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theory of **craft.**

A NEWSLETTER ON MASTERING SKILL

MULTITASKING AS A CREATIVE



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About Theory of Craft

The *Theory of Craft* is a personal and knowledge development resource newsletter developed by Society for Book and Magazine Editors of Nigeria. The scope of the topics range from enhancing skills, cultivating talent, improving productivity, freelance business management and knowledge resources. The target audience is the editorial professional to assist them in mastering their skills. The newsletter is managed by members of the society who serve as guest editors. The ToC is a continuous professional development project.

About the Guest Editor

Peace Ufedojo Haruna is a creative writer with a B.A. in International Studies and Diplomacy. Her works have appeared in The Shallow Tales Review, Kalahari Review, Brittle Paper, and North Dakota Quarterly, amongst others. As an avid volunteer, she believes in the power of storytelling in promoting human rights, uplifting marginalised voices, and preserving African culture. In her free time, she enjoys stargazing. She's on Instagram as @peaceharuna9 and X as @peaceuharuna.

Editor's Note

As the world continues to evolve with shifts and challenges, it is paramount for creatives to adjust with it. While putting together this newsletter, we considered the realities that come with living in the twenty-first century and the impact on creatives. Whether solely chasing a career in creative writing or exploring other creative endeavors, this edition, which focuses on multitasking, explores ways to manage several tasks and responsibilities at the same time.

The essay section tackles whether multitasking harms the creative mind and how creatives can effectively carry out various tasks. The interview section offers a glimpse into the life of a creative juggling multiple responsibilities. Finally, the how-to section highlights the importance of leveraging technology with productivity tools.

At the end of this edition, you will learn how to stay creative while managing various tasks and responsibilities at the same time. We hope you continue to spread your wings, achieve balance and stay creative and happy.

Yours sincerely,

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ESSAY: MULTITASKING AND THE CREATIVE MIND: FRIEND OR FOE

by PEACE UFEDOJO HARUNA

In today's world, time has become a precious and limited resource. Writers often juggle their creative careers with day jobs or other roles such as students, teachers, engineers, editors, accountants, among others. Given the weight of people's daily duties and responsibilities, it can be difficult to find enough time to achieve every goal. This raises the question of whether multitasking is harmful to the creative mind, especially for writers.

Multitasking is the performance of multiple tasks at the same time. While some claim that

multitasking can act as a catalyst for creative thinking, others beg to differ. According to Jennifer E Davis, PhD, we are "monotaskers", which means we were made to concentrate and finish one task at a time. When we multitask, our brain is switching between things; therefore, wearing it out and reducing its effectiveness. Multitasking is akin to having several tabs open and running on a computer. Even computers freeze and lag sometimes when too many tasks are carried out simultaneously on it.



Is Multitasking Advantageous?

According to a study, the idea of multitasking itself improved performance, even though trying to do more than one activity at once reduced efficiency. The study carried out thirty-two experiments involving 8,242 individuals. It showed that these individuals performed better when they thought they were multitasking than when they thought they were just finishing one task. This also applies to the widespread belief that multitasking saves time. This is because multitasking creates a sense of productivity and efficiency, which can boost confidence and focus. People often feel a sense of accomplishment when they manage to juggle various activities, which reinforces the idea that multitasking is beneficial.

Studies also indicate that individuals tend to consume more time while multitasking due to task-switching costs. When people switch between tasks, there is a cognitive cost associated with reorienting their focus, which can lead to slower processing and increased errors. This constant shifting can disrupt workflow and reduce overall efficiency, causing tasks to take longer to complete than if they were done sequentially.

For creatives, multitasking can lead to burnout due to an increase in stress levels. With burnout comes fatigue and creative blocks caused by strain in mental health. This can lead to consistent mistakes, lack of focus, memory loss, depression and reduced efficiency. To avoid burnout, how do we effectively carry out different tasks?

The first step is taking one task at a time. Timelines and schedules are important, but it is important to prioritise and allot time to each task. Start from the important tasks and work through the tasks to the least important.

The second step is to take necessary breaks between tasks, that is, indulge in a relaxation activity that helps the brain to actively rest. Take as much as five to fifteen minutes. Also, stay hydrated, grab a snack, watch a short episode of your favourite show or read a book. The key is giving your brain a break.

Lastly, outsource if possible. You do not have to handle everything yourself. Get help with pressing tasks and prioritise your wellbeing. It may cost money. Creativity flourishes when one can concentrate. Fragmenting your attention may seem helpful, but it is not the best way forward for a healthy creative mind.

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INTERVIEW



BLESSING OMEIZA OJO
WRITER, EDITOR AND
CREATIVE WRITING MENTOR

A CONVERSATION WITH BLESSING OMEIZA OJO

WRITER, EDITOR AND CREATIVE WRITING MENTOR

How are you adapting to the evolving creative landscape in this digital era?

