



Art Beyond Facial Value: of Metaphorization and Functionality of Sexual Scenes in Selected Nigerian Short Stories in the Cyberspace

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Abstract

This paper sets out to examine selected short stories published in digital media as expression of twenty first century youth culture with the exploration of sexual scenes as a paradigm. Digital literature is a relatively new type of text which has created a fluid space for digital interactions enabling writers to express themselves informally using sexual scenes as motif. The digital media platform offers new systems and cultures of expression which challenge the pre-existing modes and forms of literature of the hard text captured mainly in the features of immediacy. Immediacy in cyberspace constitutes rebellion in digital literature and also represents literary creativity. This type of literature uses informal language and undisguised representation of sex as a part of its distinguishing features. The aim of this paper therefore is to explicate the functionality of sexual scenes in digital literature and how it represents social norms that constitute expressions of dissent to conventional portrayal of sexual scenes in print literature using remediation as the theoretical framework.

Key Words: Sex, Deviance, Digital Literature, Nigeria, Cyberspace

Introduction

The digital media platform offers new systems and cultures of expressions that challenge pre-existing modes and forms of print literature. This form of

literary composition is characterised by spontaneity and immediacy (features that are concerned with the element and tendency of on the spot publishing, which entails a deliberate short-circuiting of conventional principles and processes of publishing. Essentially, digital writings seem to be devoid of the delays, rigours and tensions of editing and production conventions. It is generally devoid of pre-publishing censorship and the norms of blind assessment and review of processes such as editorial, linguistic, ideological and stylistic evaluation and the content before publishing. However, there are exceptions to these waivers imposed by the free cyberspace, some digital literature pass through the complete processes of requirements for publishing.

The freedom of the digital space allows for various forms of rebellion. Immediacy as a concept of publishing in cyberspace constitutes rebellion in digital literature and represents literary creativity. Creative literature has always kept faith with the realities of the human society, and in this regard the digital short stories portray sex in an uncensored language that tends to authenticate youths experiences in the twenty first century. This is true of literature in cyberspaces which uses sex as narrative subject. The various writers under study in our paper demonstrate that the use of sex in digital spaces should be spoken in relative terms and not the reductionist classification of it as vulgar. Digital literature is quite different from the print and oral literature in terms of content and form.

However, digital literature is actually dependent on the features of the literatures mentioned above because it appropriates the synthesised version of it in the creation of the unique nature of digital literature. Sexual scenes in digital literature are fit into subject to question various levels of abuses in Nigeria. Sexual scenes are a recurrent motif in digital literature. However, sex seems to be the aesthetic commitment in the composition of new writings in cyberspaces. The writers are committed to their own reality and as such are appropriating every element of culture even to the height of remediation to carry the weight of their generational experiences in the twenty first century. It is worthy of note that most writers of cyber space literature are young and their writings are not motivated by commercial intents. The writings are not tailored to meet up with any prescriptive requirements but their writings are motivated by the need to question the rationale behind certain societal happenings such as the moral decadence and the hypocrisy in the society. This discourse of selves has resurrected the sexuality that was constrained by African culture and community. Even though these literary pieces are read in secrecy; the virtual community has allowed the exploration of such selves to

the extent that most persons are hypnotized in the consumption of such literary pieces in cyberspaces irrespective of their religious convictions.

Writers of this literature cannot ignore the sexual aspects of their humanity at the dawn of “freedom”, and their new society which Lindsdays et-al call, “real world relationship” (3). Yochai Benkler comments on this portrayal of sexual scene thus “These practices make their practitioners better “readers” of their own culture and more self-reflective and critical of the culture they occupy, thereby enabling them to become more self reflective participants in conversations within that culture” (4).

The issue of self-reflection and the questioning of the conservative culture in respect to sex and sexual scenes are explored by the cyber space users. The narrative shows that there are aspects of African culture that have not been explored and by their creative ideology; digital writers affirm Tanure Ojaide view on the social obligation of the writer to his society “the writer is like a Chronicle-he is chronicling the experiences of his people...” (30).The literature of the twenty first century is the literature of the “celebration” of the self and the telling of the human stories of sex that society has decided to ignore. The environment has changed completely and since literature is a realistic portrayal of society, Ojaide (2012) upholds the above and states that, “As a writer, you use what you are familiar with, materials that are close to you” (30).

What this means is the appropriation of societal experience and the appropriation of personal experience to create literary pieces. It is necessary to note, as Edward Morgan Forster observes: “when idea changes form something happens to truth” (60).The sexual scene might not be scene of human condition, but it provides a representation of the human experience. However, as David Bolter and Richard Grusin (2000) states, “In order to create a sense of presence, virtual reality should come as close as possible to our daily experience”(13).The twenty first century writers are “better readers” of their culture and are more self-reflective of the culture they occupy. What this simply means is that there is a “break” from using literature to champion African collective course as a society to the valorization of and the appropriation of individual experiences as a microscopic representation of the macro human condition.

