

## The Poetics of Vision in Modern Nigerian Poetry in English

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### Abstract

The deployment of vision as a technical term is conspicuous in its functionality in various disciplines, especially politics and literature. In literature, it is an aspiration that is grounded in iconoclasm and often activated by dystopic experiences in the present time. As much as “social vision” has been valorised as a creative impulse, so is “Poetic vision” which is considered by critics of modern Nigerian poetry as the integration and ordering of the poet’s complex and desultory thought-pattern towards the curative course of the dysfunctional society. However, there has not been any critical writing(s) on the conscious formulation of poetic vision in Nigerian poetry. Thus, this paper proposes a conscious formulation of poetic vision through the explication of four modalities (mythical reconfiguration, mnemonic and satire, avid reading and techno-scientific apprehension) using a textual validating deductive method for the development of these modalities with focus on selected poems of Wole Soyinka, Niyi Osundare, Tenure Ojaide, Odia Ofeimun, and Tade Ipadeola. The paper concludes that these modalities are individually sufficient, while the combination of two or more of these modalities for the conscious forming of poetic vision is possible.

**Keywords:** poetry, poetic vision, mythic, modern Nigerian poetry

### Introduction

Ideology is a body of thoughts which greatly shapes one's disposition in the complex relations that characterise the real world. It has been broadly defined by scholars (in different disciplines such as politics, sociology and literature) as a set of beliefs and values which guide human actions, thereby making humans to operate as conscious actors. Emmanuel Ngara has identified three categories of ideology; dominant ideology or ideologies, authorial ideology and aesthetic ideology" (p11). Ngara's explication and definition of dominant ideology as "the beliefs, assumptions and set of values that inform the thoughts and actions of a people in a particular era" (11) is what John Levi Morton has described as the reduction of political ideology to value or norm-based explanations which runs the problem of tautology and reason opium for behavioural act" (12). Authorial ideology in no small measure determines the writer's (poet) perception of reality while aesthetic ideology refers to the literary convention and stylistic stances adopted by the writer (Ngara).

It is the combination of both authorial and aesthetic ideologies that, perhaps, brought about the term "literary ideology". This ideology is unavoidably necessary in the process of creating. However, Wole Soyinka rejected the necessity for literary ideology, claiming that it smothers creative process. Also, he repudiated this ideology on the basis of periodical expiration of idioms and concepts. Thus, he presents "social vision" as a necessary tool for creative writing. In describing a creative writing that is greatly driven by the impulse of social vision, he writes that:

The intellectual and imaginative impulse to a re-examination of the propositions on which man, nature and society are posited or interpreted at any point in history, the effort to expand such propositions, or to contest and replace them with others more in tune with the writer's own idealistic disposition or his pragmatic, resolving genius; this impulse and its integrative role in the ordering of experience and events leads to a work of social vision. (66)

However, in all of his explications of the entailments of social vision, he has not adequately provided the poetics or process of forming such visions.

Vision is not an uncommon terminology in the religious, political and literary domains. The duplicity of this term to these variegated domains informs the convenient restriction of the interpretation of vision to these distinct discursive domains with different powerful underpinnings pertinent to the actualization of personal or impersonal cause. Vision is a mystifying and technical term. Its mysticism is couched in experience from trance which directly or obliquely impacts the corporeal life. It is the subconscious incursion into the future experience which may later or sooner manifest, and the curative project of this experience, most often than not, remains highly elusive to consciousness but enunciated, always. This discursive domain of mystical vision which is not the direct concern of this paper is religion. However, the reference to mystical vision is informed by its curative disposition to the corporeal world and the adaptation of this disposition to various discursive technicalities. It is to this end that the conception of vision as a technical term remains important.

The deployment of vision as a technical term is conspicuous in its functionality in various disciplines, especially politics and literature. In politics, it is used as a proposed plan of actions which by all prerogatives, ought to have been performed and perfected before or at a specified time in the future. In literature, it is an aspiration that is grounded in iconoclasm and often activated by execrable experiences in the present time. The configuration of vision as either a proposed plan of actions or aspirations is underpinned by a reformative and re-engineering motive. The transmogrification of dystopia to utopia through conscious fraternization with future experience is the entailment of vision. It is based on this configuration and its igniting force that vision is conceived of in this paper as a mapping of the proposed gratifying desires impressed upon consciousness by problematic remembrance.

