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Article

Mind, Persona, and Poetry: Madness with Methods in *Labyrinths*

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Abstract: Notable critics, including Sunday Anozie and Robert Morsberger, have branded Christopher Okigbo's *Labyrinths* as allusions to the Nigerian crisis of 1965, and the civil war that followed in 1966, as well as Igbo traditional religion, the historical and personal idiosyncrasies, and as a literary work from Theocritus and Vergil to Howl. This article veers from such imputations into a hitherto less trodden ground. It subjects the mind of the persona in *Labyrinths* –from 'Heavensgate' to 'Limits' and 'Silences', and from 'Distances' to 'Path of Thunder' to behavioural patterns. The article concludes that the behavioural patterns not only define how the mind works imaginatively, but that the very imagination wrought in obscurities methodically defines madness.

Keywords: mind; persona; poetry; obscurity; madness; methods

One man in particular has the faculty of inflaming your imagination till You feel ready to declare him one of the bringers of heavenly fire. And Yet his art is mad (Cecilia Warren, 1892).

Introduction

Labyrinths (1971) derives its name and meanings from the ancient Greek word '*labyrinthos*' –a massive, complex and deliberately designed structural passage meant to slow down the mind of any potential enemy, Minotaur, the monster in particular, from killing King Minos of Crete at Knossos in 400 BC. A close-ancient-Greek-contextualization tinkered with broad-oracular-interpretation projects Okigbo's *Labyrinths* as a confused journey of the split mind. The mind, as Steven Pinker puts it, is like the spacecraft, 'designed to solve many engineering problems, and thus is packed with high-tech systems each contrived to overcome its own obstacles' (1997, 4). The journey begins with inner mind initiations to bargain easy access to some focal points, but disastrously ends, at the very points of beginnings, with obscure ratings. The mind, poetry, and obscurity epigraph with which this essay opens ultimately begins with the persona, and ends with the persona. The epigraph owes nothing to the personality of the writer. To further disambiguate the mind from the personality of the poet, poetry is employed here to theorise the mind. Obscurity of the mind, in this sense, highlights possible difficulties arising from psychodynamic indices in interpreting behavioural actions, and by extension identifying and classifying the behaviours of the persona in *Labyrinths* as communicating the mind to the reader. In this way, evaluating the mind gives vent to behavioural problems in poetry.

Christopher Okigbo is one of '...the finest Nigerian poet of his generation'... and 'one of the most remarkable anywhere in our time' (Achebe 2012, 114). The 'generation' is the first generation of Nigerian writers. It includes Wole Soyinka, J. P. Clark, Samson Amali, and Dennis Osadebe. Choosing Okigbo's only surviving posthumous collection for inquiry into the mind of the persona is informed by the text's morbid 'pursuit of the white elephant' project or 'what turned to be an illusion' and fascinating transitions, at different points, from the persona to 'I Okigbo, town-crier' (Okigbo 1971, 67). These transitions, indeed, occur in the mind of the persona.

Interestingly, a poet is like the god. He/she creates a persona who is largely invisible, morbid, and oftentimes merely perceived. The persona is heard inaudibly from one page of a text to another. Invisibility of the persona suggests that the persona is not the image of the creator. It is not even in

the likeness of the creator – i.e. the persona is created in form of a human, act as a human, but unlike the human it is forever invisible. Invisibility denies the persona a real human status. This infamous contradiction of being the determiner and yet fails to outlive the persona surreptitiously denies the god-figure of a poet. A persona, therefore, is a potential Pandora box designed to ‘transfuse emotion –not transmit thought but set up in the reader’s sense a vibration corresponding to what was felt by the writer’ (Housman 1961, 172). Whatever persona Okigbo created at the pre-writing and writing phases of *Labyrinths*, therefore, including our consciousness that the persona outlives the creator, the vague declaration, ‘I Okigbo, town-crier’ is infallibly amorphous. ‘I Okigbo’ shares common identity with the ‘imperishable’ persona who further declares, ‘When you have finished/ & done up my stitches, / Wake me near the altar, / & this poem will be finished... (Okigbo 1971, 27). Finishing and doing up stitches of the imperishable is inherently imaginative. This kind of imagination is uncommon in humans, but fantastically common in poetry. ‘Wake me near the altar’ actively suggests the persona is in a state of amnesia. Invariably, amnesia in poetry occurs only if the poetry is ‘written while the individual with schizophrenia is experiencing the worst of the disease’ (Bakare 2009, 218). Okigbo’s persona is guilty of suffering from amnesia in this regard.

This state of the mind draws *Labyrinths* closer to poetry of insight. The morbidity in *Labyrinths* turns celebrative and visionary as the persona’s utterances go high from the circle of individual knowledge to the circle of public knowledge. The urgency to know or rediscover ‘we’ in the vision in *Labyrinths* makes mind exploration desirable. The way to go about the exploration makes the knowledge more imperative, if ‘insight poetry’ is taken to mean ‘schizophrenic poetic expression while individuals are lucid and in remission’ (Bakare 2009, 218). Muideen Owolabi Bakare strongly insinuates that poetic expressions are symptomatic of schizophrenia, and that the ‘mental well-being’ of the persona is empirically verifiable. The verifying methods take us back to a theory of mind – the mechanism, the approaches, and the focal new direction, or vision of madness in poetry. The mind’s eye, so to say, in the quest for a new direction is engaged in ‘a process that produces from images of the external world a description that is useful to the viewer and not cluttered with irrelevant information’ (David Marr qtd on p. 213 of Pinker). ‘When you have finished/ & done up my stitches’ is a less ‘cluttered’ information on the persona in *Labyrinths*. The clarity of this information is in tandem with the imagining mind –we are into a vision too far from our real world.