Writers of this period are mostly interested in their individual experiences as a true portrayal of human conditions and not necessarily as residual experiences of the effect of colonialism. Yochai Benkler situates the

individual as the core driving the composition on cyberspaces with full baggage of individuality, but most times devoid of a sense of collectivist ideology. Christopher Anyokwu indirectly affirms to the nature of digital literature when he states that, "...Africa's oral heritage continues to wax stronger as it continues to adapt to its new and strange social milieu, adopting and appropriating technological resources for its own relevance and perpetuation" (1). Although Anyokwu is referring to "Africa's oral heritage," confidently, no one can discuss the gamut of Nigerian literature without capturing the various stages of development, except such scholar's intention is to discuss just a period of Nigerian literature. When Anyokwu affirms the concept of "eye" and "ear", he allude to the possibility of the realist images writers appropriate from the society that appeal to the consumers of their art. One of the distinguishing characteristics of a digital writer is his celebration of sex and sexuality even in his discourse of the condition of man. Chinyere Nwahunanya (2011) corroborates the above assertion when he submits that; "Creative works of literature are products of the society's libido" (36). Digital literature within the African realities highlights the expansive nature of African culture to make space for another "culture" beyond what we can imagine, although it meets with various resistances by the older generation due to the lack of an adequate paradigm to classify it.

The portrayal of sex as deviance captures the development of cyber space writers and their ability to deal with their environment. It shows that they understand the law of nature which embraces change even with slight resistance; after which nature accommodates change for the good of humanity. The sexual scenes portray the digital generation putting their understanding in action and using technological tools to create texts. Internet users produce more short stories and poems as a result of the requirement of immediacy and brevity as required by the digital communities. Psychologists have observed that youths are fascinated by sex and sexual scenes as a result of their age, and as such; digital writers are using this medium to capture their interest as a subtle way to question tradition and encroach on the space of print literature through the form and content of what they present. Digital literature follows this growth mentioned above and develops according to the tendency of inward forces- one of which is the drive to express one's sexuality against the constraining prescription of society and its institutionalized print literature. Susan Arndt (2013) observes that new texts are informed by previous texts, just as they happen to inform future ones. The foregoing illustrates that digital literature is not totally alien in the discourse of literature; rather it appropriates certain features of oral and print literature.

Explicit Sexual Contexts in Text: Textual Analysis

The multiplicity of dialects and cultures is an acknowledgement of the existence of traditions that determine a peoples' way of life and worldview. These traditions act as moral imperative in their interaction and relation with others within the Nigerian state and the Nigerian literature carries these diversities of taboos. Within these various traditions, sex as an act is abhorred and portrayed with the power of metaphors to such an extent that a lot is left to the imagination. Writers, publishers and critics are products of this tradition that abhor sex and they make sure that art and its criticism reflect their values. However, with the coming of the digital generation, the discourse of sex which was a private discourse matures into a public discourse and erotica which is explicit content becomes one of the marks of this generation. Erotica is an offshoot of Eros which is a Greek term for love and desire. Digital literature questions societal values through the mechanism of sexual discourse. It is a rebellion against the sex-phobia and the celebration of individual sexuality and sexual orientation. It seems most writers of digital literature are using the freedom of digital spaces to explore their sexuality.

The story *I Want All* by Lelovicks embodies the element of explicit content and the language is not censored which is one of the elements of digital erotica. The narrator's name does not seem real and has no personality attached to the story in terms of author biography. What this represents is the impersonality of most digital writers in cyberspaces. This is one of the most important features of digital literature and it marks the characteristics of its writers. V. Y Mudimbe (2007) affirms this as an art form when he submits, "when we speak of African literature, we refer to both the body of texts whose authors are known and to anonymous discourses which carry on successive deposits of supposedly unknown imaginations"(60). This unknown imagination is an element of African oral art and digital writers are appropriating such "namelessness" in the presentation of their private lives through the handle of literature. However, the pseudo names in some of the narratives are motivated by author's choice while others actually use their real names. They imitate the element of orality in the presentation of self in the virtual. Their works performs the following as submitted by Liz Gunner (2007) "Orality needs to be seen in the African context as the means by which society of varying complexity regulate themselves, organized their present and pasts, made formal spaces for philosophical reflections, pronounced on power, questioned and in some cases contested power, and

generally paid homage to “the word” Language as the means by which humanity was made and constantly refashioned” (67). The function of sexual scenes in digital literature is a means of refashioning the writer’s humanity in rebellion against society that has constrained such discourse.

Digital space is a representation of a particular society because it is consumed by a specific number of adults who might be sexually active. The language use is that of rebellion and power of art to assert itself. The narrator opines:

...“Tell me what you want me to do to you during our first time.”

