GOMBE SAVANNAH

JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES (GOSAJOLLCOS)

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
GOMBE STATE UNIVERSITY

VOLUME 2 No. 1
October, 2021

NATIONALISM, HOPE AND ECLIPSES OF HOPE IN SELECTED POEMS OF SAM OMATSEYE

Kayode Niyi Afolayan and Obasoro Hannah

Abstract

The transformation of African poetry from primordial to modern form has generated interesting discussions among critics. Beyond issues of poetics which now witness the coalescing and manifestations of primordial forms, major critical value has been attached to the social impetus that modern African poetry evinces. In Nigeria, the political experiences of the nation has impacted heavily on the tone of poetry so that issues of nationalism, corruption and bad leadership, criminality and insecurity, and a host of others, have become very prominent themes in modern Nigerian poetry and writings. This objective of this paper is to examine selected poems from the three poetry collections of Sam Omatseye and engage on the social crises that have ravaged the Nigerian state as identified by the poet. The choice of Omatseye, who works as Senior Editor with The Nation Newspapers- a famous tabloid in Nigeria - is important because his poetry combines the experiences of poetry and journalism. This paper identifies the poet's musings on the endemic maladies of the Nigerian state which include leadership failure, corruption, crises of religion, ethnicity, culture, among other vices. The paper also takes a critical look at the social value of the poems by engaging the antidotes projected by the poet. The conclusion of the paper recognizes the optimism of the poet amidst the national trials he mirrors but submits that utopia may be a mirage for absence of re- orientation of national ideals and ethos amongst fellow citizens of the poet.

Keywords: *Sam Omatseye, Modern Nigerian Poetry, Nationalism, Hope, Eclipses of Hope*

Introduction

Largely, critical insights into the evolution of modern African in English have followed three major trends that bother on poetics, poetry and the pertinence of commitment. On Nigerian poetry in English, which comes under African poetry, controversy over poetics, which relate to form, was the basis of the aversion of critics like Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Ikechukwu to the poetry of first-generation poets like Christopher Okigbo, Wole Soyinka and John Pepper Clarke. In *Towards the Decolonization of African Literature* (1980) critical responses hinged on issues of the place of tropes drawn from ancestral memory and language use in African poetry. Boniface Obichere, validating the importance of the former to the evolution of modern African poetry noted, inter alia, that it is the incontestable reservoir of values, sensibilities, aesthetics and achievements of traditional African though and imagination [consequently] It must serve as the ultimate foundation, guide-post, and

point of departure fora modern liberated African literature. It is the root from which African literature must draw its sustenance (2-3).

Stanley Macebuh furthers on this insight in "Poetics and the Mythic Imagination" where he attempted to draw a nexus between the importance, dimensions of manifestations and poetics when he said:

> all contemporary poetry in Africa must derive its legitimate inspiration from the oral tradition; the exigencies of our colonial inheritance are such ,however, that a good many of our poets have allowed themselves to suffer a divorce from African oral tradition tempered only by lifeless attempt at revivalism. Incapable of accommodating a dynamic sense of the African past in their psyche, they become the unconvincing and inept vectors of European impulses (32).

In answering the question of continuous relevance, use and refinement which were not envisaged in the statements of Obichere and Macebuh but which has now made commitment salient in discussing the tropes deployed by those pioneer poets, Mpalive- Hangson Msiska, drawing on Wole Soyinka, whose poetry was sorely criticized for its use of language more than indigenous forms, points out that:

> indigenous beliefs form a significant part of the social imaginary of contemporary Africa, the foregrounding of the similarity of social contradiction in myth and the contemporary, functions as a counter-hegemonic intervention within the contemporary ideological formation, resisting appropriations of the past which insist on its homogeneity and plenitude. However, Soyinka does not reduce the past to the present or vice-versa, as he is always conscious of its radical difference from the presence and only uses such difference as a unique resource for replenishing contemporary models of self and social formation which he regards as massively impoverished, but potentially redeemable (242).

