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An Aesthetic Theorising of the Challenge of National Security in the Post-colonial Context

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Introduction and Problematic

Prior engagement with the thematic concerns of aesthetics and security seems generally to have focussed on the restrictive study of improving the components of buildings, protective systems, and so on. But our work engages the theme of aesthetic security from a wider philosophical and ethical viewpoint that is both holistic and sympathetic to the wider socio-political and cosmological processes that underlie aesthetic valuation. The more so, whereas the dominant view of aesthetics come across as essentially discursive interrogations of the domains of natural phenomena and artistic productions, we must now see the aesthetic countenances from the panoramic, spectral approach that makes ideas, institutions and systems susceptible to analysis. While we reaffirm the predominant view of aesthetics as the engagement with the gamut of human action in the ethical, social, technological and economic realms of life, we realise that aesthetic security can be conceptualised in terms of core notions like control, beauty, harmony, satisfaction, imagination, taste and commitment. These are the vital normative, conceptual and prescriptive ordinances that can facilitate the thematic and methodological control of aesthetic themes, valuations and convergences. The crux of this work therefore is to look for the aesthetic and ethical basis of security development in this modern age. In this approach lies the power to elicit novelty and make vital connections within diverse realms of reality.

In engaging the philosophical and aesthetic dimensions of security, our analysis must specifically confront ideologies and cultures and how these try to resist and unseat the diverse centres of dominant influence, power and protection. These convolutions in philosophical and aesthetic security must be tied to the roles of cosmologies, traditions and ways of life in determining the scope and limits of state or social actions. The reasons for these situations are not uncon-

nected to the predisposing factors that constrain change. All of these trends in-
sinuate a desire for an aesthetic reconsideration of the trajectory of social vision
and social action. Such action for change must be based on the tripartite aesthetical,
ethical and logical mindsets that are very much needed today.

The critical mind that generates new ideas and queries old ideas is an impera-
tive of alternative forms of conduct that allow us to afford the more rational
modes of choice. This pathway inevitably leads either to the re-visitation of the
typology of security – a well-worn but valuable pathway – or a regress to the
explanations of the primordial principles of human conduct. While these are
laudable tracks to follow, we may just engage the illustration of our problems by
using the alternative methodological convergence of aesthetic and axiological
inquisition. Our work therefore is aimed at finding ways to ensure and enhance
the aesthetic manipulation of vision and style through either technological means
for control and communication, or through a more economic aesthetic control
that focuses on taste and preferences. Direct causal or regulative control if used
aesthetically is capable of generating a new way of altering intentions and inner
states, while at the same time moderating behaviour. The point then is that a
combinative approach that mixes normative, physical and geographical contexts
can overcome our multi-faceted security crisis.

Central to overcoming this aesthetic security crisis is the definition and appro-
priation of the mechanisms of values and valuation. While value concerns the
worth of something and the way we come to attain that worth, valuation is
based on the weighted cost-benefits of something as important, desirable or
interesting. In either of these ways, the concrete concern is to discover how peo-
ple can live in peaceful cooperation, obedience to law, and amenability to social
organisation. This is a phenomenological issue that interfaces what we are, what
we have become and what we ought to become. In pursuing this track of mov-
ing from is to ought, we must pursue the crystallisation of our analysis into the
domains of duties, affiliations, representation and conduits of power and infor-
mation. This means a regress to the zones of values through cosmologies, tradi-
tions and culture, with an express view to eliciting that which can foster the nor-
mative and prescriptive re-entry into the tripartite challenge of the social order.
The possibility of aesthetic change is thus a fundamental underpinning of our
work insofar as it delves into the links between the traditional and modern, the
personal and the public in African societies. This track requires an emphasis on the
educative mode, law enforcement, moral development, and reward systems. In
effect, we are in need of re-establishing the crucial aesthetic basis of key social
institutions for national security and social action.

The Need for and the Role of Aesthetic Concepts in the Interrogation of Security

The field of aesthetics is crucial in itself and in relation to security. The context of aesthetics as a vocation of value in itself has been partly elucidated in Adelugba (1990 and 2003). This particular essay is aimed at linking theoretically aesthetics with security concerns. Aesthetics is important because it focuses on the role of human experience and human feelings in the production of art. More so, human aesthetic feelings and experience must be brought to bear on the institutional and social-cultural aspects of human life, especially the prevailing discussions on security and well-being. However, the enduring observation made by Reid (1926: 200) is still instructive in this context. 'The attempt to understand aesthetic problems intellectually is a fact which is quite distinct from the fact of having aesthetic experience, yet the one process may, and in fact does, help the other' (Reid 1926: 200). This means that we can see security as a problem of aesthetics or we can apply aesthetic experience to the definition of security matters. The question then is what are the things or features that are susceptible to the aesthetic investigation.

