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THE MAKING OF A WAR POET: EXAMINING THE DICTION OF AMALI'S *EFEEGA*:--

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Abstract

This essay examines the war poems of Idris Amali. It is restricted to Amali's poetry collection entitled Efeega: War of Ants (2014); which is subsequently abbreviated Efeega. The reason for this restriction is connected with the pictures of war and catastrophic military destructions that pervade the collection. Moreover, it is noticed that Amali exerts so much focus, poetic artistry and energy on the war between Israel and the Palestine (2008- 2009). The essay basically adopts textual analysis of the selected poems in the primary text. Similarly, the secondary texts are used to generate the theoretical anchor and literature review of the paper. It is in findings that the evocation of stark images of the brutal Middle East confrontation between Israel and Palestine elevate the status of Amali as a war poet in modern Nigerian poetry.

Keywords: Poem, War Poems, War Poems Diction, War of Ants, Nigerian Poetry,

Introduction

The idea of war in modern Nigerian poetry has attracted the attention of several poet-scholars. It is however significant to note here that these poets have been mainly preoccupied with the diverse pictures of the Nigerian Civil war (1967-1970). In this connection, one is not unaware of J.P Clark's *Casualties: Poems 1966-68* (1970), Wole Soyinka's *A Shuttle in the Crypt* (1972), Chinua Achebe's *Christmas in Biafra and Other Poems* (1973), Ossie Onuora Enekwe's *Broken Pots* (1977), Peter Onwudinjo's *Women of Biafra and Other Poems* (2000), and many more. The significant place that these war poets occupy in modern Nigerian poetry is nothing short of phenomenon. In contrast, Amali's position as a war poet in modern Nigerian poetry seems to redirect our focus on the Israeli versus Palestinian war of 2008-2009. This idea is crucial to the whole purpose of this paper.

The background of this paper is anchored on war poetry. The suggestion of Tim Kendall's is very instructive. He puts it this way:

The term War Poetry has become so familiar that one suggests destruction, the other creation; one chaos, the other order; one pain, the other pleasure. Its internal tensions often go unnoticed ... [it]

accommodates binary oppositions, most notably life and death ... [it] is attracted to pain, and makes artistic capital out of it... [it] beautifies the terrible...(1). Tim Kendall's (2001)

What is suggested here is the unique qualities of war poetry. To the critic, the artistic creation of images that suggest “destruction,” “chaos” and “pain” with the instrument of “creation,” “order” and “pleasure” is what makes the genre both interesting and remarkable. To this end, the critic's assertion brings to the fore the oxymoronic ideas that characterise the genre. Besides, it is important to take notice of Kendall's insight concerning the themes of “life and death” in this kind of poetry. The critic brings to our knowledge the dominant perspectives of the artistic creation. This means that war poems are an artistic representation of classic themes. This is not to mention the stimulating interest that such themes trigger in the average reader.

Another point that is deducible from Kendall's submission above is the poetic manner in which the issue of “pain” is treated in war verses. A closer look at the critic's language suggests the inseparable quality that unites psychological trauma with war poetry. In this connection, the burden of private and public grief is explicitly demonstrated with lucid and creative expression. The critic's position gives us an idea of the attractiveness of the genre. Moreover, it is the skilful presentation of the gruesome images that is most appealing. To Kendall, the demonstration of painful images underscores the poet's ability to generate “artistic capital” from the horrific pictures.

Similarly, one is not ignorant of the critic's idea about the beautification of the “terrible” with this kind of poetic creation. In this sense, the management of imaginative and creative resources of language is necessary to evoke scenes of war, carnage and bloodletting. These “terrible” pictures have become the raw materials that the poet uses to beautify and demonstrate the horrific and perhaps the alluring images of war. A critical study of *Efeega* reveals that Amali uses poetic language to paint vivid images of “life and death,” “pain,” horrific scenes of carnage and the brazenly “terrible” of military destruction.

