

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**A STUDY OF THE ELEMENTS OF ORALITY AND PERFORMANCE IN
SELECTED POEMS FROM NIYI OSUNDARE'S *THE EYE OF THE EARTH*
AND *SONGS OF THE MARKETPLACE***



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**A THESIS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH EDUCATION, FACULTY
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REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARD OF THE MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY OF
ENGLISH DEGREE (LITERATURE)**

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, CECILIA UTSALO TRIUMPH ELAKI, declare that this thesis is my own handiwork and it is the document of my own research. This has not been presented for any earlier degree for award. The works of other authors used for this work have been properly acknowledged, quoted and referenced.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in consonance with the guidelines for supervision of Thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: Dr. Emmanuel Saboro

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DATE:

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DEDICATION

To the loving and cherished memory of my late father, Lawrence Utsalo in the company of my three brothers, Christopher Utsalo, Camillus Utsalo and Gabriel Utsalo and my God-given sister-in-law, Mummy Reen Utsalo. May they Rest in Peace. Amen!



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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the elements of orality and performance in modern African poetry, particularly Osundare's selected poems. The aim is to observe how Osundare uses the elements of orality in selected poems in *The Eye of the Earth* and *Songs of the Marketplace* volumes to present the African human experience. The theoretical framework for this research is the formalistic approach. The analysis is based on ten selected poems each from Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth* and *Songs of the Marketplace* volumes and the elements of orality and performance explored. The study reveals that the poet combines orality with performance. The elements of orality covered in both volumes are proverbs, riddles, *Oriki* (Yoruba panegyric), local names, music and dance, repetitions and refrains and the personal pronouns that signal dialogue; the curse prayers; *Babalawo*- the traditional priests; the pantheon of gods; dirge and incantations among others. However, in *The Eye of the Earth*, the elements of performance are explicit - the poet suggests that various kinds of musical instruments be employed and the volume is also about the non - human nature. In *Songs of the Marketplace*, performance is implicit - deductions are made from the combination of word structure. *Songs of the Marketplace* is about people - the human nature. The study is therefore relevant for pedagogy, in the teaching and learning of literature and in the area of academia, for the analysis of orality and performance in African literature.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a general framework for the study. It discusses the background of the study, methodology, the statement of the research problem, the purpose of the study and the research questions. The chapter also discusses the significance, limitation of the study, the structure of the study, and concludes with a summary of the introductory chapter.

1.1 Background to the study

Africa is a continent that is well known for its oral and cultural heritage. African literary writers have been influenced by the oral tradition. Writers have tapped from the rich African cultural heritage in their various compositions. (Ruma, 2005, p.196) is of the view that even the least contact with African literature written in the language of the white man shows the oral history or the ancestral nature. As a result, whenever writers attempt to transmit their experiences to humankind through the channel of literature, there is that possibility that they will, either consciously or unconsciously, have recourse to:

the rich repertoire of oral tradition that exist in their societies. Consequently, the African culture becomes a rich source for themes and motifs with which to structure and give a coherent shape to their experiences in the form of poetry, drama, and most especially the novel.

(Ruma, 2005, p.196) goes further to suggest that most of the African writers are ever conscious of their rich African heritage and so in talking about the African experience, “it thus becomes a formidable tool for self-critique for many African

writers that appropriate its performance dialectic especially in challenging social, political and economic” misdemeanor of the people as a whole and the totalitarian regimes in particular, (Ruma, *ibid*). The poets weave in some aspects of their people’s values, beliefs and ideologies. Writers like Chinua Achebe, Ama Ata Aidoo, Buchi Emecheta, Ngugi wa Thiong’o and many others come to mind as they have made great use of their oral traditions. Elements of orality can be found in the poetry of many other African writers such as Wole Soyinka, Kofi Anyidoho, David Diop, Okot p’Bitek, Oswald Mtshali, Dennis Brutus, Kofi Awoonor, Gabriel Okara and Niyi Osundare, to mention but a few.

The term “Oral Tradition”, as suggested by Adedeji cited in (Bodunde, 1992, p.24), is the “complex corpus of verbal or spoken art created as a means of recalling the past.” He continues to say that it is “based on the ideas, beliefs, symbols, assumptions, attitudes and sentiments of peoples.” He goes further to say that the means of acquiring it is “through the process of learning or initiation and its purpose is to condition social action and foster social interaction.”

(Egudu, 1978, p.5) sees the various modern African poets as recreating the tradition, the old into the new. He argues, for example, that the African experience is thematised in African poetry. For him, African poetry “is intimately concerned with the African people in the African society, with their life in its various ramifications— cultural, social, economic, intellectual, and political”.

(Aidoo, 1967, p.10) also suggests that it is the old that informs the new. She posits that, the literary writers of the different genres value the rich African heritage and therefore employ them in their writings. Aidoo puts it this way:

From various cultures, sacred songs, praise poems, religious chants, funeral dirges have influenced the poets writing in English who have mediated between inherited African modes and poetic techniques... in some cases, the poem was first written in the indigenous language as in P'Bitek's *Song of Lawino*.

(Okpewho, 1990) is also of the opinion that it is the rich cultural heritage of Africa that goes into the modern African poetry in one way or the other and this has contributed to the unique nature of modern African poetry and other aspects in the richness of the expression of the African experience by artists. He continues to say that many African artists who have used varied media of expression have been very successful in various ways because they have used this media out of the rich individual traditions at every level, be it structure, style or theme, to create their own compositions. For instance, Soyinka employs them in drama to mention but one of his genres; likewise, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi, Ahmadou Kourouma in the novel and Okot P'Bitek and Okello Okuli in poetry are well known for their use of oral tradition.

(Finnegan, 2007, p.2) also opines that, even before the European incursion, Africans had their traditional practices and ways of life and that Africa has been recognised as the best when it comes to orality and that it is the means by which Africa's existence is dependent. Finnegan further postulates that, orature is the foundation from which modern African literature must draw nourishment and sustenance if modern African Literature will thrive, it must, that it essentially depend on orature. She goes further to say:

Oral tradition, speech, the verbal arts, orality, voice audition words, Africa - the images and the experiences hang together. They have played a crucial role in the delineation not only of Africa, but also, by their contrasts, of the 'modernity' of the West.

Finnegan draws our attention to the fact that it is not only in the modern African literary writings that their authors have used the oral tradition to create the modern invention; and that the use of the old in the creation of the modern writings is seen in the new works of Europeans. "This inclusion of Western literature as part of oral tradition unequivocally indicates that Finnegan, as an oral-tradition critic, later wanted to proclaim the universal nature of oral tradition." (Cloete, M. J. & Madadzhe R. N. p.1), (Finnegan, 1970, p.1) clearly states it is not to African literature alone that the oral tradition belongs but that it is the base form and important part of all literatures. (Mphahlele, 1970, p.1) long ago declared oral tradition to have been "a universal phenomenon through the ages, and not something confined to Africa." Likewise, (Agatucci, 1998, p.1) agrees that oral tradition still resonates in modern African literatures and it goes on "to enrich the global human experience and its creative expressions." These views of the various scholars give an evaluation of how valuable the oral tradition is. For, according to (Agatucci, *ibid*), "every human culture in the world seems to create stories (narratives) as a way of making sense of the world." This shows that it is very important to borrow from the orature of the past in the creation of the avant-garde. (Abdallah, 1987, p.8) in his preface to his play, *The Trial of Mallam Illya and other Plays*, recommends African literary writers, more especially the dramatists, to make use of their rich cultural heritage in the creation of their works of the African human experience and equally reject whatever we should and at the same time throw away, in his claim:

It is time for African playwrights to set their own cultural heritage, our history and totality of the African experience to create the criteria for judging our own work. Our theatre must narrow for us what in our culture we must keep and improve upon and what we must reject and discard.

The worlds from which modern African literature and poetry in particular emerged are as follows:

The indigenous tradition of African people is one of the ways from which modern African literature emerged. Some of the indigenous ideals such as rituals, were utilised to create modern African poetry. For example, in Soyinka's "Death in the Dawn," he uses indigenous traditional context to create the poem. Also, Soyinka's "Idanre" is based on indigenous Yoruba religious concept where the pantheon of their gods is recalled. Osundare and Soyinka, in most of their poems, use the Yoruba traditions to create their modern poetry; likewise, other poets in Africa as well as outside the African continent employ this oral art. This shows how enriching orality is in the creation of literary works such as prose, poetry and drama.

Another area of emergence of modern African literature and poetry in particular is the colonisation of African people in the European powers namely- British, French, Portuguese, among others; so writers started to compose on colonisation and its effect on the people of Africa. Another element of colonisation in Africa is traced to the coming of the Dutch settlers to South Africa which caused great destruction to natives. The first collection of poems from South Africa is called *Songs of the Cowhide*. This collection speaks volumes of the horrible situation of the ordinary person in South Africa due to the emergence of the Dutch settlers who, upon arrival, demarcated land for the indigenes as regards where they must tread, the

market they must buy and sell in and where they must not. These aliens even defined the sort of jobs the owners of the land must do and the pay they must take home. The foreigners made several other crooked rules to make life unbearable for the indigenous South African. This is the reason why most of their poems during that era were protest poems. In many other African states as well, the indigenes were equally enslaved and they were made to toil for the foreigners, who at the end of the day took the best of the land.