Madness with methods

Probing the mind of the persona to uncover this generic information, and how it works is phenomenally fallible, obscure, and elusive. It is like the biological approach to evolution of schizophrenia propounded in 1964 by Julian Huxley, Ernst May, Humphrey Osmond and Abraham Hoffer. Regarded, initially, as a hypothetical study put together by ‘a galaxy of genius,’ (Hurst 1972, 239) the evolutionary theory of schizophrenia turned out to be wide approach by the four principal investigators. The four investigators were later abandoned by their followers due to inconsistencies in the methods, and varying backgrounds in research interests. This article on mind, persona, and poetry avoids the pitfalls of the ‘odd foursome’ (De Bont, 2010, 144). Metaphorically speaking, and to push the argument on how the mind of a persona works in poetry psychologically, when madness takes its ding-dong ‘in the first case, we are silenced by the impossibility of saying anything more and in the second place we are silenced by the impossibility of ever saying anything’ (Oliver 1995, 6). In other words, our minds or the mind of the victim goes blank and obviously silent in the face of madness. Thankfully, oblivion defines “ill-posed” or assumed problems in the mind. Inverse or ‘ill-posed’ problem in the mind arises from the instability of a mind to be exactitude in calculations or measurements in computational mathematics. The lack of exactitude oftentimes results to ‘measurement errors’.

The media *Labyrinths* has such properties as persona, heavensgate, newcomer, watermaid, Orpheus, and other personae on which the poetry revolves. Unfortunately, there are such unknown properties as hallucination, delusion, anxieties, paranoia, isolation and other none stationary or mind disorder in *Labyrinths*. The known and the unknown coexisting properties in *Labyrinths* constitute the lack of exact information ascribed as ‘errors’. What the mind does, in this circumstance, is to attempt

to provide solution to the ‘ill-posed problem,’ that is, in the face of obstacles; the mind generates rational decisions, or applies ‘a set of operations that reduce the difference.... We have desires, and we pursue them using beliefs, which, when all goes well, are at least approximately or probabilistically true’ (Pinker 1997, 62). Precisely, this was what the mind did when Geertrude van Lennich broke silence as she openly disrupted a Church service by bishop Ghysbert Masius in 1605 shouting, ‘Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is still being crucified every day’ (qtd. in Sandra Uray-Kennett 2011, 124). Spectators were muzzled by ‘the impossibility of saying anything’. If we remove the identifier ‘Geertrude van Lennich’ from the mind’s narrative, the line intensifies the monstrosity of a metaphor spoken by a façade with a lot of sense. Again, I rely on façade as a method in this section of the article. Going by the agonies suffered in Christian faith and the avalanche of mind tortures in pieties, there is sense in ‘Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is still being crucified every day’. Breaking the silence in this way is mind bugling the way we try to understand the complications in ‘There is always some madness in love, / But there is also always some reason in madness’ in relation to the mind, persona, and poetry (Nietzsche 2006, 28).

Contrary to perceived popular sayings that madness is characterized by senselessness therefore, I argue that irrationality in poetry is, nevertheless, sensible and methodical. Mind, persona, and poetry inquiry research, after all, is the unusual and extraordinary manner of a mind-set struggling in pains to make sense of a complex circumstance, or perhaps, choosing as a method and not the other, as a roadmap to solve a problem. The mind tends to say in the circumstance in ‘The Road Not Taken’ that, ‘I took the one less travelled by, /And that has made all the difference’ to get to the goal of resolving the problem (Frost 1916, 1). This is not to say that obscurity in poetry is arbitrarily spoken by the persona, even as the persona hardly recognizes the complexity in the spoken words. I was not, as a researcher in mind, persona, and poetry, for instance, aware of detailed complexities in *Labyrinths*, when I designed this article, until the absurdities systematically emerged in the lines. I realized that applying mind study method to the article was empirically achievable. ‘Recognizing and responding to complexity and fundamental uncertainty offers opportunity to innovate research methodologies and methods capable of evolving as we learn more about the problem’ (Gear et al 2022, 1). Innovation undeniably ties the mind to senselessness, at least to extraordinary way of thinking, where a supposedly wrong decision magnificently turns out to be a major breakthrough. Innovation, in this way, is characterized by sense and non-sense –a return to mind, persona, and poetry.