Tanure Ojaide, while identifying the kernel of critical thoughts on pioneer African poetry, identifies the crisis of theorizing which foreign and indegenous models, in relation to poetics have drawn, with the warning that:

> Critics of African poetry should not blindly use theories or critical canons of other literatures, especially of Western literatures.

> Literature is a cultural production and that means that its aesthetics are so culturally conditioned.One cannot use the same rules in judging literatures produced for different peoples. The culture and conditions of the West are not the same as those, for instance, of African [Therefore]... Critics of African poetry should fashion theories or canons based on the African experience in assessing the works before them (99-100).

Ojaide's thesis hinges on the dialectics and correlations between fashioning out indegenous theoretical modes for African poetry and the centrality of commitment which, necessarily, draws on the overall social essence of poetry. Wole Ogundele in "An Appraisal of the Critical Legacies of the 1980's Revolution in Nigerian Poetry in English" selects Ojaide as one of the pillars of the alternative school of Nigerian poetry in English in this testament that draws a clear distinction between the 'old' and 'new' forms of Nigerian poetry.

> Tanure Ojaide, one of the poets and spokesman for the [alternative] poetry and its poetic, accuses the older poets of over emphasising form at the expense of meaning, and even of making "form an end in itself". The rest import of this charge comes to when, after delineating the economic condition in Nigeria that has informed the new poetry, he commends his own group of poets for "using the art as a means of attempting to reverse the negative socio-economic order in their societies so that economic equality and justice will prevail (142).

Indeed, it is this attempt at reversing the "negative socio-economic order in their societies so that economic equality and justice" can prevail that is the hallmark of the 'new' order. Harry Garuba in "The Poetics of Possibility: A Study of Femi Osofisan's *The Chattering and The Song* and *Morountodun*", presents a clear perspective on this point thus:

> The issue of commitment... had been one such problem examined against the backdrop of European intellectual history and the art for art's sake movement rather than within the context of a different cultural history. An epistemological urge has always been part of that primal aesthetics desire that which is the basis of art, and that urge may have created the necessity for the criticism itself. This makes the question of commitment a pertinent one in any circumstance (205-206).

It goes without saying that ruptures in the political space in the country and the deepening crises that has enveloped the Nigerian nation since independence have drawn poetry responses that show commitment to the survival or continued existence of the Nigerian state. Without going into the complications of catalogues, which may throw up a long list of generations of poets on the Nigerian landscape, we have adopted, for convenience in this paper, two categories- academic poets and freelance poets. The latter category, where we can safely place Odia Ofeimun and Sam Omatseye, they differ because their instant calling is not within the university even though they have made similar impacts in the mirroring of the conditions of the Nigerian state. This paper draws relevant poems of Omatseye who has *ventured out of his* calling as a journalist to produce anthologies like *Dear Baby Ramatu (2009), Mandela's Bones and Other Poems (2009)* and *Lion, Wind and Other Poems (2011).*

In what appears like drawing on convergence and mutual relationship between poetics, poetry and its social values Omatseye, in his interview with Hannah Obasoro, Omatseye, after admitting Blake, Senghor and Okigbo as his progenitors, explains his allurement to the making of poetry thus:

> In writing poetry, one of the impulses is just the need to express myself. It is very difficult for me to say what inspires me to write poetry because I just started writing poetry like somebody who is hungry to eat…So it's kind of instinctual. That's what I can say but, haven been exposed to poetry in high school and then in the university, I came to understand what poetry stood for. But, in the beginning I saw poetry as arcane…Impenetrable and as distant. But I started feeling a certain kinship with it as I started reading poetry after poetry.

In presenting the quotidian decay, perplexing intrigues and the palpable hopelessness that have deluged the Nigerian space, Omatseye has not only been able to navigate this veiled phobia and encumbrances of poetics but has lucidly relayed in his poetry a sense of hope in his commitment to the survival of his nation.