The objects of aesthetic investigation are what Best (1982: 358) refers to as 'natural phenomena and works of art'. In our case, we are interested in the role of aesthetics because it focuses on the roles of underlying values and practices that determine the quality of artistic characterisations. We believe that aesthetics is vital for security insofar as it seeks to unearth the underlying principles and values that affect the reflection and practices of security in a specific society. To be able to make that contribution to the aesthetic theorising regarding security we must accept that there is a sense in which we require 'some new and self-conscious relationship' (Scruton 1996: 331) that will provide a basis for perceiving our investigation as a quest for redefining the modernity in security that we seek as a core value.

In another important sense, Best (1982: 358) draws our attention to the fact that 'many natural objects seem to have a value that can easily be explained in terms of aesthetic value'. The aesthetic value of natural objects can be said to come from the features or feelings that they elicit in us. The reason, according to Kieran (1997: 383), is that 'aesthetic value is characterized in terms of that which affords us pleasure'. But then, is it only pleasure that we can derive from aesthetic value? If the answer is yes, then how do we account for the fact that we can derive aesthetic value through satisfaction, functionality and effectiveness, even though we may not readily derive any pleasure? In the act of living one's daily life there are a lot of things that have aesthetic value but which do not retain any sustained propensity for pleasure.

To overcome this problem, Kupperman (1972: 259) adds another important dimension to the clarification of the idea of aesthetic value by saying that 'the aesthetic value depends on ethical values, and we become aware of the aesthetic

value by means of awareness of ethical value'. Thus, in a significant sense, there is a realm of aesthetic value that defines or affects the zones of rectitude and propriety. Put more directly, the task of ethical values to establish order, harmony and fairness in mutual action can be perceived as being of aesthetic value. This is so in so far as these ends can be taken as appreciable, desirable and interesting. From the above analysis, we can see that aesthetics is important to human life, of which security is a vital aspect. This is so because it brings to the fore the ideas and ideals that affect and influence the technological, social and economic realms with a view to facilitating the comprehension of beauty in the experiences of the reviewers, practitioners and audience.

The aesthetic approach is vital for generating insight into our security theorising because aesthetics is 'a lens through which to penetrate and scrutinize reality. Others have seen it as a lamp by means of which to explore previously undiscovered dimensions and horizons of human existence' (Gill 1983: 141). Still on the idea of aesthetics and its capabilities, Lindroos (2003: 235) holds that 'in aesthetic representation, the difference between the object and subject, which disrupts the identifying techniques of any representation, is the essential point of departure'. The point that was made earlier that aesthetics brings to the fore the ideas and ideals that affect and influence the technological, social and economic realms is further reinforced by Thayer (1976). The issue is that 'these strictures on aesthetic production and experience are developed in the wider context of ethical, epistemological and metaphysical theory and criticism' (Thayer 1976: 595). There seems to be an interconnection between the aesthetic realm and other crucial spheres of human activity. In other words, the aesthetic analysis of security must focus on the economic, social and technological ramifications or dimensions of security. These are definitely vital areas that can determine the outcome of security options and theorising.

It is clear from the above that the aesthetic interrogation of security seeks to strike at the heart of the human security and national security problem and seeks to view it from a more holistic perspective. The aesthetic concept is important to security for a number of reasons. The aesthetic concept can be understood in terms of aesthetic properties. It is significant to note that in the evaluation of aesthetic properties, certain epistemological, psychological, logical and metaphysical issues can and do arise. It is in this sense that the analysis of the historical dimensions of security begins to make sense to us. The spectral issues arising from the interrogation of attitudes, presuppositions, norms, conduct and systems of socialisation are all within the province of the aesthetic consideration of security.

To that effect, the following questions can become significant. What is the whole gamut of our knowledge of security in either thematic or methodological proportions? What are the trajectories (historical or conceptual) of the theorising on security? Are there immanent and transcendent, physical and non-physical in-

terfaces between the forms and practices of security? What are the logical and empirical dimensions of the examination of security? In short, what do we mean when we say that a society (understood as any, or a specific, society) is secure? Let us note that the answers to the preceding binary logical question of security need not be the same. It is these kinds of issues that an aesthetic view of security interrogates. Aesthetic properties will inevitably crystallise into the aesthetic concept. It is thus clear that the aesthetic concept is, above all, devoted to the concern for the explanation of things by connecting the physical and psychological aspects that typify our experiences of these realities. The thrust of the aesthetic concept is to merge the subjectivity embedded in the personal assessment of crucial features of the security problematic with the objectivity of the universal responses or convergence on what is central to security.

