutting down on advertising budgets without looking back. In such a scenario, the media firms have gone back to attract classifieds by innovatively connecting buyers to sellers, job seekers to job vacancies etc and making the small resources from such connection count.

In Nigeria, the classified is still popular. However, the newspapers should make it more attractive in terms of cost, versatility and even personalize it to consumers' specific needs. This will help the Nigerian newspapers maximize the revenue from classified advertisements.

Another vital strategy used by the American newspapers to address the decline in their firms is the microfunding of specific journalistic pieces or productions. The microfunding strategy is usually structured around crowd-funding which is a strategy of getting many interested persons to contribute very little to support a cause, this time, a journalistic project. In the use of crowd-funding, a media firm could gather small contributions from a large number of small investors or those who simply want a particular brand of journalism to remain. The media firm uses such contributions to execute a particular journalistic project, sell the project and return the contributions or use the proceeds to execute another project, if so specified.

Kaye and Quinn (2010, p. 65) explain Crowd-funding better thus:

> The financial model takes its name from crowd-sourcing: a way to use a large public via the Internet, as an information resource. Many enterprises have used crowd-sourcing for research and development to design T-shirts, or simply stock photographs or write software. With crowd-sourcing, the people supply the content and expertise. With crowd-funding they supply the cash.

Micro or Crowd-funding is not very popular in Nigeria but could be popularized by Nigerian newspapers if the intentions are noble. There are small investors who would love to get involved in supporting the newspapers if they are rightly approached with a good project. This is the area the Nigerian newspapers need to work on.

The next strategy we found in place in the US press that could work for the Nigerian print media is to have the mainstream media collaborate with citizen journalists who are looking for credible platforms to disseminate their stories. This strategy presupposes that the mainstream media gives the citizen amateur journalist or individual the platform to publish their stories after the usual editorial treatment. In essence, the citizen journalists go out to gather stories and share same with the mainstream media for free. The (citizen journalists) only benefits by having his/her byline on the story while the mainstream media benefits by having pro-bono reporters do reportorial jobs they would have employed full time reporters or journalists to do.

By applying this strategy, the media firms reduced the overhead costs by reducing the number of journalists or reporters employed full time. The Nigerian print media firms should certainly make use of this strategy. The firms could become even creative with it by paying the citizen journalists stipends for transportation instead of the full salaries and operational costs they would have incurred using full time journalists.

Further interrogation of literature supplied by the US print firms investigated shows the use of Niche and Passion content as credible platforms for building revenue for their newspapers. Kaye and Quinn (2010, p. 101) describe this strategy thus “Niche content is narrowly-focused, deep and highly targeted.” The authors continued by stating that “broad and popular content should be offered free to build online traffic” but hard-to-find Niche materials should be offered to specific groups or audiences who place value on such content and are therefore willing to pay for such content. This is what is described as Passion Publishing.

This strategy leads to content segmentation according to peculiar target audiences. The media through this strategy can now prepare general content for the general public for free and then go the extra mile to get specific valued content for specific audience who are willing to pay. This could help balance the equation between delivery of free content and paid content online. We also think the Nigerian newspapers can toe the same line to build both traffic and revenue in the news websites. In essence, having an efficient and effective news website by the Nigerian newspapers is no longer an option. That is the way to go to pursue after advertisers who are placing all their ads on online platforms with proven traffic of customers the advertisers are actually interested in.

As we begin to conclude, what these strategies point to for the Nigerian press that is undergoing similar economics of decline is that the media industry in Nigeria should become more innovative in addressing the economic decline. One of the major ways is to merge the print newsroom and the web newsroom. In this case, print reporters must learn to become online news reporters too. This versatility will save their jobs as well as save the industry from the total collapse that may engulf it before 2030.

Conclusion: Vision 2030 for the Nigerian Print Media Industry

The future of the Nigerian newspaper industry is not guaranteed beyond 2030. Our findings in the two previous background studies (See Oyokunyi et al., 2017; Batta et al., 2017) provide us with the facts to so predict. However, there is a way out. This solution is what we have tagged in this paper as the “Vision 2030 for the Nigerian Print Media Industry”. The components of this Vision are an understanding and application of the following strategies to address the decline in the next decade or face imminent extinction. Based on this, we make these recommendations as part of the Vision 2030 to save the Nigerian print media industry:

First, the industry should begin the process of migration to the “Free Print Newspaper (FPN)”. This is no longer avoidable. The Nigerian newspapers should begin to think along this line or lose out entirely to online news sites. With the free print newspaper, newspaper firms can begin to push for more distribution of more copies to more places. In other words, the focus should now be on how many copies the newspaper is able to distribute or how many readers it has. With a solid readership base, facilitated by the free copies, the newspaper can begin to attract the advertisers that have migrated online. The logic in this argument is based on the fact that advertisers would be attracted by huge readership base especially those they consider as target consumers/customers. Show them evidence that you have one million readers every day and they get your attention and return all the missing ads.

Second, the same "free" principle for the printed newspaper must be applied for the online version. In essence, we are advocating free news sites. This will help build traffic to the sites and eventually attract advertisers who are ever willing to pay whenever they are convinced of the number and type of visitors to a particular news site. This has worked in the West. It can work for the Nigerian newspapers as they fully migrate online.

However, the print firms could maintain some special services for those who want and can pay. For example, you can send special news reports to individual emails or SMS to them as long as they are willing to pay. Users can also subscribe to receive texts about their favorite sports teams, fashion news, celebrity gossip, etc. A substantial amount of revenue could be generated through this service because in every society, especially in Nigeria, there are individuals who love to be given preferential treatment and would feel obliged to pay in return. Exploit such vanities to the firm's advantage.

A critical aspect of our Vision 2030 for the Nigerian Print Media Industry is the restructuring of the newsroom to make it smarter with smarter and versatile work force that can multi-task. This may not sound good to many in the industry but most firms in the industry need to reduce or rationalize staff, whichever sound better and merge the print newsroom with the digital newsroom and only keep those staff that can multi-task at both platforms. Big workplace and workforce are no longer fashionable in this age of economic decline.

Having studied some of the factors that caused economic recession in the print media industry all over the world, we think the era of "Very Big" print media firms is disappearing. Big print newspaper firms will no longer be fashionable. Start small and grow to medium and manageable size. They should never get to the level where salaries, allowances and maintenance of company infrastructure are as big as the cost of content generation and production.

As part of the industry restructuring and staff rationalization, the newspaper firms must maintain a very lean Management staff that must have actual portfolios that deliver on the core expectations of the firm's line of business. This also directly leads to the firms maintaining compact structures and fix assets that are not flamboyant or meant to show off the "we have arrived or we have made it" mentality.

The industry may also have to join forces with other firms in the industry to experiment on an online police and start suing any blogger or user who uses the firm's content without permission or violates the "Fair Use" doctrine. This is not against the free model we have earlier proposed but meant to check bloggers who take advantage of the free content online to make money for themselves and at the same time allow the content providers to hang out dry.

The media firms in the Nigerian print media industry must strive to build a community of customers and make them loyal if not dependent on the firm for their specific information needs. They should stop trying to have a wide and massive readership base of all kinds of people. In other words, they should not try to be attractive to ALL. They should have specific target audience to reach out to and build them to a community. If they take care of readers; readers will take care of them.

The industry stakeholders should provide a support fund to encourage curriculum review that would lead to the emergence of "Media Entrepreneurship" as a course in the new curriculum of most media training institutions in Nigeria. They should also be willing to make themselves available as adjunct staff to practically deliver the content of the new course. This will the industry recruit personnel who are coming in to contribute not just as reporters and correspondents but as experts in the business aspect of media production.

In conclusion, whatever happens, the industry stakeholders should let transparency, credibility, and professionalism remain critical news values that continue to drive the industry. When these triple journalism values are compromised for any reason especially economic, the industry will die a natural death.

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The Science Communication in Context of New Media ——The Case of Science Journalism*

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This article emphasizes the importance of science communication in context of new media. A brief summary is offered of some particular posture of scientific journalism from within new media. With the above background, four priorities for future science communication in context of new media are introduced: (1) a brief description about the actual status of science communication within the new media and mass communication process in general; (2) a solid theoretical and conceptual frame for scientific journalism within new media context; (3) a description of some possible forms of public for scientific journalism; (4) a brief analysis upon the possible set of negative effects of scientific journalism in new media and globalization context, and a need for a larger perspective in any attempt to understand the phenomenon of science communication within new media and mass communication processes.

Keywords: new media, science communication, scientific journalism, limits of science dissemination

A Brief Description About the Actual Status of Science Communication

Not long ago, citizens listened scientists spoke in silence with respect and confidence. In that period people believed what the doctor, physicist or economist said. At the end of the Sixties, the term "scientific" began to take on negative connotations, evoking more doubts than certainties. Because of the negative impact that some of their findings had, the scientist promise to improve life for all began to lose ground in the collective imagination. Let's remember the drug called "Talidomide", the "DDT", Chernobyl, and many other problems that science does not know how to solve. Not all of the impacts of science and technology, however, are equally beneficial, nor are they universally seen to be so. Fears have grown in recent years about the capacity of science and technology to intervene adversely in various dimensions of human life. Pollution and physical harm continue to be among the unintended consequences of many beneficial technologies such as electronics, pesticides and vaccines. The increasing dependence on fossil fuel based technologies is changing the planet's climate, with very serious implications for future generations.

At the same time science and industry became closer, and the governments often actively encouraged science and industry to do this, they have called into question the presumed impartiality of science and the openness of scientific communication.

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Bultitude (2011) found that there are four key cultural factors that have influenced the separation of science from society, resulting in an increased need for scientists to engage with public audiences: (1) the loss of expertise and authority of scientists; (2) a change in the nature of knowledge production; (3) improved communications and a proliferation of sources of information (4) the democratic deficit (Bultitude, 2011).

The relationship between science and society underwent a crisis when science authority was questioned, even if science and technology are among the most positive forces for change at humankind's disposal.

The relationship between science and society is tremendous important: society needs science as a driver for social, economic and political success, while science lives off the resources, talents and freedom that the society makes available. Understanding and fairly communicating risk and uncertainty are increasingly important for science and society. At the same time incorporating science-society insights into scientific practice and public policy has to be developed. The fundamental objective is to establish a deeper and more solid relationship based on trust between them. Only on this basis will the inevitable gap be bridged, even if there will always be a difference between those who hold complex knowledge and all the rest.

It is essential to make a scientifically based voice heard loud and clear, especially in time of crisis (epidemics, financial crisis, earthquake, new medications, etc.) and this can be done through professional communication. The price for not communicating or communicating poorly is becoming higher every day because today those who are not well represented in the public arena risk losing their say, resources or trust. "Communicating is considered a strategic function by the majority of organizations which interact in our social system because it identifies and justifies them, it allows them to gain consensus and to work to achieve the objectives that all systems have: to survive, to protect themselves, to obtain resources, and to grow" (Carrada, 2006)

The Actual Theoretical Status of Science Communication in New Media Context

> The meaning of science communication and other terms used in the field of scientific literacy has been plagued by an unfortunate lack of clarity. Science communication is not simply encouraging scientists to talk more about their work, nor is it an offshoot of the discipline of communications. Although people may use the term "science communication" as a synonym for public awareness of science (PAS), public understanding of science (PUS), scientific culture (SC), or scientific literacy (SL)—in fact many of these terms are often used interchangeably—it should not be confused with these important and closely related terms.(Connorand & Stocklmayer, 2003, p. 213)

This status of the field of science communication within contemporary general theories of Public Relations is a one of the main reasons for why it should be properly considered not only by a PR specialist but also by scientist and academic scholars. We can say that this could be seen almost like an imperative because it would be hard to deny the fact that in the present science is very closely linked with the public sphere and with the general phenomenon of globalization and mass communication. So, what is science communication? Which is its main public? Which are the PR techniques and which is the purpose of such a particular domain within PR and New Media phenomenon in general? And, maybe the most significant questions from all, which it could be, or it is, the impact of communicating science through PR and New Media techniques upon the general public?

