

A READING OF YORUBA TRADITIONAL PROVERBIALS AS SOCIO-POLITICAL SATIRE IN OSUNDARE'S *WAITING LAUGHTERS*

Dr. Emmanuel Folorunso Taiwo
Department of Classics
Faculty of Arts
University of Ibadan
Ibadan, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The traditional society operates in a speech environment which articulates a collectively defined tradition of which a major feature is the existence of fixed proverbs which are the seasoning with which words are eaten.¹ They encapsulate the wisdom and philosophies of the traditional people and serve as spaces for seasoning speech. As a collectively owned linguistic corpus, proverbs confer on their users a stamp of social acceptance as they situate the user's speech within the traditional milieu. Significantly, proverbs reinforce the user's standpoint and confer validity and objectivity to expressed opinions. According to Bascom² a proverb may be employed to produce a wide range of subtle distinctions in emotional reactions. In other words, there is hardly any occasion or human experience that cannot be ensconced in a proverb or a string of proverbs.

At the risk of unnecessary repetitiveness, one would construe the mottled definitions of Proverbs by scholars as basically expressions of abstract ideas through compressed and allusive phraseology³. Proverbs are an integral aspect of the Yoruba oral literary corpus. Indeed, the value and significance of proverbs in Yoruba culture and society is perhaps borne out by the equally proverbial that, they are the oil with which yam is savoured. The figurative 'yam' here refers to the intrinsic value of proverbs as repositories of a people's history, psychology, wisdom and general idiosyncrasy. In other words, they are energizers of diurnal conversations in the society. But in recent times, as indicated in Raji-Oyelade's interesting and revealing article on "Post proverbials in Yoruba culture" (1999), the "relative fixity" of Yoruba Proverbs has suffered a radical overturning of its original form, and is now "threatened" by what he describes as "a new rhetorical tradition that accords the typical proverb a truly amphibian identity." These supplementary proverbs also take the form of tongue-twisters and oral folkloric snippets that enhances the rhetorical effect of satire. Proverbial language in the form of proverbs is used as wisdom sayings and proverbial phrases as expressive metaphors. Thus having lost their 'age old logic of fixability'⁴, have consequently become malleable in the hands of the poet-satirist. They are subsequently deconstructed semantically into what he calls "postproverbials," to suit the poet's purposes. As he puts it:

My immediate concern here is to record
the development of a normative rupture
in the production of this traditional

verbal genre, and by extension establish the presence of 'new' proverbs with new forms, new meanings, and , perhaps new values.

However, these "new proverbs" or postproverbials, rather than a playful intent, have become a critical instrument in the hands of the poet- satirist in lampooning socio-political contradictions in his immediate society. These once fixed expressions have been employed to fit the nuances of different human experiences and 'emotional reactions.'

Among contemporary Nigerian poets, there is a new generation whose penchants have found expression in the rich and lyrical Yoruba oral tradition. These poets, Niyi Osundare, Harry Garuba, Remi-Raji-Oyelade, among others, have been in the vanguard of what can be regarded as an 'alternative tradition' in Nigerian poetry; manifested in the exploitation of the rich traditional Yoruba proverbs in enriching their satiric poetry. Although their written orality is in English, it has however, not diminished its originality.

This tradition features in Osundare's experimentation and innovations which adopts the possibilities of the vernacular, according to Oyeleye⁵ "domesticating it to carry the weight of the African experience." This is a tradition that is not just modern, but also in tandem with contemporary world poetics and at the same time deep in African orality. In addition their preoccupation is the diurnal anxieties of their societies, such as the socio-political and economic problems. In order words, there is a conscious shift away from what Chinweizu et al.,⁶ criticize as "old fashioned, craggy, unmusical, obscure and inaccessible diction" ..., of the older generation. This penchant in finding expression in the work of Osundare, correlates with what Raji-Oyelade describes as the "effect of the interplay of orality and literacy-modernity, a critical correspondence between an older, puritanistic generation and a younger, disruptive, and somewhat banalistic generation." This interplay of orality and literacy-modernity," finds a subversive instrumentality in the militancy of the satiric form, a form which aptly suits the younger and 'disruptive' generation that has a proclivity for 'postproverbials.'