With special reference to Africa, the challenge of aesthetics represents itself in the effort to revisit the claims regarding certain iconic elements of African 'primitivism'. Such primitivism is certified by the exposition of the doctrine of boisterous buffoonery or by a dark sinister nature. Either option raises that crucial subject of the supervision of the African by a 'superior'. In any case, the reality of the clear and present failure of the Africans in some vital areas of life entails a need to review the contexts of savagery. This is with a view to re-evaluating the content and context of the security imperative that has defined the African reality over the ages. The point, then, is that we are in a need of a review of the African social and cultural realities as they affect the security problematic. The end-result is the quest for a way out of the security quagmire that has plagued the African continent and peoples.

The Scope of Aesthetic Security: The Art of Security or Security as an Art

Is there an art of security or is security an art? The art of security presupposes an entrenched body of knowledge that provides a distinct epistemological and technical style on which basis practitioners can develop their unique evolutionary skills and approaches to the security issue. This view that security is an art suggests that security is open to diverse interventions and that each interrogator may retain a distinct way of dealing with the ensuing issues. Security as an art is a concern for the proper way of doing things or the appealing manner of handling security matters. Security as an art suggests a concern for a cocktail of factors such as the criteria of beauty, the emphasis on the productions of the imagination and the tastes or preferences arising from this. Imagination suggests a concern for visualisation, and the reflective power and extrapolation needed to ensure survival. This is indubitably the province of security. A concern for taste stresses the equally important effort to provide crucial parameters, options and alternatives that can be the foundation of essential choice(s) and committed decision(s) about ways of doing things pertaining to security. In short, security as an art is the stress on

core values, norms and contexts that will eventually establish the basis for the rethinking of the visions and values of security and the expansion of the empirical and theoretical frontiers of the enterprise.

Therefore, given that the fundamental question that this essay poses is that of what aesthetics has to do with security, then the preliminary, yet correct, answer is that there are many things that connect both enterprises. Let us continue the analysis by undertaking some vital conceptual navigation. There are fundamental problems that arise in the analysis of aesthetics and some of these problems have significant implications for security. We shall review the ideas of art and imitation. Security may well be an art insofar as it is or can be seen as a production (a finished work) or process (a series of systematic stages leading to a result), similar to the process or production of an artistic work at the musical or visual level. For example, the security afforded by a well-constructed barricaded house is a production. This production can be defined offensively (through the presence of armed guards, guard dogs, and restrictions on movement), or defensively (via high fences, external perimeters, closed circuit television, intricate internal design, and so on).

At another level, security understood as a process can be seen in terms, for example, of the different stages and actions leading to the formation of an efficient road transport system. These will include the formation and sustenance of a national policy on road transport, an effective road safety corps, a well-made and maintained road network and a well-defined and understood set of road safety rules. Also important is the devising of other machinery that can ensure a veritable level of creative modification, positive values and attitude change that can promote the quality of life of a people. As an example, the process of ensuring an effective transport system must guarantee (enforceable and non-enforceable) obedience to the laws set up for the general good of all on the roads. A possible pathway is the designing of a national roads lighting programme, or project for the articulated vehicles on our roads. The ultimate intention of such a project may be to work towards the prevention of road accidents. Such an act of physical security also has its normative elements, a crucial one of which is the reinforcement of the belief in the dignity of the human person and in the sanctity of human life.

Of importance also is the need for the intensive modernisation of our relevant categories of roads. The reconstruction of the national roads networks must take several dominant factors into consideration. Such factors include the interlinking economic needs of communities and geopolitical sub-regions as well as national security and human security issues. The structural integrity of such an infrastructure, which compels that they should be constructed according to internationally acceptable specifications, is also of vital significance In more concrete terms, these standards will entail the provision of effective drainage, well-placed

road shoulders, parking lots, room for future expansion, and so on. These features are crucial to security on our roads. This procedural pattern of security is equally effective for the reconstruction of other aspects of society. All of these are the provinces of aesthetic investigation of security matters. These lines of security planning have much to do with the technological, economic and social realms of human existence, especially in a post-colonial society. Inevitably, the interface between aesthetics and security must decisively connect with the need to ensure the maintenance of crucial proportions, standards and preferences that can facilitate the total security of individuals and groups in the society. The crux of the aesthetic vision is the insistence on discipline and on rectitude. Aesthetics is the quest for the rules and parameters that will guarantee the proper integration of hitherto distinct and diverse properties for a more systematic, harmonious and consolidated human development. This means that there is a need to institutionalise joint action at different social and governmental levels for the common good.