I have been in the digital space since the beginning of my writing journey. Apart from submitting work to literary journals online, I began writing on Facebook like those referred to as “Facebook poets”. I like to expose my mentees to digital platforms, ensuring they have social media accounts, so that they gain visibility. This evolution has helped me bridge the gap between Nigeria and the diaspora, so it’s been an essential part of my writing journey from the beginning. However, I think one challenge is managing writing and staying up to date with evolving digital trends.

As a writer, what does your typical workday look like?

I do many things, especially ghost writing and editing. I also teach creative writing at a secondary school. My working days are chaotic. I resume earlier than most of my colleagues. The resumption time at work is 7.30A.M., but I resume work between 5:30 and 6:00A.M. Because that’s when my mind is clear and fresh. I use the opportunity to try to dive into the worlds my mentees have created [in their work]. I also leave school very late. At times I stay overnight to edit the work, taking advantage of the cool environment. So, I hardly have time for myself.

Do you think the term “work-life balance” applies to a creative?

I will speak for myself and say, “No”. Writing is everything I do. At work, at home with my wife, my extended family, my mentees, and my friendship circle. I eat, drink and breathe writing. My work is my life. However, it may apply to others, especially those who have jobs outside writing.

Has multitasking ever negatively impacted your productivity?

Yes, and it can be quite difficult. Most times, you’d find me with my laptop editing my mentees’ works, doing clients’ jobs, or writing new pieces. This has affected me in the sense that I don’t have enough time to edit my collections or literary work. I have many drafts, some written while travelling. That’s why I look forward to gaining an MFA and learning under great writers like Kwame Dawes. Although I’m a teacher, I still must learn. Being a creative writer, mentor and editor is tough and difficult to juggle. Nevertheless, what gives me joy is seeing my mentees winning on stage. A lot goes into ensuring that they are at the peak of their game.

Do you think Nigeria plays a role in the many pursuits of a creative?

Nigeria does play a role in the many pursuits of a creative, and it's not a positive one, especially in terms of plagiarism. I was suicidal in 2019 partly because my work fell into the hands of pirates. I believe Nigeria encourages piracy through patronage and if we lived in a working country then it wouldn't take much to apprehend pirates and curb piracy. The economy isn't helping either. Young creatives who want to publish their books cannot due to high publishing costs. Same with some readers who can't afford books due to the increase in book prices. Writers are readers and this situation is like a flaming arrow targeted at creatives. We also don't have many creative writing courses in Nigeria and some writers who got the chance to study an MFA abroad were rejected at embassies due to their identity as Nigerians.

I believe Nigeria encourages piracy through patronage and if we lived in a working country then it wouldn't take much to apprehend pirates and curb piracy.

What advice do you have for other creatives in Nigeria managing multiple pursuits?

Be modest and dogged at the same time. Keep working hard. Forget the rejections. Rejection is disheartening, but young creatives must spread their tentacles. The literary space is too big for a few individuals to inhabit it. Cut out your space and build a mansion on it. Believe in the power of the pen. Continue to write. Continue to muse, and you'll get there. It might take a while, but the process will surely be worth it.

MANAGING PRODUCTIVITY AS A CREATIVE: THREE TOOLS THAT HELP ME MULTITASK WITHOUT BURNOUT

CROWN NWACHUKWU

These days it seems impossible to give our undivided attention to a single task as a creative. Remember that multitasking is not about working harder, but smarter. For example, paperless document workflows, electronic signatures, time-management and teamwork platforms are all critical components of effective multitasking.

However, multitasking brings benefits only if you have the right tools that will enable you to effectively do more than one task at a time. Here are three tools that help you evade burnout as a creative.

Google Drive

Google Drive allows users to create and share documents and files, build out spreadsheets and make presentations. With a Google Account, you get 15 GB of storage for free, which stores files, email attachments, and back up photos and videos in the iCloud system called Google Drive.



Stripe

For those involved in e-commerce, Stripe makes your life easier by allowing you to manage and accept payments online. It handles key payment functions such as subscriptions, storing cards and direct payouts to users' bank accounts. Stripe enables businesses to accept international debit cards, credit cards and currencies. In 2020, Stripe acquired Nigerian based start-up, Paystack, therefore establishing itself locally.



Canva

To manage projects that require visual content, the platform Canva can help you to design concepts in various formats such as logos, flyers, banners and infographics easily with zero design skills, saving you time and energy.

With these three tools, it would be easier to manage more than one creative project at a time.



The Society for Book and Magazine Editors is a non-profit organisation that represents editorial professionals with headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria. It was founded in 2017 and registered in 2018 by Anwuli Ojogwu and Enajite Efemuaye. SBMEN offers training, resources and events to editors to enhance their professional development.



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