Sam Omatseye's Poetry and the Reflection of the Nigerian Condition

A close reading of Omatseye reveals his passionate concern for the failed condition of leadership in the Nigerian space. Writing after decades of independence, it is rational to ask questions on why his nation remains in a parlous state despite its immense resources and wealth. Chinua Achebe, while responding to the question of

failure of the Nigerian state in relation to the role of literature raised a few fundamental questions thus:

> The history of Nigeria… can be characterized by contrast as a snatching of defeat from the jaws of victory, if one considers how nearly a 100, 000million naira went through our hands like so much sand through the fingers of a child at play at the beach. Did we not have goals? Did we not have development plans?
> Did we not have experts to guide our steps on the slippery slopes of modernization? (2)

Apparently, fixing the puzzle lies in the auditing of the roles that successive leaders in the country have played. Omatseye, in the interview cited, bares his mind on the political experimentations of the nation stating that the transition from military to civilian rule, in Nigeria, has only precipitated this deficit with the 'democratic' dispensation perhaps accounting for the worse:

> We are living in one of the most uncertain times because two political parties don't understand what they are doing and in terms of creating a vision for us we have voted for change but the meaning of that change is anybody's guess… So the problem with our politics is that it has been so commercialized that the sense of what politics traditionally ensues is out of it. So we don't have politics for the politics but politics for the politicians. So what that means is that there is a strong disconnect between a politician society as different from the civil society. So that the politicians are doing their own; we as a people are doing our own so we don't really have what you call a modern state.

Sam Omatseye reveals that bad leadership as the bane of the nation's woes with poems like "Budding"in *Dear Baby Ramatu,* "Python" and "The Creed" in *Lion, Wind and Other Poems* and in *Mandela's Bones and Other Poems* where in "Mandela's Bones" we have a juxtaposing renditions of the essences of virtue and sacrifice which are vital elements of leadership which are missing in Nigerian politics. In "Budding", the metaphor of a town in Yobe State, Northern Nigeria, exposes the, greed, viciousness, hypocrisy injustice, double standards and criminality of leadership. Unfortunately, the poet persona, the harbinger of truth has no place in that community as the poet relays thus:

At frank moments I allowed myself
A nightmare of truth
And imagined myself and you
In the net of the
Avenging ministers
Sometimes I thought they
Were monsters
Ministering from crypts
But I was once in their
Ambience
In their community of souls
But now to them I
Primed with the devil
Slay my soul
To slake an errant flesh (49)

The community in dire need is held down by its leaders who have turned "monsters", "truth" has become ostracized and issued a death sentence. As expected, responsiveness to social needs is paralyzed. The consequences of gluttonous greed, which is the negative stimulus of all bad leadership, become the focus in "Python" where a python is rendered prostrate and consequently dies after swallowing a dog.The euphemism in the mockery that concludes the poem is instructive in all spaces where greed and gluttony has overridden service and duty:

But what can you do now
Before me fragile like my dog
Without your play of eyes and muscles
Your prey fattened you to frailty
A champion prey
In frail full parade
Prosperity crimped your pride
The glutton without foresight (15)

The poet reveals the age- long strategy of oration with which bad leaders ensnare and deceive the citizens in "The creed" where craftiness is hidden under the garb of kindness. Omatseye's irony and hyperbole intensify and highlight the

persuasiveness that unsuspecting citizens may never discern:

You who will coo
An angel to envy…

Your voice is a medal
Unlike the whelps
From the entrails
Of the little child….

Your smile
Like ecstatic flies
Over anonymous dead…
Your cotton touch
Like your salvation creed
Flattered our future
Into a destiny
Of laborious dreams (53-54)

There is no doubt that the "coo", the harmless infant "whelps" and "smile"are a façade which veils the wicked intent of the leaders whose ambience is truly that of "the deceptive aura of a hyena's face"(53). If it was at the point of being saddled with the sacred responsibility of leadership that such leaders use their oratory to manipulate the people it would have been understandable, however, they deploy the same skill to perpetuate their misdeeds and ineptitude.