Madness as method or what seems like sense and non-sense in poetry occurs when ‘...either the operation of Distinction in quality or that of Conjunction in quantity could not be accurately and completely effected (Hickok 2009, 161). Whereas ‘distinction in quality’ queries the listener or the reader’s inability to correctly decipher textual meanings in the mind, and ‘quality’ is inclined to sense and value, ‘conjunction in quantity’ aggregates a text volume and confusedly adds to the indistinct quality of a text in the mind, and so ‘quantity’ is inclined to non-sense. ‘Through such processes of controlled perceptual exploration we collect information that takes us from vague, pre-attentive appreciation that something is out there, to a detailed understanding of just what it is’ (Thomas 1999, 218). In the epigraph that sets off this article, Cecilia Warren’s perceptual instinct in cognitive humanities approach precisely identifies obfuscations arising from incoherent linguistic frames and semantic appropriations tending toward Nietzsche’s ethos of ‘the inner beast’ of the mind.

Madness with methods insists that a metaphorical understanding of “the beast within” lures the minds of a persona and that of a reader to empathy. The minds simultaneously move, adjust, and fret from sense to non-sense. The perceptual allure inflames the imagination of every reader with poetry of ‘heavenly fire’ – a metaphor which ultimately translates to delusion in cognitive humanities and unmistakably shifts poetry to mind study. The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines the term ‘cognition’ as ‘all conscious and unconscious processes by which knowledge is accumulated, such as perceiving, recognizing, conceiving, and reasoning’ To acquire understanding by way of thinking, what ought to be, and what ought not to be, resides in the mind. To attain know-how by seeing requires the presence of an object, imaginary or concrete, and for the photo-sight of the object to be stored in the mind and marked ‘experience’ is psychologically phenomenal. Imagining what the

mind is, or what a persona is, or what poetry is, or what madness is, either by observing what it is, or feeling what it is, or touching to see what it is, or hearing to know what is, makes this article experimentally engaging and psychologically thrilling.

Mind study favours the persona and his poetry smouldered in sense and nonsense when cognition meets poetry to collectively search for madness. When cognition hobnob narrative, the structure and the behaviour of characters give way to cognitive narratology. The trajectory, in drama, dramaturgy and the behaviour of characters, tilts to drama and cognition, while in the theatre, absurdities and performance of actors, side-step the sub-type of performance and cognition. Either way, the effusion from cognitive psychology to humanities ends in cognitive humanities. What comes to mind, in poetry, and of course, in all genres of literature when insanity is the subject and cognition leads the way is that the 'art is mad.' Consequently, I further argue that applying mind to the study of a persona and his poetry has the potential to uncover symptoms of schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is etymologically Grecian. The base word 'phrene' means 'mind' and the affix 'schizo' means 'split' {schizo+phrenic = split mind }. In other words, the persona's mental processes of moving, adjusting, and fretting, from 'vague, pre-appreciation' ultimately ends at schizophrenia in *Labyrinths*. Probing schizophrenia in poetry, if nothing else, arises from the mind seeing 'technical excellence' embodied in the depersonalization of a persona (Eliot 1962, 474).

Eliot's depersonalization model argues that poetry, no matter how close to human emotions, does not represent the poet. I contend that the axiom validates presumptions of systemic madness in poetry. The axiom genuinely concedes the primacy of 'technical excellence' in the mind to the immediacy of 'his art is mad'. To mistakenly transfer any idea from the persona to the poet strangely recalls I.A. Richard's 'Magical View'. In a magical sense, the persona exists '...but outside real life...individuality has completely disappeared...the world appears like a phantom, a gigantic hallucination' (Dugas et al 1996, 455). To blend depersonalization with the persona using 'the beast within' or 'one out of his mind' musters the whole lots of 'technical excellence' and dissatisfaction in the beast. The blend creates a common ground, that is, the '... ideas tend to spread continuously and to affect certain others which stand to them in a particular relation of affectability' (Pierce 2007, 22). Given that the persona inwardly transforms to a beast, yet in the physique of a human, the process could only be conceived in the mind. Incredulity or secrecies in the mind is measured by 'the beast within'. This trajectory approaches what the reader dubs 'technical excellence' in accessing encounters in mind, persona, and poetry. Interestingly, the argument in this section is that 'technical experience' in poetry with all its esoteric flavour and 'magical view' of the mind tantamount to schizophrenia that afflicts the persona in *Labyrinths*.

A persona may become cryptic and obsessive in folk-lore, mythology, occultism and childhood experiences to create poetic excellence; but the combinations of these mores, of course, stimulate obscurity, and perhaps, a more puzzling experience as in schizophrenia. One assumption is that 'schizophrenic behaviour is controlled by stimuli in the immediate environment. In the case of schizophrenia, this means that any individual word may be a response to some immediately preceding word rather than the semantic intention of the utterance as a whole' (Salzinger et al 1970, 258-76). A word in poetry that is a response to the other is perceptually imposed regardless of the meaning in mind. The imposition, oftentimes, leads to the formation of a new word typical of schizophrenic behaviour. 'Cases of neologism, live metaphor, or ungrammatical sentences, as well as archaisms, paradox, and oxymoron (the traditional tropes) are clear examples of deviation' in mind and poetry.²¹ (van Peer and Hakemulder 2007, 547). The deviation may be caused by a feat of narcissistic rage. In between 'ideologues and geniuses' (Soyinka 2001, 264), schizophrenia fraternizes with metaphors, absurdities, and ungrammaticalities; and being between two worlds fails to openly declare thus: 'We speak only for the sick like us'. Such a declaration of the mind tacitly combines persona, poetry and madness in unprecedented fashion.