The importance of vision to literary production has been comprehensively discussed by Wole Soyinka in *Myth, Literature and the African World*. He repudiates literary ideology as the impulse for the creative process on the basis that it is “the conscious formulation of the critic, not the artist” (1976, p. 62) and the periodical expiration of its idioms and concepts as a result of the appearance of novel idioms and concepts which threaten the stability of the existing ones. However, he valorises “social vision” for this lofty function. He avers that social vision as a creative impulse tends to re-examine the propositions upon which the society is predicated, suspend such propositions or counter and replace them with “the writer’s own idealistic disposition or his pragmatic, resolution genius...” (p. 66). It is pertinent to state that Soyinka’s

interpretation of social vision is restricted to the domain of novel (a sub-genre of fiction) production as evident in the several textual references he has used in validating his position.

The transposition of Soyinka's view on creative impulse to poetry is necessary and justifiable because poetry is itself an intellectual and imaginatively creative exercise which takes society as its constituency. This, in turn, justifies the adoption of the term "poetic vision" as the necessary impulse for the writing of poetry. The central importance of poetic vision to poetry, which is the integration and ordering of the poet's complex thought-pattern towards the curative course of a dysfunctional society, is irrefutable. Critics of modern Nigerian poetry such as Oyeniyi Okunoye, Charles Bodunde, and Ismail Bala, among others, have acknowledged the importance of poetic vision to poetic creation. However, there has not been any critical writing on the conscious formulation of poetic vision. This paper decries the paucity of research on the conscious formulation of poetic vision in light of its central importance to poetic production. Many of the critical writings that exist on poetic vision merely establish its importance to poetry without any presentation of how it can be consciously formulated. This dearth must have, arguably, evolved from the critical problem that Garuba (2008) has identified as "dependency syndrome," the critic's dependency on "episteme-ideological" abstractions that are severed from the cultural tradition in Africa.

Therefore, this paper proposes a conscious formulation of poetic vision using a textual validating deductive method for the development of these modalities and responds to Garuba's (2008) discomfiture on the critics' dependence on exocentric abstractions. Thus, this paper will focus on establishing the formation of poetic vision as a rigorous and profound cognitive exercise as well as exteriorising the various modalities for formulating a poetic vision that will serve the cohesive function for the complex thought pattern of the poet.

### **Mythical Reconfiguration: Praxis for Vision Formation**

Every society has certain beliefs and worldviews that are deeply rooted in the mythical stories of such a society. Fred Akporobaro (2012) asseverates that myths "symbolise human experience and embody the spiritual values of a culture" (p. 188). He goes further to enunciate the essence of myth where he affirms that "A myth's serious purpose is either to explain the nature of the universe ... or to instruct members of the community in the attitudes and behaviour necessary to function successfully in that particular culture...." (2008, p. 190) Akporobaro's exposition of the importance of myth to the society indubitably necessitates the literary tapping into mythical essence for explicating humanity and the universe in general. This tapping is a literary reconfiguration of a myth or an aspect of myth which requires a great deal of literary skill and intellectuality.

Soyinka is a renowned and prolific poet who has formulated his poetic vision through a conscious fraternization with Ogun, a god in the Yoruba pantheon, in which he reconfigures the personality of this deity in his poetry, especially *Idanre and Other Poems* (1967) and *Ogun Abibiman* (1976) to explain the nature of humanity. Oyin Ogunba argues that Soyinka's fraternization with "Ogun is not an act of conventional worship of this god but a source attesting fidelity for his artistic and political inspiration" (2005, p. 7). He asserts the prior existence of the idea of the paradoxical nature of Ogun, Soyinka's patron god in the Yoruba culture before Soyinka's adoption and reformation of this nature for artistic purposes. This position is justified

by Soyinka's critical comment on the template for measuring the degree of the sensibility of an artist, that the artist's skilful balancing of paradox greatly determines his sensibility. In fashioning a vision as a guide for literary creativity from religious and cultural perspectives, a conscious fraternization with the precepts inherent in the culture or religion is important as long as the enduringness of the cultural and spiritual life of the people in a community is irrefutable. This conscious fraternization may extend to the pantheon in which a transcendental investigation is performed.