In the forefront of this trend which uses oral tradition as a "creative forge" in the satirical genre is triple prize-winning Niyi Osundare, whose *WL*, among others works vividly portray what Nwachukwu-Agada⁷ sees as a tendency for African poets to make use of proverbs, tongue-twisters, riddles, communal traditions and folktales in snippets, with intention of Africanizing their poetic medium.

Flipping through the first few pages of the *WL*, one is struck by a strong aura of invocatory chants, and of 'redolent tonalities 'in response to the poet /chanter's song –an indication that the collection is after all a 'long song in many voices.' And then it subtly dawns that the scenario is actually that of an oral performance, replete with cumulative repetitions among other performantive elements which enhance its semantics and musicality. The text of *WL* is segmented into four thematic areas, with the pervasive mega themes of "Waiting" and "Laughters," however, the whole collection may be collapsed into a political theme; a theme that straddles a myriad of socio-economic sub-themes obtainable in any typical African political system.

Consequently *WL* tackles problems inherent in most post independence African economies; where both the oppressors and the oppressed ‘wait’ for who would have the last laughter of victory. Osundare here prophesies the victory as it were, of the marginalized that are waiting in hope for an end to their seemingly unending woeful fate. As hinted earlier, Osundare is one of the pioneers of the new trend in African poetry that have conferred aesthetic strength to written poetry by adapting oral poetic techniques into the written form.⁸ These poetic techniques include a copious use of the rich Yoruba proverbia. This creative outburst aptly expresses the feelings and attitudes in post-colonial African regimes.

Ibosi o⁹
 Hands which go mouthwards
 in seasons of ripening corn
 have lost their homeward trip
 to the waiting bowl
 And yet corpulent town criers
 clog the ears of listless lanes;
 praise-singers borrow the larynx
 of eunuch thunders¹⁰

These proverbia taken from *WL*, lament the gluttony of corrupt public officials as they loot the national treasury dry; while the spokesman of these regimes have enriched themselves by specializing in fabricating empty propaganda for the government.

In a similar vein, *WL* also presents a programme of the satirist’s purposes, embellished with various devises common place in the Yoruba oral tradition. His thematic concern here is on the despairs of the oppressed; the injustice of inequitable distribution of national resources which he represents in different imageries cropped from the natural environment which is in direct relationship with the social environment:

I Pluck these words from the lips of the wind
 Ripe like pendulous pledge
 Like talents of golden vows
 I listen solemnly to the banter
 Of whistling fan
 And reap rustling rows
 So fanatic in their pagan promise.¹¹

The poet’s concern is also about “fleeing Truths; blending a cumulative repetitive technique with this theme, he betrays an anxiety for the intensity of despair in the land. Hence he laments the

... fleeing Truths
 Truths of the valley
 Truth of the mountain
 Truth of the liar
 Truth of the lair
 Truth of the desert

Truth of the rain.¹²

Here the poet juxtaposes Truth in different situations in order to establish the consistency/immanence of Truth. In this binary juxtaposition of opposing Truths, he establishes the fact that Truth is constant. In a society where Truth is subverted under various circumstances, he seems to be saying that no matter how twisted Truth will always be vindicated. Notwithstanding the fleeting situation of Truth in his society, Osundare seems to be affirming that none can tie down Truth, even "...in the courtyard of dodging ears/ can the syllable stall its tale/in impertinences of half-way fancies?" Thus he provides a backdrop for his "odyssey" into the world of Oral satiric poetics. This statement of purpose, encapsulates his broad dual themes of this "long song in many voices" - Waiting and Laughters.