In order to obtain some answers to these questions we consider that the entire debate should start by recognizing the fact that in the present science communication has become something more than a simple trend within the general phenomenon of mass communication. There are at least two major reasons in our view for which the issue of science dissemination should be seriously considered by PR specialists but also by everyone who works in the New Media sphere (O'Connor, 2014).

The first one is just about the proliferation of this so called "New Media". By its potential to have a very deep impact at the level of general public, at least in terms of coverage and technological level of this coverage, and by its tremendous technological potential to establish even a personalized contact with each individual the New Media context had become indeed a very powerful tool not only in the hands of those who want to send a message in a short and effective manner to the general public but also in the hands of the general public itself. This is because, event it is not always as simple as is seems, the New Media contact offers an interactive contact with the general public and this also could be seen as a specific characteristic of the new set of tools involved in the general process of mass communication and globalization.

The second reason is strongly linked with all of those who could be seen as emitters of the message regarding the action of disseminating science to the general public. The process of sending messages about science to the general public is made by significant segments of stakeholders from the society and the message sending is not, or at least is should not be, random and futile. This means that it should be clear for everyone which is interested in the New Media and Mass Communication process that in the present there are specific segments of emitters which are especially interested in disseminating science, and not only through New Media, to the general public. The emitters are usually entities who have a strong interest to send a message in terms of science dissemination content by the New Media or PR general techniques to some specific segments of public. Here we must also take into account the fact that in the present a significant part from the research activity from within academic system is directly linked with industry and with the general possibility of implementing the results to the economic level by those who pay for the research in the first place. This situation is an additional reason for a serious approach of the entire phenomenon regarding science communication and dissemination in the present New Media context. It also shed light upon the complexity of this phenomenon:

Science communication receives significant attention from policy makers, research institutions, practitioners and scholars. It is a complex and contentious topic that encompasses a spectrum of issues from the factual dissemination of scientific research to new models of public engagement whereby lay persons are encouraged to participate in science debates and policy.

The Theoretical Frame for the New Style of Scientific Journalism

The action of transmitting the results of scientific research to the general public is a relatively new phenomenon within the process of globalization and mass communication. Because of different reasons are the need of having an appropriate conceptual frame by which the results of dissemination could be evaluated, the process of science communication requires a theoretical frame in order to see where is situated among other specific forms of mass communication (Bronson, 2014). In other words we need a set of concepts able to define and to explain the phenomenon. But this need was not always seen as a strictly theoretical one. As it was said, science communication requires a specific type of emitter, a one who needs to be more prepared than an average journalist from a general type of media.

A scientific news portal that provides information directly from those who produce it (the scientific, medical and environmental community) to the general public. Futurity, which has now extended to more organizations and also to institutions in Great Britain, is a clear alternative to what used to be the most common way of communicating on science: intermediation of journalists (Cormick, Nielssen, Ashworth, La Salle, & Saab, 2015). In other words, a “bypass” has been created today that allows the world of science to skip the unavoidable collaboration or – for some – the obstacle represented by the media in their objective of circulating information to the general public, who also have the option of searching for information directly from the specialized sources. The case of “Futurity” illustrates a trend produced by the spread of the world of internet and serves to pose several questions:

(1) If the public can access the information first-hand (and for free), why turn to the media?

(2) Do the media have an added value for the user as information providers?

(3) What reasons do scientists and doctors have for communicating their information to the public?

(4) Is it worth this additional effort for the world of science?

(5) Is traditional journalism partly to blame for this bypass spreading?

(6) Can the quality of the information be affected in the new form in which it reaches the people?

“The public can now access the direct source of the information which they are interested in. However, people must also be prepared to learn the new rules of the game. An initiative like the one used as an example can really pursue an increase in society’s scientific knowledge or pursue other goals aimed more at personal benefit. For example, quite a common objective and justifiable, not always transparent, is that behind an initiative like this the aim is also to promote universities and research centers (a new channel of institutional communication). Sometimes, the scientific, medical or environmental organization that is at the origin of the portal not only seeks to promote itself, but also looks for new clients, to improve their social image, diffuse specific information with a very clear intention (for example, seeking additional financing), etc. The user comes face to face with a piece of information and the intentions are not always clear. Absolute objectivity does not exist in journalism, but it does even less so in the world of institutional communication.

Therefore the new “disintermediation” of scientific information can be very positive, since it allows for more proximity between sources of information and society. But it can also have a negative side and the regulatory role that journalism should have in the search for the truth and as much objectivity as possible is being lost. We could ask ourselves, clearly, if the media have really played this rebalancing role in the recent past or are currently playing it or if, on the contrary, how they have acted and their interests – which they also have – have contributed to a gradual social discredit and distancing of their normal users.

Starting with the set of questions about the status of New Media in scientific journalism work the primordial question is who is in fact the public? Which is the public of scientific journalism in New Media trend? The question cannot be solved by a simple and robust answer. If the problem of public is already difficult enough in the general PR theory in the case of New Media approach the issue is more difficult due to large set of possibilities to establish contact with the receptor of the message by technological performances for the New Media segment. Still, even so, the theoretical approaches in this issue were indeed significant. A very interesting study was done by considering the public of scientific dissemination through New Media and through Media in general not from a general sociological and strictly PR perspective but by the attitude of different segments of individual regarding science in general. The study shows few categories of the public in this perspective: confident believers, technophiles, supporters, the category of concerned public, the category of a neutral public (non sure) which do not has any clear attitude regarding science, and the category of those who consider that science is not for them (not for me category).

It is important to mention that this classification is in general operational not only for the New Media environment in terms of science dissemination and its relations with the public but also for the traditional tools in media and PR (Feinstein, 2015). Anyway, a more detailed analysis of this perspective of approach suggests, in our view, the fact that science dissemination would never have as a public the segment of scientists. This could be seen as a principle statement but it has implications on the negative part of the effects which science dissemination could have in general and this negative part is very important for the segment of scientists. But before we will see the possible set of negative effects of New Media's role in science dissemination let us disclose in more details those attitudinal categories regarding the perception of science through tools of mass dissemination.

Conclusions: Some Aspects for Further Debates in Scientific Journalism

In order to disclose the difference between different forms of communication regarding science one of the ways could be reduced to this: the process of science dissemination to the masses, even if it is done by New Media platforms, has always in the part of the receiver something which is by principle passive. The public of science dissemination, regardless the medium of communication and the tools is always a passive receiver of the scientific information. And this is even more true within new technologies from New Media regardless the great range of possibilities. This is important to notice because is disclosing a key factor, situated at the most fundamental level in the conceptual frame of science dissemination by media in general: any form of communication from the scientific community to the masses is and will be always a form which consider the receiver something totally passive even if apparently things are not look in this way. This is important to mention because the New Media technological platforms which are been used in order to disseminate science could sometimes give to the public the impression that it could play an active role within the entire process. Even more there are different levels within the process of communication in general, levels of professionalism and different forms of segments of stakeholders in science dissemination process which can complicate the perception about the role and the function of the receiver.

Within a larger perspective we can say that a distinct subject within science communication theory is the relation between scientists and the media in general and, as a specific form of problem, the relation between the job of being a scientist and the act of science communication when this is done by the scientists themselves. Both issues indicated here, the issue of the type of communication within science dissemination process (unidirectional or bidirectional) and the issue regarding the type of relation which could exists between the job of being a scientists and the act of communicating science to the general public are, of course, yet debatable. Maybe some parts of the problems are not even totally conceived within the conceptual frame of sciences of communication regarding issues from New Media. Anyway, and with this we close, is possible that this historical time of mass communication and globalization to be just transitory and maybe in the future science will be again something encapsulated only within small communities. However, until then we had to deal with the actual status and to try to understand the process of science communication by using the tool of current sciences of communication.

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On the Strategies for Teaching Courses of English Literature in the Period of University Transformation Toward Application-oriented Education

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In the 21st century, the transformation of higher education toward application orientation is posing challenges to the university teachers, especially to the teachers of humanities. Combining the teaching practice with the teaching methods and theories of domestic and foreign scholars, this article intends to explore the strategies for teaching courses of English literature in such a transformational period, including multiple teaching strategies and the cultivation of innovative thinking, cultivation of students' ability to use English with the works of English literature as language materials, use of realistic contexts to spread classic western language and culture. These teaching strategies can enhance the practicability and effectiveness of the curricula, and expand the teaching space of literature.

Keywords: English literature, classic, multiple teaching, innovation, application

Research Context

In the early 21st century many universities in China are faced with the problem of transforming toward an application-oriented higher education, which poses challenges to teachers especially those in the subject of humanities. In October 2015 the Ministry of Education, the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Finance jointly published *Guidelines to Lead Some Local Colleges and Universities Toward Application-oriented Education*, and in January 2017 the State Council issued the document *The 13th Five-year Plan on National Education Development*, in which the eligible ordinary colleges were called to "a transfer to practical education". These callings and requests have created a severe crisis for the teaching of English literature, and such courses in humanities are greatly marginalized with the opening of a series of practical English courses such as commercial English, tourism English, etc. So this paper intends to explore the strategies of English literature teaching in such a transitional period on the basis of the social background and teaching practices in China, by using the methods and theories at home and abroad in teaching literature.

Multiple Teaching Strategies and the Cultivation of Innovative Thinking

Literature is a kernel course for English major according to the National Standard for assuring the quality of undergraduates. Worrisomely some students don't have much accomplishment in English literature, and they

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are facing “reading and writing crisis” (ZHANG, 2012, p. 1), lack of innovative thinking and even paper plagiarism. It is urgent to deeply reflect and reform on the teaching mode of English literature courses, which can improve the level of teachers’ teaching, and can improve the students’ English, so as to adapt to the changing society.

Multiple teaching strategies include multiple interactive teaching methods and diversified ways to evaluate teaching. The multi-interactive teaching method can stimulate and maintain students’ interest in learning, and give them methods for reading literature and improve their language communication ability and innovative ability. According to the “13th five-year plan”, we should construct “good quality online open courses and resource-base by combining curriculum teaching and application services”. In the Internet age, modern information technology brings great convenience to foreign language learning, and abundant teaching resources are available for students to choose freely. Rationally participating the micro-class and MOOC of the teachers, taking the “internet resources + network interaction + ordinary classrooms” model (JIN, HU, & CAO, 2015, p. 84), the students can use online video resources to study literature knowledge or the explanation of a certain topic, and classroom teachers can flexibly use diverse teaching methods such as the heuristic and the interactive. In conclusion, teachers need to mobilize students’ thinking by creating an open and multi-dimensional teaching environment. For example, for the works characterized by dramatic dialogue such as *Pride and Prejudice*, teachers can arrange students to rehearse the novel into drama, through the performance to deepen their understanding of the characters’ language features, the dramatic conflicts and the British culture.