The two phrasal terminologies which need lucid explications in the foregoing paragraph are "conscious fraternization" and "transcendental investigation." Each term in its' own right embodies several prefigured acts and cognitive exercises which are connected through the conduit of purpose. A culture, even that which appears homogeneous on the basis of nationhood, is unavoidably heterogeneous. This heterogeneity is apparent in the multiplicity of views on a single aspect, which commonality fully grounds in a culture, and presents the seeming homogeneity of such culture. Therefore, an artist who must fraternize with this single aspect of culture must be conscious of the multiple views on this single aspect, in order to synthesize them and form a homogenized view, which may be totally or subtly different from the original homogenized view of this aspect. In Yoruba culture, especially in the pantheon, Ogun is such an aspect of the gods with several attributive claims given to him by the people either out of piety or prejudice. Soyinka is aware of these multiple views of the personality of Ogun: views which exonerate him and those which demean his personality. He artistically manifests this awareness in "Idanre". However, he consciously fraternizes with Ogun not just to confirm Ogun as the object of his artistic and political inspiration or manifest the "Ogunnian" character in him (Soyinka) as Ogunba (2005) has claimed, but reconfigures the paradoxical nature of the mythic figure for therapeutic function- healing the ills of humanity through the balancing of contraries. This reconfiguration is the prefigured act which is motive-bound intellectually not for its abstractness but practical functionality which is the reformation and re-engineering of the dystopian society.

In conducting a transcendental investigation, the artist is expected to exercise more intellectual power in interpreting the essence of the aspect of culture with which he has chosen to consciously fraternize beyond the simplistic interpretation accrued to such an aspect. That this interpretation must not be common does not imply a mystified interpretation. However, the transcendental nature of this form of interpretation of the essence of the aspect of culture is such that it must simultaneously be common (simple) and recondite, that is, highly subjective. The commonality of the interpretation is grounded in the shared belief about that aspect of the culture which facilitates the reader's identification with the artist's chain of thought about the aspect of culture. This is in sync with Garuba's position that an artist's vision and relevance are determined by the extent to which such an artist identifies with society's "collective inheritance" or "cultural modes of expression" (2008, p. 206). The profundity of the interpretation will only be determined by the degree of intellectual power the poet expends in the re-interpretation or imaginative colouration of the shared belief about the aspect of culture for the creation of cohesive poetic thought. In "Idanre", Soyinka unpacks the Ogun myth and re-contextualises it for its binary destructive and re-creative praxis:

Low beneath rockshields, home of the Iron One  
 The sun had built a fire within  
 Earth's hearthstone. Flames in fever fits  
 Ran in rock fissures, and hill surfaces  
 Were all aglow with earth's transparency  
     Orisa-nla, Orunmila, Esu, Ifa were all assembled  
     Defeated in the quest to fraternise with man  
 Wordlessly he rose, sought knowledge in the hills  
 Ogun the lone one saw it all, the secret  
 Veins of matter, and the circling lodes  
 ...  
 He made a mesh of elements, from stone  
 Of fire in earthfruit, the womb of energies  
 He made an anvil of the peaks, and kneaded  
 Red clay for his mould. In his hand the Weapon  
 Gleamed, born of the primal mechanic  
     And this pledge he gave the heavens  
     I will clear a path to man  
     (*Selected Poems*, 1989, p. 75-76)

Thus, Soyinka's exposition of the dual personality of Ogun, his patron god, in his literary oeuvre is a paradigm of this commonality in interpretation. The given facts about the god are arguably injected into the consciousness of the people either orally or literarily, religiously or otherwise (by otherwise - the intended meaning is that people do get not first-hand information about the personalities of this god from the religious sphere but the secular through traditional conversation between or among initiates or novices). This common interpretation is the portal to the mystified aspect of the interpretation. The subjectivity of this interpretation is, perhaps, Soyinka's justification for his selection of Ogun as his patron god as he avers in "Fourth Stage":