The people of Africa were no longer comfortable with the ways of the colonial masters. In their discomfort they followed just what Karl Marx suggests; that if the working class is not comfortable with the prevailing conditions in their land, they should revolt. They sought their freedom and majority of the different countries in Africa attained their independence in different years. African decolonisation, the third aspect of the world that modern African literature covered, is - the struggle to free Africans from colonialism - the fight, some of which were physical and others were through the use of pen. A typical example is Dennis Brutus who says he will use his pen since he has been prevented from doing anything in the name of Africa- especially speaking publicly; he will quietly use the pen to convey all he needs to say.

Finally, most of the African states got their independence so poets started to talk about African independence. Africans fought for their independence; they fought for liberation and the black race won, but this was nothing to write home about. It was not the dream independence the people of Africa were yearning for. (Muzindi, 2014) talks about what African poetry is about. First, “it is about the desire to express the beauty in blackness, ... protest against colonialism, the struggle and overthrow of the bourgeois regimes and,” then finally, “regrettably, the post-colonial disillusionment caused by neocolonialism and betrayal by fellow black leaders.” Likewise, (Kehinde,

2004, p.228) is of the same view that: “Initially, African literature was a tool for celebrating the heroic grandeur of the African past; later it was used for anti-colonial struggle. Presently, it is being employed as a veritable weapon for depicting the postcolonial disillusionment in African nations.” These statements by (Muzindi, 2014, p.515) and (Kehinde, 2004, p.228) declare that Africans, upon attaining their independence, the oppression that black leaders meted out to their fellow blacks or the ‘common man,’ was terrible indeed. Positions have therefore been exchanged; where in the past their woes were caused by the white imperialists, now, it is the black imperialists.

Africans gained their independence but then the reflection of independence feature in scholarly writings as that of disillusionment, as already shown above, concerning the different parts of Africa. This means that Africans are disappointed for what they see before them is not the kind of independence they dreamt of. Also, (Muzindi, 2014, p.508) postulates: “Later, African poets composed to comment on the post-independence situation, describing their frustrations and disillusionments since nothing really changed, if anything, getting worse.” The Africans are disappointed in their independence because of irrational policies from government. From disillusionment we can see the military and the government-disillusionment in politics. This is the world from which modern African poetry has emerged and there is still economic dependence; there is insecurity of democracy. Claude Walther says the year of African independence was 1960, marking the year of European tutelage - it summarises the African war, colonised, decolonised, the insecurity of the African independence. The landmark of African independence was 1960. Some fifteen (15) years later, the number of coup d'états in Africa were already thirty (30), not counting the aborted coups. Some very important countries in Africa like Nigeria, were already

torn apart as a result of this post-colonial unrest. In Ethiopia, the longest reigning monarch, Haile Sellassi, was overthrown. The past of African glowing history is lost and gone.

Irrespective of the worlds that form the backgrounds of modern African poetry, one thing which is clearly visible is that they all have the traditional / cultural elements in them. This oral nature is not only common to modern African poetry but even to the poems that are not about the indigenous and not by the indigenous Africans. This means that oral tradition is therefore not restricted to only literary works in Africa but it is also visible in foreign literary works. This is exactly where Osundare's poetry is coming from; the poet makes extensive use of the oral tradition of his ancestors. With his poetry, he condemns the harm politicians and the so called wealthy ones in the post-independent Nigerian society have caused the common man.

1.2 Niyi Osundare and His Poetry

Osundare was born in 1947 and bred in Ikere Ekiti, a village in western Nigeria, by Yoruba parents. He describes himself as "farmer-born peasant-bred," in his poem "Farmer-Born." The poet's father was a famous village musician, and his paternal grandfather was a diviner-physician; in divination, there are repetitions and these repetitions bring about its musical nature. Little wonder, therefore, that everything about the poet's poems is so musical. While still a child, Osundare would accompany his grandfather into the forest to collect roots and herbs for curing all sorts of ailments. Fundamental in this healing process was the use of incantations to mix the medicines to life. At an early age, Osundare came to have the power and knowledge of the importance of nature and language. It is again not surprising that the poet is a poet of nature, for he portrays nature in most of his poems.

He had his secondary education at Amoye Grammar school, Ikere Ekiti and Christ School, Ado Ekiti. Later, he went to the University of Ibadan, where he studied English and graduated in 1972 with B. A. Honors. Then he moved to England to pursue his master's degree at the University of Leeds, and later he went to Toronto in Canada to attend York University, where he acquired his doctorate degree. In 1982 he returned to Nigeria to lecture at the University of Ibadan. Osundare won the first of two scholar-in-residence fellowships to work at the University of Wisconsin in 1990. His second partnership was in 1997 to the University of New Orleans, there he came to be a full professor of English. Osundare is much committed to speak for the marginalised peasants. His works clearly exhibit his own concept on the relationship between the oppressed individual and the sort of leaders there. Osundare addresses a lot of themes in his works: poverty, corruption and mismanagement by government officials. According to (Amansie, Kaan & Nwabudike 2013, p.63), writers over the years, especially “African writers have employed several devices in their works over the years to confront the menace of repression and bad leadership in post independent Africa.” Also covered in the poet’s works is the protracted effect of colonialism on the African soil. His works challenge corruption and dictatorship, be it civilian or military.

One of the principal elements of Osundare's poetry is music. The poet is of the opinion that music should be experienced orally; in his later works, he puts in musical directions. The poet claims that when he performs in Nigeria, he is backed by a number of musicians with various kinds of drums. Each of the drums he says has their own kind of symbolic message. The drums are very important as tools of expression and interpretation. Further, he states that poetry flows, it is rhythm. And the rhythm is in every single word, every syllable. His language, Yoruba, he says, is music.

Osundare's first collection is *Songs of the Marketplace*, published in (1983). His musical values are showcased throughout this volume. Its title refers to the liveliness of African markets, which serve as places for gathering for community socialisation as well as for commercial purposes. Though there is implied African music and culture in Osundare's poems in general, his individual poems are so significant of the social and political truth that troubles modern Nigeria. This is the reason why in the poem "Excursion," Osundare presents a litany of African poverty, and then distinguishes them with the insensitivity of the rich and powerful: "Several government people / have passed through these streets / several Mercedes tyres have drenched / gaunt road liners in sewer water." In *Village Voices*, his second volume, published in (1984), Osundare continued to bewail social and economic disparity in Nigeria. For him, this dissimilarity should not be the case, especially after the oil industry brought extraordinary wealth to the nobility together with unparalleled corruption of top officials and greed throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In 1986 he published an essay, *The Writer as Righter: The African Literary Artist and His Social Obligations*, in which he gave his thought on the role writers should play in exposing social injustices in the African continent. Osundare resumed poetry in *A Nib in the Pond* published in (1986) with a distinct Marxist agenda. He devoted most of his poems to Heads like Fidel Agostinho Neto and Castro. Osundare began to address environmental issues in his poetry in *The Eye of the Earth* (1986); this became his interest in this work. In another publication, *Songs of the Season* (1990), Osundare purposely clothed his poems in simple language so that a wider audience could be reached. In the form of tributes, parables satires, and dialogues, he discusses in the poems national and international issues of the time. "It's the Harmattan," won him the first prize in the 1968 Western State Festival of Art and Culture. Likewise, the

collection, *Waiting Laughters*, won Osundare the Noma Prize in 1990. This collection is for performance and goes with music. In 1993, Osundare published *Midlife*, and came to be more personal in the subject-matter, especially reviewing the dormancy of his homeland through his own experiences as a man in his prime. In 1998, he published *Horses of Memory*, which is more voluminous; he was triggered by the Nigerians' grave need for political change and the country's communal remembrance of its distress and woes. In Osundare's other collection, *The Word Is an Egg* (2000), he creates poems that focus on writing in the language of the colonisers. The power of language comes to bear on the role words play in creating national and individual identity, and the socio-political abuse of language as regards suppression and illiteracy. Osundare's 2006 collection, *Tender Moments*, (Post-Hurricane Katrina, collection) is not about politics and social ills that he usually addresses, but, rather, it is about the complications in human relationships.

Osundare wants the majority of the people for whom he writes to be able to read and understand his poetry so the poet says he does not believe in the sophisticated sort of language where one will require an interpreter. Osundare's choice of words is very moderate and his interest in style is evident in his use of language. Simply put, he says: "My poetry is strongly influenced by Yoruba poetics. Mine is the figured fancy. Metaphor, simile, hyperbole, metonymy and other figures of speech populate the lines as fishes do a fertile river" ('Guardian' Sunday July 10, 2005).