Osundare indeed intensifies his condemnation and inveighs against the vice of injustice and inequality in *WL*, by lamenting the traumatised existence of the citizenry, who although expectant of a better tomorrow, as "...the hours limp along with bandages of fractured moments" In the racy description of the deplorable condition of the people, he hints at the diverse waiting situations, deploying different imageries of nature. Yet despite their patience *the* people suffer "in the loom of naked seasons," their patience is coldly compared to the long and tortuous, broken queue of the unemployed due to austerities and devastation of factories production capabilities, of course, such economic policies as the structural Adjustment Programme (*SAP*) of the 1980's engendered a lot of injustice and social deprivation of the people. Osundare uses the all embracing theme of 'waiting' to criticize the injustice and deprivation in his society, which is vividly presented in the first section of the poem, where they seem to be waiting patiently for the restoration of their wants and deprivations.

The feet I see are waiting
 For coming harvests
 The faces I see are a mask of wrinkles
 Water-pots are waiting in famished homesteads
 The gods I see carry a clay foot in every slipper.¹³

The hypocrisy of those in authority is exposed by their claim to be 'gods' while in actual fact their feet are made of 'clay.'
 The satirical poetics of *WL* is unique because it deploys the creative forge of the Yoruba proverbial expression in the form of imagery associated with the environment to energize the poet's criticism of social injustice, exploitation and deprivation of the people.

WAITING

Like the lips of lettuce, the open palm of
 Sokoyokoto
 Beckoning the sky- bound shower, beckoning
 Waiting
 Like a raffia brush in the armpit of the valley,
 Iron straws on the hips of dancing groves.¹⁴

These metaphors are placed in direct relationship with the poet's social environment. Osundare's concern for the deprived indeed goes beyond his immediate environment. This is hinted at when in *WL*¹⁵ he says:

My song is space
Beyond wails, beyond walls
Beyond insular hieroglyphs
Which crave the crest.
Of printed waves

Accordingly his condemnation of the oppressors transcends the, wails and walls' of his immediate environment. The poet is equally unhappy about the treachery of foreigners, he speaks of the

Innocence of the Niger
Waiting, waiting
Four hundred seasons
For the proof of the prow
...for the dispossessing twang
Of alien accents.¹⁶

He notes that the whole of the Niger area is still in serfdom inspired by "alien ascent". but despite the "long seasons," time still 'snails' without a possible respite. He recalls the ravages of the delta, by the conquering boat/ which fathoms the sand in a tumble o'f mystic furies", "the hieroglyphs of calculated treacheries," the poet says are well preserved in the 'lore of Kilimanjaro icy memory,' even the rivers Nile and the Limpopo also bears the signs of the ravages of these 'alien ascent': "But for how long can the hen wait. Whose lay is forage for galloping wolves?"¹⁷

Using such injunctions in the form of proverbs, he satirizes the perpetrators of these abnormalities. And as will become clear, in the *WL*, the poet's use of Yoruba proverbial lore, helps refine and weave associated ideas into the poem rather than leaving it bare. He also alludes to political atrocities committed across Africa south of the Sahara; the rough scar of the wounds inflicted on the continent in the very recent past is still rather fresh as the poet recalls them by name, and invites the reader to ask questions, rather than continue the waiting game!

Ask Sharpeville
Ask Langa
Ask Soweto
Where green graves cluster like question mark
Ask Steve
Ask Walter
Ask Nelson.¹⁸

There are several of the poet's use of proverbial expressions whose metaphoric language criticizes the suppression of the people's freedom of expression and by extension their welfare. In the following lines, the helplessness of the people is highlighted with the proverbial metaphor of the tongue:

Waiting
 Like the crusty verb of a borrowed tongue
 ...couched and caged
 In strident silence.¹⁹

But then even this tongue is a borrowed one, an alien tongue; 'a white tongue/ in a black black mouth, 'little wonder then that its blade hangs out blunted/ by the labyrinthine syntax of ghostly histories". This social concern of Osundare is further deployed in another Yoruba oral poetics; this time he sings a sad folkloric lyric which alludes to the lore of the larynx: "In the lore of the larynx. In the velar enclave of orphaned probing. Thoughts draw battle lines with words."²⁰