The poetry of Amali has attracted vast critical essays. Kola Eke's study of his poems reveals the poet's “Quest for social justice through a revolutionary stance” (16-30). More so, Kola Eke and Esther Jamgbadi have investigated Amali's use of code-switching as a rhetorical technique (291-308). Edefe Mukoro and Kola Eke posit that Amali's poetry is ecocritical (184-203); Amos Luka Bwala is concerned

with Amali's use of poetry as a tool for "social development" (248); In a similar manner, Bello Bada argues that Amali uses his poems to assume the position of a "social advocate" (159); Moreover, Sule Egya's critical appraisal of Amali's poetry is concerned with the issue of poetic "resistance" (272). On her part, Bilkisu Adamu's critical analysis of Amali's poetry focuses on the "thought process" of the poet (371).

From the foregoing, it is evident that critics have made valid comments on the poetry of Amali. What is not arguable is that these critics have not focused on his war poems. This study aims to fill that void.

The first poem that captures the image of war in Amali's poetry is entitled "Watching Gaza live." A keen reader of the poem would be amazed with the manner in which the speaker evokes scenes of devastation in the first stanza. The lines read this way:

Let's watch from these towers
Of our luxuries
The amputated City of Gaza
The beauty in human destruction
No artist born of mortal gene
Can capture the aesthetics of this human destruction
Not even the eyes and hands of Michelangelo
Shall etch this scenery of human destruction(*Efeega* 49).

To properly appreciate this poem, the reader must have a fore knowledge of the ferocious attack by the Israeli armed forces on the Palestinian "City of Gaza" from December 2008 into January, 2009. The speaker in the above passage skilfully appeals to our visual senses to capture the vivid images of the war. The picture of "Gaza" as an amputee in the third line is most striking. The personification is not only apt, but it also illuminates the scale of "destruction" inflicted on the "city." To effectively appreciate the image here, the reader must use his visual imagination to capture the disadvantages associated with an amputee. It is this intelligent analogy that underscores the brutal nature of the conflict.

Besides, the paradoxical use of language in the fourth line is arresting. The beauty of the language subtly accentuates the plunder of human lives in the "City of Gaza" by the Israeli military forces. One is therefore not unaware of the brutal decimation of the Palestinians as the war persists. Moreover, the might and sophistication of the Israeli military is underscored through the speaker's use of

language. Therefore, the meticulous reader is not surprised with the hyperbolic expression in the poem's successive line. The expression illuminates the scale of “human destruction” in the conflict. Besides, a close inspection of the speaker's diction further testifies of the precision and finesse of the killings that dominate the war. To accentuate the brutal scene further, the imaginative proficiency of “Michel Angelo” is questioned. In other words, the speaker could not fathom how the imagination could vividly evoke the gruesome images that dot the city's landscape. Little wonder then that the expression “human destruction” dominates the passage. It is the repeated use of the expression that emphasises the calamitous consequences of the war.

In the consecutive stanzas of the poem, the carnage of war is further demonstrated. The lines read this way:

As:
 Gaza City native skyscrapers lie
 Sprawling and broken into pieces of distress
 Let's watch:
 Let's watch the pointed huge smoke
 Children of a thousand aerial bombardments
 Of soft targets of the armless
 Touching the roof of the sky in thousand spots
 The children of war
 Dying for their dead mums and dads
 In the arms of dead mums and dads

By now, one must acknowledge Amali's clever evocation of pictures of destruction in his war poems. In the above lines, the “sprawling” images of “skyscrapers” in “Gaza city” are captured with imaginative brilliance. The scene is one of ruination and distress. Undoubtedly, the superior military hardware of the Israelis has caused severe damage to the City's landscape.