Beauty, Harmony and Satisfaction as the Imperatives of Security

There will always be insecurity where there is dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction is an aesthetic quality that is vital for the comprehension of complex security situations. A good work of art must retain a core potential for, and actuality of, beauty, harmony and the eliciting of satisfaction in the producers, users and observers. To be able to enjoy security in any area of human endeavour, there must be some level of harmony, beauty and total satisfaction. Kieran (1997: 384) states that 'we can use the characterization of aesthetic value to generate general principles of aesthetic evaluation. The core thought is that what we take delight in is in itself delightful, in terms of unity, harmony, coherent structure and complex development'. The theoretical appeal of harmony suggests an integrated security or holistic vision of things that has accounted for the needs and interfaces between all the systems in the society.

For example, in the area of military action for national security, only a joint action for physical security and sharing of intelligence can make the required difference in the quest for security for a less developed society that is critically deficient in capacity utilisation, inspiration and technology for sustainable security arrangements. The power of, and need for, collaboration of agencies with mutual interests is imperative in a less developed society. Such a society suffers from inefficient infrastructure, corruption, scarcity of intellectual and financial resources, its raw materials production, and generally suffers from an endemic moral crisis seen in the pervading lawlessness, laxity, incompetence and anomie that permeates all levels of national life. Nigeria is an incontrovertible illustration of such a society.

The linking of security to satisfaction among the producers, users and ob-
servers is most clearly seen in the general state of dissatisfaction that members of
the society have expressed about the state of affairs. Such objections have been
varied but they underscore the same point that there is insecurity in the land and
that the bulk of Nigerians are very uncomfortable with the existing situation. The
whole idea of satisfaction at one level is tied to the concept of feelings. Accord-
ing to Kraut (1986: 644), 'feelings are mental states known primarily by their
qualitative phenomenological properties. There seems to be an intimate connec-
tion between emotions and feelings'. The point must be made that in the case of
a feeling such as 'fear', there are clear physiological and social or normative as-
pects. The physiological aspect connects to the physical changes that the human
being undergoes in the state of fear. These changes affect the mind and the body.
At the social level, there are certain institutional frameworks that imbue fear or
certain symbolic structures that deliver the message of fear. These can include
agents and institutions of sanctions, cultural totems or traditions such as rites or
cults.

The feeling of security is therefore largely tied to the feeling of satisfaction
that things are going well or that one remains in control. Incontrovertible evi-
dence of the dissatisfaction of the people and therefore the reality of security
problems in Nigeria can be seen clearly in the following facts. One is the demand
for a sovereign national conference that can place its stamp on the essentially
corrupt, primordial, unjust, repugnant and uncoordinated character of Nigerian
society. The complex and threatening ethno-cultural and militia violence in the
Niger Delta underscores the moral and institutional failure of government and
people to ensure social order.

In addition, there is the absence of the values of tolerance, dialogue, trust,
peace, and well-being as seen in the rise of rabid neo-ethno-nationalism across
the different geopolitical zones of the country. There is the emergence and inter-
nationalisation of core anti-oppression and anti-injustice movements such as
MOSOP, MASSOB, etc, which show clearly that there has been a dearth of
distributive justice, social justice and obedience to moral rules and laws. There is
also the persistent disruptive industrial action by trade unions such as ASUU,
NASU, NMA, NUPENG, PENGASSAN, and NULGE which reveals the de-
nial of the dignity of labour. There is the anti-government posture taken by pro-
democracy and civil liberty coalitions which is evidence that social cooperation,
mutual respect and joint vision and action for the common good is lacking. There
is the crisis of pensioners that implies a government, people or society that fails to
plan properly for the future. All of these activities ensure the crystallisation of
tension, insecurity, fear, uncertainty, which eventually underwrite the lack of satis-
faction with the way things are going. These factors pose a crisis for the construc-
tion of aesthetic security. From the above, we can understand the philosopher

Bertrand Russell (1975: 136) when he says that 'those who face life with a feeling of security are much happier than those who face it with a feeling of insecurity'.

The study of aesthetics must require some concerted effort towards attaining the common interest. According to Guyer (1977: 586), 'an empirical interest in beauty, exists only in society. An impulse to society is natural to mankind though this can be established only empirically and psychologically and this impulse leads us to take an interest in whatever can promote society'. Genuine security cannot be installed where there are divergent interests working for divergent goals. Only anarchy, fear and mistrust can emanate from such an arrangement. It seems then that harmony must be conceived in terms of the social principles for living a human, secure and progressive life.

Furthermore, the idea of beauty suggests a non-negotiable level of professional and ethical competence. For example, we may ask whether there is aesthetic beauty in the repugnant and objectionable actions (brigandage, extortion, harassment) of the policemen we see on the streets during our daily rounds of activities. We can ask whether these policemen are following the rules defined for their profession. What manner of aesthetics can emanate from extortion, tattered attitudes and uniforms, derelict equipment, perversion of justice, incompetence in investigations, and a general image of the worst that a society can produce? This same principle of analysis is applicable to other social and national institutions.