According to the document “The 13th Five-year Plan on National Education Development”, teaching should focus on cultivating students’ innovative awareness and stimulating students’ interest in learning. Professor Wang Lifei believes that in the new historical period, English major should be “driven by innovation and improvement of students’ ability and quality” (2015, p. 8). Teaching by focusing on input or recitation will stifle students’ creativity and extinguish their learning interest, while the flexible multiple teaching methods would liberate students from mandatory prescriptions, cultivating their innovation ability. In teaching literature, teachers can guide students through analyzing and comparing related works to promote students’ active thinking. The 19th century British romantic poet Shelley’s work is permeated with optimistic spirit and longing for the future, while the works of another poet Wordsworth in this period emphasize more on reflection and recollection. If teachers first introduce the relevant background to the students, and then directly ask them to discover similarities and differences between the two poets from their representative works and finally evaluate them, students will easily grasp the features of Romanticism, their desires for knowledge stimulated, and possibly the ideas for innovation sparkled.

Multiple teaching strategies are reflected in a flexible way to guide students to have innovative interpretation of literary works as against a single authoritative interpretation which will stifle the minds of students. By asking questions and listing key points teachers can guide students through the works especially the selected details to determine an angle for literary criticism, encouraging them to raise new points for interpretation that teachers have never mentioned in class, discovering new meaning and features of the works. For the interpretation of the classic novel *Pride and Prejudice*, the traditional perspective is usually about female characters or marriage. There will be a new understanding of this novel, if students are asked to find different locations in this work and pay attention to the connection between the change of the location and the change of characters’ thoughts and emotions. The teacher can ask the students to evaluate people’s travelling in the work, and then point out the theory about journey narrative and its functions. As for the General Prologue in

The Canterbury Tales, in addition to its humanistic ideas and the way of narration, from the knight's description we can find dozens of war campaigns, from which we can see what the medieval England is like, thus opening up another perspective in the interpretation of this great work, and this kind of analysis can help students to look for new horizons "to develop students' innovative thinking and abilities" (ZHU & WANG, 2004, p. 122).

The National Standard advocates the use of scientific methods in the evaluation of students' performance. Teachers should consider the features of English literature courses to make the test more scientific. Traditionally the courses of English literature took closed-book examination with the focus on knowledge points and writing ability, thus memory took a large part for the exam, which is detrimental to students' creativity and initiative. Multiple test forms not only refer to participation of class discussions and memorizing literary knowledge, but also include extra-curricular reading, book notes, essay writing, document retrieval, and so on, in order to evaluate students' learning performance objectively and scientifically.

Cultivating Students' Language Application Ability by Using Literature as a Resource

English literary works form a treasure for richness of language, and we would lose a lot if we only teach the humanistic values. According to "The Guideline for Teaching College English" published by the Ministry of Education, we should combine its usage as a tool with its humanistic natures, for the purpose of improving students' English language skills and making substantial progress.

The National Standard for undergraduate teaching of English major set up a quality assurance system for undergraduate teaching and clearly put forward that teaching should "focus on the integration of language skills training and professional knowledge based on the teaching content". The choice of language materials is crucial for English learning. Teachers can select some appropriate works as the learning resources for students to imitate and thus consolidate their language foundation. Teaching ideas and experiences of foreign scholars are worth pondering. In Malaysia, "literature teaching is a crucial element in the drive to improve standards in English language" (Parkinson & Thomas, 2016, p. 15). Michael Short and Christopher Candlin suggest that "literature and language teaching should be linked and made mutually reinforcing" (2000, p. 91). Carter listed some language practice activities in literature teaching (such as debating opposing viewpoints, guided re-writing, close procedure, prediction, etc.) (2000, pp. 111-119). These methods are valuable for Chinese teachers.

In comparison with the old English and the language with colloquial color, the study of formal language can directly enhance students' proficiency and application ability of English language. The 19th and 20th century literary works, novels in particular, are full of standardized language, such as British writers Austin, Dickens, Hardy, and American writer Henry David Thoreau. Teachers can choose to teach these literary works, and require students to take them as examples and imitate their language. Professor Wen Qiufang constructed a theoretical system of "production-oriented approach", which advocated "learning-using integrated principle" (2015, p. 550), the emphasis being on the absorption and use of the learned content, attaching importance to students' participation and expression, constructing a virtuous cycle of input and output. To retell or comment on the excerpts can not only improve their ability to analyze and extract key points, but also improve their English expression and writing skills in practice.

The classification of the complicated literary resources can make the teaching of literary language more diverse. There are various categories of classification, which can be classified according to different linguistic features (such as dialogue, monologue, long and complicated sentences, etc.); it can also be classified according to practices (e.g., listening, speaking, translation, reading, etc.). Or we can classify them into different genres, using specific teaching methods for each category to train students' ability of speaking, writing, translating and so on. It would be difficult to understand English poetry because the language is concise, especially for student to study English poetry for the first time. Teachers should help them to overcome their fear, arouse their interest, and then explain key words in the poem and their meanings, and interpret the theme of the poem and the ideas or emotions conveyed. The language of the characters is the striking feature in drama, so when you study drama, you can select the highlight part and grasp the linguistic features of the characters. In George Bernard Shaw's drama *Pygmalion* different social classes use different languages, and due to their different growing environment and social status, upper-class linguist Higgins and the street flower girl Eliza use very different language styles. From the analysis of the language, students can better grasp the temperament of the characters and the conflicts between them.

Although the translation method is a traditional teaching method, the translation-oriented literature teaching can effectively improve students' language ability. In the book *Teaching Literature in a Second Language*, Brian Parkinson points out that "much can be learned from literature in translation" (Parkinson, 2016, p. 13). The "output" of Wen Qiufang's "production-oriented" theory includes oral and written translation, as well as the speaking and writing of English (2015, p. 547). According to the National Standard, the design of graduation thesis can be an academic paper or a translation of literary works, so an appropriate training of literary translation could be complementary in literature teaching. Studying and translating English literary masterpieces, whose ideological content and language uses would have subtle effects on students' mind, can cultivate students for better aesthetic judgments and improve their comprehensive abilities unconsciously.

Disseminating Western Language and Culture Classics Based on Real Contexts

Based on Real Contexts

According to the national "One Belt and One Road" strategy and the need for international talents, it is essential to know more about the western classics of language and culture for cross-cultural communication and in-depth cooperation. English literature is a reflection of the social life and values of English-speaking countries. "It offers a full and vivid context in which characters from many social backgrounds can be depicted. A reader can discover their thoughts, feelings, customs, possessions: what they buy, believe in, fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave behind closed doors" (Parkinson, 2016, p. 9). Learning literary masterpieces not only helps to acquire idiomatic English, but also enhances the ability for cross-cultural communication by understanding the society and culture of English countries.

Many literary works are far from contemporary society, and it is inevitable that they appear strange to current readers for the gap between Chinese and Western cultures and some specialties of literature. We can work out this problem by forming a connection between eastern and western cultures. Literary works like *Sister Carrie* and *The Gilded Age* represent the social problems after the Civil War along with the development of America, including bribery, corruption, speculation, unemployment, changes in sexual attitudes, etc. These phenomena are also quite common in China with the rapid development and social stratification. So when teaching these works the teacher can lead students to consider the situation in China after this 40 years' of opening and reform and compare the series of problems in China and America in the process of urbanization, thus achieving the dialogues between the East and the West, the ancient and the modern. When teaching *The*

Canterbury Tales, if the teacher focuses only on England in the medieval period, students will feel "historically, geographically and socially" (Parkinson, 2016, p. 11) distant. We can avoid this by guiding them to compare different customs in spring between the Great Britain and China, namely the Tomb-sweeping Day in China and Britain's Easter Day. Turning to actual daily lives will help to understand the British custom of pilgrimage in the spring, and to train students to describe Chinese cultures in English language to improve their ability for expression. Undoubtedly, this kind of teaching method can also improve students' intercultural communication ability in a subtle way.

In addition to the macro society, the personal experience of an individual can also promote and stimulate people's understanding of the works. Teachers should help students to have an effective dialogue with the texts, guiding them to reflect the inspiration and the realistic significance that the book can give to them in this world, and interpret the works according to their own experience of life. The scholar Brumfit emphasizes the importance of guiding students to experience literature in literature teaching, and reading literature is "primarily an experience" (2000, p. 31). Instead of blindly inculcating abstract theories or so-called authoritative interpretations, in the class students should be inspired and guided with their personal feeling as if they were in the works. The sonnets of Shakespeare fully represent the charm of English poetry, and in sonnet 18 a poem is far more valuable than a beautiful summer day of England for it can preserve the beauty of man forever. When explaining the poem, the teacher can encourage students to express their feeling and understanding for beauty and art, and give specific examples in life to compare transient beauty with eternal beauty, and then make academic comments on the sonnet, and in this way teaching effect would be better. In a word, the teacher should encourage students to use their own experiences to understand and appreciate the works, so that the contents of the text are blessed with new value and new significance, thus achieving the ethical and enlightening values of classical works (WANG, 2015, p. 97).

Conclusion

Subjects of humanities such as English literature are facing challenges with the transformation of higher education toward being more practical, therefore it is urgent to promote an in-depth reform in the teaching methods. Colleges and universities should not aim at instant benefits by giving up literature courses for the sake of practical orientation, and meanwhile English teachers should adapt to the country's demand for practical talents in such a new situation. The teaching reform should stress language application and innovative thinking, focusing on the output of language, so as to promote validity and vitality of teaching. Teaching methods originated from class practice, such as multiple teaching strategies and cultivation for innovation, enhancing application ability using literary works as language resources, disseminating western masterpieces based on contemporary situation in China, break the fetter of traditional didactic rules and widen the space for literary teaching, so as to continually improve students' ability for comprehensive use of the language, for appreciation of English literature and for cross-cultural communication.

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Jemaa el-Fnaa Public Square: A Cultural and Literary Source in Ben Jelloun's *The Sand Child* and *The Sacred Night*

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The purpose of this article is to analyze the significance of a special space, which has a particular meaning in Tahar Ben Jelloun's work: the public square of Jemaa el-Fnaa, Marrakesh's Medina Quarter. For Tahar Ben Jelloun, the well-known French Maghrebian writer, the process of writing begins with the emergence of creative evidence in speech. It is the matrix of his writing. Thus, an oral perspective is sketched out, a whole game of fleeting narratives told in the public square. This space is an ideal one that draws its elements from orality and contributes to the preservation of traditional knowledge and the implementation of common values participating in a collective memory. How does Ben Jelloun seize the voices that already exist in the real Public Square in order to engage them in his narrative? A closer examination of the text enables us to unpick the process of Ben Jelloun's narrative strategies. In the public square, the picture that emerges is that two essential elements reveal the organization of the narrative: the cultural source and the literary source.