Similarly, the visual imagery of war is further illuminated with the picture of clouds of thick black “smoke” heading skywards. There is evidence in the poem that the smoky atmosphere is the effect of “a thousand aerial bombardments” by the Israelis jet bombers. In this instance, one is not ignorant of the speaker's use of imagery to elucidate the brutal attack on different “targets” in Palestine. To Amali,

the brutal images of heavy bomb attack could be considered the “children” of the war. In this connection, the ferocious attack on “soft targets” is recognised. At the same time, the picture of pain is heightened with the callous bombing of the “armless.” Amazingly, it is the speaker's use of language that underscores the wonderful display of war planes in the “sky.” Through a deft use of imaginative expression, the skyline of “Gaza” is painted with the image of a house. By so doing, the mind's eye is made to picture several Israeli war planes dominating “the roof of the sky.” To understand the imagery here one would need to capture the picture of a “roof” dotted in “thousand spots.”

Although, not clearly stated in the poem, one could deduce a scene of war with thousands of bombs dropped on the “City of Gaza.” Little wonder then, that the speaker's deep cry for the “children” of the city is crafted with metaphorical beauty. The scale of deaths that pervade the city is vividly illuminated in the concluding couplet of the quoted passage. Besides, one is not ignorant of the use of repetition in those lines. It emphasises the picture of “human destruction” and carnage in the war.

As the poem progresses in another stanza, the artistic depiction of the brutal images of war is continued:

Let us watch:
The Israeli Xmas jets in flamboyant sails...
Unchallenged but undeterred in
Acrobatic aerial combat embattled with the air
Trembling Gaza with fireworks of death
As they burst into engulfing flames
The chemical warfare reigns and rains
On the armless city of Gaza.

Here again, Amali deliberately appeals to our visual senses to capture the devastations of the war. The mind's eye could visualise the mesmerising air movements of “Israeli” fighter jets. The exciting and confident manner in which these sophisticated fighter planes move swiftly and smoothly in the air is interesting. In fact, the picture of excitement is further underscored with the word “Xmas.” To the speaker, the euphoria of the season seems to have an amazing impact on the “jets.” But of more significance here is the speaker's subtle lampoon of the Israelis' display of human hatred in the season of love.

To heighten the ferocity of the “aerial” bombardments and the superior air power of the Israeli military forces against the Palestines, the “Xmas Jets” are said to

go “unchallenged” as they engage in “acrobatic aerial combat.” Besides, one is not unmindful of the “undeterred” image of the “jets” even in the “unchallenged” territory of the Gaza skyline. Consequently, there is an unrestricted release of bombs resulting in the tremendous destruction of the city. To capture the image properly, a sound understanding of the word “trembling” is needed. The suggestive strength of the word illuminates the scale of tremor caused by bomb explosions. As these seismic waves continue, it takes the intelligence of the reader to spot the metaphorical description of destructive “fireworks” by the speaker. It is this imaginative use of language that evokes the picture of “death” in the poem. The scene is one filled with human casualties.

At the same time, the image of intense “aerial” warfare is heightened as jets “burst into engulfing flames” in mid-air. To worsen the already stark images from the brutalities of war, one cannot ignore the speaker's reference to “chemical warfare.” A critical look at his diction reveals that the “city of Gaza” is heavily bombarded with “chemical” weapons. More importantly, it is the speaker's use of pun in the penultimate line that illuminates the dominance of “chemical” bombardment in the war. The picture is painted with aquatic imagery. In this sense, one could picture the Israeli fighter jets lashing the “city of Gaza” with vicious chemicals cast in the form of torrential “rains.”

In the poem's last stanza, the speaker's tone of resignation about the war in Gaza is noticed:

As:
The powerful of the world watch
Holding dead talks
As the unarmed city of Gaza
Is pounded into rubbles
... (*Efēga*50).

The above excerpt is dominated by metaphorical language. There is every indication from the speaker's choice of words that the “powerful of the world” seems unperturbed about the brutal killings and bloodshed in Palestine. The nonchalant attitude of these world powers to the plight of the Palestinians is underscored through the word “watch.” The issue is further compounded with the injection of metaphorical expression in the third line to elucidate the insincerity of these world leaders towards ending the war. Little wonder then that the “City of Gaza” is further “pounded into rubbles” by the Israeli military. To appreciate the

speaker's diction, one would need to use the power of the imagination to capture "a landscape of ruins" (Masur, 40).