... “I want to look at your beautiful brown eyes before you kiss me so deep that your tongue almost touches my throat. I want to feel ever callus on your palm as you hold my neck at that particular angle you want as it allows for deeper penetration.(1)

The demand the lady makes on the type of sexual intercourse she needs is a reflection of how time affects generational taste/ habit; it is an acknowledgement of the rejection of Okonkwo’s looking for the edge of the wrapper in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* to telling the man what the woman wants. It is a reflection of gender equality and sex as demand and supply by both parties although in a changing format of what the individuals by consent want in the exchange. She gives him rules on how he is expected to pull her clothes before she could grant him sexual access. There is an impersonality of the characters having no name but just a gender role assigned to them. In most digital erotic scene, the characters have neither names nor extensive personality development. Their outstanding feature is their sexuality as it is reminiscent of Penstory.com, elsieisy.com, Brittlepapers, Blanzpaper, Sentinel Nigeria.com and most sites that host Nigerian literature.

Explicit sexual content occurs when the writer leaves nothing to imagination to the extent that it triggers a sort of sensation of acceptance or rejection of sexual pleasure based on individual perception about sex. However, the foregoing is a matter of choice and the writer’s opinion and does not constitute universal truth on the effect of erotica. The short story, “The Chronicles of a Government Hooker” by Akinwale Akinyoade supports our conviction. In the narrator’s words:

I was reluctant to do with my wet hands which now a mixture of water, soap and pre-cum but then I remembered the hundred thousand by the feet and deftly unhooked my bra. My young breasts swung free from their confinement in all its fullness and he stared at them appreciatively, with one palm, he covered the head of my left breast and squeezed gently... (2)

The foregoing shows a sort of sexual orientation and strives toward sexual satisfaction through fondling or an aided masturbation. This is a highlight of the individual and private sexual orientation of the narrator. The use of the first person pronoun "I" shows that certain erotica in cyberspaces are autobiographical and demonstrates the new sexual orientation and the personality of the character because the private sexual scene of a man tells more about his personality. The narrator continues:

All of a sudden he ransacked for my panties, tugged at them and dipped two fingers between my legs, once again I winced in pain. "for a100k I suppose fuck u sef," he muttered in pidgin. I opened my mouth to respond but all I could do was moan loudly as his fingers stroked my clit...I grabbed tightly onto his dick with my right hand and started stroking his curved manhood faster. Still twirling his fingers in my pussy, he cupped a butt cheek with the other hand and squeezed tightly. My legs felt wobbly and the sensation between them seemed to be spreading all over my body. I couldn't help myself, I moaned into his ear "I want you to fuck my virgin pussy." (1)

The above has elements of explicit contents; where it highlights the personality of the leaders of the national assembly as they could pay a hundred thousand for one round of sex and added another hundred thousand as reward for it but considers the payment of minimum wage as too expensive for the government. The narrator who appears sad that she

had to do it to pay her fees does not take away the fact that she did enjoy it at one point in time. The work highlights the hypocrisy in the society where people make choices and blame them on circumstances.

The portrayal of sex, sexuality and sexual orientation shows the fluidity of power relation in sexual acts between man and woman that it changes like the tick tack of the clock. Freedom of expression which the internet emphasizes connotes different interpretation depending on an individual's understanding of what such freedom represents. Freedom is interesting only to those it makes meaning to, while for others, it is a form of rebellion and distraction and that is why certain literary freedom can be offensive. Digital literature embodies alternate ways of thinking and perception. It is like the responses to Njabulo Ndebele's request to South African writers but his requests are very relevant to Nigerian writers too. To Ndebele:

The greatest challenge of... revolution is in the search for ways of perception, that will help to break down the closed epistemological structures.... The challenge is to free the entire social imagination of the oppressed from the laws of perception that have characterized apartheid society. For writers this means freeing the creative process from these very laws. It means extending the writer's perception of what can be written about, and the means and method of writing (126).

Digital writers have broken down the closed epistemological structures of reasoning in Nigeria through their choice of sex as narrative subjects of storytelling. They have freed their creative spirits by portraying the real human conditions in recent times, and we believe they have asked the question of how the human nature is today. Appropriately, they have answered this question through their portrayal of characters. Digital literature is a successful attempt to express the individual using sex both as a metaphor for a society suffering from moral ailment and as a motif for understanding the human nature.

The questions emanating from the use of "I" which is an autobiographical marker, shows that digital erotic writers have a need and that need is the quest for visibility and the cravings to understand one's self and one's

sexuality through creative experimentation with bold expression of sexual scenes or acts. The reason for the foregoing is as a result of the non-challant attitudes of most parents towards the provision of sex education for their children. Consequently, the youth who are most creators of these stories use their narratives in trying to understand themselves. To them, sex is not just an act of procreation or power relation of gender, it is simply the coming of doubt and the need for them to understand sexual urge. This is seen in the short story titled "Don't Say Jesus" by Akinwale Akinyoade when the narrator says that:

Having tasted a bit of what it seemed like now to have a woman's mouth on my dick, I knew that I wanted more. I wanted to explore her body and feel that mounting excitement; I wanted to know what it would feel like if I got the chance to stick my dick into her. Would it taste the same way? Would it feel better? Thoughts of her flat stomach, her mounds of breasts and the areole, the nipple that I had suckled on and felt like I was being weaned kept finding their way into my mind and soon I felt like I was going to go crazy...(3).