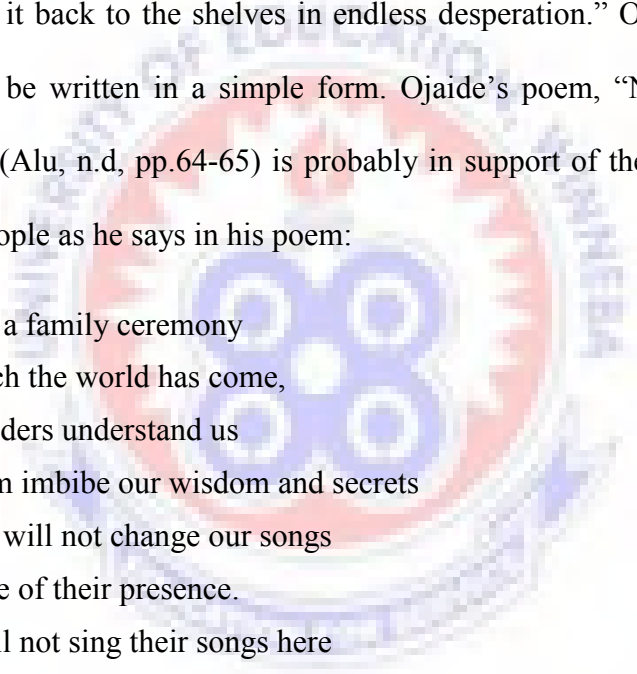
A brief look at the poet's language style in *Songs of the Marketplace* and *The Eye of the Earth*, shows that Osundare is fond of his Yoruba tradition. He employs this local language alongside the English language to produce unique volumes of poetry. Though many African literary writers like Ngugi, at their Kampala conference

which was organised in 1962 to talk about the proper medium to compose in, have raised the concerns that African writers should write in their native languages in order to completely forget everything about the oppressor, it was, however, made clear by many of the literary writers that writing in English as a medium was not and should not be a problem. (Achebe, 1964) posits that, for him, English language will be capable of carrying the weight of the African human experience but, then, it will have to be new English that is still in complete unity with his home of ancestry but changed to suit new African environments. Osundare, though he was not present at the conference at Makerere, where they debated on whether or not English language was the problem, employs the English language and just as (Achebe, 1975, p. 62) asserts, it is a new English that ‘communes with his ancestral home’ and almost everything is done in his Yoruba oral tradition. He gives a detailed explanation for non-natives to get an understanding of what he means, in the footnotes. Though not the meaning of every word is accounted for in English, majority of the Yoruba words are. In the poet’s creation, we find his Yoruba traditional lore, the proverbs, idiomatic expressions and parables, riddles, dirges and music, among others.

In one of the two collections for this research, the poet redefines poetry, in lines 25-34 (p.4) of *Songs of the Marketplace*, and that is Osundare’s philosophy- that poetry should not be so difficult to the extent that only very few could make meaning out of it. If poetry is too difficult, then it becomes an “oracle’s kernel for a sole philosopher’s stone.”

The poet believes in coming to the grass root level for the majority to understand him, more especially the peasants for whom he writes. He says he does not mean that poetry should be oversimplified but that, basically, people should get the message when they read or listen and therefore don’t have to go after an interpreter. It

is “no oracle’s kernel.” In the traditional system, when one comes to seek the face of God, it is only the *Babalawo*, the chief priest of the gods who can read the divination to tell the client what the ancestors or the deities said and what the future holds for them. Osundare uses the language in such a way that people can get a fair idea of what he means. In his epigram to this volume, he says, “I made an unbreakable pledge to myself that the people would find their voices in my song.” (Babatunde, 2011, p.249) says of Osundare: “Niyi Osundare, a poet and critic, accused Soyinka of using words that could not be easily comprehended by all.” He states, “are we supposed to read it or toss it back to the shelves in endless desperation.” Osundare suggests that poetry should be written in a simple form. Ojaide’s poem, “Naked Words” (1987, p.11) cited in (Alu, n.d, pp.64-65) is probably in support of the need to come to the level of the people as he says in his poem:



This is a family ceremony
to which the world has come,
If outsiders understand us
let them imbibe our wisdom and secrets
but we will not change our songs
because of their presence.
We will not sing their songs here
To show that we have heard them
sing about themselves,
Let us not learn from teachers
who have no love for our land.
We must speak the truth
about ourselves to ourselves.
Without interpreters, middlemen.

The poet therefore deploys the use of his native language in some lines; he uses his traditional words to make the people feel completely at home. So, he is very

close to them and they are close to him, just as it was done by the fireside in those days. Osundare, by combining the English language with his native language, exposes the socio-economic problem in his continent and in his country, Nigeria, and he advocates a revolution. The understanding of his poems is one of his priorities and, at the same time, he agrees that a poem should not be oversimplified.

In an interview with Shaffa cited in (Alu, 1998, p.68), he declares concerning Osundare:

A poet who writes poems that don't require any energy, any spiritual and mental exercise to understand is not a poet, is a writer of doggerels. At the same time a poet who writes such poems that cannot be understood except by himself or one or two others is not a poet. He is a juggler, a magician.

He, however, argues that the diction of his poetry is not the oversimplified kind as some people assume, otherwise, it will not pass for poetry but that it is the kind that the people for whom he writes can understand.

Also, (Anyokwu, 2015, p.1) presumes that Osundare's arrival on the literary scene was to help rescue the art from ambiguity. "The socio-cultural and historical background or context of Osundare's emergence – family, schooling, village setting, and prevailing ideology ... went a long way in moulding and shaping him for the kind of poetry for which he has come to be known, namely: the poetry of performance."

Further, Osundare's poetry often includes musical directions because he believes poetry should be felt orally. He has said: "I have a number of musicians backing me up with different kinds of drums. Each drum has its own kind of symbolic message. The drums are very important, as tools of expression and interpretation. My

language, Yoruba, is music," (*Black literature criticism; classic and emerging authors since 1950*. January 1, 2008, Osundare, Niyi 1947) (Retrieved 30th August, 2016)

In *Songs of the Marketplace*, which is mainly about human nature, the poet visits the ailing populace in their various environments, bringing out their problems and telling them the way out. The poems are mainly concerned with the sufferings and injustices of the common people. In *The Eye of the Earth*, which is purely about man and nature, he celebrates his tradition, the rich Yoruba cultural heritage in the fauna, the rocks, rivers, mountains and pyramids that have powers. "Osundare takes his audience by the hand and leads them into the rain forests of Africa so as to reenact the seasonal rituals of farming, for which his father was known," (Anyokwu, 2009, p.6). The poet shows how generous nature is in giving and how ungrateful humans can be in receiving and not preserving and this same humankind is the one bringing about destruction, erosion and desertification, of which foreigners play a key role. He talks about the economic and cultural heritage of his people. Osundare joins his people to reverence nature; he does his best to preserve the traditional mythology which has granted communal unity to them all. (Akingbe, 2014, p.192) again testifies that Osundare brands his poems with the oral tradition of his ancestors: "Orature is the traditional medium of Niyi Osundare, who often identifies with the misery and poverty of the masses in his poetry."

In a similar realm, (Odinye, 2015, p.1) is of the opinion that Osundare's "poems exhibit different characteristics of oral poetry extensively borrowed from his traditional oral background." It is also discovered that Osundare employed the traditional patterns of Yoruba poetic composition in writing which has influenced his style of poetry.

(Ogunyemi, 2011, p.230) also attests that: “Osundare’s poems are mythical, cultural and philosophical.” This means that the poet writes poems based on his Yoruba mythology and the way of life of his people. It is therefore important to tap from the cultural heritage of Africa to create unique volumes of poems.

(Afolayon, 2010, p.133) is of the view that Osundare’s “delight is not only in the use of diverse use of folklore but also in the integration of performance in the poems of social mediation.” Afolayon is in agreement with Ogunyemi, but he also adds that Osundare not only employs the folklore of his ancestors but he goes further to include performance in his poetry.

More so, (Ogoanah, 2003, p.5) cited in (Nwagbara, 2012, p.2), says, “Osundare in all his artistic enterprise envisions hope and light at the end of the tunnel. He is an optimist as well as a humanist.” Ogoanah suggests that the poems of Osundare carry hope along for the people for whom he writes, the peasants and the under-trodden in society.