Another poem that evokes the images of war in Amali's poetry is entitled "Gaza: a breakfast." The verse is replete with vivid pictures of war coupled with bloodletting and environmental pillage. The first stanza reads like this:

As thick clouds and rains of fire
Eat up the Gaza at dawn
We toast a dawn breakfast menu
For tongues, teeth and eyes
To make a harvest and feast upon: (*Efeega* 60)

Here again the brutal war between Israel and Palestine in Gaza attracts the attention of the speaker. But what is of note here is that the speaker is getting these brutal images from a live telecast while having his "breakfast." In the opening lines of the poem, the scale of devastation in the City of Gaza is stressed through aquatic and thermal images. The consistent air raid of the City by the Israeli forces is conveyed through pictures of torrential "rains." The analogy is not only striking but it illuminates the degree of artillery bombardment unleashed on the City. Moreover, the picture of war is further underscored through the apt use of the word "eat up." In this case, the destruction of "Gaza" by "rains of fire" is imaginatively captured with poetic brilliance. A closer reading of the speaker's diction evokes the image of a ravenous animal feeding voraciously on its prey "at dawn." It is this artistic representation of the destruction of "Gaza" that reveals the speaker's mastery of imaginative resources.

In the poem's second stanza, the artistic demonstration of the devastation of "Gaza" is continued:

Shattered edifices with craters by air raids
Mangled babies decay below concretes
Dead mothers with crying babies in their arms
Dead babies in the arms of dead mothers
Dead babies in the hands of dying mothers crying
Dead hospital, fortresses of the hopeless
Dead skyscrapers bury midget structures
Dead animals
Dead this
Dead that

The intensity of the air raid on “Gaza” is quite horrendous. The image of devastation as well as ruined “edifices” is arresting. In this sense, there is a graphic depiction of large holes on houses caused by sophisticated bombs unleashed by jet bombers. To worsen the already gruesome images, the speaker imaginatively shows us vivid pictures of ruined human parts. The “craters” seem to have twisted these human bodies beyond recognition. Besides, one is shocked that these victims of war are actually “babies.” To further aggravate the pain in the reader's heart, these “mangled” remains are said to be lying “below concretes” as decomposing corpses.

As the poem progresses, there is a skillful use of repetition to emphasise the scale of killing, bloodshed and neglect in the war. The images are agonising as well as brutal to the senses. One cannot imagine the pictures of “crying babies” in the arms of their “dead mothers.” Moreover, the graphic scenes of “dead babies in the arms of dead mothers” is heart wrenching. Yet again, there are pitiable images of “dying mothers crying” as they behold their “dead babies.” These horrific pictures expose the atrocities of war on “mothers” and “babies.”

A further reading of the poem reveals that there is an infusion of metaphorical expression by the speaker to elucidate the state of neglect and hopelessness in “Gaza.” In this connection, the conflict is said to reduce “hospitals” to refugee camps as well as make them shelters for the “hopeless.” Apart from the state of hopelessness in the war-torn city, the degree of ruination is furthered captured as “midget structures” are completely buried by collapsed “skyscrapers.” Besides, it is instructive to know that “animals” are not spared in this war. In fact, the whole city is full of “dead” bodies.

In the successive stanzas, the images of war and the speaker's call for celestial intervention in the war is recognised:

With thick clouds of vultures hovering over Gaza
As the drunken iron-air-birds
Pound into rubbles the silent Gaza at will

Today its Gaza made
Tomorrow begets another Gaza
If we do not now invite God
From His high throne
To pronounce a verdict (*Efeega* 61).