In "Don't Say Jesus" by Akinwale Akinyoade, Aunty Blessing whose parents do not allow her to enjoy sex due to their religious regulations found great delight in Kunle who her father, brother Tunde is teaching to be an obedient child of God. Aunty Blessing touching Kunle awakes that humanity in him and he decides to search for the full package of what he has experienced. In the narrator's words:

This was paradise and the pastors that said we should wait until marriage before sex didn't know what they were saying. Her head bobbed up and down on my dick in quick movements, it was like she was in a hurry unlike the last time when she had been bent on torturing me with teasing.She started sucking me whole and taking in parts even as we stood right where we were by the door. My own head thrown back with my mouth slightly opened as I allowed the sensation to course

through my body. I suddenly understood why Papa Emeka had twelve children despite his being poor, who could resist this kind of pleasure.... (3)

The story shows that youths are fascinated with sex because it soars their imagination about the possibilities of pleasure and they are hypnotized by it because it is a secret pleasure. They cannot share with people who do not share this fascination about sex or have been weaned from it. The narrator attests to that in the sense that his sexual experience with Aunt Blessing questions his religious belief.

Sexual experience for the young ones is like the promises of paradise full of endless bliss and that is evident in his questioning of the religious teachings he had subscribed to all these while. The story shows that the man is not always at the forefront to induce the woman into sexual intercourse as we have in many feminist narratives that have painted the man as a sex maniac and as such look for every opportunity to violate the woman. The narrative subtly affirms the sexuality of the woman and her ability for sexual urge. This can be seen in the abusing of a minor. For example, Aunt Blessing sexually abuses Kunle who is a greenhorn and whose parents left in her care because they share the same religious faith. Sexual scene in literature is capable of portraying the human true nature just as it subtly highlights that religious people have the same biological make up and also desire sex. If given the opportunity, most of them would reject their faith. The naivety of the narrator is highlighted when he affirms that it was due to the enjoyment of sex that made Papa Emeka to have twelve children. This shows the level of illiteracy in Nigeria when most persons fail to embrace birth control either due to lack of awareness or due to religious beliefs. This story represents a balance of story as affirmed by Chimamanda Adichie in her TED talk on "the danger of single story". The narrator, through the innocence of the inexperienced, gives an account of his encounter with his aunt with great delight. The narrator corroborated our interpretation when he observes that:

... "Lie down" she commanded in a voice made thick with desire and then she went back on my dick with desire and began sucking again. This was the paradise on earth and my... mind went to the thought that heaven couldn't be any better than this. She had been sucking for another six minutes when I felt that familiar

storm building again and began to thrust in to her mouth and she noticed my action and increased her own sucking. (4)

There is an intrusion of the narrator's belief system where he considered his heart treacherous. However, it is necessary to note that if there was no punishment, the narrator would prefer to reject heaven - a place he felt would be very boring due to the singing and praising devoid of sexual pleasure. Most of the cyber erotic short stories share the same function with Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Bocaccio's *The Decameron* which highlight the nature of humans and to a large extent the enjoyment of sex by religious people who had sworn to celibacy. The sensation which a reader feels when reading *Decameron* is also present in most erotic short stories in cyberspaces. Njabulo Ndebele in his paper "Redefining Relevance" says that "feminism and colonialism like the protest literature of South Africa appears to have lost its objective basis" (126). Digital writers are rejecting what Ndebele calls "... the characteristics of a socially entrenched manner of thinking about the...reality; a manner of thinking which, over the years, has gathered its own momentum and now reproduces itself uncritically (126)."

Embedded Sexual Contents in Texts Under Study

Sachs (2007) observes that "Each culture has its strength, but there is no culture that is worth more than any other" (136). Sex is a culture in recent times whether explicit, embedded or metaphoric; presentation of sex needs acknowledgement of its existence in human society. Sachs noted, "Every culture has its positive and negative aspects". We believe it is the same with digital literature. The concept of sexual portrayal in digital literature is viewed from the perspective of levels and not from the a perception or submission of digital literature as vulgar as "traditional critics and scholars" want us to accept. The use of sexual language in digital literature is an instrument of deviance in the sense that it is a breakaway from the sexual phobia of African print literature. The portrayal of sexual scenes is an attempt to express and prove the other which the "Empire" when writing back failed to acknowledge and even when feminism came on stage did not also highlight because they were looking at power relation using literature as a tool to question levels of human actions in the society. Digital literature wants to connect with their audiences who are members of a sexually active generation as a result of free society and virtual humanity. The writers of this society want to connect with their society where their sexuality is freely expressed without reserve in their organic community.