The Philosophy of Beauty and the Aesthetic Quest for Security

There is, however, the more important dimension of beauty in aesthetic analysis. How does the idea of beauty connect to the question of aesthetics? Beauty itself is suggestive of an emphasis on appropriateness or fitness to function; it refers to efficacy and efficiency. Beauty is also linked to the beneficial or the pleasurable or desirable. In a way, beauty is linked to value because value is understood in reference to what is appreciated, desired, interesting or important. What then are those features of our national and human security that we can desire or appreciate? The ideas of beauty and desirability further suggest that beautiful things are made with care and respect for symmetry, proportion and an eye for excellence. How can we apply excellence and caution in our quest for security at the practical or theoretical levels? It then becomes clear that there is an interface between security and the demands of an aesthetic notion of beauty.

The whole issue of beauty must transcend that which is merely pleasurable as an object of aesthetic experience. Rather, the aesthetic notion of beauty will re-emphasise the features of an idea or object that moves us deeply. That is, there is an emphasis on the things that guide and determine our lives; the things that we are committed to. The idea of aesthetic beauty also emphasises those things that reorient our perception or vision of reality. Thus to talk about beauty is to talk

about aesthetic value or for that matter, the willing and dedicated effort to see alternatives and reassess the phenomena before us.

What are the consequences of connecting beauty to security? The emphasis on appropriateness or fitness to function refers to efficacy and efficiency. More than that, it stresses the sanctity and integrity of the moral and professional elements of an institution, system or security principle. It draws attention to the character of rule following, stability and synchrony. On the issue of the beneficial or the pleasurable, the implication is that there is a need for a more appealing and captivating way of creating security. Innovation, synergism and versatility are taken as aesthetic virtues in the fostering of security. The suggestion that beautiful things are made with care and a respect for symmetry clearly demonstrates the vital nature of discipline, demeanour, form and steadfastness in the management of issues affecting security at the personal and institutional levels. But then in order to escape from the accusation of perfectionist expectations, we can only insist on a set of directing principles, namely, the higher values that are painful to sustain, but significantly beneficial in the long run as the crux of security.

The Crafting of Security or Security as a Craft

Still on aesthetics, the idea of art that retains the potential for, and actuality of beauty, harmony and the eliciting of satisfaction, is known as craft. The idea of craft is suggestive of skill, expertise or competence. It means that security is the task of skilled people. Security can be more effectively produced by skill or expertise. The idea of skill is itself suggestive not merely of physical prowess demonstrated by a police officer or soldier in maintaining order. This sort of physicalism is no doubt valuable for success in some areas of security. More importantly, aesthetic skill presupposes a more fundamental emphasis on the creativity and innovation emanating from a consolidated power of judgment, the imaginative and visionary employment of the mind as the producer of a new and authentic epistemology on an issue. The value of the aesthetic principle is seen in the view of McLean (2000: 183) who says that we need 'a set of categories, namely those of aesthetic judgment integrating the realms of matter and spirit in a harmony which can be appreciated in terms of human creativity working with the many elements of human life to create human life and meaning which can be lived as an expending and enriching reality'. This intensely phenomenological account of aesthetics offered by McLean is supported by Kieran (1997: 387), who maintains that our engagement with aesthetics facilitates the hope that 'we may learn and develop our cognitive understanding of what human possibilities would or could be like'. The evidence available in Africa suggests that this latter conception of aesthetic skill as imaginative ability is difficult to find and apply, thence the grave security problems that abound on the continent and especially in Nigeria. It is quite clear by now, and confirmed by the

investigations of the NWG, that central to the problem of security in Nigeria is the inescapable crisis of values, vision and imagination plaguing the post-colonial states of Africa.

The idea of aesthetic craft or skill that is valuable for security theorising can be divided into two parts, the acquisitive and the productive. The productive craft can be further subdivided into two parts, the production of actual objects by human or divine elements, and the production of images or reflection by human or divine elements. The idea of an image is itself divided into two parts; it is assumed that an image imitates its original but cannot fulfill its function. There is the genuine likeness having the quality of sameness with the original model. There is the second view, which refers to apparent likeness, which has to do with semblance; it merely looks like the original. Therefore, there is false imitation which brings about a deceptive semblance of things.

At the human level, the productive aesthetic craft of actual objects is similar to the point that we made earlier about the design, formulation, creation and construction of a secure building. This idea can be applied to other institutions or structures that require security such as refineries, universities, military bases, and so forth. The issue here is that of design and form on the basis of a combination of environmental factors, mainly geographical, cultural, economic and social-political. At the level of the divine, we can draw an analogy using the rules and forms employed in the creation of the heavens or the transcendental worlds. St Augustine's analysis in his work *The City of God*, is instructive here. He defines Heaven as a place guided by its own specific rules that ensure its survival, beauty and harmony. Its visions and values ensure a satisfaction with the rules, conventions and operations of things therein. The eventual aim of all of these ordinances is to maintain the security of that world. Other researchers of the NWG have undertaken this analysis of transcendentalism.