The speaker here uses the image of a bird to espouse the state of killings in “Gaza.” The vulture is a large bird that feeds on the flesh of dead and decomposing animals. In this connection, the picture of “clouds of vultures hovering over Gaza” indicates the presence of dead bodies. Apart from the fact that the speaker's use of language is interesting; one is not unaware of the horrific image of vultures feeding on the remains of decayed human parts. At the same time, the metaphorical description of Israeli's fighter jets in the second line stresses the creativity of the speaker. In the poem the word “drunken” is suggestive of the disposition of the Israeli air force in the war. To Amali, the demonstration of inhumane and callous actions by the soldiers could be seen in the astounding aerial movement of the “iron-air-birds.” They are said to be under the influence of alcohol. By extension, they seem to show no restraint of “will” as they “pound” Gaza “into rubbles.” The picture epitomises a sense of utter devastation and destruction.

As the poem continues, one could sense the speaker's concern with the manner in which humans engage in war. To him, the destruction of “Gaza today” is just a prelude to the destruction of “another Gaza' in the future. In this sense, the use of celestial imagery as solution to war is noted. To be more precise, the speaker wants humans to seek God's intervention in the prevention of future wars.

In the poem entitled “Pounding Gwange (Maiduguri) to rubble”, Amali again paints vivid images of war. In this instance, the centre of conflict is Maiduguri-North East Nigeria. The true life event actually occurred on 9th October, 2012 between 6:55 and 8:35 am. The poem begins with a narrative intensity:

I ran from the city centre at dawn
As even the goats, donkeys, camels and horses
Took to their heels.
When the market breaks into chaos
No one need tell the deaf.
...
And the battle rages strongly
As turmoil rages
As thick black smoke engulfs Gwange of Malignant surge
(Efeega 63).

The picture of pandemonium and confusion here espouses the agonies of war. The actions of the speaker as well as the animals underscore the spontaneous quest for safety during conflict. Besides, to imagine that “the city” is deserted “at

dawn” is quite instructive. The scene is full of “chaos” and uncertainty. The infusion of proverbs in the quoted passage aptly demonstrates the speaker's astute description of a chaotic atmosphere.

As the poem continues, the picture of violence becomes clearer as “the battle rages strongly.” Yet, the observant reader of the poem would not fail to spot the repetition of the word “rages.” It emphasises the rising intensity of the “turmoil”. Consequently, the image of “thick black smoke” is said to surround “Gwange.” The implication of this artistic presentation underscores the scale of violence and destruction in the war. Moreover, the speaker's use of clinical imagery in the last line accentuates the uncontrolled and fatal consequences of the war. In the context in which the speaker uses the word, one is inclined to picture a cancerous tumour ravaging the body with unrestrained “surge.” In this sense, the war has become an uncontrolled disease destroying the cells of “Maiduguri.” The reader of the poem is therefore not surprised with the subsequent breakout of artillery exchanges in the successive stanzas of the poem. The lines are replete with sounds from explosions and gun fire:

The last one sounds like cluster bombs
The next kaka ko! Kaka Kakagboom!
The next gboom!
My earth several kilometres trembles
And threatens my foothold

Now this single thin one kboom!
And now running in the heavy one gwuum!
The music of guns, death salutes us
As our heart trembles

...

With a clever appeal to the auditory senses, the speaker demonstrates with vivid imagery the devastation of “Maiduguri” by the warring factions. The exchange of gun fire is underscored through the apt use of onomatopoeic expression. Yet, one cannot ignore the heavy “gbuum” sounds from “cluster bombs.” By so doing, there is an injection of seismic imagery to illuminate the sophistication of the explosives and its effect on the speaker's “foothold.” The repetition of this cacophony of sounds stresses the consistent intensity of bombardment in the war.

As the poem progresses, there is a further artistic demonstration of gun fire violence illustrated through auditory images. The whole setting is dominated by “the music of guns.” By now, the observant reader of the poem should be fascinated with the creative use of language here. Moreover, the personification of “death” evokes the gruesome image of the dead bodies littered over the city. From all indications, the effect of these vivid images is telling.