Keywords: Tahar Ben Jelloun, cultural source, literary source

"Before writing a sentence, I say it loudly".[1]

This event stimulates writing for Tahar Ben Jelloun. For this well-known French Maghrebian writer, the process of writing begins with the emergence of creative evidence in speech. This cultural experience is personal, sought after, proclaimed: it is the matrix of his writing. Thus, an oral perspective is sketched out, a whole game of fleeting narratives told in a place that has a particular meaning: the public square of Jemaa el-Fnaain Marrakesh's Medina Quarter (old city). The public square which Bsaithi considers as a shelter for oral tradition, is characterized as follows:

> Sid Abdelouahab Square and other similar places in Morocco, the surviving example of which is Jemaa el-Fnaa in Marrakesh, were the center of an intense socio-cultural activity. This activity was popular and spontaneous. (Bsaithi, 2008, p. 107)

Recognized by UNESCO in the year 2001 as a "Masterpiece world heritage"[2], for conveying urban legends and oral history, for the richness of the oral culture that it unfolds, Jemaa el-Fnaasquare, as a physical space, is a center for a rich oral tradition. The origin of its name is uncertain: Jemaa means "audience" in Arabic and "El Fna" means "a courtyard, in front of a building". Straight translation thus, would be "the

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[1] T. Ben Jelloun, interview avec Stephan Bureau, *Littérature: Contact*, Radio Québec, 1993.
[2] Djemaa El Fna, Top choice square in Djemaa El Fna & Around, https://www.lonelyplanet.com/morocco/marrakesh/attractions/djemaa-el-fna/a/poi-sig/422043/1341479.

audience area". The symbolic value of the physical public space is rooted in the collective socio-political consciousness as the basis for a general sense of civic action. The public square summons the high verb, the myth, the story, the anecdote, the event, oratory performance.

Being a territory of fragmented temporality, as well as a cultivated archaism of the myth, used by locals as a place of performance and spectacles, Jemaa el-Fnaa Square is the privileged space of Ben Jelloun's two most famous novels (forming together a diptych) *The Sand Child* and *The Sacred Night.* This space indeed, admits the differences of language, inciting the permissive act that plays with the coherence of the narrative, as well as that of the audience. The public square, is by definition fragile, evanescent, realized in the very prowess of the hlayqi'sact (the storyteller who generally activates the audience) and does not exist outside the circle of enunciation and reception. In effect, orality appeals on the daily exercise of an improvisation set on a rooted cultural basis whose motives it varies. Jemaa el-Fnaa brings together in a collective movement, fortuitous and individual intentions towards a "noble" goal: to transmit and perpetuate orally a heritage with a universal dimension. This space is an ideal one that draws its elements from orality and contributes to the preservation of traditional knowledge and the implementation of common values participating in a collective memory. Orality allows the author to express an origin, and communicate with societies with a written tradition. From then on, the spoken word turns to be inscribed in the texts to signify. Aït Mokhtar Hafida describes ben Jelloun's attitude towards the Magrebian culture in what follows:

> In *The Sacred Night*, not only does Tahar Ben Jelloun borrow from his Maghrebian culture and heritage, but he also draws inspiration from the cultural text (*The Thousand and One Nights*) and from his mother tongue. Thus, the traces of orality in Ben Jelloun's text, as in other Maghrebian texts, explain that writing in the classical language always draws its source from the spoken word.[3]

The point is not that ben Jelloun takes a well-known genre formula to write his novels. The status of Ben Jelloun's writing appears to us in all its fruitful complexity: If the text is told vocally in which method is it written? The purpose of this article is to analyze Ben Jelloun's narrative strategies based on the public square as a metafictional element: How does Ben Jelloun seize the voices that already exist in the real Public Square of Jemaa el-Fnaa in order to engage them in his narrative? A closer examination of the text enables us to unpick the process of Ben Jelloun narrative strategies. In the public square, the picture that emerges is that two essential elements reveal the organization of the narrative: the cultural source and the literary source.

The Cultural Source

The *Sand Child* and *The Sacred Night* are impregnated with specific cultural characteristics as they appear in the public square, a territory created for public speech, a speech that evolves from circle to circle. It is undoubtedly a privileged place of transmission, conscious of an oral culture and it is not by pure chance that Ben Jelloun chooses this space to set out his stories. The two stories form a diptych composed of tales, customs, legends, rituals that play an essential role in the Maghreb community. The originality of Ben Jelloun lies in his art of seizing the aspects of the Maghreb tradition in a singular amalgam with the reality of the public square: the quest for a story as it usually occurs in Jemaa el-Fnaa square, different storytellers and the audience participation.

[3] Aït Mokhtar Hafida, «Oralitéetécrituredans La Nuit sacrée de Tahar Ben Jelloun». http://www.univ-chlef.dz/uhbc/seminaires_2008/Communications_francais/Ait_Mokhtar_Ben_Jelloun.pdf. (This French text and all the following ones have been translated by myself).

The Quest for the Story

The Sand Child and *The Sacred Night* reveal a continual search for the story: storytellers try to tell a story they do not understand. The public square then becomes the formal space where the narrative progresses, regresses, where it is modified or canceled not only by the storytellers who appear or disappear in turn, but also by the audience itself. It is in this privileged place that it is possible to memorize and it is there that orality engenders the story. Speech is reported and not simply said, because the tale is a quote from another tale, an inter-referential system[4].

Ben Jelloun, in conveying the quest of the various storytellers in the public square, expresses at the same time his own compulsory search, nourished by a lack reflected in the Maghrebian postcolonial novel, a need to compensate for a past world, which is out of reach. Singularly, the narrative revealed, reflects the events and cultural elements of the Maghreb and at the same time, it discloses Ben Jelloun's own quest of the story: his novel is not the creation of a conventional story, but rather the process of creation itself, highlighted and becoming a narrative. The result is that it is not the story, but rather the *manner* it is conceived that is told.

Writing then covers all aspects of a literary discourse in formation. Ben Jelloun uses the deep gap that is created between content (Maghrebian legends, tales) and form (French language) between text and context. The text is then incomplete, fragmented, told and corrected in different ways by several narrators. *The Sacred Night* is a re-birth of the story that failed again and again in the mouth of many story tellers until the end in *The Sand Child*. The text of *The Sacred Night* is organized around a structure based on several competing storytellers-narrators who tell in turn, incomplete and fragmented stories in the *halka* (the circle around the storyteller). This narrative strategy is based on a speech that leads to another, chaos of the story as well as the hero, luring and blocking an impossible quest: "Friends, I owe you this story. I arrived at the moment when the storyteller responsible for saying it fell into one of those traps... "[5]. The reader realizes immediately that he is a victim of the unaccountability of the story and that the plot is somewhat twisted: "Friends of good! What I am going to tell you is like the truth"[6].

So we would be tempted to say that Ben Jelloun's work is more and more concerned with its internal process, and less and less about what it tells. Alain Robbe-Grillet commented on the fact that "the real writer has nothing to say. He only has his own way of telling it" (Barth, 1981, p. 400). Ben Jelloun's way would rather be to repeat the story by correcting it, each time, in a different manner. The result is a text, which stands with respect to its oral influence as well as its French writing, in a relationship that seems in some ways perplexing, yet which does not clearly situate itself outside or in opposition to these influence. It is a position much comparable to literary deconstruction. Through the narrative, the presentation of the writing process appears. The entire novel includes a meta-textual element, an inset thought that takes into account the typical cultural Maghrebian customs. The story and the production process related to culture make the work of the text become the narrative object itself. The restored word is a necessary work for the production of the Maghrebian narrative in a privileged cultural place: the public square.

The Storytellers and Their Audience

Ben Jelloun seizes voices already present in the public square, the most important of which is that of the oral storyteller. Oral storytellers exist in the Maghreb in large numbers: they have the talent to tell stories in a

[4] See Robert Elbaz's book, *Le Discours maghrébin: dynamique textuelle chez Albert Memmi*, Balzac Editions, 1988.
[5] Tahar Ben Jelloun *La Nuit sacrée*, Seuil, 1988, p. 20.
[6] *Ibidem*, p. 6.

society where one knows neither reading nor writing but where one is eager for oral tales. The entire Maghrebian atmosphere invites the audience to take part in the construction of the plot. The storyteller therefore, by speaking out, becomes a mediator between the audience and the story:

> The skills of the hlayqi (the storyteller) are, in a way, in the experience of a social intelligence of an interactionist kind, that knows how to speak the languages of the Public Square, its codes, its mix and heterogeneity of norms, cultures, social situations... The hybrid, the differential, the conjunction, the disjunction, the Switch, the game of identity between oneself and the other, the mask and the truth of the suffering body, compose the grammatical routine of the hlayqi act. (Arrif, 2011).

Not only is the storyteller perceived as a showman whose goal is to entertain an audience, but he also serves to convey memories, ideals and to animate expectations. As Rahmouna Mehadji explains, the storyteller is considered “a wise man in the true sense of the term, a man whose faculty and will are to transmit didactic messages intended to perpetuate the ancestral values guarantors of the social order of the community” (Mehadji, 2005-2006, pp. 435-444). This remarkable practice is fundamental for the Maghreb community where speech has a role of transmitting a memory heritage. Rahmouna Mehadji adds that “each gathering gives the opportunity to tell a story: all meetings are a pretext to transmit knowledge through a word. Even today, in certain regions, there cannot be a meeting between people without a reason to tell stories” (Mehadji, 2005-2006, pp. 435-444).

An echo of this description is expressed by Nicole Belmont, writing about tales of the oral tradition, and the fact that the *manner* to tell is what is venerated: “when we advance [...] in knowledge and intimacy, we notice a strange phenomenon: the desire to tell the story calms down, or dies out since we understand that the storytelling says more and better” (Belmont, 1999, p. 237). This confirms the fact that the word itself has a particular strength. It is indeed around the storyteller, the central character of the public square that activates the orality, that the audience will gather and finally the story may be born. Then a frontal or solemn relationship is created between the storyteller and his audience. Mohammed Habib Samrakandi contends that this relationship “favors the power of the word on the public” and that “the storyteller […] is involved in the community to perpetuate tradition” (Samrakandi, 2003, p. 8).

Ben Jelloun strongly covets the storyteller his active audience. He seems to be obsessed with the vital orality that he cannot afford to own completely since he is not an oral storyteller. His only possibility is to insert in his novel a storyteller to whom he tries to measure up. As a result, the text challenges the readers with their subconscious expectations and leads them to question the artful narrative pointers that have led them to such expectations. The readers may not have the pleasure of the usual canonic uncontested plot, but they are exposed to an eccentric discovery: a novel of orality created by dialogue with the voice of the storyteller who, most of the time, overlaps with that of the narrator to finally cover it completely as noted by Marc Gontard:

> There is a pragmatic narrative whose protocol is a guarantee of social cohesion. In *The Sand Child*, the guaranteed narrator for the story order is the famous storyteller of Jemâa el FnaPublic Square in Marrakech, who draws his legitimacy from the halqa (the circle of listeners) and only his narrative performance in front of the public allows him to establish it (Gontard, 1994, p. 17)

The storyteller then becomes the “other” Ben Jelloun who is at the same time his assistant and his rival, often contradicted and sometimes illegitimate. In continuing to tell the story and at the same time questioning its being and its narrative construction, the narrator moves away from the traditional form of the French novel and distorts it by inserting his combative approach, oscillating between the French technical tools and the traditional oral storyteller and his audience. Orality and writing intertwine under one broad and this is one of the highlights of the text. This strategy is typical of the Maghrebian novel. Referring to the Albert Memmi's *Desert*, Robert Elbaz points out that:

> Two voices interpenetrate each other; El-Mammi is the author of the novel, and at the same time the subject of narration and enunciation. His voice covers that of Memmi [...] Memmi speaks through El-Mammi and vice versa: in the body of the story the two voices meet [...] The preface and the postscript "contain" the narrative which, from the beginning till the end, consists of a quotation, in accordance with the expansive nature of the Maghrebian novel sign. (Elbaz, 1988, p. 142).