Where "words" become orphaned in their enclave, delineates the situation of his people; "orphaned," uprooted, he wonders when they would "settle back in the pink of the mouth." The Blackman has become a wanderer in his own land, like the 'wondering tree,' which seek/ the loam of its father's forest." He continues his interrogation of history and experience and its limitation, especially when he had earlier alluded to a "borrowed tongue," "History's stammerer. When will your memory master. The vowels of your father's name?"²¹

Now it is no longer an issue of the 'wondering tree' seeking its father or the African lore, which wonders when a stammerer will pronounce his father's name; but rather he creatively directs this Yoruba proverbial to History's twisters who have failed to memorise the vowel of their fathers name-and do the right in society.

Under the circumstances, it is imperative to isolate the themes of political corruption and hypocrisy from that of despotism and tyranny, even though both may present just a slight difference in semantics. While the former, exhibits the acts of the oppressor as carried out by his acolytes; the latter concerns direct acts of repression by the despot. Thus in Osundare's WL , one perceives this tenuity of alienation in his attacks of the repression of the downtrodden.

In general, African countries in the last forty odd years, have had their own fair share of dictatorial regimes, both military and civilian, even civil-military as the Nigerian variety shows. And these dictatorships no matter their garb are concerned with repression which translates into arrests, exile, executions, and consistent harassment of dissident voices. These are couched in proverbially structured aphorisms in the third section of the (WL) as the poet's laments the devastation in his land due to the greed and negligence of those at the helm of affairs:

My land lies supine
 Like a giant in the sun
 Its mind a slab of petrified musings
 Its heart a deserted barn
 Of husky carvings.²²

The yield from the soil has failed, hunger has taken over as the new king, "His proud father is death/which guards the bones at every door." One does not need a stretching of the imagination to decipher those he refers to here: "And the vultures are fat/Crows call a feast at every dusk." The use of these contemptible imagery,

“vultures” and “crows,” indicates the poets disgust at these rulers who fed on the carcasses of the hungry masses and have grown ‘fat’ at such feasts. The despot is merely preoccupied with rolling out oppressive ordinances:

...like iron showers
 Decrees strut the streets swaggering emperors
 Hangmen hug the noose like a delicate baby
 And those who die thank death
 For his infinite mercies.²³

While the dispossessed and hungry masses are dying of hunger, the despot deploys other arsenals at his disposal to further suppress them; such as ‘ordinances,’ ‘decrees,’ and his ‘hangmen.’

Amidst all this, corpulent sycophants sing praises of the tyrant, as the helpless cry out *ibosi o* (a cry for help) for help; of course these have fed fat with the corruption, exploitation, and injustice directed at the people. These sub-themes are highlighted with serious lampoons at the insensitivity of the ruler and his praise-singers at the plight of the masses. It’s ‘the season of the barking guns,’ and the poet paints a grim but satirical scenario:

...the strident summon of hasty edicts
 ...lips of vulgar guns
 Signed in blood...
 Of trembling streets.²⁴

The above scene is typical of any African country where gun-toting power hungry individuals seizes power; even also in a civilian setting. The poet wonders whether these rulers are actually the ‘messiah,’ the self-proclaimed messiahs who celebrated their arrival with “joyful drums and retinues of chanted pledges”. African leaders are so power-drunk, that their pre-occupation lies in promulgating proscriptive decrees or edicts, like the Shogun wielding a “swaggering viper under his armpit” and bellows:

I proscribe the frog
 I proscribe the tadpole

I proscribe the sun
 I proscribe the moon

I proscribe the tale
 I proscribe the TRUTH

I proscribe History!²⁵

Osundare again uses element of cumulative repetition from the Yoruba oral poetics to satirize the hypocrisy, insensitivity and injustice that characterize most regimes in Africa, because they have among other things –proscribed TRUTH. It’s a condemnation of despotism and oppression in his native Nigeria and Africa as a whole. The poet energizes his condemnation of despotism and tyranny by deploying

the Japanese orature of the shogun. These were military commanders in pre-20th century Japan, who exercised absolute power over their subjects.²⁶