The indices of leadership failure are laid out in the poverty that has become endemic in the land with the masses becoming the immediate victims to the horrors and pains of lack.In *Dialogue With My Country* (2007) a compendium of social interventions rendered over a period of nineteen years in Newswatch Magazine, Niyi Osundarepresented a graphic picture of the situation in a country thrown into hopelessness on account of failure in leadership:

> What this boils down to is that more Nigerians are becoming hungry, ill, dehumanised. Next time you are in a crowded place, look very well at the faces you see. You will notice a sea of preternaturally grey heads and faces prematurely wrinkled like crumpled foil paper. You will encounter a desert of frowns punctuated

by an oasis of ephemeral grins. You will go back home feeling that what commodity prices say out there is miles apart from what government statisticians proclaim in their alchemy of lying figures (7-8)

In *Dear Baby Ramatu especially in* the poem"The Little Ones", the fourth poem in the collection we are confronted with abject poverty of parents which have trickled down to the children asseen in little boys and girls who have become beggars and hawkers of goods. Unfortunately, poverty does not hinder procreation and Baby Ramatu has just been conceived in a milieu where, for example, "The neck of girls cringe with trays of wares" (62). The criminality of child labour in itself gives a guilty verdict on the society but, worse than that, the child is exposed to criminal tendencies and has to contend with abuses, like the female child that is defenseless "against the libido of men" (62). Although, Ramatu's mother dreams of giving her baby a better life than the children on the streets who parade in "dry skins, cry…for buyers [and] thirst [and] hunger" (64), the cruel conditions under which children grow would be an insurmountable obstacle:

I saw the little girls
and I thought of you
you would never end up like this
mama would see to that
you would not wear
their clothes
parade dry skins like theirs
bodies without the moist of water
cry like them for buyers
thirst
hunger
enter men's huts
yield
deflowered
profitless in early whoredom (63-64)

More so, the feminists tone in this poem raises query of gender imbalance, Omatseye's clairvoyance takes a sordid look into the future of the nation in presenting the conditions of the child, there appears to be no hope of survival for the child that

translates into a gloomy future for a country especially considering the fact that children are supposed to take over from the parents.

This crisis of religion is a critical subject that has caused ripples all over the world in recent times, in Nigerian, apart from the civil war which was between 1967-1970, no national crisis is wasting lives and resources of the nation as crises of religion. Sam Omatseye has taken note of this in the following of his poems: "My plea", in *Dear Baby Ramatu,* "Sickle cell""December 25, 2009", "Abdulmutallab" and "Suicidal god" in *Lion, Wind and Other Poems.*

In lampooning the vicissitudes of injustice and ignorance that pervades religion, the poem "My Plea", gives an ambivalent narrative in the consequences of an "original sin" which is conceiving a child outside of marriage and the burden of subservience that foreign religions place on women. Omatseye uses Mama, Aminatu and Ramatu's mother to expose the crime commited by those who claim to be religious and pious but on the other hand, with brutal malevolence, permits cold murder of the innocent. The poet uses jungle imagery to parallel jungle justice and heighten the savagery of religious extremismwhich he described as "recumbent reptiles". Nothing abhors the poet more that the dangers of religious extremists who have turned themselves into "the lord's brigade" [whose] riotous indignation (41) and "judgmental eye of convention" (39) have made them become "the leer of hypocrites" (40).The poem "Sickle cell", digs deeper into the aspect of ignorance in the case of a sickle cell child taken for an "Abiku". Although, Omatseye does not use this Abiku myth to satirize the life of a nation as Ben Okri did in *The Famished Road* (1991), the concern here is with ignorance which pushes most religious extremists into avoidable errors, needless crime of terrorist activities that have since become a global phenomenon. The deceit wrapped in the existence of a phantom ethereal bliss that spurs terrorist actions is identified in "Abdulmutalab" through the voice of the indoctrinated terrorist:

You cannot unhinge my creed
Unlike your pantheon creed
We are superior
Poised to soar
Above your perch
To celestial milk
Angel brood
Virgin-bevy bred
Bare with bliss that never dims (80)

In a way, "My plea", and "Sickle Cell" prelude "December 25, 2009", a poem about the botched plan of a twenty- three year old Nigerian,Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab who, primed on a suicide mission by the Al-Qaeda, an Islamic terrorist group, was to bomb an airplane leaving Amsterdam for Detroit on a Christmas day.

