

In Search of a Method: Towards Voicing in Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*

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Introduction

Oral Literature now proves to be a *sine qua nun* discipline in African school curricula design. It includes all oral genres such as ballads, chants, chronicles, genealogies, hymns, incantations, laments, legends, lullabies, myths, praises, prayers, proverbs, riddles, storytelling, nursery rhyme, etc. Grounded in tradition with the absence of alphabetical writing system, these oral materials prove to be a highly specialized form of speaking in that they have more rhythm, more balance, more mimicry, and more formulas. People belonging to oral cultures perform their (hi)stories without writing, but rely on devices that support their memory. Because the performance of oral material conceals a style that does not rely on paper support to recall information, it demonstrates speaking in a more disciplined and intense form: it is 'aural-oral' (spoken and heard) and 'gestural-visual' (performed corporeal-manually and seen in performance). Then, when put on paper in writing and taught in a formal western classroom learning context, the study of the oral material involving the body and voice of the performer, initially intended to an audience of listeners in a live performance in an ethnic setting, is likely to be faced with a number of practical factors that do not lend their *modus operandi* to the classical pedagogical methods.

Attention is then instantly drawn on the conceptual crises that may besiege the pedagogical perspectives of African traditional material with the Greco-Latin school design. The continued reliance on Western education tenets and the direct impact of the superimposition of a foreign educational design become pedagogical issues of importance in that respect. Indeed, the school system imposed on all African educational paradigms from the colonial era was developed in a total disregard of the Indigenous African Knowledge Systems (IKS). In the Greco-Latin system, the western intellectual scheme is promoted, and the African learner becomes a *tabula rasa* that must be trained to a new cultural paradigm. The use of such culturally insensitive curricula leads to poor assimilation, a principle which is in an uncritical contradiction with the very ethos of the concept of *educare/ex-ducere*, a Greek term for education meaning to 'lead' (*ducere*) 'out' (*ex*) of the learner. In other words, education is a process of building on, or strengthening the existing knowledge of the learner.

Yet, another crisis area in teaching and learning oral traditional materials is the very origins of the knowledge taught in schools and how it is organized and managed. The superimposition of a foreign knowledge construct onto the IKS at large has had undeniable devastating effects culturally. It has reshaped invaluable educated African minds. The African educated in the western school has henceforth become a virtual confused character in that the corruption of his identity by foreign education design may best be summarized in what Frantz Fanon holds to be a *Black Skin*, (in a) *White Mask*¹.

With regard to the above arguments, this paper joins issue with the broad-based assumption of the oral-print transfer. But, instead of pledging the controversial stand of a pragmatic replication of a performance in print form, it advocates a rather simple algorithm. It wishes to

consider the methodological significance the teaching and learning of orally traditioned values should take on in an oral-style text. The issue is of paramount importance in that it probes reconciling two modes of expression: oral and written. Reading an oral-style text is thus exemplified in the ‘once upon a time’ controversial novel by the Nigerian writer Amos Tutuola’s, *The Palm Wine Drinkard*.

Based on the observations done in my Oral Literature classes, I have come to an understanding of the factors that validate contextual meaning production of a performance. While the question of the oral-literate divide advocate idiosyncrasies of ‘oral-style’ texts in a literature class then, as a teacher, I have decided to function in this paper as a sensuous experimenter in search of a method. Teaching in the classroom setting *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, which is an aggregate of traditional Yoruba tales invaluable came along to me with a number of pedagogical challenges. In a way, the pedagogical difficulties I experienced in teaching Tutuola’s stories brought me to think of the ways in which to enshrine educational paradigms of Oral Literature in indigenous socio-cultural epistemological framework. The written Yoruba stories have the tradition to be listened to in a live performance and not read in a textual performance. The question then comes as a byword: should an ‘oral-style’ text be read or voiced with all the complexities and subtleties of its composition? It is my belief that teaching an oral-style text necessarily involves vital considerations such as summed up in Alan Dundes’ words in terms of the three elements of textural, textual, and contextual aspects². It is meant by these terms that in writing, meaning rests on the text and the textural conception, while in speaking meaning lies essentially in the context of performance. In the case of *The palm-Wine Drinkard*, beyond the textural representation, one vital meaning-specific aspect remains the contextual living performance and the dynamic paralinguistic features.