Digital writers try to convince the readers to freely see literature as a second handle to question their sexuality or see their sexual pleasure as an aspect of their humanity. They want to correct the perception that Africans are sexually-phobic and have no sexual content in their existence. The acceptance of virtual community entrust the issue of personality in the society. And personality is the promotion of individuality which means individuals are given access to their personal experiences in literature in respect to their sexual actions. However, there is security in the virtual space in the sense that the people are not physically threatened and as, such have the freedom to freely express their suppressed personalities by print literature manned by keepers of indigenous culture. Sex is a social norm among most youth on digital platform and it is not viewed as perverted neither is it tabooed among the digital writers. The writers on this platform do not just capture sex or sexual scenes in their works but they view it as motif in the portrayal of human conditions. Digital literature is the re-emergence of African oral literature in a written form; they share the same element of immediacy and in certain aspect of brevity as a result of the time constraint in view of African art. However, the difference between digital literature and African oral literature is that the sexual content was constrained by tradition and made to look as if it did not exist. Digital literature is actually forming a new culture based on sex and sexuality and using it as motif in the portrayal of human conditions and also questioning the societal constraining force on print literature which censors this explicit and embedded sexual content or towing the line of print literature which couches the presentation of sexual scenes in metaphors.

Furthermore, the use of sex in this discourse is elastic in nature and stretches into sex as gender, sex as love making, and sex as changing identity as a result of a personal decision devoid of biological concept. Sex in this discourse is a motive and it alludes to Pat Caplans (1987) definition of sex, thus: " ... 'sex' as widely used is of comparatively recent origin; people talk of 'having sex', usually meaning coitus. In the 1965 version of the Oxford English Dictionary, this use of the word does not appear, but it is included in the 1975 version, defined as 'pertaining to sexual instincts, desires of their manifestations' (1). In response to the above highlight of the definition, Caplan observes that the presence of two different definitions of 'sex' in ten years apart suggests that there are shifts in meaning over time. What his observation captures is the acknowledgement of the varied shift in respect to the meaning of sex in Nigerian literature in recent times. 'Sex' is in a state of flux as will be highlighted using various headings to lay claim to our submission. The discourse of sex in digital literature is more or less the

interrogation of human conditions ranging from religious exploitation at various levels as demonstrated in this segment of our analysis. The discourse of sexual content in digital literature is a matter of levels and perceptions which are influenced by the individual culture, religious beliefs, traditional affiliation, cultural taboos and level of 'exposure' of the individual. These perceptions couched in various societal restrictive ways, find their ways into the literature of the time.

However, the period at which the art of a people is created has great influence on the art because it is a representational of the spirit of such age. Sex and sexual scene is the motif of the digital narratives in the twenty first century. Sex or sexuality is structured in digital literature in such a way that without it, the narrative cannot flow or the plot of the narrative will collapse. Sex and the diverse allusions to it aid and act as a catalyst in the development of the plot. There is the merger of religious sexual exploitation and sexual scene in *Holy Sex* in such a way that without the sexual scene and allusion to it, the effect would have been lost. Obinna Udenwe employs immediacy to remediate familiar story to the extent that he defamiliarizes the content from the audience. **Carl Max** opines that "religion is the opium of the masses", and we believe that this 'opium' ranges from day to day problems that religion steps in to save the masses from that state of hopelessness to the extent that they lose their reasoning. The opium transforms into exploitative motif as seen in "Holy Sex".

According to Lawrence Chonko (1992):

Religion is a collection of cultural systems, belief systems, and world views that established symbols that relate humanity to some supernatural or inanimate objects who are revered and worshipped through ritual practices and there exists a code of existence that guides adherents on the why and how of social existence; an icon is formed and harmonized as the rallying point of faithful and it could include sun, moon, river, fire or some animate personalities.(9)

Pastor Samuel in *Holy Sex* represents this established symbol that relate to the supernatural to the extent that his actions are not questioned. Pastor Samuel is the rallying point of the faithful even amidst their exploitations because he gives them certain form of hope. The use of embedded sexual

content can be seen in "Holy Sex" by Obinna Udenwe. He uses sexual embedded content to satirize the religious temperament of most Nigerian Pastors. The authorial voice says:

Your pastor secretes holy milk. That is the story being whispered
by everyone in the church- choristers, ushers,
and the women. They say he is God's
anointed. A man anointed by God must have
all his body parts and fluid blessed, too. ...The
widow receives holy milk from him, too, and
that is not a problem because He is anointed
one. Who can say no to God's anointed? 'Now
listen I am your pastor. I cannot lead you to
eternal condemnation. No, we are about to
make love, the greatest gift God gave to
mankind. Through love, the world is
replenished. Why do you think God made sex
the sweetest thing on earth? And we are his
children and he loves us. Do you think God
would deny mankind that pleasure? (1)

The foregoing epitomizes religious exploitation and the use of the name of God to commit the same sexual immorality that Pastor Samuel preaches against. Pastor Samuel is an archetypal representation of most Nigerian pastors who use the words of their God as a tool to sway the reasoning of their members. The writer's use of satire is aimed at correcting this social and religious foible to envision change. This is made effective through the combinatorial effect of indignation and laughter with a mixture of criticism and wit. The idea of satire is invented from the act of mockery or ridicule, to correct the ills of the society. The work uses irony to expose and attack human vices in the name of God and to reveal the stupidity of most Nigerian Christians.