In this modern time, when many Africans are no longer proud of their ancestral way of life and when many of them also know little or nothing about their tradition; through this review of literature, orality could therefore be seen as an ornament with which the poet adorns his compositions. He is also versatile in the deployment of the old in his volumes. The researcher chose to research into Osundare’s selected poems because he is one of the literary artists who have used their voice to speak, fight and defend the people through their literary compositions; a man who is very proud of his Yoruba traditional practices and who is so renowned in literary writings which are foregrounded in his Yoruba oral tradition and myths. This, among others, is the reason why this researcher singled him out to see how he

employed the oral tradition and how far he went with the creation of this old oral tradition in *The Eye of the Earth* and *Songs of the Marketplace*. Osundare is one of the modern African poets that belong to the third generation of Nigerian poets. He borrows from his Yoruba tradition. He covers their staple foods, their occupations, their herbs and plants their worship and belief systems, their pantheon of god, their rocks and vegetation that are said to possess certain powers and spirits he did not spare. Osundare goes further to talk about their rivers. One of such rivers actually passes through his village in Ikere. He employs music, proverbs, riddles, parables, wise-sayings, the praise poetry of his people, “Oriki”, dirge and the mythology of their folklore. For Osundare, “looking back is looking forward; the visionary artist is not only a rememberer, he is also a reminder” (Preface to *The Eye of the Earth*, p.x). The poet speaks about the experience of the African people through the use of his orality. He warns against forgetting the African past. Osundare, posits that the collection of *The Eye of the Earth* is a voyage into the periods when the head remains on earth’s neck and the hand also grows only five fingers.

A critical reflection on Osundare’s poetry suggests that things are no longer the way they used to be. This is exactly why he says in one of his poems, “I Sing of Change.” In his other volume, *Songs of the Marketplace*, he says the poems “are essentially the expression of a critical awareness in his exploration of the social situation in contemporary Nigeria,” (Preface to, *Songs of the Marketplace*, p.i). The poet is very important because he writes about “the dispossession of the majority of his people and more specifically of the rural producers”, (Introduction to, *Songs of the Marketplace*, p.xi) through the use of ancestral oral tradition; he, as well, envisages a revolution. This is exactly said to be the “grand theme of Osundare’s poetry”, (ibid). In bringing out this theme, his poetry is sturdily enveloped in metaphor and imagery,

proverbs and aphorisms. The poet further suggests that there should be performance in his collection with different musical instruments.

1.3 Performance in Poetry

Performance is a very important aspect of poetry. This aspect is what brings orality to life as in the past when the people gather to dramatise their culture and tradition as they drum, sing, dance and show gestures and other body movements of various kinds as befitting the occasion. Very often, this is not put on paper when authors and poets in particular compose; it has been more of theory than practise and little or nothing is mentioned about this important aspect, performance. (Agyekum, 1999, p.22) is of the assertion that “Oral literature is by definition dependent on a performer who formulates it in words on a specific occasion - there is no other way in which it can be realised as a literary product without performance”. This is why (Anyidoho, 2010, p. 382) seeks to advocate for the dramatisation of written poetry for stage presentation to the gathered audience because “our people do not have eyes to witness the poetry of print but do have ears for the power of the sound and sense of words.” Anyidoho postulates that, in Ewe, poetry is termed “ha or heno” and that the terms show that poetry and music come about as a combined art. Therefore, “almost invariably the poet is also a composer and / or singer. In the actual public performance of his role, the picture becomes even more complex, for the poet-singer performs as part of an ensemble of drummers, dancers, and singers.” Kofi Awoonor is also of the view that, in Ewe, poetry ‘comes to life’ when performed with drums and in the accompaniment of songs. It is not only in Ewe that poetry is performed but also in other African countries. In South Africa, for instance, Kunene, cited by (Anyidoho, 2010, p.383), states:

Zulu poetry being communal requires a special method of presentation. The poet does not just recite his poetry but acts it, uses variation of pitch, and aims at communicating his poem through the stimulation of all senses. He produces at one level a symphonic chant, at another, drama, and still another, music.

Until performance takes place, the poet and the poem are only slaves to the written or printed medium, but they are liberated and 'lifted from the cold print' only when there is performance through the use of 'body language, voice, pause, tempo, gesture, and paralinguistic techniques. Poetry is therefore brought to a 'warm and living experience' and this is what the audience is at home with and they spontaneously participate at various levels and they also give encouraging comments or they applaud the performer(s). It is therefore not a surprise that (Apronti, 1979) refers to Atukwei Okai as the most appealing Ghanaian poet of the 1970s and he (Apronti) also calls him the man that turned poetry recital into an event that is public this is as a result of his special performance style, which fittingly captures and communicates what has been described on print as the great increase of his poetry. In the same vein of performance, Julien Pearn, cited in "Poetry and Performance" by Anyidoho, also celebrates Braithwaite as "one of the most innovative poets" said to have equally influenced a wide audience that is most of the time not literary, and has made way for a truly popular concern and interest in performance of poetry throughout the commonwealth Caribbean and this, is what Zagba Oyortey would call largely on account of the dramatic quality of his performance.

There is a higher level of performance when there is little or no reference at all to the script to be performed and it is memorised and "assimilated into an artistic design that makes for spontaneity of performance reinforced by a more elaborate use of body language" and paralanguage devices.

Music, which is another important element of performance may be fused into the text of the poem as is visible in the works of poets like Asiedu Aboagye, Kobena Acquah and Atukwei Okai. Very often, however, the music is performed as opening, background, refrain or at the ending. The engagement of all the devices mentioned earlier leads the audience into the performance even without a direct invitation by the poet and performer. The poet may also make room for the audience to join in participation at certain, regular, intervals by creating a style. Performance in poetry is a new rendition whereby poetry is taken out of the books and brought to the people alive as it was in the oral form and the performer together with the audience, play the drums, alongside other different kinds of instruments with music and paralanguage in the African way.

1.4 Methodology

This thesis is a qualitative library research this is because the researcher's interest is in the close reading of the poems. The data is based on primary and secondary materials. For the primary data, the analysis centers on the ten selected poems each from the *Eye of the Earth* and *Songs from the Marketplace* volumes respectively. The reason for the choice of ten each is that it will help to reveal a certain pattern that will carry what the researcher is looking for. For the secondary data, scholarly works related to the topic under research from journals, books, theses (library and internet sources), both published and unpublished are examined. The researcher picks one poem after the other, reads through intensively to fish out the elements of orality and performance. Immediately after the critical reading of each poem, the researcher foregrounds beside the title of the poem for analysis the elements of orality in a pair of brackets. The form of the poem is discussed alongside with the elements of orality and performance.

1.5 Statement of the Problem

A great deal of criticism has over the years emerged on Osundare's poetry mostly focusing on areas such as the concerns of the Nigerian society through the medium of oral tradition, aesthetics, stylistic analysis, Osundare's poetry and the Yoruba Worldview, to mention but a few. For instance, (Luga, 2004) looks at the survey of Nigerian poetry and the influence of oral tradition on modern African poetry with a close look at Osundare's selected poems; (Anyokwu, 2009) reviews the relationship between myth and history from an African vista, the poetry of Osundare. In (Anyokwu, 2011) he is interested in the analysis of Osundare's use of the indigenous Yoruba concepts and traditions of Yoruba culture; (Ogunyemi, 2011) surveys the inherent themes in modern African poetry; (Yomi, 2012) studies proverbs as an aesthetics of meaning in Osundare's *Village* and he again looks at the pattern of parallelism as a collection of meaning in Osundare's poetry. (Onarinde, 2013) is equally concerned with modern African poetry and oral tradition and the fundamental themes; (Akingbe, 2014) carries out an analysis of the use of satire in the selected poems of some modern Nigerian poets; (Anyokwu, 2015) is also interested in what he calls the essentials of Osundare's poetry, which is also about orality.

A lot of research have therefore been carried out on the volumes of Osundare as exemplified above. All these have bearing on what I am doing, which is orality. On the contrary, little attention has been paid to the elements of orality alongside performance. Performance is crucial because this is the aspect that makes oral tradition come to life. This thesis thus builds upon existing literature as a basis to help reflect on the elements of orality and performance in the selected poems of Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth* and *Songs of the Marketplace*.

1.6 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is therefore to find out how Osundare deploys the elements of orality and performance in the selected poems in *The Eye of the Earth* and *Songs from the Marketplace* volumes.

1.7 Research Questions

This research seeks to address the following questions:

1. What specific elements of orality are found in the selected poems of Osundare?
2. How does Osundare use the elements of orality and performance in *Songs of the Marketplace* and *The Eye of the Earth* volumes?
3. Are there similarities and differences in the way Osundare deploys the elements of orality and performance in the selected poems in *The Eye of the Earth* and *Songs of the Marketplace* volumes?

1.8 Significance of the Study

This research work is significant to pedagogy, research and knowledge; it will contribute immensely to the teaching and learning of literature more importantly in revealing how the elements of orality and performance can be employed in literary texts. In the area of research, this study will serve as a resource material adding to the existing body of literature from which a variety of knowledge can be tapped.

1.9 Delimitations

This thesis focuses on only the selected poems from two of Osundare's numerous volumes in investigating mainly the elements of orality and performance.