I wish to consider this paper in two areas of significance that aim to contribute to the continuing debate over oral-literate interface. The first is theoretical and addresses the oral history of responses to the question of “putting an oral performance on the page”⁴. In other words, and more specifically, I look at the ways in which writing a generic oral story may be particularized in its textual representation. This probes an understanding of some theoretical method of oral-print transfer as a threshold beyond which classical literary theories are always critical. *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* is one typical example of such a transfer between two modes of expression that must always call upon intersecting teaching techniques.

The paper thus becomes performance-centered from both oral and written so much so that the second area of significance becomes methodological and pedagogical. In that regard, the paper aims at suggesting a teaching methodology of oral traditional materials which see their dynamic features reduced to fixed texts. Ultimately, an understanding of factors influencing the teaching of a matter that has the tradition of being voiced rather than written can guide curricular and pedagogical decisions. The pedagogical challenge of teaching nonconventional texts through conventional means is an issue of importance. By non-conventional we mean texts that do not always obey the classical textural considerations such as that may be gauged in *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* by Tutuola. In fact, as an ‘oral-style’ text, the PWD informs the oral (literary) genre with idiosyncratic features of the Yoruba oral culture that generates it. As this happens in a classroom, the suggested methodology is only introduced and exemplified with one oral genre, storytelling as it applies to the *The palm-Wine Drinkard*. It may be extended to various aspects of the oral genre to varying degrees.

The Palm-Wine Drinkard

Amos Tutuola who has now become a well-known enigmatic Nigerian writer has attended the formal western school only for six seasons. His debut as a writer rhymes with an unusual scribal style. *The Palm-Wine Drinkard and his Palm-Wine Tapster in the Dead's Town* published in 1961, no without havoc was to become the epitome of such a 'strange' style believed to fall short of the classical norms of writing by a so-called 'uneducated African author'. Without circumlocution, critics, including his own Nigerian fellow writers went into the frenzy of downgrading the work. A whole host of derogatory stamps was set on it: "A ghost novel" (Gerald Moore), "A bewitching story... a devilish story" (Dylan Thomas), an encouragement to "useless, impractical and mythical way of thinking which provides ...the supercilious Westerners with an excuse for continuing to patronize the allegedly superstitious Nigeria"¹. Notwithstanding, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* bred the ambitious seed that foreshadowed thought-provoking pedagogical perspectives. Indeed, with the rethinking of the so-called discipline of 'Oral Literature' in the ensuing years, Tutuola's work was to be construed in the field as one of a pioneering.

Inspired of the Yoruba folk narratives, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* is the story of an enfant terrible, an innocent childhood of the abundance (of the palm-wine) set on a journey to the Deads' Town to bring back his dead *Palm-Wine Tapster* from the beyond. It is a quest story of departure, initiation, and return in which Tutuola seems to resolve the moral dilemma of the divine punishment from the garden of End. As his stories evolve around the natural garden of African jungle, Tutuola always put innocent characters on the stage of life out of the divine circumstance of want out of which man develops the need to venture in nature in search for welfare through hardships. Like the main character Simbi in *Simbi and the Satire of the Dark Jungle*⁴, the Drinkard whose personal circumstance removes him from the necessity for work was condemned to the necessity to remedy his lack because the refusal to work is regarded as a social and moral offense. Tutuola's *The 'Drinkard'* makes the story and the protagonist knits together the actions into a plot in an allucinatory world of a drunken character. The marvelous and sensational register of the story with the motifs of the enfant terrible clenched between the contest between Heaven and Earth can only subsist in refined imagination, and Tutuola succeeded in such effect of the illusion of real Yoruba tales. He must have worked it out to obtain a hybrid process in which tradition meets modernism through elements of modern civilization, that is when "in the dark jungle, time is measured in hours and minutes, as if the protagonist was carrying his pocket watch, distances is gauged in miles and business is conducted in Pound" (104), petrodrams, bombs, buoys, technicolours, telephones, electric switches, and all other stuff of modern civilization find their use into the stories. And if this is so, it is because these elements are henceforth part of African experience for survival in the global arena. In Pr. K.A. Busia's words in *The Challenge of Africa*, "survivals of extremely old cultures can be found alongside recently borrowed intentions and ideas. The old and the new are both a part of Africa as it is today. The talking drum belongs as much to contemporary African cultures as does the telegraph or the Jazz band; the baby at its mother's back as much as the baby in the pram the lineage or clan as much as the trade-union or the political party; the chief as much as the president. All have been accepted and incorporated into ever changing and growing cultures that constitute Africa's way of life" (p 39). The *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* thus becomes the perfect story of imbrications of, and interconnectedness between all the elements of life. On the stage that Tutuola sets for all to live in unison, the combination of human, animals, fantastic creatures, and other imaginary elements; all move in and out of their natural habitats and use and thus create an interactional whole of interdependence.