Given that these exploratory and experimental approaches potentially disentangle mad narratives (Freud, 1893/1895, 46; Nietzsche, 2006, 28; Laing 1959, 65; and Foucault 1961, 65), this article is poised to exhume the remains of 'illness is not a metaphor' controversy that was opened five decades ago (Sontag 1977, 3). Assuming without conceding that 'illness is not a metaphor,' how do

we explain in mind and poetry where every emerging word predicts a new word, or where each line in poetry prompts multiplicity of meanings, or where each section in a poem is fragmented, and a whole poem or a collection of poems is engulfed in obscurity mediated by symptoms of schizophrenia? The ennui and, indeed, the obfuscation arising from this question coupled with my gross dissatisfaction with Sontag's disposition find no answers, at least, not without experimenting a text to demystify madness and the illusionary methods therein to finally resolve the 'ill-posed problem'.

Labyrinths: Madness with methods

In dedicating *Degeneration* to Caesar Lombroso, Max Nordau specifically warned on the limitations of literary and aesthetic critic. His concern was '...the subjective impressions received from the works he criticizes,' and additionally, that the critic was incapable of judging as to whether the literary works are the product '...of a shattered brain and also the nature of the mental disturbance expressing itself by them' (1895, viii). Nordau's apostasy against imagination did not foresee the birth of interdisciplinary studies in the midst 1920s, let alone that a researcher in mind, person, and poetry would stand, mentally ready, with the surgical blade in one hand and the imaginative knife in the other, to dissect the mind of even a degenerate persona and flaunts a new direction publicly. Whatever renders the mind of a persona split does not only come from within, it enters from without, using several methods.

The methods begin from the vantage of *Labyrinths* as a text, and the loss of identity of the author: 'We shall never know, for the good reason that writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing' (Barthes 1967, 142). Okigbo, in this sense, summarily disappears, forthwith in this article. Whatever incoherence, obscurity in speech, fright, anxiety, delusion, hallucination, silence, depersonalization and isolation that occur in *Labyrinths* are sheer pervasions of the mind of a persona – the author had entered 'his own death' much earlier. In what follows, I explore '... the distinct realms of knowledge into significant relation; to argue their analogous, contiguous, or causal interconnection; and to use one such realm in order to disclose or contextualize some unexpected feature of another' (Mckee 1994, 18). In this regard, I contextualize each distinct schizophrenic symptom seeking to model itself as artistic pattern to give impressions of obscure poetry. The result is the 'unexpected' close affinity of the pattern in a convoluted form between poetry and madness.

The media *Labyrinths* is borne out of 'Homecoming' of a persona who claims to have arrived, and the loneliness that accompanies the supposed blissful moments: '...nothing here is ashamed of obscure, obstinate feelings' (Nietzsche 2006, 146). The paradox of obstinacy in this context is analogous to 'anything goes' rule in a professional tact-match in WWE. Everything is possible at homecoming including the thought of starting a tortuous and rancorous journey from hell to heaven in a weird and deadly manner. The choice by the persona to start the journey itself is based on mood swing in the mind. The swing ultimately leads to regrets, though it looks calm at the beginning. So, when the mood swung from bizarre islands in hell to heavens in *Labyrinths*, the persona surprisingly transfigured to a 'Newcomer' (Okigbo 1971,17) awaiting 'Initiations' (Okigbo, 1971, 6) and a grand reception by the 'Watermaid' (Okigbo 1971, 10) at 'The Passage' of the supposed heavens –the several chambers are assumed (Okigbo 1971, 2). The constellations '...later grew into a ceremony of innocence, something like a mass, an offering to Idoto, the village stream of which I drank, in which I washed, as a child; the celebrant, a personage like Orpheus, is about to begin a journey'' (Okigbo 1971, xi). Do not ask where madness is in this poetry, or perhaps, the evolutionary methods in poetry and madness. Madness is this poetry; but in form of symptoms –the idea of homecoming, immersion of innocence, celebrity of a kind, and the incongruity of a celebrity like Orpheus in Greek mythology mystically swelling from the mind. Paul Maurice Legrain argues that 'Mystical thoughts are to be laid to the account of the insanity of the degenerate' (1886, 45). That is to say, the allusion to Orpheus in *Labyrinths* is a mysterious transference of obscure mental image conjured by the persona to create a mythological account of 'Idoto' and to premise the ego-maniac force in 'of which I drank, in which

I washed.’ For recounting the weird experience of a journey yet to start, and for already experiencing remission from delusional grandeur associated with loneliness, the persona, for sure, is in a disordered mind, if loneliness, egomania, and mythical thoughts are subjected to mind, persona, and poetry with the aim to discover madness.