At the level of the aesthetic craft of the production of images or reflection by human or divine elements, the idea of an image is itself divided into two parts; genuine likeness or sameness as opposed to apparent likeness or semblance, that is, deceptive semblance or false imitation. At the human level, the issue of an image brings to the fore once again the question of imagination and conceptualisation. But then there is the issue of whether it is every idea that can be represented by an image. This question is significant given the communicability or otherwise of ideas and the more difficult point of the translatability or conversion of images. In other cases, there is the more practical question of the role of images in security affairs. We readily recall the use of mannequins, decoys and simulations in the reconciliation of security problems. Ingarden (1961: 290) puts it to us that 'the possibility of purely fictitious objects, which are devised by ourselves ... indicates that we may imagine a ... situation to obtain for people although we know that it has never existed, and also that we have never perceived

in our intercourse with real persons'. Thus, there is a strong affinity between aesthetics and security at the level of aesthetic imagery or the use of imitation. Security is, no doubt, a product of the higher levels of creative innovation.

Art, Morality and Security

On the aspect of art, morality and security, we once again fall back on the question of roles, social order and social responsibility. Classical aestheticians such as Plato in *The Republic* insist that the supreme craft is the art of the legislator and educator. His argument regarding the role of the guardian class and the value of education for the security of the ideal state is legendary and unassailable. It then seems that there is a value in the quest for some idea of security that cannot be devoid of the inputs of the educational system and the legislative body. In short, security would come from better enlightenment, training and lawmaking.

There seems little doubt, therefore, that aesthetics and the arts have a role to play in the security of a people. Aesthetics focuses on the cultural life of the people and the education of the citizens as they attempt to strike at the heart of the security problem. This is the role of the human agents and the latent and manifest presuppositions embedded in the ways of life of a people. The concern of the arts and aesthetics is to guarantee the indispensable and proper character formation of humans, to make people better and more virtuous. The emphasis on character and virtue inevitably underscore the need for morality, attitudes and ethical notions that define a secure environment. Simpson (1975: 196) makes the point that 'in the case of moral qualities, evaluations are linked to natural qualities and the conditions for their satisfaction. Moral virtues, presumably, enhance the viability of any free, secular social organization, and participation in such a community involves expectations about the behaviour of one's fellows and appreciation of those qualities of behaviour which facilitate that organization'. In a way, aesthetics seeks to build a conception of social responsibility which makes all concerned groups act in ways that are conducive to the common good. Thus, the quest for the common good and total structural integrity and efficiency of things is the irrefutable province of aesthetics.

Imagination, Taste and the Quest for Security

There is a link between aesthetics and security vis-à-vis imagination and taste. The role of imagination in aesthetic production is unquestionable. In relation to security theorising, it seems that poor imagination will inevitably lead to insecurity. The power to imagine, plan, think ahead and generally to be one step ahead of things is the crux of the ability to ensure personal and social security on an enduring basis. The power of imagination is irretrievably tied to the capacity to rearrange ideas and things in the mind and in reality. Ingarden (1961: 291) makes it clear that 'the reality of an object is not thus necessary for the accomplishment of an aes-

thetic experience'. Imagination makes sense mainly in the context of taste. The problem of taste is captured by the challenge of the moral sense, reflected in the task of our aesthetic impression or preferences of beauty. According to Simpson, it is through aesthetic appraisal that we can come in contact with "aesthetic qualities" and the "exercise of taste" needed for their identification' (1975: 190). Taste, in our view, therefore has to do with aesthetic preferences, which may depend on the type and context of interest, appreciation and prominence.

Aesthetic preferences can be determined according to era, culture and similar factors, which together insinuate the absence of an objective basis of taste. But this mutable feature of the aesthetic preference, if translated into security reflections, inevitably places a stamp of variability and transformation on the security project. This is evidently an advantage because for security to be guaranteed, some level of innovation, alteration and adaptation is essential. This, then, is the value of aesthetic sensitivity which, as McLean (2000: 73) puts it, is what 'enables one to take into account ever greater dimensions of reality and creativity and to imagine responses which are more rich in purpose, more adapted to present circumstances and more creative in promise for the future'. With regard to security, taste has to do with the combination of expectation and judgment of correctness and incorrectness of things and strategies. Thus, aesthetic tastes or preferences in security define the way people (ordinary and experts) assess the total picture of a security strategy or system using parameters such as the need for it, its effectiveness and the innovative appeal of the design, among others. In short, taste is the concern for harmony, effectiveness and quality standards in security production and provision at all levels.