He warns:
 The shogun who thinks he is an awesome god
 Let him take note of burning statues
 And streets wild with vengeful spears.²⁷

The poet is apparently not happy with post independence African leaders, whether military or civilian, some of whom includes; Blaise Campaore, the Marcos's, Idi Amin, Jean Bedel Bokassa among many others whose records leave a sour taste in the mouth. He recounts "seasons," perhaps of violence against the people; conveyed by such images of, "...the swords arrogant thrusts and chronicles of desperate goring/blind steel, unflinchingly deaf to the blade's hunger." These words convey cannibalistic tendencies in the oppressor, which the poet piles up in the selective scenic style and bitterness of a Juvenal. He is indeed disgusted at the inhumanity of these so-called leaders in the continent. African leaders do not like criticism so they do all in their power to put down the activities of civil society groups, including labour movements. The poet captures this aspect of the autocratic despot, in the aphorism of the hyena:

Says the Hyena to a clan of lambs
 "today, I dissolve your flock
 For making such loud noises
 About my eating habits
 I will now set up a group
 To select your spokesmen
 Who will come freely to my den
 With your woes and sundry views."²⁸

This tale is a metaphor ridiculing the relationship between the downtrodden masses, who in an attempt to sensitize the despot on their plight, come away with more stringent conditional ties. In yet another illustrative tale, a dialogue between a hungry snake and a wise toad, is instructive for each autocratic African leader. The snake who threatens that it will swallow the toad no matter what it turns into, soon discovers that when the toad turns into a rock and he swallows it, the stomach fails to function:

Ah! Aramonda
 The mouth has swallowed something
 Too hard for the mill of the stomach
 Okerebubu okerebubu.²⁹

The satirical bite in Osundare's poetry is enhanced with his employment of oral poetic specially those of his local Yoruba setting. This according to Nwachukwu-Agbada, consists in the use of proverbs, tongue –twisters, riddles, communal traditions, even folktales in snippetary forms are built into to his lines. Such is the aphorism of a hyena waiting "for the anniversary of its pounce," and the African despot," for the seventieth year of his rule, which clearly lampoons the dictatorial tendency of both parties. The comparison perhaps also lies in their being destroyers of lives. The proverbial of *Mosafejo*³⁰ in 'I am averse to litigation', further ridicules the

tyrannical behaviour of the despot. The poet juxtaposes the wisdom of Mosafejo in giving out his only daughter to six suitors, unmindful of the onomastic irony that gesture creates. Osundare's oral poetics further illuminates the relationship between the masses and their oppressors, when he writes:

A baby antelope
Once asked her pensive mother:
Tell me, mother
How does one count the teeth
Of a laughing lion?³¹

The satire is not hidden at all, rather exposes the abnormality in the relationship between the ruler and the ruled here, besides, under the circumstances, while it would be foolhardy and suicidal for the young Antelope to attempt such a mortal feat, at the same time, the satiric humour in this proverbial cautions against foolish behaviour. Next the persona deploys a local orature to ridicule the tyrant's confidence in the purported sacrosanctity of his crown:

Behold the wonder
The crown is only a cap!

Orogododo orogodo
a king who dances with a dizzy swing
Orogododo straight he goes
orogododo orogodo
Oba ba ti beyi
O mo d' orogodododo ooooo.³²

Osundare here uses effectively his local Ikere mythology, to sound a warning advice to tyrants of the fate of dishonorable kings of his home town, in the old days; they are banished to a remote forest, known as "orogododo orogodo". After all the king is 'flesh and bone,' he says in a repetitive refrain. Again he deploys his native traditional oral poetics of "Alapandaji"; who like some of our leaders think they are larger than life, but are now consigned to the negative side of history; such leaders as Idi-Amin, Bokassa, Nguema, Abacha, among others. He further illustrates the morals of their tyrannical style with the proverbial of the folkloric:

The king's brave legs are bone and flesh
The castle is a house of mortar and stone...
A chair is wood which becomes a throne.³³

As if intent on demystifying the institution as a whole, he reminds the leadership that power was transient. An allusion is also made to the French revolution of 1789, at the end of which the head descends lumpen dust in its royal mouth," is also thrown in to drive home further the message.