1.10 Structure of the Study

This study is structured into five chapters: Chapter one covers introduction, the world that forms the background of modern African poetry, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study and limitations of the study. Chapter two deals with the literature review; it examines poetry as a literary vehicle. The related literature review analyses scholarly views on the issues of modern African poetry and its orality, and throws light on the scholarly works on Osundare's poetry. Chapter three centers on the analysis of the elements of orality and performance from the selected poems. Chapter four dwells on the findings and discussions on the analysis of data; the study is brought to an end in chapter five with a conclusion. Here, summaries drawn from the analyses are provided, as well as recommendations for further research.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter examined the background to the study. The researcher examined Africa and the oral tradition and how literary writers came to be associated with this tradition which is glaring in their compositions of the various genres, the statement of the problem and purpose of the study were stated, the problem the researcher attempts to research into was specified, research questions that the researcher will unearth answers to were stated, significance of the study was covered, the limitation of the study was also discussed.

A brief introduction of the research method to be used during the chapter three of this work and the theoretical framework which is the Formalist approach were also stated.

CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews related literature. It is structured in three parts. The first part looks at the generality of works on African writings. The second part looks at the selected poems in Osundare's *Eye of the Earth* and *Songs from the Marketplace*. The third part focuses on the theoretical framework that informs this research.

African writers have used their creations throughout the continent as an important vehicle with which they have reflected on the experiences of their society. For instance, poets like Kofi Anyidoho, Kofi Awoonor, Dennis Brutus, Oswald Mtshali, Wole Soyinka, Niyi Osundare, Atukwei Okai, Agostino Neto, Antonio Jacinto, Noemia de Sousa, Dennis Osadebey, Jean Joseph Rabearivelo and Leopold Sedar Senghor, among others, also wrote to speak against the harsh conditions of the colonial master and they expressed how the Western world has brought the Africans confusion and put them into disarray. The themes that African writers covered during the colonial era were mainly those of human suffering, oppression, degradation, pain, deprivation of one's homeland and so on. But, after the independence of most of the African states, the tide turned and the poets then reflected on the aftermath of independence and post-independent eras. The writers in the various genres spoke against those voted into power as the themes were those of despair, corruption, poverty, hunger, political instability, administrative mismanagement and devastation, among others. Authors like Ngugi, Brutus, Soyinka, Osundare, Ayi Kwei Armah, Achebe and many others wrote but this time, to speak against what was wrong or the wrongdoings of governments voted into power. At a particular time, again in history,

the battle was about social inequality. Women were being relegated and were looked down upon; they were seen as the weaker sex and sex objects. Many women rose through their literary works to speak against the situation. The following women poets challenged the patriarchal supremacy and assert the pride of womanhood: Finuala Dowling, Malika Ndlovu, Mary Watson, Fatima Alikale, Lobogang Mashile, Buchi Emecheta, Ama Ata Aidoo, Mariama Ba, Amma Darko and Angela Miri, among others. Modern African poetry also covers issues of Africans in diasporas. These are Africans in different parts of the world who grieve as a result of the loss of their homeland in the hunt for social justice and sentimental patriotism. They continue to champion their voices on issues basic to their homelands. Examples of some poets in diasporas are: Frank Chipasula and Helon Habila. What prevails at a particular time in the history of Africa determines the trend and nature of compositions by the various literary writers.

Poets in West Africa used their poetry as a weapon to speak against injustices and defend the oppressed. In Ghana, for instance, Anyidoho used his poetry to speak into the future just like the seer in his poem, “A Dance of Death.” Anyidoho advocates revolution and his advocacy actually comes to pass in the form of coup d’état.

In Nigeria, Osundare criticises a despotic reign. The poet disguises himself like an unconcerned person in the poem, “Not My Business”, that nobody should sit on the fence unconcerned for if it is my turn today to suffer, tomorrow it may be your turn. “Not My Business” is a poem in which Osundare attacks his government for the evil being carried out against the innocent.

South African poets paint the picture of post-apartheid horrors and issues faced by the indigenous, identity crises, among others. Their poetry was that of protest

against man's inhumanity to man. Poets who were well known during this era were Oswald Mtshali, Dennis Brutus, Mazizi Kunene and Peter Abrahams, among others. Dennis Brutus wrote a poem to show the sufferings of their renowned icon, Nelson Mandela, at the notorious Robben Island prison. The poem, "Yes Mandela," was praise poem to the great man, Mandela with whom he was in prison.

Also, in North Africa, the Egyptian Ahmed Fouad Negm wrote the poem titled, "What's Wrong With Our President?" He shows one thing common with African leaders, and that is pretending to serve the people when they are in actual fact enriching themselves. The poet shows that this issue of false identity of the rulers is a common trend in Africa, be it in the North, South, East or West.

In East Africa as well, the poets use the Marxist approach to display the experience of the common man, which is a general issue of human nature in the whole of Africa. One of such poets is the Malawian, Jack Mapanje. He employs the elements of his oral tradition to display the sudden promising transformation of the nation to totalitarianism and despotism just because they want to please the western world in order to entice them for grants and aids. Mapanje passes his message through the poem titled, "Songs of Chicken."

(Trinya & Godwin, 2015, 2008) respectively highlight the various uses to which modern African writers have put the wealth of African oral tradition in their creative writings and that the three main stages that the oral art have been put to use are: modern fiction with traditional content; traditional narrative in modern form and modern fiction with traditional narrative style. He concludes that African writers have immensely used the oral art and that "the traditional aesthetic reservoir is an inexhaustible mine awaiting the next ably prospecting contemporary writer" (Trinya, 2015, p.1).

(Okon, n.d) asserts that the late Ugandan Okot p'Bitek has been one of the earliest pioneers in modern African poetry and that his poetry has had great effect on the African poetic creations. He mentions another poet who affected the poetic scene greatly in the 80s to be the Ghanaian Kofi Anyidoho. Okon concludes that these two were innovative in their use of language, oral poetic techniques and the contribution they made to African poetry in terms of themes and techniques of presentation and mainly on the adoption of the indigenous oral technique which has contributed to their improved creations and their effectiveness as poets who are preoccupied with the thoughts of the common people and vision.

In like manner, (Heron, 1976) is aware of Okot p'Bitek's adoption of images borrowed from the Acoli literature. As a result, the audience Okot is able to cover is larger without borrowing foreign features that would alter his message. (Heron, *ibid.*) again, takes note of how Okot made his English African just as Achebe would say, and moves on to analyse the cultural conflict between the people of African (Acoli) and the White (European) culture.

(Adedeji, 1971, p.25), cited by Bodunde, further opines:

Both Okot p'Bitek and Christopher Okigbo are significantly influenced by African oral traditions. Like other African artists, they borrow from the rich African verbal art forms to create new visions of life and new poetic idioms with remarkable originality. These borrowings occur in the form of imaginative use of African traditional symbols, images, proverbs, myth, and other traditional stylistic devices.

Adedeji is of the view that the new creations of both Okigbo and Okot p'Bitek are not independent of the old. In other words, their artistic works have, as their background,

the old traditions based on African mythology and this enabled them to create such wonderful works that they created.

Likewise, Adrian Roscoe, cited in (Bodunde, n.d, p.25), agrees with Adedeji that Okot p'Bitek made use of oral tradition in the creation of *Song of Lawino in his Uhuru's Fire*. Roscoe, again, attests that the success of Okot p'Bitek's Song "stems in part from its relationship to oral tradition." Further, he stresses that Okot's accomplishment is much "better than most African poets." That he has created, in *Song of Lawino*, a form which is popular and the outgrowth of home tradition. Roscoe's (Ibid) line of argument is that, when one uses the old as a background or a stepping stone to the new, the work comes out well in a unique manner, he advocates for the use of vernacular. This he associates with the growth of orature. In the same light, (Okon, n.d, p.27) is of the assertion that Anyidoho did not create his literature in isolation but rather:

His poetry is closely modeled after traditional Ewe poetry in which he is well versed. This influence can be seen in his use of praise-names, as well as in his dirge- style. An example is his poems "A Harvest Of Our Dreams" and "Fertility Game".

In the same way, Okon draws his conclusion on p'Bitek and Anyidoho by saying that both of them have "contributed to modern African poetry, in their use of language, themes and techniques."

Osundare is one of Africa's well known poets. Some of the themes he covers are mainly those of human sufferings, social injustice, hunger, drought, corruption and appreciation of nature. Like some poets, Osundare does not only speak for the populace by bemoaning the situation but he also advocates a revolution. That is one of the reasons why his works are unique, the fact that he advises the oppressed populace

not to be comfortable in their zones but to arise and do something. Therefore, he says “I Sing of Change.” This is actually the title of one of his poems. The poets all over the world use their voices, powerful enough in their various societies at various times to talk about the events and situations, especially of human and non-human nature. They lend their voices for the voiceless, the marginalised in society. Therefore, Osundare believes in the power of words for he says, “to utter is to alter” he says that the African poet has no choice but to be political. He is one of the poets who is well committed to society in his poems. During the regime of Olusegun Obasanjo, the poet wrote several letters to criticise him publicly for, he posits that, one is not supposed to be quiet about the situation in the sort of countries they find themselves in, in Africa; as one wakes up and the taps are not flowing, when there is an enormous power outage for several days and several nights, there is no food for households to eat, no health facilities for the sick to attend, people have virtually no peace of mind; when the picture of the leader you see everywhere is that of an autocratic holding a gun in his hand. When you weigh the problem on the international level, you seem to live in a world in which the continent is relegated to the margin, a world in which even the colour of your skin is a recurrent disadvantage, everywhere one turns to, there is often no other way “than to write about this, in an attempt to change the situation for the better.” Osundare, in 1993-1998, very often “contributed poems to a Nigerian national newspaper (now part of the collection *Songs of the Season*) that ridiculed the regime and commented upon the lives of people in Nigeria. As a result, he was frequently visited by security agents and asked to explain his poems and to whom they referred.”