The physiology of ‘morbidity associated with loneliness appears to be mediated by psychological changes’ and a sense of failure in the persona (Febian et al 2016, 4). Indeed, ‘one with a load of destiny on his head (Okigbo 1971, xiv) incredibly indicates a sense of failure of an obscure persona and an impenetrable personality. Obscurity and impenetrability in the mind of the persona are obvious in ‘after we had formed/ then only the forms were formed/ and all the forms/ were formed after our forming... (Okigbo 1971, 57) The misunderstanding is compounded by the strange ‘we’ pronoun that splits the persona into personae or multiple personalities. ‘It is at least possible to suppose that the individual whose abiding mode of being-in-the-world is of this split nature is living in what to him, if not to us, is a world that threatens his being from all sides, and from which there is no exit’ (Laing 1990, 79). The entrapped is not only stripped of dignity and identity in the mind, the meaninglessness of the trap makes the persona suddenly become ‘talkative like the weaverbird’, and in ‘Between sleep and waking’ abruptly brandishes ‘A tiger mask and nude spear....’ (Okigbo 1971, 23). This insomnia all the more acerbates restlessness of the mind in *Labyrinths*.

The psychomotor-related problem ‘becoming talkative’, which is either from the experience of sleepiness or the lack of it, leaves the polygonal reader perplexed. The obvious question arising from the uncertainties, even from the persona, in the crisis moment in *Labyrinths* is: ‘Was it a vision or a waking dream’ of the mind? (Keats 1960, 356). David F. Dinges and seven other researchers revealed that ‘The most consistent effect on subjective sleepiness and mood was a reliable change across days of sleep restriction’ (Dinges et al 1997, 270). The physical ‘change’ in talking too much due to lack of sleep is evident in ‘If I don’t learn to shut my mouth I’ll soon go to hell. I Okigbo, town-crier, together with my iron bell’ (Okigbo 1971, 67). Either way, being asleep and at the same time being awake is obscure and psychologically mind depriving –hence its relation to mind, person, poetry and madness. The sudden swap of identity or the identity theft in ‘I Okigbo’ is worrisome. To an alarmist, the swap is a ploy, perhaps; but the obscure manoeuvre results to depersonalization in poetry. ‘It is in this depersonalisation that art may be said to approach the condition of science’ –the science of mind and poetry (Eliot 1962, 470). Eliot alludes that the persona in *Labyrinths* has one foot in poetry and the other in affective sciences.

The awake or the dream experience in *Labyrinths*, from affective sciences perspective, inflames mythical jokes and their relations to lifelessness the Idoma man in North Central Nigeria humorously describes as ‘imputation of unreality’. One example of mythic jokes in Idoma relating to unconscious frequently used is: ‘*Ebiode choko...*’ Only the initiate doubly initiated like the initiations in *Labyrinths* (Okigbo 1971, 6-9) not a ‘Newcomer’ (Okigbo 1971, 17-19) understands the hilarious imputations of the catchy phrase which fully translated is: ‘*Ebiode choko Ode kikpo kano kweba*’ –while on the neck of someone to cross a menacing river, the frightened Ode in self-transcendence screams: ‘my feet touch a big fish’. The pleasure of the Ode joke lies in the impossibility of being on someone’s neck, far away and above the water; yet claiming the feet, not that of the carrier, touch a fish, and a big one for that matter, down the river. The joke arouses interest of the hearer, who mentally battles the impossibility and comes to a resolution in the mind that Ode’s behaviour depicts lunacy or ‘idiocy masquerading as a joke’ (Freud 1960, 190). The aura of incredulity in this myth coupled with multiplicity of personalities encountered in ‘after we had formed,’ make it more compelling for the reader not to accept ‘I Okigbo’ in *Labyrinths* to be real, and in any way practically possible. ‘I Okigbo’ is a charade and ‘...the white lies it sounds like’ (Browning 1996, 645). Yelling and claiming the feet touch a big fish is a case of depersonalization bordering on identity theft to accentuate and methodically display obscurities in *Labyrinths*. Similarly, ‘What if’ arguments, arise from ‘...If I don’t learn to shut my mouth I’ll soon go to hell’ (Okigbo 1971, 67).

The utterance is symptomatically paranoiac –false senses that someone is targeting the persona with the aim of eliminating him? What if, in the real sense, no one is targeting the persona, where does he go to, blissful heaven? What if the bliss renders him grandiose? And what if, as the persona

claims he is Okigbo, and someone is unfortunate enough to believe that he is, how do we account for delusion of inclusion in the poetry? 'Okigbo accompanies us the oracle enkindles us' and 'Okigbo accompanies us the rattles enlighten us' (Okigbo 1971, 69) also encounter the 'what if' argument in the mind. 'What if' argument makes inquiries into mind, persona, and poetry somehow methodical and highly experimental in the search for madness. Experimentations in these suppositions range from confusions in meanings and meaningful confusions to misunderstandings between poetry and the mind. Less confusion is in the binary: 'Okigbo accompanies us', but while delusion of inclusion clearly identifies the persona other than Okigbo, confusions in '...the oracle enkindles us' and '...the rattles enlighten us' are unprecedentedly incomprehensible. Oracular and commotions created by the poetry bifurcate into further misunderstandings of what is imagination on the one hand, and what is perception on the other, albeit the duo are regarded as extraordinary show of semantic oddities in *Labyrinths*.