Tutuola produces the illusion of reality by creating a picture of a world that closely resembles our world today. His story is the projection of idealistic values in a distorted world. The picture life thus takes form through a fictional technique that constitutes the central inheritance of the African educational paradigm. Tutuola's writing is a model that reacts to individual life story. Like the Drinkard, we may all be portrayed struggling to abide by the divine code of conduct. We all face the task of defining our duty towards the community in which we live, don't we? And although there seems to be no uniform body of norms in the jungle of life, the Drinkard tried to search for the basis of the ill-defined expectations from various creatures, from their species groupings, their social structure, their agriculture, their politics, education, communication and entertainment. The Drinkard's bush-trek informed him to the sense of community. It ultimately formed him to the sense of negotiation between the gods of Heaven and Earth. This was certainly necessary before individuals could feel able to go about the business of life with a sense of certainty.

“When a journey ends, another journey starts”. *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* is the epitome of this reply of ‘La Madone des ordures’ by Andre Benedetto⁵. *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* is indeed as endless a story as the words of a storyteller who recounts and transmits ancestral stories by word of mouth over the generations. This is an epic work, said the German writer Dolin, which is limitless as it hardly begins and never ends. One evening a performance is concluded, and the next evening it takes more flight. ‘De be le vie le be le vaflamianin le go be’, ‘there it will be flying anew, be it a lie’, says the ethnic Gouro ending formula. The ending formula of the flying metaphor by the Gouro people translates the cathartic function of the enigma of a story over which one is to sleep or ponder. Flying is the elevating spirit in the realm of self-realization in thought. A teller leaves the story where s/he took it for it to be taken up anew by the teller who is taken over. The endless cycle which lives in the mouths of anonym tellers recreates thus the voice of the wandering wind of *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* through asymptomatic use of the age-old continuum of the palm and its seed. So goes the conundrum of the seed out of which springs forth the palm tree. Whether it is the seed that generates the tree or the tree that generates the seed, the beginning rests in the end as birth rests in death; and so grows the contest between the Earth and Heaven.

To be an aggregate of bits of Yoruba tales, Tutuola's writing of *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* may be accessed today in the light of the oral-stylistic devices. The story is written in winding sentences by Tutuola and proves redundant from grammatical, syntactic, and structural canons. In fact Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* is poised between literacy and orality, a form of mediation between ear and eye. Tutuola certainly expected an audience of listeners, yet looked to a reception at the hands of readers. Recounting in a never-ending fashion in writing the traditional Yoruba stories, Tutuola presents the *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* as the projection of a live performance in an endless individual creativeness. The textual prescriptions of *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* substitute the voice of the reader to the text so that voicing the text becomes the continuum of the essential textural paralinguistic features.

Re-creating the voice in the *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* as oral-print transfer

Very few of the indicators of an aural-oral/gestural-visual text can be represented in writing. On the page, one cannot represent the aural-oral features of rhythm, timbre, ‘a consonantisation’, ‘avocalisation’⁵, expressiveness of tone, pitch, pace, pauses, inflections, volume, facial expressions, costume, and the interplay with the audience⁶. When a live oral performance is recorded in writing it gets focalised in inert text. “An oral performance would be near impossible to recreate exactly in print. Prose is most unfit to represent spoken narrative, since it rolls on for whole paragraphs at a time without taking a breath. There is no

silence in it (Montenyohl 1993: 165). A live performance is thus unique event never to be recaptured. Attempt in the scholarly world to recapture in print an oral-style performance in a more pragmatic way have been made (and are still being made) by specialists in the field of Orality and literacy Studies. Elizabeth Fine in the Folklore Text uses the example of an African-American toast called 'Stagolee' to include aspects such as paralinguistic features and the initial performance-related textual characteristics. Eric Montenyohl uses the example of a recording of a Zuni (Latin American indigenous people) narrator's loudness, pauses, silence, etc. the recording of the Xam Bushmen's oral performance is elsewhere done in short verses by Duncan Brown to recreate rhythm and pauses. The same attempt is done with a degree of success in *Choreutics* (1966) by Rudolf Laban through uses of various graphics signs. The free flowing English may appear as one device used by Tutuola to stay as close as possible to his native Yoruba language. The stylistic device used by Tutuola may appear as a literal translation of the Yoruba language in order to recapture its natural language characteristics. Repetitions, metaphors, apostrophes, allegories, long winding sentences are common uses in *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*.