In another part of the poem, the picture of war is further demonstrated with poetic creativity;

In Maiduguri
We watch the intriguing rebirth
Of Biafran Wars
...
Time bomb for another round
Of reprisal wars of intrigues

In the above lines, the war in “Maiduguri” is intense. Besides, the diction reminds us of the gruesome memories of the “Biafran War.” In this regard, Amali deftly compares the killings, bloodletting and mayhem in “Maiduguri” to the brutal Nigerian Civil war that lasted three years (1967 -1970). Moreover, it is important to note that the war in “Maiduguri” has assumed the metaphor of a “time bomb.” The implication of this thought illuminates the danger inherent in the escalation of “wars.” Remarkably, it is through the insight of the speaker that the bloodbath and brutal killings in “Maiduguri” is seen as “reprisal wars of intrigues.” This horrific thought of retaliation becomes vivid in the closing stanza:

And now the guns
Have taken the part of silence
As our brothers, gun totting
Lie wasted
...
For mowing down their own blood
In battles against soft spots (*Efèega* 64)

The image of “gun totting” militias brutally killed by their own “brothers” is portrayed with lucid expression here. All of a sudden, the “silence” of “guns” in “Maiduguri” has become deafening as these men “lie wasted.” The picture is a poetic representation of the scale of violence that characterises reprisals. Besides,

one is fascinated with how the speaker intertwines agricultural imagery with metonymic expression to demonstrate the violent reprisals in the closing couplet. With the clever use of the imagination, the gruesome killing in the war is demonstrated through the mower image. In this sense, innocent human lives assume the image of grasses being cut down by the machine. To heighten the implication of this bloodbath, the “reprisal wars” is said to become “battles against soft spots.”

Another poem that illustrates the images of war in Amali's poetry is entitled “Closing in on Gaza.” The vivid picture of a massive attack by the Israeli armed forces on the city of Gaza on 2nd January, 2009 is here painted with poetic language. The lines read this way:

Like hungry jackals and wolves
In their thousands
Like restless leopards and lions
In their hungry milling numbers
Like trampling company of elephants
Poised for a great offensive battle
Against ants and rats: (*Efeega* 66)

Here the imaginative brilliance of the speaker is demonstrated through the injection of animal images. The fact that these animals are wild and fierce illuminates the disposition of the Israeli armed forces as they besiege the city of “Gaza.” The picture is not only striking, but it gives us a graphic illustration of the impending attack. To understand this insight correctly, the reader must be acquainted with the wild instincts of “hungry jackals and wolves” on their prey. Besides, one is not unmindful that the fierce-looking soldiers are marching into the city “in their thousands.”

At this juncture, it is crucial that one comment on the word “hungry” as it is used in the poem. In the first place, the word denotes the ravenous appetite of the animals. But in the context of the poem, it underscores the Israeli soldiers' hunger to ravage the city of “Gaza.” In another way, the word evokes the degree of vexation in the hearts of the attacking soldiers. By now, the observant reader of the poem should be able to spot the speaker's repetition of the word “hungry” in the fourth line. It must be stated here that the use of this literary technique is not for decorative purpose; rather it is deliberate to emphasise the intense anger that characterises the military invasion.

Meanwhile, one cannot ignore the speaker's evocation of the soldier's wild offensive through the picture of “restless Leopards and Lions.” The image

illustrates the deadly and ferocious intent of the “hungry” troops. In a way, the keen reader of the poem could sense the troop's thirst for a bloodbath in “Gaza.” The atmosphere is charged as the soldiers march into the city to rip it to shreds.

Similarly, the fearsome offensive into “Gaza” is further illustrated through the image of a “trampling company of elephants.” The picture elicits the brutish intent of the military invasion. In fact, the poet persona considers it “a great offensive battle.” In a way, the use of the elephant image is instructive for two reasons: first, it reveals the sophistication of the Israeli forces. Second, it underscores the strength of their might in comparison with their opponents. By so doing, one is not surprised with the speaker's use of language in the last line.