The expansion of the Maghrebiansign is also manifested in Ben Jelloun's *Sand Child*, but in a deeper manner, since there not one or two voices, but rather a plurality of overlapping voices, creating a shift in the relationship between the narrator and the storyteller. The confusion of the voices creates a disjunction, which contributes to the dismantling of the text.

Not only does Ben Jelloun use professional storytellers in his stories, but he also inserts amateur storytellers. A wide variety of these storytellers can be found in the Maghreb, who, even if they have talents more or less similar to those of professional storytellers, evolve in a different way. Unlike the first, who make their talent a job and are generally attached to a master when they are no longer themselves disciples, amateur storytellers, do not depend on anyone. They tell stories for their own pleasure in the sense that they do not consider this activity as a profession, and indeed, they do not expect any remuneration for their generally spontaneous performance. According to Rahmouna Mehadji, amateur storytellers:

> occur more often in the evening, after a day's work, in private circles, intimate circles or in family circles where everyone can intervene, provided they respect the speech distribution protocol: begin first, those who have the perfect mastery of the text to be told, then come the women, and finally the youngest ones who try to learn the style of speech and the art of the composition of the tale. (Mehadji, 2005-2006, 435-444)

Therefore, amateur storytellers do not specialize in a particular register of oral tradition and do not seek to become specialists. They adopt several genres at once: tales or fables, epics or genealogies, proverbs or riddles.

These cultural characteristics, rooted in reality, are revealed in *The Sand Child*. The readers are immediately introduced in the context of the oral narrative in which the dialogical nature of the narrative is highlighted in a metafictional manner. The storyteller "sitting cross-leggedon a mat" in the square of Jamma Lafna, like a real professional, appears the day and disappears with the twilight, warning his audience: "This book, my friends, cannot circulate or be given ... It cannot be read by innocent spirits [...] You can access it without crossing my nights and my body" (Ben Jelloun, 1985, pp. 12-13). Insertions like "you know enough" create a theatrical suspense. The audience seated around the storyteller, takes part in the story by sudden interruptions, demonstrating the importance of orality and the theatrical atmosphere as it occurs in reality in Jemaa el Fnaa. Thus, as soon as the professional storyteller loses the power of credibility, he is interrupted by another who appears to be an amateur storyteller, who in turn presents himself as the true holder of knowledge and truth: "I, if I am allowed, will tell you the truth [...]. We will see if this story corresponds to the truth" (Ben Jelloun, 1985, p. 42-43). Then, a new amateur storyteller introduces himself as the brother of Fatima and undertakes the initiative of the story: "This man hides the truth from you. He is afraid to tell you everything" (Ben Jelloun, 1985, p. 67). He is also teased by the audience: "But you are not a storyteller ... You do not have the elegance of Si Abdel Malek, may God have his soul" (Ben Jelloun, 1985, p. 83-84). Then, another character of the halqa takes over: the story reminds him of another one,which is in fact, a miseen abyme of the main story, a microcosm that translates the macrocosm. This is the story of Antar: "a ruthless leader [...] an exemplary man [...] the day he died, it was revealed that this terror, this force lodged in a woman's body […] today he is a saint; he is the marabout of wandering" (Ben Jelloun, 1985, p. 83-84).

Indeed, after the death of Si Abdelmalek, no less than five storytellers share the rest of the story: the three faithful listeners of the Halqa Salem, Amar and Fatouma[7], the Blind Troubadour and the man with the blue turban, Bouchaïb, who reappears in *The Sacred Night* and finally disappears, devastated by the story. Such a technique thus not only does allow Ben Jelloun to use the traditional North African narrative mode, but also, as Marc Gontard emphasizes, on the literary level, it helps him "burst the monologue and integrate into his storyline a plural narrative that often contradicts itself with the mutation of the narrator / narratee hierarchy" (Gontard, 1993, p. 101). Overall, the skillful use of these strategies allows the reader to identify which narrative elements are emphasized by the author and what the structure and organization of the text are. In any case, Ben Jelloun enhances loose ends of the story to proliferate and then refuses to tie them together as a conclusion with a final version of events.

The Literary Source: Legendary and Fairy Features

The diptych of *The Sand Child* and *The Sacred Night* is established on the basis of Maghrebian tradition and culture as well as on its literary sources. Ben Jelloun's narrative strategies are established on a frothiness of stories before engaging in the main great narrative. For Robert Elbaz, these ambiguities and difficulties in grasping the plot imply a need of "pre-texts" long elaborated [...] which remain outside of the textual space, [for] the text itself is incapable of manifesting its own production process in the immediate future" (Elbaz, 1988, p. 35).

But these "pre-texts" accentuate the process of Maghrebian orality, expressed by other means, the most important of which are the legendary and fairy insertions in the text. The truth first proclaimed as a necessity in *The Sand Child*, becomes in *The Sacred Night*, more and more chaotic. Indeed, the linear facts are dotted with allusions and stories with marvelous characteristics.

For instance, on the day of his death, the father releases his son Ahmed, magically transformed into a daughter, Zahra: "The Night of Destiny calls you Zahra, flower of flowers ..." (Jelloun, 1988, p. 32). At this point, the rebirth process of the young woman begins. The journey to her new identity starts on the day of the father's burial which triggers a series of fairytales, more or less fantastic, qualified by Marc Gontard of "strange stories" (Gontard, 1993, p. 101).

In the same manner, in the cemetery, after the father's burial, exceptional characters appear such as the children playing on trees or the lovers hiding behind a tombstone to kiss. In the same way, the arrival of the bride on the white horse and the rider wearing a southern blue gandoura reinforces the fairy atmosphere. In a ceremonial manner of a magical fairy, the bride places on Zahra's shoulders a burnous embroidered with golden threads whispering in her ears that the rider "is waiting on a white mare spotted with gray" and the statement "the beautiful cavalier took me away" concludes the chapter entitled "A very beautiful day". The rider acts like a prince charming coming finally to release the princess after her transformation.

[7] In order to accentuate the orality and to highlight the fact that the storytellers are not professionals, Ben Jelloun does not hesitate to create a decadence of style: that of Salem, the black slave, is brutal, grotesque and vulgar; his story ends horribly. Amar's is already more poetic. But it is Fatouma, who is the most gifted of the three and who introduces herself as Ahmed-Zahra.

Zahra has to undergo a whole series of ceremonial and symbolic acts, all of which come under fairy tales. Thus, in the following chapter entitled “The Perfumed Garden”, she must be physically washed of all the anomalies that have concealed her body: the strips of fabric that tightened her breast are removed; she bathes in the springwater, symbol of maternity and origin of life. Her body is thus purified and she is reborn in a female body.

Moreover, after the physical assets, in order to transform her virgin body into that of a true woman, Zahra must undergo another act in the process of her rebirth: rape. In this case too, Ben Jelloun uses legendary effects. This time it is the tale of *Little Red Riding Hood* that he seems to be referring to. Just like the little girl is attacked by the wolf, Zahra is attacked but also unbound by her rapist, since without the initiation to the sexual act, she would not be a complete woman.

Other facts in *The Sacred Night* bear the characteristics of a fairytale, such as the monstrous figure of the *Assise* (the Khammam’s keeper) which evokes that of the witches tales, or that of Zahra’s uncle whose blood is “greenish yellow”, and by killing him, Zahra does not commit a crime, but somehow gets rid of a dragon closely trailed behind by the witch. Zahra sometimes looks like Cinderella: she becomes a maid, she cleans the feet of the Consul, and when she is disliked by the Assise, she is sent back to the kitchen. As for the Consul, he has the role of Prince Charming who becomes “sacred” at the end of the story.

To summarize the elements of this study, we should remember that the public square plays a key role in Ben Jelloun’s writing. He seizes the metafictional voices coming from the real Public Square of Jemaa el-Fnaa and inserts them in his diptych *The Sacred Night* and *The Sand Child*, in order to express the rites and the customs dear to his country, essential to him in order to write his story. In this space, two essential elements emerge to support the organization of the narrative: on the one hand, its cultural source which reveals elements such as the quest for a narrative, the storytellers and their active audience; on the other hand, its literary source which is articulated on the basis of legendary and fairy features.

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Progression of Femmephobia in the LGBTQ+ Community

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All around, men are raised not to be a "sissy", "gay", or a "faggot". Gay men are, then sculpted by a masculinity framework that, from their early years, will not fully accept them. In an attempt to be accepted, gay men often try to make up for their homosexuality through the performance of masculinity centered on suppression of the feminine. Femmephobia, in this context, is the suppression or rejection of feminine features. In the LGBTQ+ community, femmephobia is driven by the media and masculinity factors that are manifested in standards of attractiveness, but can also be broken down by media outlets that combat these ideas. Media has shaped gay men's perception of body image, standards of beauty, and have led to the progression of femmephobia within the community as a mode of restoring their masculinity that would not accept them. The introduction of alternative ideas of masculinity and gender perception are necessary for creating an inclusive form of masculinity that would promote a greater acceptance of all, and reduce femmephobia in society. Challenges against this masculinity are at work through various routes especially through the media. These venues are creating spaces where male femininity can be further explored and redefined.

Keywords: femmephobia, feminism, LGBTQ+, masculinity, media, men, MSM

Historical Context

"Maybe Gilda isn't a big meanie grumpy mean-meanie-pants. Maybe I'm just a big jealous judgmental jealous-jealousy pants."

-Pinkie Pie, "Griffon The Bush Off," *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic* (Morrow)

Hollywood has popularized the stereotypes surrounding gay men. From the 1890s to the 1980s, "Hollywood's portrayal of lesbians and gay men has often been cruel and homophobic. During that period, Gay and lesbian characters were defined by their sexual orientation and lacked any complex character development" ("Queer Representation", n.d.). In illustrating gay men in the one-dimensional manner, gay men are established in the media industry as stagnant "cookie cutter" characters often present for little more than to offer comedic relief or to offer a character solely due to their sexual orientation. The character's sexual orientation was their character. The character was their sexual orientation. The films presented gay men as the side characters that offered little function to the plot. In Hollywood's early years, "homosexuality was often presented as an object of ridicule and laughter. The archetype of 'the sissy'- foppish and feminine males, often of delicate sensibilities- was popular at this time, […] such a character was a source of amusement and reassurance for the audience" ("Queer Representation", n.d.). Although the images were poor, the representation did result in the introduction of gay characters in film. Comedy may have been one of the few routes for representing gay

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characters. For example, the sissy was not a ridiculed character trope for he occupied a middle ground for masculinity and femininity (“Queer Representation”, n.d.). Through the introduction of stereotypical gay characters as a means for exposure, more people were exposed to them, however, the gay characters were not realistic beyond the smaller portion of the demographic they represented.