In Osundare’s grief, despair and revolutionary spirit, he makes every effort to restore sanity in a dirty and filthy society and simultaneously, advocating for the drugs that would heal the wounds already inflicted on it. He ends on the note that

justice will reign in future when the society is awake and eventually aware of the demoralising situation and then join him in the fight for justice.

Different literary scholars reveal that Osundare's poetry is such that he advocate revolution and seeks a return to African oral tradition. (Ebeogu, 1985) asserts that literature must be free from anything colonial. He sees this new literature as radical and quite different from the earlier one. This is so because, in the present literature, writers try to establish new ways of examining realities. Likewise, Osundare, even though he also talks about the realities on the ground in Africa, he makes use of the oral medium. The importance of orature in the literary creations of writers in general and poets in particular is therefore very clear and this is one of the reasons why Osundare cannot do without the oral tradition of his ancestral land. These poems have received a great deal of works from various scholars.

(Agofure, n.d. pp.4) posits that: "By aligning with victims of political tyranny, the poet Osundare presents himself as a moral strength to check the nauseating condition of the Nigerian society". Agofure goes further to say that *Songs of the Marketplace* is a reflection of the appalling socio-political situation of the people of Nigeria. By this volume, the poet bares the wickedness of the Nigerian government towards the common man in the street. He reiterates: "These leaders have failed miserably to address the ailing dilemmas like hunger, poverty, under - development, unemployment, dilapidated roads, schools and good social amenities." (ibid)

Also, (Anyokwu, 2011) gives a general overview of Osundare's poetry and he both analyses and assesses Osundare's involvement in and employment of his native Yoruba oral poetic and mythological concepts, which highlights the poet's commitment to fight against social injustice as a common human task. He is able to employ orality and perform as the mouthpiece of his culture because, just like the

“Ijala” apprentice who undergoes training internally before he can come out to perform publicly, Osundare has studied and adopted the “folk history, mythology, and the metaphysics of his Yoruba people” and this is why he admits that his poetry is highly influenced by the Yoruba poetics for he himself has been raised in the traditional oral culture of his people. This, I think, is precisely why all his poems have bits and pieces of the Yoruba oral ways inculcated in them.

(Anyokwu, 2013, p.3) further reiterate that in Osundare’s poetry:

We find a lavish or liberal appropriation of such oral artistic categories as the proverb, the riddle, the curse, song, word games or punning, incantation, eulogy or panegyrics and satires.

Anyokwu’s assertion is one of the reasons why most scholars of the time refer to Osundare as one of the fathers of tradition as he mercilessly deployed his Yoruba tradition in all his works for he, Osundare, says the past is worth remembering. In his Midlife volume he says, “But what if we forget the past/ And the past never fails to remember us...?”

(Anyokwu, 2015, p.11) affirms that the fundamentals of Osundare’s poetry are the clarity of diction, his combination of man and nature, ‘animist materialism’, skillful use of stylistic ‘trick of print’ word play, coinage, ‘lexical- morphological innovation, sound semiotics, sprung rhythm, riddling vision, memorial temper, innuendo, an unbending commitment to revolutionary ideals’, among others.

(Olufumbi, 2014, p.14) carried out a stylistic analysis of the phonological features of stress and syllable beats to identify the rhythm norm of the unit of sound that ensures structure and the relationship between form and meaning in Osundare’s “Harvestcall” and in his investigations, he declared that “the rhythm of “Harvestcall”

is not depended on metrical-foot repetition but on syntactic juncture and multiple contour patterns”.

(Luga, 2004) is also of the assertion that Osundare is able to contribute to Nigerian poetry because of the tradition of poetry that already existed before him and he looks at Osundare’s use of oral artistic techniques and the traditional ethos as exhibits of his poetry. The poet has it and this is why this overflow of the oral culture in which he was brought up spontaneously flows into his poetic creations. It is the deep exploration of oral tradition in the work of Osundare that has left African poetry a clear picture of indigenous identity.

Likewise, (Adekunle, 2013) discloses that Osundare in *Random Blues* brings about social reform by adequately painting the picture of the contemporary Nigerian society and using various rhetorical means to influence the common man in Nigeria to bring about the required change which, to him (Osundare), is a necessity. In Adekunle’s research as well, the poet, also made use of a lot of his Yoruba lexical words with which he speaks against the unhealthy human situation in Nigeria. He (Osundare) goes as far as criticising any of the governments that make life unbearable for the Nigerian populace. One of his statements, “Gongosu g’ori ite” a Yoruba statement meaning, “The fool ascends the throne,” was used to criticise and ridicule the Good Luck government at the time when the price of fuel was raised and the people of Nigeria were suffering. One’s use of his or her local language shows how proud one is of the tradition Osundare’s poetry carries this trait.

(Nwagbara, 2012) states that Osundare in *The Eye of the Earth*, which is an addition to his aesthetic compositions, has changed to the poetry of the environment. This is to give face to the hidden but obvious presence of capitalism on the Nigerian environment and this is of utmost importance to the poet. According to Nwagbara,

Osundare speaks for the renewal of the environment as he sees the malady destroying the Nigerian's natural world as something that can be prevented; so he advocates for "environmentally friendly politics." The activities of humans on this earth, he claims are mainly of commodification, which is directly linked to exploitation.

(Alu, 2008) postulates that Osundare came with "a new poetic revolution" and that his works display the link between "the oppressed Nigerian/ African and the crop of leaders there." Alu also talks about the poet's themes which, among others, are corruption, poverty, administrative mismanagement, and to a certain extent the lasting aftermaths of colonialism on the continent of Africa. In a nutshell, Alu suggests that Osundare condemns injustices, corruption and dictatorship both civilian and military, including other social evils.

(Bodunde, 1997) asserts that "*The Eye of the Earth* is used as the basis to explore the materialist vision in Osundare. *The Eye of the Earth* ... is the most relevant Nigerian poetry text that explores the various processes of transformation from pure Agrarian practice to the capitalist mode of production" (81-82). I think Bodunde is right because, from beginning to the end of *The Eye of the Earth*, Osundare makes the reader or listener aware of his stand as a "farmer-born" and he speaks strongly against the destruction of the earth and he refers to the earth as the beginning and the end of mankind in his poem "Earth," in which he renders homage to it. The poet is not happy that the farmers are not recognised so he is one who is on the side of these people who sweat a lot and yet receive little or nothing in return.

(Yomi, 2012, p.1) postulates that the following scholars:

Chinua Achebe, Ola Rotimi, Niyi Osundare and Femi Osofisan, who write in English, have made a virtue of proverbs in their works. One immediate benefit of oral written-contact is the preservation of the tradition of the oral culture, both in its 'pastness' and progression into the future, serving as an attraction and a bridge into the written format.

Yomi carried out a critical survey of Osundare's use of proverbs mainly in his volumes: *Village Voices*, *Songs of the Marketplace*, *The Eye of the Earth*, *The Word Is an Egg*, *Midlife*, *Horses of Memory* and *A Nib in the Pond*. He comments that Osundare has disclosed an in-depth use of proverbs in his volumes mentioned above. Yomi is of the view that Osundare's immense exploration of proverbs in his volumes is a sign of his dedication to and preservation of his ancestral tradition which the colonial masters have tried to destroy.

(Dare, 2011, p.93) also argues alongside Yomi that most of the Yoruba elements of orality such as the praise and incantatory poetic forms have been employed in the volumes of Osundare and this he describes as WH- ASK and NP- WH-NP-LET and he draws the conclusion that it is characteristic of borrowing from the Yoruba tradition.

Two rhetorical structural types characterized as WH- ASK and NP- WH-NP-LET, constructions, derived from the Yoruba praise and incantatory poetic tradition, are identified in Osundare's poetry. The syntax though distinct and unique, does not violate the combinatory possibilities of English. Breaking no rules of the syntax, of English, the syntagmatic patterns inevitably draw attention to themselves as characteristic habits of thoughts and mode of expression of the Yoruba people. The

syntactorethorical borrowing from Yoruba represents the poet's efforts at "domesticating" English or making it carry the "weight" of his Yoruba experience.