Déjà Vu, Fiction, Cinematography and Possible Worlds: Alternative Visions and the Re-imagination of Security

Indeed, the new quest for security must come to terms with the reality of alternative conceptual and methodological spaces. The world of fictional entities and fictional depictions is not only a problem of philosophy and literature. It is also a key problem of meaning, logic and ontology. The problem of ontology in philosophy is the search for being and the need to examine things that exist in the world or universe. The problem takes on a new dimension when we realise from the sources of knowledge, reason, authority, revelation, intuition, inference and participation and experience that various things or entities are in this universe. There are abstract, metaphysical, physical, fictional, visible and invisible entities, all of which have definite effects on the lives of men. Fictional entities and fictional activities were before now seen as things that arose from the minds of men through imagination and remained there in the realm of conceptualisation. But today, fictional things have been made physically real by the power and innova-

tion of those who seek to pursue certain ends (terrorists). Fiction has moved from the sense of a production of the human mind to a state of physical reality.

The world of films is the most illustrative of this point. And just before some critics erroneously claim that we should not talk about films here, the point must be made that even foremost philosophers have appealed to the world of literature to buttress their points. Recently, a philosopher and enthusiast of the film realities, Peter French, in the book, *Corporate Ethics* (1995: 317), has shown that films are a crucial symbol of a people's cultural identity, and are necessary to illustrate points about their ways of life. The point must be made that the modern film industry in places such as the USA is the testing ground for the latest and most sophisticated scientific and technological inventions such as cars, computers etc. Hence, these films, even though they are works of the imagination, can provide insights into the real world and offer reliable information. These films and other artistic works stress the value and need for viable alternative theorising that acknowledges the role of epistemological spaces and multi-disciplinary viewpoints. The example of the United States is instructive. The imaginative, aesthetic and ethical imperatives and denominators are articulated individually and collectively in modern films such as *The Terrorists* (1975), *The Enforcer* (1976), *Commando* (1986), *Terror Squad* (1987), *Die Hard* (1988), *Die Hard II* (1990), *Under Siege* (1992), *Sudden Death* (1995), *Hard Justice* (1995), *Executive Decision* (1996), *Riot* (1996), *Air Force One* (1997), and more recent films such as *Con Air* (1997). These works of filmic excellence and a host of unmentioned others have defined the presumably underestimated American film industry as a major beacon of hope in a society plagued by insecurity from terrorism. These films, which are works of the imagination, displayed social and psychological processes that were a quantum leap ahead of the social and military processes of the actual world. The American theatrical and filmic ventures have actually become valuable contributors to the theoretical and practical struggles for security in this modern age.

Similarly, insights into security-related issues have unsurprisingly come from the genre of factual and fiction novelists all around the world. Indeed, some of the details of recent operations of global terrorists have been foretold with uncanny accuracy and precision by extraordinary novelists of the day, such as Douglas Terman, *First Strike* (1978), J. C. Pollock, *Pay Back* (1989), and the numerous works of Tom Clancy. More recently, the American government recognised this fact and drafted the Hollywood Film Corporations into the National Security Programme on anti-terrorism in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The immense conceptual capabilities and visualising powers of the filmmaker have become an inestimable asset for US national security.

The imaginative, aesthetic and ethical imperatives of security in a post-colonial society are visibly articulated individually and collectively in modern novels such as the Nigerian Pacesetters series. Stories such as these describe the deep anatomi-

cal, cosmological and sociological ramifications of the security problematic ravaging most of our African societies. Such stories include Joseph Mangut, *Have Mercy*; Philip Phil-Ebosie, *The Cyclist*; Kalu Okpi, *The Smugglers* and *On the Road*; Sunday Adebomi, *Symphony of Destruction*; Dickson Ighavini, *Death Is a Woman* and *Blood Bath At Lobster Close*, together with a host of others.

An analysis of a few of the above mentioned novels should suffice here to demonstrate the impact of literature on security theorising. In *Have Mercy*, we have a moving tale of the security-related travails of youth in society, as specifically situated against the background of the social difficulties faced by one young man who passes through all manner of life-threatening experiences in order to finally make peace with himself, with society and his true love. Whereas this story putatively ends well, insofar as some people's lives and sanity are salvaged, the same cannot be said for the protagonists in *The Cyclist*. Situated against the backdrop of the dislocations caused by the civil war and the post-war era, *The Cyclist* is a mind-rending account of how a devious combination of uncertainty, fear, tradition and undying love can become such a broiling experience in a humble and serene rural setting. The pathetic struggle of two unfortunate men over a hapless woman, within the wider context of an acrobatic festival, creates a twist of fate that inevitably leads to pistol shootings, machete fights and for the woman, a blissful relapse into the embrace of perpetual insanity. The losses are total and final.