Only one who has himself undergone the experiences of disintegration, whose spirit has been tested and whose psychic resources laid stress by the forces most inimical to individual assertion, only he can understand and be the force of fusion between two contradictions. The resulting sensibility of the artist and he is profound artist only to the degree to which he comprehends and expresses the principle of destruction and recreation. (*Myth, Literature* 1976, p. 150)

The principle of destruction and recreation veins and throngs the African experience since the inception of colonialism. While the imposition of the values of westernisation on the traditional African customs has led to their destruction, it has also led to the recreation of hybridised cultures which meld subsisting aspects of traditional mores with overarching constructs from the West. Ogun – the god of destruction and creation – thus becomes, not just conceptual and ideational scaffolding for Soyinka, but also a metaphorical symbolization of a

unique experience. According to Adekoya (2005, p. 168), “the Ogun myth is used to explicate the African experience and man’s historical progression.” To Fashina, Soyinka’s deployment of Ogun’s “malevolent”, “belligerent”, “destructive”, “rapacious”, and “cannibalistic” tropes “tend to resonate a radical ideological castigation, not of Ogun his god per se, but these vices as manifested in the leaders, kings, and monarchs, heads of state, etc. in Africa” (2005, p. 153).

### **Mnemonic and Satire: A Schematic Construct of Poetic Vision**

The formation of poetic vision is not restricted to the reconfiguration of myth in its totality or an aspect of myth; the profundity of the poet’s knowledge in orality - an embodiment of comprehensive philosophy brandish with sublime verbal artistry - is equally a quintessential modality for the formation of poetic vision. The comprehensiveness of the philosophy that is proposed here elides the metaphysical, a domain that is restricted to religious beliefs; it is a corpus of knowledge formed from historical events and actions by which the present complex social relation is regulated. Hence, the formation of poetic vision from this perspective is a deliberate recapture of the past for re-engineering the present. Niyi Osundare asserts that the selection of vision, as well as the human target of the vision, is a deliberate choice which is situated within the vortex of “social complexes and mutations” (1986, p. 6). As much as Osundare anchors artistic creation on a “dialectically related triad of inspiration, choice and aspiration” (p. 6), he enunciates that “choice is intensely influenced by aspiration, the social and ideological goal of the artistic product; inspiration is the enabling force that transforms choice into concrete artistic reality” (p. 6). The essence of this expression to the formation of poetic vision is its projection, though subtly, of the conscious scheming of history for devising a “social-ideological goal” that is disposed to social reformation.

The conscious scheming of history for social reformation is conspicuous in Osundare’s poetic vision. This vision is expressed in his collection *The Eye of the Earth*. He writes that “For in the intricate dialectics of human living, looking back is looking forward; the visionary artist is not only a rememberer, he is also a reminder” (1986, p. xiv). This poetic vision is a social and ideological goal that is influenced by the poet’s choice of what aspect(s) of history he has chosen to re-enliven, reactivate and valorise for social re-engineering and reformation. The valorisation of aspect(s) of history will inevitably pose some questions in the mind of the conscious poet. These questions are: through what medium can the valorised aspect of history be reactivated? Is the essentialization of poetic vision in terms of the reactivation of history entrenched by prefatory enunciation or absence of vision? Osundare writes:

The future is  
a past  
we often forget to re-  
remember  
(“Lion Mountain”, 1998, p. 37)

History has always been protean. It regenerates itself in various forms and guises based on the values and norms by which it is lived or regulated at a point in time. The continuity of history is engendered by complex social relations in which actions and mutations are triggered

by either malefic or beneficence values. Before the modernization of Africa through the introduction of chirography and typography in the literary sense, griots, raconteurs and bards relied heavily on memory to preserve and promote beneficence values which are capable of engendering healthy and harmonious existence between “agencies” in the society as well as vituperating and extraditing malefic values to re-engineer the society. Memory has, in no small measure, served the same purpose for literary artists today. In Osundare’s case, Anyokwu writes,