'Disordered thinking and delusions sometimes—but not always—co-occur in acute phases of schizophrenia and often, in bipolar acute mania' (Elvevåg, et al 2011, 461). The disturbing aspects in 'oracle' and in 'rattles' are the inability of the mind to predict imminent dangers involved in the harrowing visual picture 'of Guernica, /On whose canvas of blood, /The slits of his tongue cling to glue' (Okigbo 1971, 35). The visual pictures render the persona mesmerized, and in 'reversed dream'—hence the implosion and wailings 'for the fields of men: For the barren wedded ones; /For perishing children....' (Okigbo 1971, 50) Instigated by realities of the 1937 Spanish War—the broken limbs, headless bodies, fallen walls, severed faces, hands, and feet in Pablo Picasso's 'Guernica' orchestrates what has not happened in Nigeria, but yet imagined to have happened in the mode of source memory in *Labyrinths*. Source memory inevitably intermingle poetry to degenerate into symptoms often '...associated with hallucinations among patients with schizophrenia, as well as healthy individuals scoring high on a scale measuring predisposition to hallucinations' (Bre'bion et al 2008, 383). As someone predisposed to hallucinations, the persona ostensibly cast off 'the burden of several centuries' (Okigbo '97', 64) only to encounter the admixture of visions typical of the mentally ill. The visions of the encounter—i.e., the metaphors, which indicate break of thunder and war, and the unexpected 'Hurray for thunder' echo the loss of bodily sensations. A good mind and poetry researcher will diagnose the sensual experience with the result that 'The process is that of sensual anaesthesia, of total liberation from all physical and emotional tension; the end result, a state of aesthetic grace' (Okigbo 1971, xii). Sensory anaesthesia and the so-called aesthetic beauty are two obscure combinations that run on our minds. The persona's regrets at leaning 'upon a withered branch/ A blind beggar leaning on a porch' (Okigbo 1971, 64), or 'O wind, swell my sails; and may my banner run the course of wider waters', (Okigbo 1971, 65), or the secrets threatening with 'iron mask/ The last lighted torch of the century (Okigbo 1971, 66) leading to thunder outbreak are poetry hard to disambiguate, at least not without a mind and poetry focus on the behavioural patterns of the obtuse maker. An easy resolution of the obtuseness is feasible. It comes in 'sensual anaesthesia' and such contras as frenzy, or perilous, or stuporous, which indicate symptoms of schizophrenia; yet not without the loss of consciousness or 'aesthetic grace'.

Visual grace in 'Imagination is a mental faculty, which develops conceptions by the synthesis of perceptions' (Giebeler-Angelika 1983, 16). The scenario weighs near 'Logistics/ Which is what poetry is' in *Labyrinths* (Okigbo 1971, 9). The distortion of sensory response from the visual scenes in *Labyrinths* makes transitory encounters momentary. It is 'So brief her presence – /match-flare in wind's breath—/so brief with mirrors around' (Okigbo 1971, 11). The transitory encounter leaves the persona in *Labyrinths* mentally bruised, confused and confounded, 'and I, where am I? /fulfilling each moment in a /broken monody'—a tinge that is half poetry and half mania (Okigbo 1971, 13). Mind and poetry methods in *Labyrinths*, nonetheless, reveals, and the revelation leaves no options in poetic discourse, that 'Illness was no doubt the final cause of the whole urge to create' (Heine 2004, 2). In the brief encounter between the persona and the Watermaid, the dictum, 'When you have finished /& done up my stitches, /Wake me near the altar, / & this poem will be finished...' practically endorses the fret, the freak and the fright associated with pathological conjectures. If nothing else, the aura of dissections and surgery recalls anxieties and somatic manifestations such as palpitations. How the

internal and physical manifestations of madness blend with poetry to create obscurities in *Labyrinths* does not really matter, at least, not to the persona, so long the combinations bring forth a perfect union. In this way, '...who says it matters/ Which way the kite flows, /Provided the movement is/ Around the burning market?' (Okigbo 1971, 30). The obscure approaches, nevertheless, matter to mind and poetry –hence the subject of this article.

The metaphysics of mentally panel-beating or descending 'upon the twin gods of Irkalla' puts African cosmology in the front burner (Okigbo 1971, 33). The metaphysics matters where the mind negotiates between a behavioural breakdown and a normative order in the persona. The twin gods of the forest –the tortoise and the python in Igbo traditions spiritually subdue the Mesopotamian deities amidst silences. 'The gods lie unsung, /Veiled only with mould, /Behind the shrinehouse' and in inertness (Okigbo 1971, 34). Poetry, even so, thrives in silences: 'Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter' (Keats 1960, 320). It is for this reason that 'Silences' in *Labyrinths* 'explores the possibilities of poetic metaphor in an attempt to elicit the music to which all imperishable cries must aspire' (Okigbo 1971, xii). It is apparent to ask the legitimate question that 'How many times can a man turn his head /And pretend he just doesn't see' anything in the imperishable cries? (Dylan, 1963). The cries are not only from the imperishable, the cries intensify the search for madness in silences. That is to say, no matter how golden silence may look, the persona pretending not to see what goes on is mentally disorganized by 'the sounds and silence in madness' in he who turns his eyes away from the realities (Lougy 1984, 407). Silence predates *Labyrinths*; though the archaeology of silence in poetry started in the 18th century, when literary critics began to admire '...all those stammered, imperfect words without fixed syntax in which the exchange between madness and reason was made' (Foucault 1961, x). Madness, in this sense, is silence and silence is madness with neither a 'why question, nor a probing 'how' method in the incoherent, incongruent and jumbled poetry syntax typical of madness.