Udenwe submerges his words in metaphors in the use of language and employs immediacy to put his message across. The fluid which resonates Pastor Samuel's sperm is spiritually fertile to the extent that his physical penetration gives the spiritual healing of the fruit of the womb to the barren in his congregation. Pastor Samuel's supposed 'generosity' assists beautiful ladies by providing solutions to their problems through the sowing of his

fluids into their lives. He uses the needs of sister Blessing to have sexual intercourse with sister Blessing. In Pastor Samuel's words:

'Blessing, I am a Pastor. When I mean finding favour, I mean God's blessings. I pray for people and they receive blessings. I lay hands on them. If I like you, I lay my hands on you. My wife is a very successful woman because I don't just Lay my hands on her, but we make love. And each time I see you in my dream God tells me to reach out to you. This last one I saw us making love, and I knew you need His blessings, especially as you need to know it that guy in London is the best husband for you' 'How do you know sir? He kisses your lips again. 'Do you doubt God?' 'No, Sir.' 'Then swallow his holy milk to quench your thirst for blessings (4).

Pastor Samuel is a changing representation of what God constitutes among religious believers in Nigeria. God for them can be bent to fit into the purpose of their situational narratives for personal gains. Blessing had to submit to his sexual exploitation because she wants to marry and since Pastor can see into the future she had no choice but to drink the milk of harassment with submission and tears hoping to be rewarded at the end of the day for her labour. According to Bernth Lindfors (2007), "Writers have served not only as chroniclers of contemporary political history but also as advocates of radical social change. Their works both reflect and project the course of Africa's Cultural Revolution" (22). Udenwe is projecting this Cultural Revolution in respect of Nigerian art reflecting sex as a tool for exploitation and power relation in the society. One of the indications of African Cultural Revolution is the use of sex and sexual scenes as one of the connecting element of literary narrative.

In the narrators voice, we detect sarcasm heavily unleashed further on religious leaders with the view of correcting this religious aberrations:

Pastor, you moan as his lips cover yours. The room is very dark as you have not touched the switch. His hands are on your waist, moving down to your large buttocks. He

presses himself too tight against you and suffocates you with his kisses so tender and warm. You hit him on the shoulder lightly as you call, 'Pastor...Pastor...' he lowers you on the rug and lies on top of you. His hands find its way down your shirt and he undoes your buttons (2).

The foregoing highlights an embedded sexual scene to many who are 'used' to this physical environment although mediated. However, the "righteous" (spirited persons) of this world; with the full weight of the scripture; whom are yet to be exposed to this physical environment in literature and reality, may not understand what the writer is writing about. As a result, the writer's message is taken on a religious level without any sexual interpretation to the message the writer is passing across.

However, it is necessary to note that what constitutes sexual embedded content is a matter of perspective and 'exposure' because there are no standard measures for determining embedded sexual content. For the purpose of classification, our submission is to individual perception and not a universal truth. Consequently, within the embedded sexual content in digital literature, there is gender relation as well as a progression to a sexual scene as it is highlighted. The narrator continues:

He smooches your right breast and takes your left nipples into his mouth and you moan. 'Oh God...Oh, Good...' you call, and even though it is very dark, you see an angel on your roof. You are sure. When you see the angel, you close your eyes and you kiss your pastor back fervently. You relish his lips as you moan unconsciously, and then he unbuckles his belt. He unhooks your brassiere (5).

Most digital literature is built on the superstructures of sex and sexuality and accommodating other subtle themes that reflect human conditions in the society. Digital writers who are writing in colonial languages use the digital platform to express things that society finds offensive as implied by Lindfors. However, it is necessary to note that these writers try to assert their humanity constrained by society as a result of sexual phobia in African society. As observed by Lindfors, "Holy Sex" questions society's reverence of

men of God in the garment of pastors and religious leaders in a generic sense who commits such crime even against the dictate of the message they preach. One of the institutions in Nigeria that has been abused extensively is religion. This is because it has no science to measure its truthfulness and it is based on faith which abhors doubt and questioning. The level of education and the economic situation in Nigeria has imposed faith as a means of economic prosperity and a secured hope in the society. Many people believe in the promises of Nigerian pastors as a result of their promises of certain place devoid of suffering and many in the country see religious faith as compensation to secure a peaceful life here after.