The poet captures the misadventure which if not averted would have equaled the gravity of the September 11 (9/11) incident.

On that plane of angst
You forbade Christmas joy
Even for the saved who soared
In that high relief

You followed the
Phantom trail of the years
Mired in mirages masking
As faith
Discounting your fount
You romped with lies in
Bliss of becoming (71)

The poet isolates and also criticizes the doctrine of a 'suicidal god' (68) whose illusion and lies not only distort rational thinking but promote carnage and bloodshed. The nature of the crime sadly underscores its international status but also identifies the nation of the poet with such heinous act. This taste for bloodshed can be situated in the crisis of leadership in the home of the arrested criminal and the nation at large.

Omatseye's metaphor in "Bees and the Beast" and "The Arc" in *Mandela's Bones and Other Poems* draw attention to the issue of corruption, exploitation and the plundering of the nation's wealth by the ruling class that has controlled the political space after the colonial experience. The paradoxical texture of "Bees and the beast" lies in the rapid transformation that is characteristic in the class migration between the 'bees' and the 'beast'. The sense of camaraderie that prevailed in the land of the bees was shattered, self -aggrandizement and wanton wastage supplant prudence at the production of honey as:

Bees boasted
Became monsters and buzz happy

But flung down the curtain of partition
Between us the meek sufferers
Lording even over us
The former fellow custodians
Like the beasts from the cities and power circuits
The bees envied their rapists. (22)

But in "The Arc", the poet criticizes corrupt leaders whose bestial nature has turned them deaf to the reality of the vanity and ephemerality of wealth:

We thought we
Had it made
All of us
On the high arc of prosperity
....
We would not go down again
To the low dust of things
Where our youth rendezvoused
Materially poor (46)

The grotesque nature of Omatseye's use of'honey', which symbolizes crude oil, reverberates the politics and crises of oil exploration in Nigeria and the conspiracies or alliances between expatriates and ruling elites. The image of Honey is used as a resource that causes bitterness instead of its natural sweetness. Even though, he sees the inevitability of turmoil and bloodletting in the resolution he is hopeful that another time would come when:

The bees among us
Suddenly became us again
Sang like us
Nude like us
Ran like us. (24)

It is not certain whether the poet knew that kidnapping would metamorphose into a national tragedy when he wrote the poem with the title,"Kidnapper" in*Mandela's Bones and Other Poems. The heartlessness of the crime is exposed through a victim,* a little girl, in custody of her kidnapper. Just like in the poem, kidnapping for ransom, which goes with other vices such as alcoholism and other

addictions, has today become a massive business and means of survival for bandits. The victim is helpless in the hands of her captors:

So weep or whimper
Little girl
But I have no ears
Faint
I have no pharmacy
Speak
I have no philosophy

Tears and tragedy are my
Vital tools for toils
I'm sorry (56)

While Omatseye exposes the crime of kidnapping in his poem of that title, he answers the question of security of citizens in "Police and burning girl" where two policemen,who were supposed to be upholders of justice and protectors of the citizens, responded by merely by watching the victim burning "on her knees begging with her eyes". Although they have their weapons to save the victims

Their guns limp
Like their lips and limbs
Guns are not made to put out fires. (34)

The incident of the burning girl recasts the reprehensible and irresponsible nature of the nation's security outfit and overall ineptitude which has become characteristic of the entire security architecture of the country.

Omatseye's Advocacy and the Endless Quest for Utopia

There is no doubt that Omatseye has exposed the salient issues that affect the Nigerian state in his poetry. Although the issues point to hopelessness and gloom, the poet in encouraging perseverance, scribbles lines of hope and optimism. For example, Ramatu's mother had lost hope on life until she was saved by a man in "Samaritan cloak" in the last poem "Resurrection". After burying her child there was a heavy rainfall that softened the soil and allowed the baby to stretch her hand out from under. Some men saw this and took them to the hospital.