In fact, as an ethnic storyteller, Tutuola presents the reader with the memory of an event that 'once upon a time' occurred somewhere in Yorubaland. Every written formula by Tutuola in *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* is then to turn into what may be perceived as oral formula, and every paragraph into a mnemo-technically structured recitative. Indeed, memory is the first tool of learning, says Marcel Jousse. "We must understand everything in terms of memory, because it is through memory that anything and everything can be learned" (jousse 2004: 27). As a storyteller, Tutuola brimmed *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* with fixed traditional formulas that help to record data worthy of memorization. How this surface in the scribal textual representation is what may be termed as mnemo-technical devices, and mnemo-technical devices inform the power of memory in oral societies. Indeed, with the absence of writing in oral societies, the natural memory capacity constitutes the sole reliable means of recording of people's life.

Addressing in a particular light the question of improvisation and memorization through such an endless story, which under normal circumstances present ethnic performers with challenge, Tutuola's form of writing of *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* may be perceived as a response to the techniques of scanning and cueing⁶. When asked by Robert Elliot if he went anywhere to do research for his books, Mr. Tutuola's replies that he does not go anywhere; he collects his materials where he is and starts to write when he thinks he has enough to make a beginning. He goes on to say that, as he is writing, he starts to get a picture in his mind which he then endeavors to describe. He begins with folklore and uses his imagination to elaborate it. He weaves together tales; his imagination unifies them⁷. This statement perfectly illustrates the mix of orality and literacy inheritance and invention by Tutuola. The headings and subheadings in the story text of the *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* act in that regard as a response to Tutuola's creativeness as a literate mediator between orality and literacy. In fact, traditional stories have no subheadings although they may be introduced with a title to end with a formulaic moral lesson. This way, Tutuola deals with the oral-print transfer when he uses the style now known of him as a means of achieving a better oral-style reconstruction.

A methodological approach

Variables

The following observations suggest a number of interesting issues that have to be taken into account in teaching oral materials. Along with the mnemo-technical devices, they are factors that relate to story performance and to the process of memorization, such as it occurs in an authentic ethnic setting. They are of prime importance in the context of classroom teaching and learning since it is admitted that knowledge of factors regulating performance is the strongest predictors of the effectiveness of traditional learning process. They effect writing involving paper support and human composite as intersecting path between reading and acting. It is believed that a text which is a dead element, when seeded with such oral-style performance indicators will result in a living enactment through body which is the primary tool of human expression very much in use in oral-style milieus.

Exposure: the classical pedagogical belief that adult learners are all capable of making the fine neuromuscular adjustment necessary to make sense of motifs of indigenous tales intended to be seen in live performance cannot be gauged evident. Prior exposure to storytelling performance may have a bearing on the reaction expected of the learners in a classroom setting. Just as a learner is expected to be present in the classroom during a lesson, a traditional learner is intended to be physically present during a storytelling performance.

Under controlled input conditions, such as it is the case with the modern classroom pedagogy, the learners who have had exposure to storytelling performances prove to have a better understanding of the story texts, and therefore to have expected reactions. In addition, showing compartments grounded in cultural manifestations of traditional learning process proves indispensable in the demonstration of the learning of traditional oral materials.

Motivation and affect: Physical enactment is one of the indicators of all performance art forms. Authenticity of performance indicator is indeed related to the way individual learner feels, appreciates and reacts according to established patterns. Reaction to a story depends on a good deal of knowledge and its receptivity. The extent to which those with a greater experience of cultural performances results in active participation, attitude of commenting (by exclaiming, using codified cultural formulas to approve or disapprove of sayings) becomes a norm in teaching oral materials. These predictors are an important part of the learning process inasmuch that they constitute one major factor of contextual meaning specification. This has a facilitating effect in the process and, just like the mnemo-technical devices, they act as effective memory-aid.