The 'imperishable cries' of 'the Silent Sisters' in *Labyrinths* draw on Gerald Hopkins' *The Wreck of the Deutschland*; yet they are '...entirely metaphoric; the ship is the Nigerian society of the early 1960s which foundered in a political storm' (Egudu 2003, 28). This view on silence in which nuns in *Labyrinths* are sole victims with no 'escape ladder' or 'an anchorage' in a drowning boat heightens silence in the mind to a state of catatonic schizophrenia. 'So, one dips one's tongue in ocean, and begins /To cry to the mushroom of the sky' in the unfortunate disaster (Okigbo 1971, 41). If ocean metaphor 'is the sigh of our spirits' and we are silently confused on how 'We shall make a grey turn to face it' (Okigbo 1971, 42), what makes madness different from silence in *Labyrinths* –the mind, the poetry, the puzzle, the probe, or the methods?

Evanescence appears in form of 'match flare' in *Labyrinths*, says one critique. It is implanted from Ezra Pound's 'Cantos 6 and 104, and where the 'downward' movement in *Labyrinths* really is 'upward,' and the wind that of the King (Clark 1978, 25). Swapping of personae rarely occurs in poetry, that is, the persona in *Labyrinths* may be likened to the persona in Pound's, it is hardly the same, except in the application of culture where one puzzle mutates the other as spirituality. Sunday O. Anozie describes this kind of illusionary cross-referencing in poetry as 'the result of successive impacts on a highly sensitive mind' (1967, 158). A 'sensitive mind,' in the case of *Labyrinths*, means there are certain conclusions to reach on the behaviour of the persona, in particularly when the behaviour is patterned into sanity and insanity. The division looks like 'frame problem' in artificial intelligence (Hayes 1973, 223). A conclusion that the persona is sane or insane is futuristic. Dana S. Scott, Gilbert Harman, and John Haugeland explain 'frame problem' to mean thus: 'in the computational theory of the mind when we envision a system that anticipates what the future will be like given certain changes' (1990, 42). Expectedly, the 'changes' in *Labyrinths* occur when sanity in the poetry turns to insanity by virtue of the application of psychoanalytic approach. What Anozie means by 'a highly sensitive mind' is that an imaginative mind bifurcated by obscurities is susceptible to behavioural patterns in *Labyrinths*. The mind's framework in *Labyrinths* is, therefore, interestingly manageable.

In what follows, I demonstrate the methodology of using imagination of Greek mythology on the persona and the influence on Igbo traditions based on source memory. In 'It is over, Palinurus, at

least for you, /In yours tarmac of night and fever-dew' (Okigbo 1971, 47), the source of the information is contextually Grecian. Except for the night that perceptually has 'tarmac' suggesting a movement and the imprecise 'fever-dew' that suggests mood disorder, the utterance of the persona is more of word-salad typical of a schizophrenic. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Palinurus who pilots Aeneas fleeing at night to a new homeland in Italy following the Trojans war in Troy is trounced by the god of sleep, falls into the sea and is drowned. There are no clear connections between Igbo traditions and this Greek epic; but the persona who engages in mental pictures of Greek mythology draws on the far-fetched-allusion to emphasize classical drama on the mind. This means the mind of the persona, like the computer, in this instance is not localized; even as the persona turns to chart an independent course for Igbo traditions in *Labyrinths*. Alan Turing hypothesizes that, 'we need a comparably fundamental dichotomy between mental processes that are local and ones that aren't' (qtd in Fodor 2001, 5). This explains the unconscious mental method destroying the twin gods Irkalla and the conscious approach in adapting the tortoise and the python to mentally localize *Labyrinths*.

Igbo traditional mind, again, fleers up in the salient incantation tunes in drum modes. The drum is traditionally used to invoke 'ogbanje' spirits to move, even if they 'are very far away,' to come. In *Labyrinths*, the drums speak in broken and disjointed tunes reminiscence of invocation: 'We are tuned for feast-of-seven-souls' (Okigbo 1971, 45). The plaint painful tone of the drums moves *Labyrinths* closer to senseless incantations. 'Seven' as a number mentally hold the spirits together. It '...is a portentous magical word in Igbo mythology; it is a diabolical number used to evoke the evil spirit in an ominous incantation' (Acholonu, 1988, 109). Mind and incantations, after all, are seemingly senseless sounds used either to invoke spirits or cure illness in magical traditions. The persona, in this context, uses incantatory sounds of the hollow drums, tanks and thunder, to magically invite 'swifter messengers', re-engage the weary gonads, and move them from the forest to intervene in the threatening air. This obscure nostalgic infatuation reminiscences 'ogbanje' tradition, again, recalls 'Ishtar's lament for Tammuz' in Greek mythology and further complicates the already chaotic mind in *Labyrinths* (Okigbo 1971, 49).