Maybe the water
Maybe the remorse of nature
Maybe the redeeming eye of God
But you yielded
Not to asphyxiation
But to the impulse of renewal(76)

The poet's use of "renewal" not only applied to the new life and fate that the child would experience, but to the general outlook in a nation. The renewal is like a rebirth, a baptism by the stormy rain that ushered into a new life and hope for a better future.

In *Mandela's Bones and Other Poems* "Angel of Mercy", like "My plea" in *Dear Baby Ramatu* emphasizes the need for forgiveness and kindness that the victims of the crimes of a nation need to give to their victimizers.

I came here that you may have life abundantly
In this desert
Of generous heat and heartless sands
I am an angel of mercy
But the mercy is yours to give
Don't let this wound win (38)

The poet does not gloss over the hurt suffered but points at the needlessness of revenge which has the tendency of compounding the crises and obviating cosmic intervention.

The angel can only function when there is mercy in his heart.
I have no weapon except compassion
My love to heal remnants of carnage
Like you
Angels of mercy
Have no material revenge
So please give me a hope
By clinging on to hope (38)

For Omatseye, the resolution of leadership crises begins with the head. In "Only a Governor", one of his poems on the crisis of leadership in *Lion, Wind and Other Poems* the poet harps on the fallibility of man with a veiled expectation that

those victimized by wrong actions of leadership would understand this principle. The emphasis in the poem is the humility in realizing frailty which, unfortunately, is an uncommon trait in the leaders who govern the space in the art of the poet:

I am only a governor
Not a god
Don't pour confetti
On my blood
...
Let me fear
Let me eat
Let me stumble
Over the stubble pile
Don't change the colour of my blood
It won't turn blue (56)

The poet is not oblivious of the fact that in dealing with recalcitrant leaders, frustrated citizens under the yoke of misrule may resort to violence but he canvasses against this option in "Mandela's bones" where he celebrated the iconic South African fighter, Nelson Mandela. He reminds the masses that:

It was silence
Not guns
That brought Pretoria
To its knees
....
So the armory did
Not need staccato arguments
Thuds and booms from bushes
Nor the sophistry of saints (34)

Like the South African apartheid experience, the poet sees stoic resistance, persistence and dialogue as more potent weapons of liberation of the masses in milieu where rights and dignity of citizens are being compromised.

However, it must be stressed that the 'silence' being advocated here is not a 'passive silence' that is steeped in indifference and amnesia as pointed out in "I should pray for you", "Pacifist" and "People", three poems in *Mandela's Bones and Other Poems*. In fact, the poet has called to question the docile nature of the present generation in "I

should pray for you", thus:

I should pray for you
Those whose faiths
Fatten on dead tales
Spun with a tiger's tail. (12)

As far as the poet is concerned the excuse that the "hungry never fight" is untenable because situations of hunger, which have now enveloped the space, had propelled fight for freedom in the past. The poet, with nostalgia says:

I will remember you
Our ancestor
Who always
Fought the battle and must regret
…
Your prophets looked into the future
But saw mirages instead of us
Palaces instead of ruined platforms of blood
Your dreams flattered you
If you knew better
You would have prayed
Or worked harder
But you thought you had planted
A miracle: we (14)

This tendency of inaction or lukewarmness is also re-echoed in "Pacifist" in these words as the poet warns against taking half way measures in addressing the situation:

Fullness
Is the quality of ripeness
Half measures
Are neither sun nor moon
… warm water
Unlike mama's pepper soup
Never burns (45)

The sarcasm in "People", leaves one without doubt that the people are displeased with the dehumanizing conditions they face but the hurdle is finding the rallying point and courage to unseat their annihilators and right the wrongs in the society.