Dare carries out a survey on Osundare's selected poetry *The Eye of the Earth* (1986), *Waiting Laughters* (1988) and *Midlife* (1993) and analyses orality. Osundare's use of English made it carry the Yoruba and for that matter African experience, just as (Achebe, 1975, p.62) puts it, "The English language should not be the problem because it will still be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will then have to be a new English still in ... communion with his ancestral home but only altered to suit its new African surroundings" (My own emphasis).

(Anyokwu, 2015:6) further postulates that the stress on sound in Osundare's poetry is highly critical and this special effect is stressed in every interview the poet had and this is also visible in every poem that he composes. It is evident that one of the essential qualities of Osundare's verse is the especial emphasis on sound. It would appear as though some of Osundare's predecessors seem to have forgotten the original conception of poetry as verbal, (oral auditory) art, speakerly in realisation such that melody mellows into meaning. In interview after interview, poem after poem, Osundare never tires of calling attention to this crucial and vital element of poetry. Sound in Osundare's poetry is the interest of Anyokwu.

Osundare's love for music goes beyond bounds. This is even evident in his collections published in 1990 which he titled, *Songs of the Season*. They are poems that depict the ironic exhibition of collective failures, aspirations, blames and hopes. Just like in his earlier poems, the poet persona in his poems calls for change in a society stricken with problems and pains. As usual, the poet sets out to create a volume that portrays the momentous events of the period in a simple, straightforward, important, up-to-date and artistically gratifying tune. According to the poet, he wants

“to remind kings about the corpses which line their way to the throne, to show the rich the slums which fester behind their castles, to praise virtue, denounce vice...” As the poet is always fighting for the cause of the down-trodden, he again in this volume says one of his priorities is “to mirror the triumphs and travails of the down-trodden, to celebrate the green glory of the rainy season.”

Osundare has the same themes in the old poems running through the new poems as well. His published collection of 2008 is titled, *Days*. He further divides these poems into three parts: “Children of the week,” these are poems for each day of the week, the poet advances the actual names of the children of the week and the particular features and feelings attached to them. He is of the view that “myth and music enhances the poets; each day tells its own story.” The second part of the volume is “Some Days” and the third part he calls, “Special Days.”

A lot of scholarly works have been produced in the poetry of Osundare. (Agofure, n.d) talks about Nigeria and the citizens as being victims of political autocracy; (Anyokwu, 2011) gives an overview of Osundare’s poetry and commented on the poet’s deployment of his local dialect to fight social injustices in Nigeria. (Adekunle, 2013) also talks about style in Osundare’s *Rainbow Blues* and he brings out the inadequacies and the weaknesses of the Nigerian leaders; (Nwagbara, 2012) concentrates on the Nigerian environment and he talks about the degradation of the environment in *The Eye of the Earth* volume and discusses the tradition of Nigerian poetry which she says existed even before Osundare; in the same manner, Luga (2004) discusses the tradition of the Nigerian poetry which she says existed before Osundare began to write. She also looks at the poet’s use of oral artistic technique of the traditional ethos. (Nachafiya, 2008) in “Style and New Poetic Revolution in Osundare’s Poetry,” insists that Osundare presents a new poetic revolution and he

also reveals the link between the down-trodden and oppressed Nigerian / African and their kind of leaders and he further reveals similar themes of corruption, poverty, administrative mismanagement, among others. (Yomi, 2012) likewise, in proverbs as aesthetics in Osundare's poems," examines how the poet deploys the use of proverbs in *Village Voices*, *Songs of the Marketplace*, *The Eye of the Earth*, *The World is an Egg*, *Midlife*, and *Horses of Memory*. Yomi posits that the poet implies an in-depth use of proverbs in talking about the Nigerian experience. Dare (2011) talks about two rhetorical structural types known as WH-ASK and NP-WH-NP-LET in *The Eye of the Earth*, *Waiting Laughters* and *Midlife*. He posits that Osundare makes the English Language carry the Yoruba, African experience; (Anyokwu, 2015) in "Essentials of Osundare" asserts that Osundare's verse make use of sound and that sound is the original conception of poetry and that this special element is what Osundare keeps reminding people of.

The various scholars under review, almost all if not all, touch on similar themes of human suffering, corruption, poverty, administrative mismanagement, environmental degradation, man's inhumanity to man, among others. They also, almost all, emphasises the fact that one of the most important mediums of Osundare's compositions is his native language, Yoruba. Some of the scholars discusses the Yoruba mythology and some still stress on oral tradition and orality of the Yoruba, which is one of the preoccupations of this thesis. On the whole, a lot has been done on oral tradition and orality but not much has been done by scholars on orality and performance which is very important when it comes to orality and this important aspect, without which orality is incomplete and lifeless, is what this work does differently and to a greater extent in the selected poems of Osundare as already mentioned at the beginning of this research.

2.1 The Theoretical Framework

Every research is grounded on theory. My research work, therefore, will be guided by the Formalistic approach. Besides, this work is based on the close reading of Osundare's selected poems; it is therefore evidence based on what is visible. The choice of the theory has a bearing on my analysis because the formalist theory lends itself to a literary text as this theory speaks to my analysis, on the basis of literariness of the text and not the historical background or any other information outside the text.

The formalistic process is a demonstration of the reading of a text more especially a close reading of a poem. In other words, the formalist approach is an intensive reading that starts by giving a critical consideration to the words and phrases of the text and all their denotative and connotative meanings, values and implications. Also, one must be vigilant not to indulge in any allusion to mythology, history or literature. It is critical to master the individual words and phrases as seen in the literary text, then "look for structures and patterns interrelationships." According to (Guerin et al, 1992, pp.66-67):

When all the words, phrases, metaphors, images and symbols are examined in terms of each other and of the whole, any literary text will display its own internal logic. When that logic has been established, the reader is very close to identifying the overall form of the work. The context (for example, the nature and personality of the speaker in a poem) must be identified also.

Form is the preoccupation of classical art and aesthetics. The interest of the formalistic approach is on the form and structure. This basically means that looking at the form or structure is in effect, looking at the meaning of the text. Word structure is therefore very important and this is based on word choice, diction. The one who analyses must not impose extrinsic evidence such as social, geographical, historical,

or biological information upon the literary work. Plato used “dialectic and shape movements towards Socratic wisdom by his imagery, metaphor, dramatic scenes, characterization, setting and tone.” Aristotle’s poetics advocates an “orderly arrangement of parts” which forms an aesthetic whole or “organism.” Horace cautions the up and coming poets that whatever subject they seek to address should be “simple and unified.” However, the Romantic movement of the late 18th and 19th centuries in Europe strengthened ‘speculations’ solely on form in literature. Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) brought the conception of a dynamic imagination as the shaping power and unifier of vision to America. This is the concept he had gained from his studies of Kant, Hegel, Fichte and Schelling, who were the German philosophical idealists. Taylor’s kind of conception paved way for distinction between a poem and other kinds of discourse by laying stress on the poem’s power to “elicit” delight as a “whole and distinctive gratification from each component part” Guerin et al (1992:70).

Victor Shlovsky is the lead proponent of this theory. The theory took root from his work, *Art as Device* (1917). Formalism came to be well recognised and powerful in 1960. Other proponents of this school of thought are Roman Jakobson, Yuri Tynyanov and Boris Eichenbaum. The theory states that the form of an art work elicits its meaning. It is the type of criticism based on the study of the form of an imaginative work. Details about the author’s background, year and place of publication, background of work and so on are not important and are therefore not used in this method of criticism. The meaning of the text is determined from its form.

The major pre-occupation of a writer is how to achieve meaning through the combination of the various elements operating in the text. This is an implication that

the objective or responsibility of the writer is to give the reader meaning through the words used in the composition of the text.

A literary text must elicit its own meaning, thus, the meaning that comes from the text and for that matter, poems, is from the reader and the passage's or text's interaction. Any other extrinsic evidence such as social, geographical, historical or biological that interferes in this interaction makes the interpretation redundant and worthless. What is critical here is to allow the form to reveal the meaning of the text.

Point of view is a device that the formalistic approach should pay heed to. Just like the consistency of imagery, it is considered universally as a virtue in the work of literary art since it saves and keeps the internal form which is 'the organic quality of the work.' On the reverse, a work in which several points of view are not clearly marked out from each other brings about flaw in the work since the work tends to diverge in different directions and, as such, is devoid of integrity. But, in more restricted points of view, the form of the work is inured to the point of view to which the author restricts the narrator. The formalistic approach, in a nutshell, is all about how a work of art is thoroughly analysed based on everything seen in the work of art and not outside it.

The stress on form at the expense of content did not augur well. Critics like Leon Tsrosky does not condemn the formalist approach but argues that "the methods of formal analysis are necessary, but insufficient," and this is so because they neglect the social world that the people who read and write literature are members of. The form of art is, to a certain and very large extent, independent, but the artist who creates this form, and the viewer or spectator who is enjoying it, are not empty machines, one for making form and the other for the appreciation of it. Both are living

people, with a crystallised and candied psychology, suggestive of a kind of unity, if not completely harmonious, though.