Miming and musical abilities: the ability to successfully imitate story characters, whether animal, fantastic, human, etc., through musical performance is yet one significant factor in learning oral materials. Due to their ethnic experience of storytelling performances the learners may be far more likely to perceive meaning and make sensible associations with motifs and their interactions. This may translate into *modality preference* of oral material learning, which is a living manifestation of body and language, eye and ear-mindedness and are thus linked to success in mastery.

Method

In the following class experiment, I aimed at implementing a rhetorical device of group narration. It finds substance in the method of oral composition and how the narrative units can be knit in one final memorized story in a collective memory.

The Palm-Wine Drinkard is articulated into 30 episodes, hence 21 episodes make up the departure and initiation to the Deads' Town; 5 bring the hero to the river (which is the demarcation of the land of the Deads and the land of the Living), and 4 events take place after his return from his quest.

The ultimate intention in the experiment was to recreate a pragmatic setting of performance.

The experiment was made with 120 learners from different linguistic backgrounds. They all are English, French and various indigenous languages speakers. They all were majoring in English at the University of FHB of Abidjan. Only 3 out of the 120 learners hardly speak their mother tongues, as they reported. The 3 learners acknowledged having never been part of a storytelling performance, notwithstanding that they have read stories in books and have seen storytelling performance only on TV screen and therefore, they have a clear idea of what storytelling is.

The whole class of 120 learners was subdivided into 20 subgroups of 6 members each, and clustered around a table with the instructions to read and memorized the much possible their sequence of the whole story. The groups were numbered from 1 to 20. Likewise, the 30 episodes of the *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* were sequenced, numbered, and allotted to the 20 groups following a chronological numbering of the groups. The first ten groups were allotted 2 episodes each to make both the episodes and the groups even. In fact, one major ritual context of storytelling is the centrally located gathering, which I tried to create in the class through malleable groups. The classroom context is marked with the particular performer's ethnic-related assumptions and symbolic associations with individual teller's cultural experience. Two weaknesses were to be noted though: the first is that the performance happens in the classroom, which is a closed place as opposed to the open air gathering of traditional setting, the second being the use of a foreign language - here English - instead of the mother tongue initially used in such occurrences. This may impede cultural reactions to the performance. But the effect of the ethnic differences was minimized by the familiarity that existed between the learners who have been together for the past three years. In so doing, I aim to solve one problem; that of collective participation in a telling process, whether in an informal setting, when members of a family come together, or a formal whole community gatherings to share stories.

To reveal the inventiveness of individual teller that denies written oral stories their pure oral-style advocate, I expected to see the texts blossoming forth into a complexus of characteristic teller's gestures, vocal meanings and behavioral types. The ultimate goal is to tell in a live performance the episode without the help of the paper support. I asked group members to choose one person as performer, and to discuss the following aspects after reading their respective sequences, bearing in mind three main steps.

Step 1:

1. The major action lines and the *actantial* categories (positive / negative)
2. The character types and the nature of their interactions
3. The *narratological* elements and their *semiological* significance

4. Time and space in the sequence
5. How transitions operate between the episodes.

Step 2:

After twenty minutes of reading and exchange of information within the group, all groups respectively report back following the chronological numbering of the sequences. The teller is to recount the story as s/he remembers it using the 'I leave it where I took it' formula as a transition to pass the story over to the next teller.

Step 3:

The sequences so recounted will make up the whole story of *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*. The performers are expected to access their ability to imitate various character types' gestural behavior and sounding properties; and their musical abilities by chanting, if applicable.

Observations

To define the modality of production, I suggest a reading matrix that allows oral literature learners' *oralation* to serve the initial written text of a story. The student is to become the reader-performer as s/he is above all else the intelligent acting one of the significant propositional *geste*⁵ suggested by the intra-textual elements. His voicing of the text has to become the continuum of the essential *geste* of the story. Apprehending an oral-style text, the process is more important than the end result, which is, for the learner to know that stories are to be heard in a live enactment. More important yet is the exploration of the telling paradigms from an initial story to an adaptation and coincidence with present realism. The learner played in close confidentiality and intimacy the detailed realism of the propositional *geste* and the real harmony of the narrative. The performer is to take the full measure of the symbolism focalised in the piece of writing. And the *dramatis personae* of the learner-performer lives the full measure of an African local market motif in its most suggestive representation in a bodily enactment. This encloses creative merit by the performer to insist on the living characteristics of a public place such as it may be witnessed in the full-blown hula-ballo on a market day.