The 1930s and 1950s was a period that focused on shifting away from the overt stereotypical gay characters toward sets of gay mannerisms. Faced with contributions toward immorality, Hollywood introduced the Hayes Code in which “films could not feature overtly homosexual characters - so homosexuality was coded into a character’s mannerisms and behaviors” (“Queer Representation”, n.d.). The gay “sissy” or “pansy” was the result—Hollywood’s first gay stock character (Mislak, 2015). The gay “sissy” was an “extremely effeminate boulevardier type sporting lipstick, rouge, a trim mustache and hairstyle, and an equally trim suit, incomplete without a boutonniere” (Lugowski, 2011, p. 4). The stereotype of the gay “sissy” was, and remains to be a common perception of gay men, the belief that all “homosexuals are weak-willed, make-up wearing men who society values for nothing more than a cheap joke” (Mislak, 2015). Not only does the portrayal marginalize the gay men who do exhibit some of the “sissy” characteristics, but it also places a stigma on gay men that they, too, must act in accordance to this stereotype. Since the “sissy” was the first gay character in Hollywood, gay became shorthand for feminine.

Masculinity and Stereotyped Homosexual Men

The connection of femininity to homosexual men created an interesting dynamic for homosexual men. Society pushes for men to be masculine from an early age. From teaching young boys to not show emotion when they fall to shorthand insults, men are raised to not be feminine. More specifically, “masculinity is the relentless repudiation of the feminine” (Kimmel, 2008, p. 45). In this context, homosexual men would typically refuse “gay” partners, men that could come across as “looking” gay. In being raised and taught masculinity through refusal of the feminine, gay men are internalizing and propitiating femmephobia for others in the community.

Homosexual men are left on unstable ground in reference to their sexuality and masculinity, which leads to femmephobia within the gay community. Guys are raised to “not being a sissy, not being perceived as weak, effeminate, or gay” (Kimmel, 2008, p. 45). Two of the important competing factors are being gay and being effeminate. In order to maintain one’s masculinity, too many factors of their masculinity must not be put into question. In order to allow oneself to be gay, compensation for the weakened masculinity is vital and often a hyper masculinity is sought (Saucier & Caron, 2008). When pushing against femininity and effeminate men, femmephobia is the result. Men may also retain their masculinity by refusing their sexuality, despite having sex with gay men. In refusing their sexuality, men may feel even more personally insecurity which is difficult to accept. In order to live a life that is sexually and romantically involved, the individual must make some compromises. Smaller compromises would be the preferred in relation to bigger changes (Backlund & Mary, 2004). A small give in masculinity by being gay would be the preferred rather than accepting femininity, for seeking a masculine partner would cause less social pressure than seeking a feminine partner.

Shifts in Attractiveness Standards

Male attractiveness could also be important to the gay community to ward off stereotypes. The gay community often portrays images of a “hyper masculine physical appearance in order to ward off stereotypes”

(Saucier & Caron, 2008, p. 506). A paper by Jason Saucier and Sandra L. Caron looked at the portrayal of men in four popular magazines aimed toward gay men: *The Advocate*, *Genre*, *Instinct*, and *Out*. For their research, they looked at 4 issues, one from each season from 2001 to 2004. Only the advertisements that were at least a third of a page were analyzed. Among the different models of analysis used, a primary method was the characteristics of the men in the advertisement. The factors of analysis were if the individuals looked under 30 years old, if they were shirtless (and if they were, was their chest hairless), muscularity of the individuals, and if the individual was white. Analysis of the advertisements reveal that, 98 percent of the men had a youthful appearance (under 30 years of age), 52 percent were shirtless, 99 percent of whom had hairless chests, 53 percent were muscular, and 95 percent were Caucasian (Saucier & Caron, 2008). The amount of muscular models is declarative of the desire for a masculine partner. Of the four gay-audience targeted audiences, the muscular models were, more often than not, depicted. In *The Advocate*, *Genre*, and *Instinct*, 46 percent, 67 percent, and 73 percent of the models had muscle tone/low body fat (Saucier & Caron, 2008, p. 513). The author makes some important notes on these rates of muscularity in that “ads containing only headshots or men in loose clothing inhibited coding in this category. If these men were able to be distinguished as muscular or not, it is most certain that this percentage would be far higher than the reported 52 percent reported” (Saucier & Caron, 2008, p. 520).

How the media presented the gay male body resulted in the persistence of gay stereotypes. In looking for a male partner, personal ads by homosexual men often “mention traits related to sex typical and more likely to request sex-typical than sex-atypical partners” (Bailey, Kim, Hills, & Linsenmeier, 1997). In hopes of finding a new partner, homosexual men would emphasize their masculine behavior, this is a sign that masculinity is an attractive factor within the gay community. The seeking of a masculine partner and emphasis on one’s own masculinity establishes that masculinity as an ideal body image within the gay community. The want for a masculine partner was weaker within personal ads of effeminate gay men than masculine men in “gay men preferred men who described themselves as masculine rather than feminine, but this preference was weaker among men who rated themselves as relatively feminine (Bailey et al., 1997). In other words, “[most advertisers] expressed that stereotypical feminine traits were undesirable in a potential mate” (Sánchez, Greenberg, Liu, & Vilain, 2009).

The result of the increased masculinity focus and preference within the LGBTQ+ community can be seen in a study conducted to learn more about the perception of the male body by men identifying as queer against those that identify as straight. Viren Swami conducted a study, “The Muscular Male: A Comparison of the Physical Attractiveness Preferences of Gay and Heterosexual Men”, which compared the ratings of attractiveness by straight and queer men in order to determine if there was a difference in perception. The study was conducted by gathering men and having them take an 8-point Kinsey-type test to determine their sexuality in a quantitative manner, and those that identified as bisexual, or were more heterosexual than homosexual (or more homosexual than heterosexual) were excluded (Swami & Tovee, 2008). The men were then shown images of men, one time to get an idea of the images, and the second time, they were prompted to rate the attractiveness of the men in relation to the group as a whole (Swami & Tovee, 2008). The images presented were standardized images of men a set distance from the camera, wearing tight grey leotards and leggings, with their faces blurred out as to not interfere with the analysis of attractiveness of the body (Swami & Tovee, 2008). The models used were of know body weight, body mass index (BMI), waist-to-chest ratio (WCR), and waist-to-hip ratio (WHR) to determine factors relating to attractiveness based on the build of the body (Swami

& Tovee, 2008). The researchers found that “gay observers appear to judge a body that is more V-shaped (lower WCR) as more attractive than heterosexual viewers” (Swami & Tovee, 2008). The finding indicates that gay men find more muscular men more attractive, than from the straight male perspective. The use of the straight men being included in the study, is to serve as a control for media exposure and classical definitions of what it takes to be a “real man”. The straight men are the preferred control group in that the sexes of the two groups would face similar social pressures to a specific body type, with the only difference being placed on their sexuality. With WCR serving as the main point of determination of attractive even in female populations, gay men tended to prefer a lower WCR—“a stronger idealization of upper-body muscularity” (Swami & Tovee, 2008). Swami also suggested that “the value of muscularity may reflect the tendency to associate muscularity with masculinity… while signaling distance from the ideas about femininity”. By constructing masculinity around a more muscular body while visually distancing oneself from femininity, the evidence suggests that gay men are more prone to distancing oneself from femininity toward a more muscular body as a way of preserving their masculinity, which is put into question by being gay. The idealization of a muscular body is seen in Saucier’s work of male models in common LGBTQ+ magazines, in promoting a masculine man as the “goal” of a gay relationship. The data also revealed little difference between the BMI preferences between straight and gay men which further indicates that “most [gay] participants were concerned with muscularity rather than weight” (Levesque, 2006). The finding that the main factor on bodily attractiveness did not so much rely on BMI but instead on WCR, indicated that the weight of the body did not matter, but the composition of the body did.

Femmephobic Expansion Through Dating Profiles

The effects of femmephobic comments on gay dating profiles have also been analyzed to determine the effect on how gay users interpret user profiles. Brandon Miller’s study “Masculine Guys Only: the effects of femmephobic mobile dating application profiles on partner selection for men who have sex with men (MSM)” illustrates how femmephobic comments alter MSM’s perceptions. The study was conducted by looking at how MSM score dating profiles that are the same, with the only difference is the presence of femmephobic comments in their bio (Miller & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). The factors of consideration were physical attractiveness, intelligence, sexual confidence, masculinity, and dateability (Miller & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). The accounts that contained a femmephobic comments in their bio descriptions were perceived differently across the variables when compared to profiles without femmephobic profiles (Miller & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). However, the characteristic of physical attractiveness was not affected by the profile description which was hinted to suggest that “much of the social capital seems to be placed on appearance and materiality” (Miller & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). The separation of physical attractiveness and femmephobia is distinct in that femmephobia is more characteristic of one’s personality than one’s appearance. The profile user’s perceived masculinity was also unaffected (Miller & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). An unaffected masculinity due to femmephobia indicates that the use of femmephobic commentary did not make the profile more masculine, despite the intended purpose that the femmephobic comments would have increased their masculinity in the view of others. The profile’s perceived intelligence, sexual confidence and dateability did decrease with the presence of a femmephobic profile (Miller & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). The researcher then begged the question as to “why some men continue to frame their profiles in an especially femmephobic manner” (Miller & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). A possible reasoning for the continued femmephobia in the profiles is that despite these factors, the profiles were not affected when asked the desire to meet for sexual partners (Miller & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). Thus, including femmephobic remarks on one's profile would not be a loss to users seeking sex only, and still get rewarded for their profile. Two reasons arose to explain the overlooked femmephobia for the purpose of sexual interaction is that it "could be related to the anti-effeminacy that many queer men develop early on in life as a response to societal masculinity pressures, or perhaps indicative of the overall preference that many gay and bisexual men have for masculine sexual and dating partners" (Miller & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). There was the result that the presence of femmephobic commentary did lead to increased ratings from men of similar belief. The reasoning was that the presence of the femmephobic comments attracted MSM who endorsed similar models of thinking and were also likely to be displaying femmephobic speech (Miller & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). The femmephobic users would thus gain from having femmephoic speech on their profiles in that it would attract men that they would be more likely to think attractive, dateable, intelligent, ect. The cycle would continue to promote femmephobic speech in order to find like-minded users.

In another study of the Jack'd profiles on a global scale, David Miller looked at the self-portrayal of gay men in a masculine manner. Jack'd is a social app aimed at gay men that allows for randomized conversation with men globally (Miller, 2015). In the study, 300 Jack'd profiles were analyzed and coded in order to determine how gay men portray themselves and to gain insight on the global gay community (Miller, 2015). Various factors were looked at including the self-description of the users, whether the face was included, if the pictures were shirtless, and the partner preferences of the user (Miller, 2015). In the study, the most revealing feature was that none of the profiles self-described themselves as feminine (Miller, 2015). Many users also devoted sections of their profiles, despite the presence of pictures of the users, to address their masculinity (Miller, 2015). A reason given as to why "anti-effeminacy might run rampant in online MSM spaces is due to the policing of masculinity that all men experience as products of a heterosexist and, often, homophobic culture" (Miller, 2015). In suppressing the feminine characteristics in favor of the masculine traits, MSM are molding themselves into the masculine man that society conditions individuals into. Another reasoning was that MSM may be trying to disassociate from the social stigma of being gay though not being feminine, even in a queer space (Miller).