His vision is ineluctably bound up with his life-world; and his experience is the incremental accretions of the historical process. The past, therefore, constitutes, for him, as we earlier noted, the common backcloth, the fount of his own creative essence. It is this omnipresent past that he must always ‘remember’- both to avoid its negative aspects and to reinforce and celebrate its positive aspects. (2013, p. 5)

Hence, the act of remembering is inextricable from memory as memory itself is an act of remembering, perhaps the valorised aspects of history for remedial purpose; the redirection of the present from the precipitous to the beneficence path (See Osundare’s *Horses of Memory*). Concisely, memory - a highly cognitive act - validates and establishes vision formation as a cultural-intellectual activity. In this activity, memory serves as a very vital psychological means for projecting an apocalyptic vision of humanity that is devoid of a serious depletion of every aspect of such humanity. This prophetic vision indubitably gains in strength from the reminiscence of the inconspicuous verdure of the past. What more could one have demanded from Osundare, who in *The Eye of the Earth* and *Village Voices* deliberately remembers the lushness of the past as well as the oral poetic tradition of the Yoruba, precisely Ekiti to express the traumatic experience of the present? The significance of his remembering the oral poetic tradition is what he succinctly enunciates in *Midlife*:

In keeping with the oral poetic tradition whose inexhaustible lifespring I am forever indebted to, poetry here is confession, declaration, reflection, play, struggle, vision... It is change, an unwavering engagement with the world, a dynamic treasury of noetic probing and rooted voyagings mediated through epic syntax and experimentation in the choric blend of rhetoric and song. (1993, p. x)

The claims that the poets of the third and lost generations are guilty of superficiality, intellectual hollowness and looseness in their poetic oeuvre (Anyokwu, “The Nigerian Poetry...”), calls attention to the absence of vision in the poetry of these poets. The absence of vision that is mentioned here is in itself, an expression of a poetic vision which is not immediately visible in the preface but in the thought pattern of the poet. Poets such as Odia Ofeimun and Tanure Ojaide among others, indubitably exhibit this expression in their poetic oeuvre. Orhero commenting on the twenty-first century poets, asseverates that they do not subscribe to any ideology and they “thematize multiple issues at the same time thereby creating

a connected web of themes” (2001, p. 15). Thus, the formation of vision from thought-pattern is the question of the thematic orientation of the poet which resonates in his/her oeuvre. In all of Ojaide’s collections: *Delta Blues & Home Songs* (1998) and *When It No Longer Matters Where You Live* (1999) among others, his concerns for the degradation of his regional environment that is prompted by insidious miming operation and the effects of the appalling depletion of the environment on the people are the thematic orientation of Ojaide. Ofeimun’s poetic thought-pattern is more complicated as he charges himself with the responsibility of responding to the deterioration of the country, in a narrow sense, and humanity in a wider sense in all of his fifteen collections.

In the complexity of Ofeimun’s thought-pattern, lies consistency which helps in demystifying his vision through a clear understanding of his aspiration. The inference from the reference to both Ojaide and Ofeimun’s thought-patterns is that poetic vision can be formulated, though without prefatory pronouncement, through consistency in the presentation of thematic orientation in as much such orientation is propelled by the “intellectual and imaginative impulse to *re-examine* the propositions on which man, nature and society are posited or interpreted at any point in history” (1976, p. 66). Olaniyan (2018) asserts that Ojaide’s poetry is a “responsorial project” which avails itself of thematic unity via resistance to oppressive mechanisms. It is pertinent to state that satire sustains consistency. Abrams presents satire as “the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of contempt, scorn, or indignation” (1999, p. 275). It is the scathing critique of a “subject” which may be a person or society. This critique is usually precipitated by the violation of communal norms and virtues. These virtues and norms have been ignominiously violated by the political elites. Poets are, therefore, charged to militantly attack the moral indignation of these elites and the failings of society. The prolongation of the social failings indubitably informs the consistent critiquing of the society by modern Nigerian poets (such as Hope Eghagha and Akachi Ezeigbo, among others) whose poetic visions are not explicated in the prefaces to their works.