Early in this discourse, it was hinted that the major theme of most of Osundare's poems as in the present study, is the art of waiting and the hope of laughter, of better fortunes, freedom from the tyranny of the despot. These themes indeed straddles the various sub-themes in the collection, providing, as it were, a

backcloth for the persona's pent up emotions, for the persona it is indignation, while for the audience/reader, despair and frustration at the decadence and almost paralytic state of the country. Hence, waiting laughter (*WL*) takes up these themes of hope and gaiety in a world where despair and gloom seems unending. Right from the opening lines, the poet's passion for the downtrodden are couched in proverbials:

I pluck these words from the lips

Of the wind
Ripe like a pendulous pledge
Laughter's parable explodes in the groin
Of waking storms.³⁴

In a language embellished with such oral folklorics as, proverbs, idioms and imagery, the poet sings among others of "springing laughter/in the loins of bristling deserts/snide giggle in grass" this, is a song about laughter even amidst despair. He is lamenting the traumatized existence of his people, who in their resilience await that eventual laughter that heralds freedom from oppression and deprivation:

For time it may take
...the stammerer will one day call his
Fa-fa-fa-ther's's na-na-na-me!³⁵

Alapandagi (a fish of the tilapia family), the lesson of which is embedded in the witticism, "everyday has its dog/every dog has its day:"

I saw alapandagi swinging gleefully
On the corridors of the lake...
One frightful hook later
It lay surprised at the bottom
Of a boiling pot.³⁶

The onomastics in this folklore is satirically used to reinforce, not just the lines but the satirical thrust. The poet uses the cumulative repetitive technique in his criticism of the various strands of "waiting," to show that the waiting game has gone on for too long. To show his indignation at such unnecessary resilience on their part, even in the face of flagrant provocation; he employs the use of a variety of elements from Yoruba orature, to energize not just the aesthetics but also the satirical bite of his criticisms. The theme of waiting is subjected to such treatment, the imagery are sometimes contemptible and elemental:

Waiting, waiting
Four hundred seasons
Without a face without a name without a face.³⁷

Waiting

Like idle bugs for their nightly feast
Like the yam for the knife
Or these exciting images from nature, when he wonders:
Whoever hasn't fondled the legend of the grape

Teased the mammary temper of the joyous pawpaw
 Incited humble carrots to riot
 Swollen with pink bluff.
 Of February's relentless sun
 Whoever hasn't?
 Is still waiting.³⁸

In the same vein he says, the devastated land, polity, political landscape, psyche; are "our countless vulnerabilities/and the strength of our fear waiting tail over head/for the fear of our strength." However amidst this various waiting seasons, you could feel palpable optimism in the poet's sad song. Even though:

Sometimes
 Joy-killers reach for the neck
 Of our laughter
 Dragging through sweat-soaked dusks
 The memory of our mirth.³⁹

Despite all these atrocities committed against the masses of his land, the persona is convinced that 'laughter will surely come back /to the paradise of our lips.'