In the next stanza of the poem, the military might and sophistication of the invading forces is painted with poetic intelligence:

The machine guns
The booby traps
The steel-birds of death
The cluster bombs
The rocket propelled grenades
The new weaponry in their maiden outing
The army of infantry of combat terrible
READY
FOR GAZA
Of tortured faith

In the above lines, the speaker gives us vivid images of sophisticated weaponry to illuminate the armed status of the military offensive. The first picture that strikes one's imagination is the array of “machine-guns” on display. Each soldier is captured armed with a machine-gun as they besiege the city. Besides, one could picture the scale of impending explosions and destruction as the soldiers moved into “Gaza” with “booby traps.” Yet, the meticulous reader of the poem would not fail to notice the bird image in the quoted lines. This skilful use of literary language evokes pictures of devastating jet-bombers providing air-defence for the invading forces. Moreover, to imagine that the invading troops are armed with “cluster bombs” as well as “rocket propelled grenades” evoke a striking picture of the onslaught.

Furthermore, a closer inspection of the speaker's diction reveals his imaginative creativity. In this sense, he portrays the invasion of “Gaza” as the “maiden outing” of the Israeli armed forces. By implication, there is a demonstration

of “new weaponry” to underscore the readiness of the “army of infantry” to unleash its “terrible” devastations on the “tortured” city.

In the closing stanza of the poem, the brutal picture of war is further painted with poetic language:

Close in on Gaza
They are closing in on Gaza blindfolded
As God watches
The destruction of His immortal hands
By the mortal hands
In this season of death in Gaza of strong faith.

The first line in the quoted passage demonstrates the massive military attack on the city. In fact, a critical look at the speaker's diction illustrates how “Gaza” is effectively surrounded by the invading forces. It would take an informed scrutiny of the word “blindfolded” to understand the relentless ferocity of the invasion. The manner in which the Israeli armed forces lay siege on the city is quite telling. The whole scene is charged with the callous and pitiless intent of the soldiers. Yet, one is not unaware of the speaker's appeal to our visual senses through the celestial image. In this instance, there is a skilful presentation of the images of “destruction” as the war rages on. Moreover, the devastation of “Gaza” by the Israelis is captured through the creative injection of metaphorical language in the penultimate line. At the same time, the last line of the poem further underscores the fatal consequences of war through climatic imagery.

Conclusion

One of the strong qualities of Amali's poetry is his demonstration of vivid images of war. The keen reader of his poems cannot miss out the beautiful manner in which he uses creative devices to paint the devastations and destructions of the city of Gaza.

One remarkable feature that seems to pervade his poems is the evocation of visual images of the brutalities of the “Gaza” war. The skilful re-enactment of these gruesome images by Amali underscores his delightful mastery of literary language. From poem to poem, one cannot lose sight of pictures of human and environmental destruction clothed with creative and imaginative resources of language.

In another light, the graphic depiction of shattered edifices and the gruesome waste of human lives in the “Gaza” conflict expose the scale of the war. The military might and sophistication of Israeli armed forces over the Palestinians also lend credence to the horrific images of the war. Moreover, the picture of decomposing bodies under rubbles and the level of lamentation by victims of the war underscores the shock realities of the brutalities of war.

Another fascinating image of the “Gaza” war demonstrated by Amali is the graphic illustration of the Israelis' offensive into the city. The picture of the invasion is painted with lucid details. The deft infusion of animal images in this instance underscores the depth of the poet's illustrative power. This is not to mention the skilful manner in which the array of sophisticated weaponry by the invading forces is shown. Yet, one is not unaware of the scale of destruction and death unleashed on the besieged city.

Finally, the beauty of Amali's war poems is brilliantly evoked through the use of poetic devices. There is hardly any poem in this study that is short of creative resources. The skilful manner in which he intersperses metaphor, repetition, rhetorical question, personification as well as animal, celestial, aquatic and agricultural images is quite interesting. One is not in doubt that it is the mastery of these creative resources that elevates his war poems to the status of classics in modern Nigerian poetry.

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