### **Avid Reading as a Vehicle of Vision Formation**

Theoretical and critical writings are projections of some subjective convictions built on objectified phenomena which are historically conditioned irrespective of the abstractness or socially responsive nature of such writings. Critical or theoretical writing is a consciousness in its own right, with certain intentionality. A lot of theoretical postulations and critical writings which explicate the meta-world, life-world, and affinity of the life-world to the meta-world through rationalizing transcendental cognitive discourse and the (in)activities of the people in the life-world, have been churned out by scholars and critics from the classical era to the present time. It is important to state, in a very simplistic term, that theoretical and critical writing is an ideology on the basis that it is a product of a crystallized idea(s) in the consciousness of a human agent. This idea may either be conservative or radical in respect of its relation to existing social order and becomes a formalized intellectual paradigm through a dialogic or contending relation with other corroborative and oppositional ideas, thereby creating a trajectory - politics of idea(s) - in a particular direction in the intellectual community. Many of the Western critical and literary theories became formalized intellectual paradigms in this way.



This conception of literary ideology, from the perspective of being a formalized intellectual paradigm, as the re-narrativity of a single idea with multiple voices and different brandishing towards a course resonates with avid scholarship as a requisite for the conscious poet who wants to formulate a poetic vision from these paradigms. But how would a poet develop a vision from the opposite, literary ideology, to which it is at once related and transcends? Soyinka asseverates that ideology attains discreteness from social vision (in our case, poetic vision) via its tendency to narrow schematism, and at once related to it, though occasionally, via coincidence. He writes that,

If we leave the lunatic fringe of the literary Unilateral Declaration of Independence, however we discover that despite its tendency towards narrow schematism, a literary ideology does occasionally achieve coincidence – and so a value expansion – with a social vision. From merely turning the mechanics of creativity into a wilful self-regulating domain, irrespective of the burden of statement, it elevates its sights to a regenerative social goal which makes continuing demands on the nature of that ideological medium and prevents its smug stagnation. (1976, p. 63)

Soyinka has only referred to the rare relationship between the two distinct creative impulses without providing a profound explication of the elevation process. Hence, to develop a poetic vision from a literary ideology, the poet must be open-minded enough, not out of a sheer exhibition of academic vulgarity, to discern the (in)congruities of the many ideas functioning to promote a single idea in a particular direction, in such a way that the shaped idea in the consciousness of the poet is brandished by this discovery of the (in)congruities of these ideas.

Thus, the poet must nurture a single thought which may either have a universal or a local outlook. This thought must be rigorously reflected upon for simultaneous contraction and constriction. The contraction is always made possible by keen readings of existing literature (critical, theoretical writings and/or literary texts), from which the poet absolves multifarious perspectives of an idea, and thereafter absolves himself of the perspectives by delineating their commonality which will serve as the poet's visionary position. Anyokwu is one of such poets who formulated his poetic vision through this avidious paradigm in *Naked Truth* (2015), in which, focusing on Philip Sidney's notion of truth and functionality of literature, seizes "truth" and ascribes to it a cosmic functionality of reformation, re-engineering and regeneration of utopia. Tade Ipadeola in *The Rain Fardel* (2005) and *The Sahara Testament* (2012) has stupendously exhibited this style of forming poetic vision through a prism of other poets by which he, arguably, and subtly envisions universal tolerance through the re-inscription of history; the repositioning of Africa to its rightful place in the process of world history:

I ask for another sky  
as from the distance  
of another life  
I bear witness to wills

that would not dissolve in rainstorm.  
Odia Ofeimun

I am not I: thou art not he or she:  
they are not they.

Evelyn Waugh  
("Prefatory note", *The Rain Fardel*, n. p, 2005).)

A deep reflection on these poems (which Padeola culled from Ofeimun and Waugh in the prefatory note to *The Rain Fardel*) serving as Tade Ipadeola's universalistic poetic vision will accord them an ideological flavour tinged with localized sentimentality or ethnic chauvinism. This is an ostentatiously simplistic (mis)interpretation of Ipadeola's complicated and ambitious vision. Hence, the problematization of this vision will flicker its erudition - the reconfiguration and utilization of the poetic insights, with probable ideological leaning, of other poets from a narrow perspective of regionality to a wider course of universalism; an essence that is deeply rooted in its subtle intent of preventing and attenuating anarchy (from the perspective of neighbourhood) in the world through the outcry of tolerance and acknowledgement of differences across humanity as well as extensive radius of love beyond shores. This reflection does not efface the fact that the peculiarities of Africa which constitute the continent's difference from others are the resounding presentations in Ipadeola's poetic oeuvre, thereby cloaking his works with more of ideology than vision. However, this reflection emphasizes his simultaneous adoption of the ideological prognosis of Afrocentricism and/or Negritude - ethnic-centred and combative ideologies- as a scaffold into the visionary space by salvaging world history and advancing universal tolerance through the projection of the difference that is to be acknowledged and tolerated.