Addressing Femmephobia Through Protest Masculinities

A new mode of masculinity must be applied in order to address femmephobia at its core. Eric Anderson describes of two different models of masculinity: orthodox and inclusive. She describes how there are multiple types of masculinity that can coexist in every sphere. For example, orthodox masculinity includes extreme homophobia whereas inclusive masculinity does not (Anderson & Rhidian, 2010). She states that hegemonic masculinity functions as a "hegemonic process by which one form of institutionalized masculinity is 'culturally exalted' above the others" (Anderson & Rhidian, 2010). The hegemonic process of masculinity results in the orthodox form of masculinity to be the prevailing form of accepted masculinity. As a solution, she states there are also protest masculinities which all compete within the hegemonic system of masculinity. However, she suggests that as homophobia decreases, multiple forms of masculinity can be expressed in a horizontal fashion, rather than a stratified competitive fashion in the hegemonic order (Anderson & Rhidian, 2010). The result of no hegemonic masculinities would be many personalized masculinities which would allow men to make their own working definition of masculinity that is not culturally restrained (Anderson & Rhidian, 2010). The model of the inclusive masculinity, rather than the current hegemonic system of masculinity, would profoundly decrease femmephobia within the LGBTQ+ community by allowing for greater acceptance of sexuality and preferences beyond the muscular, masculine male ideals.

Media, though is the root of the advertisement of femmephobia, can also function as part of the solution through its television programs. Leah Palmer, a student at Warren Wilson College, performed some research on the shifts in masculinity perspective among men that watch *My Little Ponies: Friendship is Magic*. In her research, she interviewed several men that watch the show to discover that "many men have begun to openly reject the idea that liking something that is feminine is emasculating" (Palmer, 2013). The show seems to bring to question the rigidity of masculinity in exchange for a more fluid model of gender expression and a more tolerant form of masculinity (Palmer, 2013). The showing was, for many viewers, "their gateway to a more tolerant, open-minded approach to life" (Palmer, 2013). The break-down of the hegemonic structure of masculinity is a gateway to a greater acceptance that would deteriorate homophobia as well as femmephobia. The show is operating on men by questioning their ideas on masculinity, and the result is greater acceptance of various forms of gender expression. The greater overall acceptance is indicative of the shift toward an inclusive masculinity and ultimately a "leveling-out" of stratification of the hegemonic order of masculinity. The television show is able to work on people in a way needed to allow for greater acceptance of all expressions of gender.

Conclusion

The media has established a standard of weak feminine characters that are of little importance than the passing LGBTQ+ minority. The media has shaped gay men's perception of body image, standards of beauty, and has led to the progression of femmephobia within the LGBTQ+ community as a mode of restoring the definition of masculinity that would not accept them fully for being gay. The introduction of alternative ideas of masculinity and gender perception are necessary for creating an inclusive form of masculinity that would promote a greater acceptance of all, and reduce femmephobia in society.

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Human Security, Poverty Pattern and Social Order in Igbo Rural Communities of Contemporary Nigeria

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The Igbo have their homeland in seven states of Nigeria mainly Imo, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Delta and Rivers. They are receptible to new ideas and adapt easily to change. The ramifications of human insecurity, poverty, social disorder, poor coherence and poor integration appear to haunt them and the gravity is felt more in the rural communities. The factors are traceable to many pathetic issues. The pathological consequences do affect Igbo stability and navigation in the Nigerian socio-economic environment. The causality constitutes the physical, human, natural, financial and social assets. It is recommended, among others, that the people should return to core values and norms, stick to their own noble identities, have a framework for tackling insecurity and hunger, target the youth in poverty reduction measures and tackle the herdsmen menace. Equally, the abused philosophies used to support dangerous and strange behavior should be tackled.

Keywords: human security, poverty pattern, social order, rural community, assets, integration

Introduction

The Igbo have their homeland in seven states of contemporary Nigeria, viz: Imo, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Delta, and Rivers. They also constitute major settlers in many cities in Nigeria. They are great travelers. They are competitive and industrially minded. They have an egalitarian orientation but materialistic. They have an innate receptivity to new ideas and adaptability to change as well as a zeal for continuous improvement. They often manifest shouty life styles. The Christian religion which arrived in Igbo home areas in the later part of the 19th and early 20th centuries have since become their primary religion. Politically the Igbo have a few traditional state societies while remaining primarily acephalous. The few state societies are Onitsha, Aboh, Oguta and Arochukwu.

Colonialism and post colonialism brought them under Anglo-American fashioned political organizations. Between 1954 and 1966 it was the parliamentary system of government while from 1979 to 1983 and again 1999 to date it has been presidential system of government. The Igbo also shared in the unitarism of the long military regime in Nigeria. The military mind, soaked with aggression, violence and associated military-type political administration, affected the personality of the Igbo, making many to care less about the feeling of others and generating a bohemian civilian class long after the military had left.

The Igbo rural communities share in the over all human insecurity and poverty pattern of Nigeria and peoples. Okunmadewa et al. (2002) listed insecurity as one major cause of ill-being or poverty in Nigeria. It has been consistently reported that majority of the poor in Nigeria live in the rural areas (National Bureau of

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Statistics, 2007, pp. 37-43). Insecurity and poverty have been appearing as correlates and tend to reinforce each other. The insecurity is traceable to deviations from Igbo ethnic norms and values, acquisition of military psyche, activities of politicians, state misrule, emergence of gang groups and cultists, income uncertainties, grazing privileges to Fulani/Hausa herdsmen. Poverty is traceable to insecurity and crime, low health, lack of freedom and oppression, mis-governance and weak community social institutions. Disorder and poor social coherence have been accompanying all these, a situation that affects goal attainment and interest articulation.

Theoretically, this study is explained by differential social disorganization model popular with deviant studies. By this, insecurity, order and disorder are rooted in social organization of the people, thus the people may be organized for order or disorder. Out of disorder the poor would emerge. The deviations from the norms of security also manifest.

This writer looks at the ramifications of human security and poverty pattern as they relate to social order, social cohesion and social integration and how they altogether limit the Igbo, especially the rural dwellers. The study is important when it is realized that insecurity weakens social capital and brings to vulnerability the natural, human, physical and financial capital. What is more, in the face of insecurity in the rural, the urban suffers because rural assets do much of the urban supply.

Human Security and Poverty Pattern

Human security refers to the safety of life as evidenced in civil peace, physical safety, guarantee of human rights and the environment, ease to justice, guarantee of a secure old age, confidence in the days ahead, reduced vulnerability, of fear and anxiety. The definition given by Commission on Human Security cited by Severine Denuelin is insightful, thus: absence of violence, presence of good governance, access to education and health care, ensuring that individuals have opportunities and choice to fulfill own potentials, freedom from want, freedom from fear and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment (Deneulin, 2009, p. 93). Deepa Narayan and Patti Petesch present the following as elements of security: living in fear, atrocities of police and the army, the capture of state resources by state representatives, deterioration of law and order, thirst for quick justice, gender based violence and abduction (Narayan & Petesch, 2010).

The above issues to a large extent are evident in Igbo home areas and states including the rural communities, people live in fear of hostile neighbors, cultists, kidnappers, rapists, armed robbers, militant politicians, Fulani herdsmen and youth gangs. A group of bohemian state representatives capture state resources leaving the people lost, deprived, in discomfiture and traumatized. These issues are easily exemplified. Habeeb Pindiga published a statistics that “Nigerian Federal legislators receive much higher salaries than their counterparts in wealthier countries; in terms of lawmaker’s salaries as a ratio of GDP per capita, the gap is even much wider. While the salary of a Nigerian lawmaker is 116 times the country’s GPD per person, that of a British member of parliament is just 2.7 times; add these to other allowances, frivolous foreign trips arbitrary appointment of aids and use of excessive motorcades” (Habeeb, 2013, p. 64). Government representatives of Igbo abstraction benefitted from these schemes but would not employ their largesse wisely, rather they would be casting terror on their people especially the rural dwellers.

Let us consider, further, the aggravated hostilities that accompanied creation of autonomous communities in Igbo speaking states beginning from the mid 1990s to present. The quarrels and hate are yet to soothe. Definitely politics and democratization, including creation of autonomous communities, brought about a lot of opportunities but opened up new fault lines. In many communities ancient inter and intra land disputes have been resurfacing with open hostilities, and reprisals. Cultists and hired assassins are gradually replacing thugs as instruments for settling disputes and vendetta. The return to democracy saw many politicians arranging for armed guards and militant wings, an outfit that creates tension in communities. Armed robbers in the south east have moved some steps further. They go into banks with dynamites, gas cylinders, brick slizing machines and iron cutting machines. Imagine the desperation to destroy commonly owned property in order to rob. Abduction and kidnapping, slavery and trafficking have continued to take new dimensions. By all these we begin to witness a gross decline in social morality and the social contract between people and government and such can be infections.

The impact of all these in our communities could be grave. Farm lands are abandoned in major food basket areas of Imo State such as Ohaji, Obinze, Mgbirichi, the satellite garden community of Irete as well communities in Ebonyi State because of armed Fulani herdsmen. Youth gangs attack and rape women in Mgbuishi, Ohaji of Imo State and prevent them from farming. It was reported that the gang had to over run a local police unit (*The Leader*, 2014). Resources meant for community development are spent on the leisure of politicians. The methodology of execution of crimes shows how the Igbo proverbial dogged energy, competiveness and inventiveness is now being channeled into vices at the expense of science, technology and humanity. The overall climate of fear, de-motivations and discouragement to repatriate money is captured by Pius Okaneme thus:

> Most of the successful indigenes from south-east living outside the zone are frightened to visit home. Wealthy people have relocated their loved ones to presumably safer zones… the desire by many Igbo people to amass wealth in big cities and come back home and show their folks that they have succeeded had been known to be a strong motivation. (Okaneme, 2013, p. 20)

The bad security situation in Igbo rural communities have been affecting rural based industries forcing many to shot down. People in the communities are frightened to attend meeting where community matters are discussed; people run morbid fear and worries that affect the development of ideas. It should be noted that insecurity in rural communities hit women and children strongly. They are there more than the men. Above all they do more of the farming, harvesting and post harvesting activities. If they are chased out by insecurity the situation would be grave for Igbo speaking states. Even agro-urban supplies will reduce. One should also be worried that in the face of insecurity vulnerability to declines in wellbeing is increased. The strong link between human security and human development is buttressed by Adedaya Adedoyin thus: "human security is essential for every sustainable development plan, a precondition for people's improvement particularly the poor" (Adedoyin, 2012).