Nigerian digital writers are using virtual spaces to assert their sexuality by attempting to use the virtual space to express their sociological perception of sex and sexual orientation. In the past, homosexuality and lesbianism were constrained by culture and by the gate keepers of African culture working within the establishment of print literature. However, in recent times, with the coming of technology such writers could easily bypass the censorship board mounted by print literature and tradition to express the new sociological perception of their sexuality through their sexual choices in literature. Some of these new identities as a result of the need to express the personal and the other are carried out through sexual scenes or character delineation of sexual choices of the characters in digital literature. The other might be considered as biological abnormality for those who were born male but suddenly gained female features that made them to express such identity within the purview of their sexuality and identity. This is clearly highlighted in 'A night so damp'. Mrs. Ngozi has waited for a very long time after the death of her husband for the return of her only child and son Kamalu. His return is a great joy to her as she prepares for a celebration of his return from UK. The authorial voice expresses her joy thus: "She reached for the handkerchief lying on the table and wiped the corner of her eyes so gently. Had your father been alive, this would have been a perfect homecoming. Kamalu nodded, then shifted his gaze over the balcony" (2). That captures the depth of Mrs. Ngozi's joy and she wishes her husband was alive to witness the return of their son. However, she is willing to make his return fulfilling when she says:

I said, we will celebrate your home-coming with a dinner party on Friday. Whoa! Should be cool. Kay will be thrilled. She sat up, with the flash of a smile on her face. Who? He glanced at the handkerchief on the table. Is

she your girlfriend? A special friend. So is she not your girlfriend? She sounded somehow satisfied. Curiosity made Eve to lose Eden, mum, he replied. ...kamalu picked up the bottle, shook it lightly, then poured some into her goblet. As he kept the bottle on the table, he said hesitatingly, I didn't mean it that way. She took a sip from her goblet(2).

Mrs. Ngozi notices the enthusiasm expressed by the son and she feels that based on her cultural perception, her son is actually in love with a lady but has refused to inform her that the girl is actually a special friend of his. Kamalu and his mother have different meanings of what the gender of a person should be in a romantic relationship.

Pat Caplans (1987) corroborated the above when he submits that, "...different meanings tend to coalesce in many people's minds, with the implication that gender is expressed through sexuality and each sex has a specific sexuality" (2). It is this specific sexuality that Mrs. Ngozi asks after of which her son fails to acknowledge but said 'a special friend' without any gender (sex) role assigned to the person he refers to. Since Mrs. Ngozi is sure that there is no lady in her son's life, she decides to source one for him. This irritates her son but she remains indifferent about it as seen in her response motivated her response thus: "Don't give me that I'm-doomed look! You are young, but twenty six is not an immature age for taking a wife, is it not so?" (2). Kamalu was troubled because his mother wanted him to get married to a lady when he had different sexual orientation. Caplans Pat's submission that, "...one's sexual orientation is a very important aspect of one's identity" (11) and this is true in the above instance. This is so in the sense that in Nigeria, when those of marriageable age get married, they are viewed as being responsible and it is a requirement in most religious houses for them to be given additional responsibility in the church. Kamalu's sexual orientation makes him to abhor Daphne -the lady his mother chooses for him as a result of his failure to identify a lady he loves. The conflict in the narrative is developed based on his alternate identity which his mother is oblivious of. The conflict of the narrative is resolved when the mother meets the progress of Kamalu's sexual scene with his friend as revealed by the narrator thus:

In the corridor Mrs. Ngozie paused, called Kamalu. When he didn't answer, she knocked on the door to his room and turned the knob.

What she saw as the door opened slightly was enough to sear through her body and electrify her senses. The bottle dropped out of her hand. Her eyes bulged out. She was able to cry out, Kamalu! Nwanka egbuemuo, this child has killed me...before she collapsed on the floor. In that split minute the two friends drew back. She had seen it all, though. Two men who had been suckling each other's tongue....And his body dripping with feverish sweat, he knelt beside her and tried to revive her (3).

Embedded sexual content in digital literature is a means to identify the sexuality of the characters and to highlight multiple identities in the society in respect to sexuality.

In "Growing from a Boy to a Woman", a biological abnormality is captured as a result of growth that transforms the male character to a female. Femi is worried as a result of his new identity that is actually defined by the biological growth which threatens his identity. Here, his gender is actually having radical changes and these sudden physiological transformations traumatize him. In the narrator's voice:

First it was just normal nipples, then a needle-like pain, then a lump, then a mould and then full grown breasts. But how manage? Why was I growing breasts? For heaven's sake, I was a teenage boy of 18 years and not a girl. Over the past few months I had noticed that I was growing them. My breasts were getting sensitive. There were other things about my body that were strange as well. I seemed to have bigger hips and a larger but than the other guys. When I looked in the mirror naked, my body was sort of like a girl's. I tried to conceal my growing boobs by wearing loose shirts or jackets. I decided to speak to my girlfriend about it.... "Shade...I don't know how or why but I swear I'm growing boobs.

Her response was a five minutes silence
before she finally burst into laughter (1).