Who are the people
Do I know the people
Can I see them
Or forgeries
I see creatures like silhouettes
In mists
...
They don't probe
They are prone to
All the wiles of weather
The protest streets are frozen
The righteous rage rump
In the forest clearing
They peer at power
With mousy eyes (77-75)

In all, the poet puts the blame of the decay in the nation on the leaders and the led making rife his call, for concerted efforts that would revive consciousness to responsibilities in "Plateau", a *Mandela's Bones and Other Poems poem*

We shall head there
The land beyond canine drool
No longer shall our flesh and blood
Field for their bloom (47)

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the situations mirrored by Omatseye in his poetry show his sense of nationalism weaving the life events that he encountered on the field of journalism into poetry. As at 2011 when he published *Lion, Wind and Other Poems* he saw the condition of the country as terrible and in need of urgent attention. He was unequivocal in his call for urgent intervention in "What the prophet said" where the nation he likens to "Babylon" was doomed to destruction. Despite the prediction of famine and plague the people, oblivious of the fact that clairvoyance runs with much benefit of hindsight, have continued in their dastardly acts:

Town crier proclaims
An empty barn

Worms more prosperous
Eat at the harvester

But in the night flurries
Revelry denies testimony
The whore has her potion
The lair has profit...
On the roadside tree
A rotten apple hangs
What did the prophet say? (26)

Apparently, there seems to be a disagreement between what the poet, [the prophet] saw and the realities that confront the people. Not that the sins that invite dooms were not prevalent but the consequence of those actions were yet to materialize. Sadly, the vices that Omatseye pointed out in his poetry have today worsened, unlike before, the nation is beginning to see the manifestations of the prophecy making his parody of the wasteland, in his Babylon symbolism, more rife to call for urgent intervention.

Works Cited

Achebe, Chinua. "What Has Literature got to do with it?" In *Radical Essays on Nigerian Literatures*. G.G. Darah (Ed). Malthouse, 2008.

Boniface Obichere cited in Bodunde, Charles. *Oral Traditions and Aesthetic Transfer: Creativity and Social Vision in Contemporary Black Poetry*. Bayreuth University, 2001.

Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie & Ihechukwu Madubuike. *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature*. Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980.

Garuba, Harry. "The Poetics of Possibility: A Study of Femi Osofisan's *The Chattering and The Song* and *Morountodun*". In *The Postcolonial Lamp: Essays in Honour of Dan Izevbaye*.Aderemi Raji-Oyelade & Oyeniyi Okunoye (Eds). Bookcraft, 2008.

Macebuh Stanley. "Poetics and the Mythic Imagination". *In Perspectives on Wole Soyinka: Freedom and Complexity.* Biodun Jeyifo (Ed). University of Mississippi, 2001.

Msiska, Mpalive- Hangson. "Divine Ways of Cognition: The Burden of the Poet-Seer in Soyinka's Idanre". In *The Soyinka Impulse: Essays on Wole Soyinka.* Duro Oni & Bisi Adigun (Eds) Bookctaft, 2019.

Obasoro, Hannah. Personal Interview. With Sam Omatseye on 20th March, 2016.

Ogundele, Wole. "An Appraisal of the Critical Legacies of the 1980's Revolution in Nigerian Poetry in English". In *The Postcolonial Lamp: Essays in Honour of Dan Izevbaye.* Aderemi Raji-Oyelade & Oyeniyi Okunoye (Eds). Bookcraft, 2008.

Ojaide, Tanure. *In Winging Words: Interviews With Nigerian Writers and Critics.* Ezenwa- Ohaeto (Ed.) Kraft Books. 2003.

Okri, Ben. *The Famished Road.* Jonathan Cape. 1991.

Omatseye, Sam. *Dear Baby Ramatu.* Kraft Books, 2009.

Omatseye, Sam. *Mandela's Bones and Other Poems.* Kraft Books, 2009.

Omatseye, Sam. *Lion, Wind and Other Poems.* kraft Books, 2011.

Osundare, Niyi. *Dialogue With My Country.* Bookcraft, 2007.

Kayode Niyi Afolayan, PhD, is a lecturer at the Department of English, University of Ilorin, Kwara State. Email: kay4layan@yahoo.com

Obasoro Hannah is a lecturer at the Department of English, University of Ilorin, Kwara State.