Reinforcing complications in the mind, at this point, is shrouded in wailing 'For the barren wedded ones; /For perishing children...' and, of course, '...for the fields of men' (Okigbo 1971, 50). So far, there is none in mind and poetry research, where the amorphous persona in this state of confusion, or contrition, anxieties or hallucinations, paranoia or egomania, either in a pathological and a psychological worlds who will not in all honesty mumble sounds/incantations in the high risk condition. Incantation, in other words, minimally navigates methodical erudition to concatenate poetry and the mind. No one else understands concatenation better than the persona who in solitude paddles '...through some dark/ labyrinth, from laughter to the dream' (Okigbo 1971, 53). The persona, from the poetry of 'dark labyrinth,' moves from ambush to anguish, and surreptitiously lands in fleeting catatonia: 'the only way to go/through the archway/to the catatonic pingpong/of the evanescent halo...' (Okigbo 1971, 57).

Apparently, this momentary excitement after a bout of catatonic schizophrenia tells how 'each sigh is the stillness of the kiss...' in obscurity (Okigbo 1971, 58). The evanescence of this episode makes *Labyrinths* more of verbal violence that leaves no traces of intelligibility at the end. Intelligibility in *Labyrinths*, even where it echoes onomatopoeically, is further impaired as the utterance drags the hearer to partake in the estranged communion: 'Come into my carven/ Shake the mildew from your hair; / Let your ear listen; / My mouth calls from a carven...' (Okigbo 1971, 59) This invitation into privacy intrinsically lures configurations of conflicting meanings in a verbal rage. Take, for instance, the hapless figurative expression: 'O mother mother Earth, unbind me; let this be my last testament' (Okigbo 1971, 71). If Earth unbinds the persona in *Labyrinths*, the verbal rage crudely foresees his death. It is from this foresight that a twist on rebirth quickly pops in the elegiac rage that 'foreshadows its going /Before a going and coming that goes on forever...' (Okigbo 1971, 73). Rage and tears suggest continuities in poetry and obsessions and mentally foreground a rebirth conundrum to bring forth a new persona. Rage in dying and the pains of rebirth in *Labyrinths*, therefore, opens up new directions in mind, persona, and poetry tacitly tampered with madness.

One hypothesis of the mind is that, and the hypothesis looks credible, 'The obvious illustration of foregrounding comes from the semantic opposition of literal and figurative meaning: a literary metaphor is a semantic oddity which demands that a linguistic form should be given something other than its normal (literal) interpretation' (Leech 1965, 154). The fury in 'Going and coming that goes on forever' with which *Labyrinths* draws to a close, again, recalls the local excitement and tears associated with 'ogbanje' child in Igbo tradition. Notwithstanding this traditional interpretation, the poetry of rebirth in a rage stands in strong opposition –i.e., as the persona in *Labyrinths* departs, the departure predicts the coming of 'a new star' or a new persona who may be as incomprehensible as the 'OLD STAR' (Okigbo 1971, 72). Mind, persona, and poetry, in this sense, is hypothetically imbued with lunacy of varying types, and in varying circumstances, now, and in time to come.

Conclusion

Jerry Fodor is right, 'the mind does not work that way' (2001), at least, not the way Sunday Anozie, John Pepper Clark, Kathleen Brunner, and Robert E. Morsberger interpret *Labyrinths* to mean. There are substantive evidences of lunacy in mind of the persona. These constraints of lunacy substantially affect our reinterpretation of behavioural patterns in *Labyrinths* to determine what is presumed in the mind. The presumptions arising from incomprehensibilities dubbed madness with methods in *Labyrinths* –from 'Heavensgate' to 'Limits' and 'Silences', and from 'Distances' to 'Path of Thunder' are too obvious to ignore. Even when the poetry at some points bifurcated, and from bifurcation moved to befuddlements, and depersonalization at another point, and the persona in a hallucinatory mode identified himself as 'I, Okigbo, town-crier', and again, the persona strangely beckoned, 'Okigbo accompanies us' shortly after, our minds turned to nowhere, saw nowhere, and focused nowhere, but on persona, poetry, and madness. Branding *Labyrinths* as '...obscure allusions to Nigerian life and ritual as well as literary works from Theocritus and Vergil to Howl' (Morsberger 1973, 603), and going ahead to characterize *Labyrinths* as 'The Apocalypse of Representation' oscillating from Igbo traditional religion to the historical and the personal (Brunner 2001, 80) leave much unaccounted for. While such imputations can nonetheless be validated, the critics take for granted the obtuseness or lunacies discernable in the incoherent and fragmented language, and the chunks and lumps of allusive wreckages in *Labyrinths*. I reject the imputations of these critics in favour of a hitherto less trodden ground –that is, like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) whose mad dreams vanished and hatred filled his heart, *Labyrinths'* persona masquerades as a sane visionary, but his butt displays lunacies in the mind.

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