Poverty Pattern

An over arching conception of poverty is needed in this study. The World Bank defines poverty as:

> A denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity, lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society, not having enough to feed or cloth a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit; insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities; susceptibility to violence; living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clear water or sanitation. (The World Bank, 2007)

Poverty patterns are difficult to describe in view of absence of poverty maps in Nigeria. However the pattern goes with the level of presence of the characteristics and manifestations of poverty. Initial conditions for poverty are more in certain communities and households than others. Some places and households have more locational advantages than others. Government infrastructures and missionary initiatives like schools, markets, hospitals, roads may have reached certain places earlier than others, thus giving them a leap. There is therefore communities and households with more educated heads, more working class heads, water and sanitation, nutritional opportunities electricity and reduced sizes than others. There are also places/households that have more persons in the formal economic activities; places that experience more seasonal and environmental stresses and shocks than others. There are places that have more girl/women education and where women have access to social amenities. In many places the presence of police would serve as assurance for human safety or serve as trigger for violent conducts. Some communities and households are known to have more disregard for traditional values than others. Some communities have more informed persons than others, an indication of safety nets and secure livelihoods.

Levels of violence, conflict and disorder tend to move along these lines. This is confirmed by Foluso Okunmadewa et al. reports about Nigeria, thus: "in some villages crime is considered to be on the increase due to disregard for traditional values, growing impoverishment, widespread disobedience among youths. Corrupt and abusive police are related to illegal arrests and intimidation" (Okunmadewa et al., 2002, pp. 99-100).

Social Order and Social Cohesion

Social order and social cohesion are not significantly separable. Social order is about how social structures are integrated and maintained while social cohesion is about how parts of the society are held together using common interests and values. Dennis Wrong views social cohesion as how social and moral order are accomplished, social integration achieved and whether societies become divided or united. To Dennis Wrong the problem of or order becomes resolved in everyday associations that maintain regular life rather than being minimal and occasional contacts (Wrong, 1994). Kurt Back articulates that cohesion is a certain pattern of relationship of which the denser the pattern the stronger the relationship and the more cohesion that is expected within the group (Back, 1977). Kurt Back further gives certain conditions of cohesion which are instructive for the Igbo.

- Through instruction during which subjects are told how they resemble; they are promised of joint reward so as to become more independent and appreciate interdependence.
- Common threat. Threat, especially an outside enemy, can increase group cohesion.
- Positive action, people are induced through positive actions like creating warm atmosphere, to love one another (Back, 1977, pp. 115-117).

The Igbo came closest to number two conditions above, a common enemy, during the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970. That alone took care of any other condition. The people hoped for wealth and human flourishing. They appreciated interdependence; they showed warmth and love.

Maintaining Cohesion

Social structure is implicated in the issues of social order and cohesion. Man is at the centre of structures. He approaches its maintenance through two models-consensus and conflict. For consensus, reasoned Margaret Peil, members are seen to share in the same values and norms; co-operation is rewarding and society is basically stable. Even when conflict and violence occur, continued Margaret Peil, they are contained and eventually overcome. On the side of conflict, it is argued that values and norms are not same for all members of society but vary according to interests and positions in that forms of social organization provide more for some persons than for others, thereby making conflict inevitable (Peil, 1977).

All known societies contain elements of cohesion and conflict. However, one form may dominate at one time than the other depending on the pattern of allocation of weberian type economic, prestige and power resources. Conflicts over interests, even ideas may begin to threaten human security. Insecurity tears down the social order. This is where the Igbo communities are. The questions ahead are: Could order be restored and how would the people begin to re-cohere? What pathological consequences are being witnessing? Dennis Wrong while commenting on "what units and divides of society, informs that order is always a matter of degree, coexists with and influences and is influenced by individual deviance, group conflict, social change and cultural innovation" (Wrong, 1994). Dennis Wrong also pointed at the factor of withdrawing from an initial identity and moving into a new one as a causation. He reasoned further that the problem of order could not ignore human nature and the processes by which it is formed through contacts. Dennis Wrong pointed at anarchy, anomie, crime waves, insurrections, revolutions and civil wars, riots, mob violence and other kinds of unconventional behavior as instances of breakdown and collapse of order (Wrong, 1994). In a comparable contribution on what units and divides, Cante, cited in Coretta Phillips states that the problem of changing attitudes and values are at the root of lack of community cohesion (Philips, 2013).

All these issues and factors appear to have been playing out among the Igbo. The people for many years have been abandoning their own identity patterns and taking up strange ones just to belong or be accepted by those who conquered them in the civil war. Though it is often said that the Igbo need some levels of diplomacy in their dealings with neighbors, but they cannot be anything less than their own eternal order. If eternal order, which is psychical is assured, a good social order emerges. One notes, in addition, that the Igbo, especially the rural dwellers are primarily sliding into religious/faith identity which is dangerous to order going by its association with anxiety, fear, unreliable prophesies and suggestiveness to withdrawal from mainstream activities.

Pathologically, a wave of hate appear to be pervading the communities; self destruction, especially among the political class is noticed; ambushing and dispossessing genuine investors, inter and intra-group discords are every where. These are aggravated by poverty, hunger and ignorance as well as the continuous splitting of rural communities along autonomous and political ward lines. They are even complicated by abused ideologies as incapsulated in such sayings as:

> if one cannot beat them, he joins them; climb the iroko tree and collect all the fire wood (even when the iroko tree is of collective ownership); one can be wealthy at childhood – osina nwata buru agaranya; let the sweet bean cake oil go round-mmanu akara di uto, onye ratu ibeya aratu, a popular slogan among the political class, oblivious of the embarrassment posed to the masses who actually own the 'sweet bean cake oilz'.

The chief casualty in Igbo disorder and poor cohesion is loss of assets/resources. These assets are in the form of:

- Physical assets-material belongings, equipments, housing and infrastructure;
- Human assets-health care, education, training and labour force;
- Social assets-social structures, network connections, use of norms and how people participate;
- Natural assets-environmentally related resources such as land, soil, forests, water, wetland, minerals;
- Financial assets-microfinance products, savings and supplies of credit (Narayan et al., 2000, pp. 48-56; Louise Cord;[1] Moser, 2008, p. 50).

[1] Louise Cord, "Rural poverty", in a source book for Poverty Reduction Strategies

Disorder and poor coherence have reduced the availability of these resources. The most implicated are social and human capital because they have overriding influence on others, serving as informal insurance on them. The extent to which social capital, for example, ties others is captured by Vinod Thomas, et al. thus:

> Few resources are spent to protect against economic fraud; monitoring of supplies become easy; inter personal trust, participation and co-operation are built; diffusion of innovation and information are guaranteed. (Thomas et al., 2000, p. 33)

A return to group cohesion can be achieved through instructions from Talcott Parsons on return to value consenus and adherence to social functional prerequisites mainly adaption, goal attainment, integration and pattern maintenance (Haralambos & Holoborn, 2004, p. 940). Adopting the Parsonian conceptions above, the Igbo would arrive at shared values, then common goals are set and these goals provide direction in specific situations. The adaptation prerequisite suggests that the Igbo would relate well with their environment, provide food, shelter and security for the service of the people. For goal attainment, goals are set and social activity is directed on such and resources allocated on such activities too. Integration suggests that parts of the system (Igbo social system) continuously adjust in relation to conflicts; define norms properly and standardize relations so that conflicts do not lead to disintegration of society, pattern maintenance suggests the maintenance of basic values of the people through the family institution, the educational system and religion.

The Problem of Social and System Integration

How are social and system integration implicated in the Igbo problem of insecurity and social order? How does poverty come in? What is the balance between internal and external disequilibria of Igbo life and what are the implications for survival? John Scott and Gardon Marshall consider "social integration as the principles by which individuals or actors are related to one another in a society while system integration is the relationship between parts of a society or parts of system" (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 655). John Scott and Gordon Marshall further opines that during social integration actors are physically co-present while for system integration they are not. Barry Barnes reasons that social integration is about how and why individuals in the system produced the actions necessary to its existence while system integration is about how parts of a social system, the constiment institutions operate in relation to each other (Barnes, 1995).

Both social and system integration do overlap and embrace all of orders, conflict, harmony and contradictions. In what ever forms, we expect these to be positive for Igbo survival. Unfortunately, so many forces are not being mitigated against. One is the problem of post-colonialism which pushed the Igbo into crass materialism. A conflictual social integration is expected for a people that embraced crass materialism (Scott & Marshall, 2005). Secondly the Igbo appear not to be mitigating the forces of internal and external disequilibria. The forces of internal disequilibrium which appear to call for regulation are the nascent strange business character, reign of hobbessian free passions, bad political ethics and ideologies, institutionalization of killer groups like hired assassins and cultists, anti-people religions groups.

The forces of external disequilibrium are due to the macro social and economic policies of the federal government which the Igbo states are part of. One recalls rice policies that do not promote Igbo Akaeze and Abakiliki rice; stock fish and vehicle spare parts importation policies concerning a business area that is the domain of the Igbo; cattle and meat policies that have ignored the promotion of Igbo indigenous cow; science and technology policies that do not promote the Igbo content;

Without integration and the mitigation of both internal and external forces, the Igbo, especially rural dwellers are likely to slide deeper into cultural confusion and poor fare situation in the years ahead, cultural confusion in the sense that the Igbo are left with:

> A mongrelized, extroverted, foreign-dominated culture, a culture without respectability, a culture without economic strength and political power, a culture with no intellect and of incomplete synthesis. A poor fare state in the sense that there is an equal distribution of poverty, consumerism, parasitism and competitive factionalism and intensification of instability and anti-cohesive ethnic politics. (Chinweizu, 1978)

Conclusion and Recommendation

A lot of ambivalence is faced by the Igbo in view of insecurity, poverty and social disorder that are occurring simultaneously, moreso when the state is weak and can no longer be relied upon. The reinforcing nature of these is threatening Igbo survival and pushing them into fatalism. Disorder has been created by divergent interests, post colonial crass materialism, inconsistent ideas and values; the jettisoning of own identity patterns and picking new, often strange ones. Insecurity and poverty share in the same causative agents. Insecurity affects poverty escapes, hinders the freeman and lawful industry and tears down the social order. Conflictual forms of social integration are expected in societies that purse crass materialism.

Recommendations

The Igbo have a responsibility to restore order in their homelands, beat down poverty and achieve social cohesion. The following must be done:

- The people must work towards conformity to core group norms which are the key to system stability. This must be done over and against the promptings of rational self interests.
- Persons in power in the south east states must share ideas and strategies, even a clearing office. A good example was when they simultaneously accepted to demolish the houses of kidnappers.
- Eastern government should create livelihood opportunities for the poor, recognizing the fact that poverty is not just about income. They also need to invest in the organization and human capacities of the people to enable them check the erosion of assets that have come under threat.
- Contacts among Igbo and among social institutions must be encouraged while at the same time fashioning out how to distinguish what is Igbo and non Igbo, such as the use of language and any symbols.
- Igbos should stick to their noble identity endowments, refuse to compromise or play safe. The ignoble trends should be jettisoned.
- Poverty reductions plans by governments should be targeted at the youth, in view of their role in insecurity.
- A programme of reintegration of gang leaders and men, cultists, former political militants and thugs should be organized by local government authorities via community councils.
- The Eastern states should create ranches for herdsmen and put up an adequate value chain for the cow industry so that Eastern economies of Nigeria will benefit.
- The abuse of Igbo philosophical sayings and using such to support strange conduct should be tackled by specifying their contextual usage, and limits, Igbo socio-cultural organizations and relevant agencies should be involved.

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