The persona is no doubt an optimist, a trait unusual in the satirist whose penchant is to gloat over the seamier side of things in society; but his optimism which is rather infectious, can be traced in virtually all the proems under study. Such sentiments obviously betray the poet's optimistic outlook for his deprived compatriots. The poet's vision of change is not just localised, but universal, a change for a better future traversing national boundaries. In another piece titled "I sing of change," he sings of a world free relics of the past, 'an end to war of hate and fear of abundance, after the quickening rains.' This echo is also audible in *waiting laughters*, where the poet criticizes in different voices. When he says:

My song is space
 Beyond wails, beyond walls
 Beyond insular hieroglyphs.⁴⁰

It is the same sentiment which, as aptly suggested by Ezenwa-Ohaeto⁴¹ whose lyrics portray the inevitability of joy and hope because the persona's insistence on the songs going 'beyond walls' indicates an unwillingness to be restricted by mundane impediments. Pursuant of this binary theme of optimism; the persona deploys Yoruba oral poetics, as he sings of the inevitable wind of change and the laughter imminent, in aphorisms, riddles and folktales among others...and the cripple stands blissfully tall

On his abandoned legs
 The bush fowl hatches its eggs far, far, from
 The clever fingers of the foraging hunter
 And the desert returns with a pasture of pliant shepherds
 ...and the shogun's last whimper is alpha
 Of re-tiring trigger
 Werepe (cow-itch) spells out its freedom
 In a rampart of stinging needles.⁴²

But in the meantime, there is prayerful request for “fortitude of the lamb which lames a lion/ without inheriting its claws”/, and the wisdom of seasons which see the hidden dagger in a plumage of smiles.” The season calls for the lyric of other laughters; perhaps to be prepared for:

A boil, time tempered
About to burst.⁴³

Conclusion

In every society, there are conflicts. Binary forces engage each other in a supremacy struggle. These are the contradictions which the poet satirist engages in his lampoons. As noted in the foregoing, proverbs are effective didactic tools in Yoruba oral tradition, which the satirist employs to propagate virtues and condemn vice in the society. This falls within the ambit of acculturation and enculturation.⁴⁴ However, in recent times, poet satirists, like Osundare, have resorted to the use of proverbs post-proverbially- as an “indicator of cultural dynamism” to interpret socio-political inequities in the society. Essentially, they rupture the traditional structure of the proverb, in effect creating a rhetorical product of a secondary orality, which can easily fit into imaginative possibilities of the modern speakers of the language.⁴⁵ In effect, the proverb acquires a new meaning both for the poet- satirist and his audience.

Endnotes

¹ Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*, Heinemann, 1958, 4.

² Bascom, W. 1955. Verbal Art. *Journal of American Folklore*. No.68 p.251.

³ .Raji- Oyelade 1999 p.74; Boadi , A., 1972; Akinyele, A.B., 1947; Finnegan, R., 1976.

⁴ Op.cit. Raji-Oyelade, 1999, 74.

⁵ Oyeleye, A. L.1990. Domesticating the English Language in Nigeria: The Example of Achebe’s ‘Local colour variety’ *Journal of the Nigerian English studies Association*:. Vol.10, 128-45, 44.

⁶ Chinweizu et al.1980. *Towards the Decolonization of African literature*. Enugu, fourth Dimension Publishers, 165.

⁷ Nwachukwu-Agada J.O.J. “The Eighties and the return to Oral Cadences in Nigerian Poetry”. Special Issue of *Matatu*10, 1993.

⁸ Ojaide, T. “New Trend in African Poetry”. *RAL*. Vol.30 No.1, 1995, 4.

⁹ A loud cry for help.

¹⁰ Osundare, N. 1990. *Waiting Laughters*. Lagos, Malthouse Press, 46.

¹¹ Op.cit. 2.