The oral style formalism was played and replayed with varying degree of mastery by Learners who are socialized in an ethnic environment of storytelling,. Indeed, as ethnic apprehenders, they demonstrated memories of traditional cultural formulas. Members of different groups would at times get into the excitement of ethnic interjections as 'tsetse! Madiasamadiasa! Etc. The live performance effect the social learning theory in that it validates the expectation by the audience that a tale necessarily provides cues to laugh and play through jokes paradigms. The mindset related to jokes in the process predisposes the Learners to be receptive to anything funny. As it were, there was an acceptance of joke of various nature atypical to storytelling as there would be for Van der Merwe jokes, Irish jokes, mother-in-law jokes, where one can expect a good laugh. Thus, they have shown for example a good cognitive construct of fear-driven characters in stories, the cultural meaning of types of antagonistic character types, and they would easily reconcile the uncertainty of the telling process with the certainty of the moral lesson out of the behavioral patterns of certain character types. I observed that taking into account the cultural parameters allows the learner to better formulate his shared understanding in the total context of social institutions, relationships, and realities. Basing Oral Literature classes on these postmen gain a great deal as a replay of Learners' memories to whom the written stories represent a codification that grants its symbolism the ultimate sense to be made of a text. In that respect, the writing device of *The palm-Wine Drinkard* works as memory aid since reading the text with our eyes was never Tutuola's first

intention. The way he reaches the reader was not to ensure the external existence of the stories in dead letters by memorizing them, but to help the living memory to give them life with all the dynamic replay in a live performance.

This teaching method above described reveals several advantages. One is that it develops an awareness of the dynamics of the oral-print transfer and back. The point here will be not only to bring to cognizance the problems related to the putting on the page an oral performance, but more importantly, to reverse the process by reconstructing the initial performance out of the textural elements

The other advantage is that it necessarily engages individual performer's inventiveness. The telling process becomes in that matter a highly mnemonic exercise while giving way to free imagination. The function of entertainment in a creative way develops in this process to elicit pathos and reactions from the class. The third advantage is that of creating awareness of the dynamics of the performance traits, that is in which ways an oral print transfer may fail to recapture all other paralinguistic features. All in all, the bookish story of *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* was told in one collective participative performance within one class session.

Conclusion

The present study points to the continually dynamic teaching method of oral genres that obey the dynamism of a telling performance. Attitudinal and motivational variables appear to play an important role in teaching an Oral Literature class for the quality of original performance. The study experimented the voicing of *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* texts and seeding them with imaginative and creative devices that account for a natural oral performance. As such, the view adopted in this paper proves somehow algorithmic of the usual scholarly concerns. I approached an oral material from fixed textual and textural considerations to contextual performance because it is my belief that, before being written, any orally composed story is a living evidence that first lives in living human memory.

The Palm-Wine Drinkard is an answer to the perception that writing must be used only as a means of achieving better oral style reconstruction. Tutuola has succeeded in creating harmony in cueing and scanning Yoruba stories in one strong formulaic unique performance. More than the aesthetics of a performance by characters of all sorts in a seemingly chaotic world with porous borders between life and death unison is probed in the association of humans and animals, and fantastic beings. This unison is so probed by all characters to pinpoint to a "happy live ever" of all.

The performance by Learners revealed the ritual and corporeal-manual strategies of expressions stored in the viscera of their respective ethnic experiences. More importantly, it was the demonstration of their capacity both to improvise and to sustain memorized formulas *in situ*. The class had the dual advantage of having most learners born and *traditioned* in variegated oral milieus, hence ready to be further instructed in the same mode. Then, the challenge a teacher faces in an oral literature class is that s/he is duty-bound to resurrect the living spontaneity of orality from a fixed oral-style text.

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Footnote: Harold Scheub in Xhosa Ntsomi. Scanning and cuing is a term coined by Scheub to identify the traditional composition methods consisting in creating a new story by using existing bits of different others stories from the ethnic tale repertoire.

Footnote: Robert Elliot who taught at the University of Ife in Nigeria from 1978 to 1985 found himself fortunate to share an office with Tutuola, who joined Literature in English as a visiting writer for the 1970-80 session. As he had spent more time with him he had the opportunity to interview the man he affectionately calls Baba Tutuola (In Robert Elliot F, Tutuola and the commitment to tradition. (Amos Tutuola). Vol. 9, *Research in African Literature*, 09-22-1998, PP 203-6).