In *Mark of the Cobra*, the metaphor of spectral danger is immanent and imminent as the male and female members of the secret services, acting to protect society, suffer heavy causalities at the hands of a megalomaniac terrorist and martial arts expert, renowned for his demonic killing powers. The empathetic realisation of the unacceptability of a monomaniacal social capture, coupled with a relentless sequence of grievous mortal dangers to people, comes to a zenith when the hero and heroine simultaneously encounter killer snakes - king cobras, in separate do-or-die fights for their lives. Ultimately, the world is saved from one more villain by a dying naval officer who fights for all that is good in a high-stakes mortal combat during the final battles on a ship.

This brief summary of the thematic concerns negotiated in these works clearly illustrates the almost overwhelming concern for security-related issues in the context of developing African societies.

Furthermore, the point must be made that apart from the fact that alternate disciplinary commitments such as the film enterprise can contribute to security issues, it must also be noted that solutions to the security problem may come from areas hitherto underestimated as external to mainstream security activity. The point, then, in our quest for security has been well made by McLean (2000: 174), who says that 'first there must be an imagination which can bring together the flow of disparate sensations. The imagination must have also a productive

dimension which enables the multiple empirical intuitions to achieve some unity'. Thus there may be the rise of such areas as philosophy, anthropology, religion, indigenous knowledge systems, psychology, etc.

The Aesthetic Perspective, Aesthetic Attitude and the Quest for Security

The idea of aesthetics is further tied to the fundamental question of what it means to view something from an aesthetic perspective. What do we mean by the aesthetic attitude? Reid (1926: 201) offers an insight in terms of a question: 'Is there any difference, or ought there to be any difference, between our attitude of mind in what we have called ordinary perception, and our attitude in our perception of beautiful things?' This question is significant insofar as we are in need of determining whether the aesthetic attitude is coterminous with the visions and practices of security. According to Best (1982: 359), the aesthetic attitude implies the aesthetic appreciation of natural phenomena through the understanding of art forms as the central cases.

The aesthetic attitude is often juxtaposed with a series of attitudes such as the practical attitude - which is concerned with the utility of the idea or object in question. Ingarden (1961: 295) holds that 'the aesthetic experience is change of attitude from a practical one, assumed in everyday life'. The practical utility of security is not in doubt, since without it humans cannot attain well-being, peace, survival and progress at the personal and social levels. The cognitive attitude or the concern with the knowledge of that thing is also vital for security. The knowledge of the different stages of security evolution and the reconstruction of the diverse yet interconnected thematic concerns and methodological convergence certify the discussant, practitioner or innovator of security matters as competent.

The aesthetic attitude presupposes that we either review the worth of that thing or that idea for its own sake or for the sake of pleasure. In other words, the aesthetic view of security seems to be all-inclusive and all-embracing, taking cognizance of the holistic vision of the reality in question as well as the contextual functionality of the idea. Thus, central to a viable aesthetic attitude is the commitment to the display of foresight, a sense of posterity and public- spiritedness in handling matters of national planning and policy. Aesthetic security is geared at making 'a contribution to the well-being and preservation of the human community' (Ujomu 2001: 256-258). The importance attached to the notion of security makes it a matter worthy of concern and investigation in its own right. There is thus the concern for the intrinsic and instrumental value of something, which, taken together, will pave the way for a more systematic appreciation of the issues at stake. The entire panoramic view of it, the solid aspects, the nuances, sublimities and connotations are very much in need of analysis. It has also been suggested

that the aesthetic attitude requires some level of detachment or disinterestedness to the extent that we know the limits of the realities presented before us.

For example, there is a recognisable difference between a stage performance and the real life occurrence of the same phenomenon. A simulated or staged armed robbery is different from a real armed robbery. For one thing, the emotions displayed and the sequence of events have a closeness or immanence that can have very consequential effects on people both far and near. The simulated scene appears to be an imitation of the real scene, but it is without the dangers and uncertainties that define the human factor or the unknown quality attached to human actions. Thus the aesthetic factor will be novel given the indeterminacy attached to real life events as opposed to that of make-believe. It may well be that the province of the real life events must be the domain of the genuinely aesthetic.

Conclusion

Finally, to derive the best from the social realities before us, the aesthetic state requires a close and complete concentration on the issue or subject of investigation. This suggests that the aesthetic perceiver does not miss any feature of the reality under survey. That means that intense perceptual awareness is needed. The point of emphasising the aesthetic state as an imperative of security is to highlight the role of detail, thoroughness and an integrated approach not only to security as a task or vocation but to the analysis of security as an intellectual enterprise. All of the above issues are clearly the salient elements of the attempt to engage national and human security theorising from an aesthetic perspective.

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