- ¹² *ibid.*, 3.
¹³ *ibid.*, 74.
¹⁴ *ibid.*, 14.
¹⁵ *ibid.*,25.
¹⁶ *ibid.*,37.
¹⁷ *ibid.*,37.
¹⁸ *ibid.*, 38.
¹⁹ *ibid.*,40.
²⁰ *ibid.*,41.
²¹ *ibid.*, 41.
²² *ibid.*, 45.
²³ *ibid.*, 46.
²⁴ *ibid.*,49.
²⁵ *ibid.*,50.
²⁶ Edonmi, C.C. 2000. A textlinguist Approach to Niyi Osundare’s Poetry. Thesis. English. University of Ibadan, 25.
²⁷ Niyi Osundare, *ibid.*, 51.
²⁸ *ibid.*, 62.
²⁹ *ibid.*, 64.
³⁰ *ibid.*, 75.
³¹ *ibid.*,72.
³² *ibid.*, 22.
³³ *ibid.*, 22.
³⁴ *ibid.*, 2.
³⁵ *ibid.*, 74.
³⁶ *ibid.*, 58.
³⁷ *ibid.*, 39.
³⁸ *ibid.*, 82 .
³⁹ *ibid.*, 86.
⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 25.
⁴¹ Ezenwa-Ohaeto 1990:123.
⁴² *ibid.*, 91.
⁴³ *ibid.*, 97.
⁴⁴ Ajibola,J.O.1979; Bamgbose,A.1967; Taylor, A. 1996.
⁴⁵ Raji-Oyelade 2004,305.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adedeji, P. “Form and Function of Satire in Yoruba Drama”. *Odu*. Vol. IV: No.1, 1967, 61-72.
- Adejare, O. *Language and Style in Soyinka: A Systemic Textlinguistic Study of A Literary Idiolect*. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1992.
- Adelugba, A. “A Semantic Study of Duro Ladipo’s Mythico-Historical Plays.” Thesis. Ibadan: University of Ibadan, 1988.

- _____ "Functions and Forms of Traditional Theatre practice in Nigeria African culture and civilization." Adelugba on Theatre Practice in Nigeria. A Dasyuva interviewer. *Ibadan Cultural Studies Group*, 2005.
- Adeyanju, D. *Sociolinguistics in the Nigerian Context*. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press Ltd., 2007.
- Aiyejina, F. "Recent Nigerian Poetry in English: an Alter-Native Tradition". *Perspectives on Nigerian Literature: 1700 to the Present*. Vol.1, 1988.
- Ajibola, J. O. *Owe Yoruba*. Ibadan: University Press Limited, 1979.
- Albrecht, V. *Masters of Roman Prose*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991.
- Alden, R. M. *The Rise of Formal Satire in England: Under Classical Influence*. 1899 rpt. Philadelphia: Archon, 1961.
- Awonor, K. *Guardians of the Sacred World: Ewe Poetry*. New York: Nok Publishers, 1974.
- Babatunde, S.T. & Adeyanju, D.S. eds. *Language, Meaning and Society*. Papers in honour of E.E. Adegbija at 50. Ilorin: Haytee Press and Publishing co. Nigeria. Ltd., 2002.
- Bakhtin, M. M. and Medvedev, P. N. *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*. (trans. A. J. Wehrle). Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.
- Bakhtin, M.M. *The dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist ed. M. Holquist). Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- _____ *Speech Genre & other Late Essays*. Trans. by McGee V.W. UT Press, Austin, 1986.
- _____ *Speech Genres & other late Essays*. trans. W. Van, McGee, 1999.
- _____ *Creation of a Prosaics*. tr. G.S. Morson & C. Emerson. Carlifornia: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- Bakker, E.J. Homeric and the Poetics of Deixis. *Classical Philology*, 94, 1999, 1-19.
- Bamidele, S. Clearing the ambiguities of the Sociology of Literature and Drama, 1989.
- Bascom, W. Verbal Art. *Journal of American Folklore*. No.68, 1955, 251,
- Chinweizu et al. *Towards the Decolonization of African literature*. Enugu, fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980.

Finnegan, Ruth. *Oral Literature in Africa*. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Ojaide, T. New Trend in African Poetry. *RAL*. Vol.30 No.1, 1995.

Oyeleye, A. L. Domesticating the English Language in Nigeria: The Example of Achebe's 'Local Colour Variety' *Journal of the Nigerian English studies Association*:. Vol.10, 1990, 128-45.

Raji-Oyelade, A. "Postproverbials in Yoruba culture: A playful Blasphemy"
RAL.vol.30, No.1, Spring, 1999.