### **Techno-Scientific Apprehension as Poetic Vision**

The process of world history has been tremendously accelerated by several vibrant and exhilarating innovative researches in science and technology. The twentieth and twenty-first centuries have witnessed numerous ground-breaking scientific breakthroughs and ultra-high technological advancements which have rendered previous breakthroughs and advancements obsolete. As a matter of fact, the comprehensiveness of robust scientific and technological research has culminated in transcendental discovery which influences the universe. The ontological statement of this discovery had been enunciated by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the United States of America:

Today, humanity has the potential to seek answers to the most fundamental questions posed about the existence of life beyond Earth ... Direct human experience in space has fundamentally altered our perceptive of humanity and our place in the universe. Humans have the ability to respond to the unexpected developments inherent in space travel and possess unique skills that enhance discoveries. (*The Vision for Space Exploration; February 2004*)

Wherein comes poetry, precisely, Nigerian poetry in the exegete of altered perceptiveness of humanity and place of humans in the universe evolving from their 'space' contingency? Hence, most Nigerian poets, as much as they grapple with social discomfitures for correctiveness- social reformation/re-engineering- have done little or nothing in proffering answers to fundamental questions that are capable of altering the perceptiveness of humanity, which are deeply rooted in science and technology. This is glaringly a violation of George Nnamdi's (2006) injunction, that "Literature should be put at the service of society's future, and that future cannot be imagined away from the defining influence of science and technology: at least not in today's world. Ultimately, any culture that ignores this prescription also causes itself to be ignored" (p. 577). Since science and technology valorise logic, precision and specificity, and vision itself is a prospective commitment in nature, then poets should poetically engage in scientific discourse and technological innovation with all literary armour invigorated with logic and precision. This engagement, though with a lucid poetic sensibility, should no less be concerned with offering a logical explanation for the possible cause(s) of disaster or potential disaster (both human and seemingly natural disaster), not necessarily linked to celestial operations but excesses of science and technology; long-term effect of robotic explorations on humanity and disaster-courting products of science and technology. This engagement would nevertheless require an intrusion into the field of science and technology, a very well-defined eclecticism which is very much different from the modernists' imposition of the scientific system on literary or critical discourse in the twentieth century. And, though Atkins (1995) believes that science has contributed more to the comprehension of the universe than poetry, poetry should be interested in science, not for the sake of science, but for the sake of humanity. According to Midgley (2001), only poetry (literature and other humanistic disciplines) can truly deconstruct what it means to be human. The intersection of science and poetry is the realm where both will be put to service for rigorous apprehension of humanity, nature, and the universe for the advancement of man.

### **Conclusion**

Poetry is definitely an imaginative-cum-intellectual creation wherein poetic thoughts are consciously enunciated in such a way that it at once appeals to passion and reason. The appeal of poetry to reason is enabled not only through the seriousness of the subject matter/theme but also through the cohesion of the poet's thought which is vigorously discernible in his or her poetic vision. As much as "social vision" has been valorised as a creative impulse, so is "Poetic vision" which is considered by critics of modern Nigerian poetry as the integration and ordering of the poet's complex and desultory thought-pattern towards the curative course of the dysfunctional society. Therefore, the probe into the conscious formulation of poetic vision, considering its central importance to poetic production, is a worthy scholarly research endeavour that cannot be ignored in the course of criticizing poetry in line with its tendency for effecting social re-engineering and reformation. The four different modalities for the conscious formulation of poetic vision that have been presented are individually sufficient, while the combination of two or more of these modalities for the conscious forming of poetic vision is possible.

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