The pseudo writer of this narrative is trying to express the other of his being as a result of his biological development which obscured his sexuality. He is trying to connect with the society and he wishes that the society would understand his plight. The beauty of this story is written in the first person narrative technique which implies that the writer is telling about a personal experience. There is no biography to the name of the author. The writer is trying to understand his sexuality and with the click of the button in his privacy, he actually publishes the story that society abhors. It is this affirmation of self that Femi searches for which makes him to confide in Shade who sees him as a jester. Shade replies to him: "Femi you are just a comedian, breast ko, breast ni," she finally responded with laughter in her eyes. At this point I needed not to talk too much, I simply took off my sweater and you needed to have seen the astonishment on her face. She stood there and her eyes glued to my chest" (2).The writer wanted to connect and correct Shade's perception of his new reality.

Although he is ashamed by her reaction to his secret and the sudden transformation he had undergone biologically, but he wants shade who is a member of the larger society to understand that this apparent transformation of his biological make-up is not self-induced hence not of his volition. He fears that his society whose laws are anti-homosexuality will brand him names that will threaten his masculinity. The narrator continues:

... I hated more to see myself go through such
evil transformation. Days grew into weeks,
weeks into months into a full blown year and
nothing seemed to change except for my
breasts. There was nothing I hadn't tried. I
had gone on several dry fasts, prayed
ceaselessly and cried endlessly but it all
seemed like God wasn't listening. It all
seemed like the more I attempted to get rid
of them, the more they became rounder and
firmer. Gosh!!! My life had suddenly turned
upside down (3).

The foregoing highlights the plight of the narrator rejecting his sex as a result of these biological abnormalities.

In the story above, the narrator wants the society to understand an important perception from this narrative. This perception is that society must try to purge itself from the shallow construal aberrations that believes that it is not always the case that the presence of certain feminine biological traits in a man necessarily makes him gay neither does the presence of masculine attitudinal and biological features in a woman necessarily translates that she is lesbian. From the story, one can see the effect of biological disorders as evinced in the psychological stress that the victim undergoes as a result of trying to understand his sexuality in a generic sense. The narrative shows the various challenges the boy undergoes aimed at either accepting his new identity or seeking for correction. The narrator did not tell us whether Femi developed a pussy. However, the narrator seems to imply that but since such information is not in the text; we cannot foist it on the text. The narrator submits thus: "...My shoulders, thighs, arms, and my waist thinned out. I became fleshier around my hips and bums. It felt strange but at this point I had gotten used to it. I looked in the mirror and, slowly, I was morphing into my late mother. I looked so much like her"(3). The narrator did not seek for correction of his sexual abnormality through medical means hence the reader feels that it seems there is a sort of acceptance of this new identity by Femi after the two years. The writer subtly seems to sway the emotion of the reader in his attempt to legitimize transgender as the final part of the story shows. The narrator says,

... brought out a photo and then it suddenly became obvious. The whole secret of what she had left me for became open. He looked straight in the eyes and said, "You lost a girlfriend and now you have boyfriend." I looked him in the eyes and began to cry because I loved her so much but her changing to him shows that she loved me more. Right there, all years of anguish and confusion feel away (3).

The logic of the narrative is threatening; the authorial intention is basically to connect with the reader and to appeal to his emotional sympathy through the conscious highlighting of the plight of such sexual abnormality.

In addition, the story above highlights one of the defects of immediacy in digital literature, which does not allow for critical **elevation** in most cases. However, this is an except and can be classified as standing between the thin

line of larva and Imago digital literature in view of certain aspects of the logic of the story and the requirements for such biological abnormalities to take place which the writer places at eighteen years of his life. It is pertinent we ask, if Shade could change her gender through medical means why did Femi not use medical means as well to change his sex? Has as the narrative tries to appeal to the basal aspect of our humanity according to Plato? "Growing from a Boy to a Woman" is a narrative of deviance from the Nigerian society's construction of sexuality. This societal construction of sexuality finds corroboration in Pat Caplan when he submits that "...sexuality, like gender, is socially constructed. For as Barrett has pointed out, sexual relations are political, and therefore can be variously constituted (10)." The narrative is an expression of deviance against the standard of gender identity in the society and hinging it on the framework of political choice to socially construct another through changing of sex by implied biological process and medical process.

Conclusion

Globalization is a catalyst to alternate knowledge and it alters traditions. Digital writers belong to very different generation irrespective of their living in organic society. However, some of the sexual content is as a result of the identification of the writers with literary experimentation in the name of globalization and creative freedom. The writers of virtual space are embracing the free speech going on in the world and are allowing their literature to carry that privilege of freedom. They are exposed to alternate ways of artistic representation which appeals to the spirit and discourse of post-modern literatures. Some writers make forays into cyber space literature writing about sex probably because they have engaged in it and want to recreate this experience on the digital literary platform to entertain readers. However, this entertainment inherent in the creative recreation of sex through stark and vulgar presentation of sexual scenes in digital literature is always not devoid of moral impulse and content. This understanding presupposes that the notion the didacticism of a narrative piece is not a monopoly of print literature especially as digital literature teaches morals too. Sexual scenes are commentary on the state of the nation. They constantly interact with it. Digital writers are creating literatures relevant to their time and using the tool that is available in their time.

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