In a nutshell, the theory is limited as it does not take cognisance of historical/ moral aspects/ social aspect, psychological aspect, gender aspects, production and reception aspects. Again, this theory cannot be applied easily to long forms.

My work fits into the formalist theory because I am working on poetry and the form and structure will be relied on for the elements of orality and performance inherent in the selected poems for this research and not outside the poems.

2.2 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the generality of works of authors about orature concerning modern African poetry. Again, it reviewed some specific works on Osundare's volumes, particularly, scholarly views on Osundare's selected volumes under study. It has also looked at the theoretical framework for the study - the theory of Formalist Approach. At the end of this chapter, it has come to the fore that a text, and for that matter a poetry text, should be analysed based on the features of the text that are visible and this will, in turn, reveal the invisible, that is the form and nothing else, as every other thing is inherent in the form - for it carries the weight of everything one needs to know about the text.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Analysis of the Elements of Orality and Performance from the Selected Poems of *The Eye of the Earth* and *Songs of the Marketplace*

This chapter begins with the analysis of the selected poems from the two volumes aforementioned. The elements of orality will be fished out.

3.1 Analysis of Selected Poems from *The Eye of the Earth* and *Songs of the Market place*

The following poems have been selected from the two volumes mentioned above: “Earth,” “Forest Echoes,” “The Rock Rose to Meet Me,” “Harvestcall,” “Raindrum,” “Who says that drought was here?” “Farmer-Born,” “Let Earth’s Pain Be Soothed,” “They too are the earth,” “Our Earth will not Die,” and “Poetry is,” “Siren,” “Ignorance,” “Udoji,” “Reflections,” “A Benin Mask in A British Museum,” “To the Dinosaur,” “Zimbabwe,” “For Bob Marley,” and “Homecoming” respectively. In the analysis, the elements of orality have been put in brackets besides the various poems below.

3.1.1 Analysis of the Elements of Orality and Performance in the Poems from *The Eye Of The Earth*

“**Earth**” (In “Earth”, Osundare borrows the following specific elements of orality from his tradition to create the modern work of art. In the poem we find: “Oriki”-panegyric, twilight, God and deity, rocks and rivers that have power - signals of the oldest form of worship in Africa.)

The structure of the poem, “Earth,” is in the form of a narrative made up of fifteen unequal short lines without any punctuation marks between the lines. They are run-on-lines. The author makes use of only one capital letter, which is found at the

beginning of the first line and first letter of the word, “Temporary.” This is probably so because this is praise poetry, a panegyric in honour of earth; and a praise song should flow from beginning to the end.

The persona lays bare the importance of earth so that all must show respect to the earth since it is our “Temporary basement/ and lasting roof.” Among the Yoruba people, praise is rendered to whom it is deserving, be it human or non-human, be it animate or inanimate objects.

In lines 7 and 8 are “rocks and rivers/ muds and mountains.” These are special rocks and rivers that are believed have powers in them. The mud and mountains are not left out; they are also revered by the people of old. “Twilight” in line 9 refers to the special times in the past when oral tales were told to family members especially children. In this way, the ways of life of the people are taught to the younger generation. In line 13 there is “roving sky.” The sky is said to be moving about. In the Yoruba mythology, the sky is said to be the dwelling place of “Olorun” the Supreme Being. The poet also deploys the use of his local language, “Ogereere amokoyeri.” As already stated, the poem is a tribute, a praise poetry just like the Yoruba “Oriki” praise song. The mention of the name, “Oriki”, alone brings performance to mind, for it cannot be mentioned in isolation. On a piece of paper, panegyric is not what it is until it is accompanied by musical instruments in the midst of performance. The performer booms with smiles, different body movement, gestures, tones and other paralanguage come into play. The performance here is not explicit but implicit. All these elements are missing on the piece of paper but are brought out during performance. “Oriki”, is known mainly to the Yoruba people. Many people especially the non-natives know little or nothing about the Yoruba “Oriki”, this praise poetry of

the Yoruba people is therefore theorised since the poet employs this style almost in all the poems from the two volumes.

3.1.2 The Yoruba *Oriki*

“Oriki”, simply means to allude to one’s origin. This is a unique attachment to any name. It can best be described as a praise name, a nickname which describes a person’s character, the situation behind the birth of that person, or what that person is hoped to become one day. Oriki may be given at the naming ceremony of a child or later in the life of that child. The praise poetry is not meant only for individuals; but kinship and lineages also have their own “Oriki”, called “Oriki Orile”.

In the land Yoruba, all chiefs and renowned personalities also have their “Oriki” which is used to communicate their character and achievements, and this serves as it were, signature tunes to announce their approach or presence. “Oriki”, sometimes and it could be very long and as well boring but no matter how boring it is, it is important to historians and the Yoruba people at large. One peculiar thing about “Oriki” is that it is recited by several categories of people and rendered in different styles. The following are the different kinds of the Yoruba “Oriki” : “Ijala ode” – the style of the hunter’s guild, “Ewi” – the style of the Egbado Yoruba, “ Esa” – the style of the Egungun of the Labala group, “Ege” – the style of the Owu and the Egba people, “Rara” – the style in Ibadan and Oyo, sung by both men and women but more especially by women during celebrations such as title takings, “Efe” – the style of the Egbado people and Ijio people of Oyo, among others. The Yoruba “Oriki” is performed for anything or any human that deserves to be praised.

The “Oriki” singers usually sing accompanied with talking drums. It is also performed with the traditional blacksmiths hammer which in the local parlance is called, *Omo*

Oluwo Alagbede. It is important to note that these singers often occupy vantage positions in the courts of the Yoruba king. As soon as they see any important personality enter the king's court, they start performing the "Oriki" and this performance of the "Oriki" alerts the Oba of the presence of such an important person in his palace.

This aspect of the Yoruba tradition and culture is what the poet Osundare has borrowed into his modern creation. This style of "Oriki" praise poetry is vivid in almost all of the selected poems from both volumes for this thesis. Osundare renders "Oriki" to the non-human and the human natures alike.

"Forest Echoes" (From this poem, the following elements of orality that Osundare borrowed from his oral tradition are visible: song form; chorus and verse as in folktale, flute and drums, lore, the proverbial bird and the use of local names.)

The second poem is longer than the first one. The structure is in the form of chorus and verses, which is a suggestion of performer and the audience who together effect performance. The performer is supposed to lead in the verses and the audience picks the chorus and, by so doing, they register their presence. The poem is made up of 269 lines that are not the same in length and number of lines. The stanzas are about twenty-nine in number. There are very few isolated lines that rhyme in all the stanzas.

The poem is about the long period of drought, of which man is the major contributor to this ailment due to indiscriminate cutting down of trees as the persona suggests in lines 69-74:

A forest of million trees
a forest of million trees
wounded though, by time's axe

and the greedy edges of agbegilodo's machete

a stump here, a stump there

like a finger missing from a crowded hand (p.5)

The persona compares the stump of the trees cut down to "a finger missing from a crowded hand" (Line 74). The forest that used to be crowded with trees is now full of stump of trees.

Many people move in and out of the forest just to cut down trees. "The toemark on the footpath/ fingerprint on every bark" are everywhere in the forest. The timber lorry that carries the log of woods from the riverside has been nick-named "agbegilodo" (line 72). Osundare speaks against the destruction of the environment, the vegetation and creatures, through the activities of greedy mankind. All of these have caused the drought. In any case, there is hope that it will rain again, the poet says, "earth has finally won the love of the sky" (p.4). It is a thing of joy that the people will experience rain again so the poet persona suggests that "Forest Echoes" be presented "with flute and heavy drums." This is an explicit suggestion of performance that begins, immediately, below the title.

There is orality and performance in the structure of the poem. The arrangement is just like the chorus and verse form, as we have it in the folktales where the performer or narrator and the audience are in close contact. This is where performance comes into play. The chorus is the part reserved for the audience. The audience and the narrator together bring this part to life through their performance. There is bound to be singing and with the flute and heavy drums, dancers as well are ushered in voluntarily. This aspect, though very important, is not visible on paper.

Likewise, in stanza 1 lines 9-10, "masquerade scribbling loric fear" (line 9), in the traditional setup draws attention. Masquerades are said to be ancestral spirits and

they come out for performance on important occasions in the “lines of festival street” (line10). During performance, masquerades create fear; the audience run whenever the masquerades make attempts to pursue or run in their direction. The masquerades perform, jumping about; they do not stay at a particular place. This is why the Ibos of the eastern part of Nigeria have it as a proverb that says, “anagh’ano notu ebe’kiri muo” meaning, you do not stand at a particular spot to watch masquerades. As they perform, they jump about so if one watching wants to catch a glimpse of everything they do, then that person has to move about as well. The word, “masquerade”, is just a word on paper but it is in performance that the details of it are known, seen and felt. Masquerades can never do without performance. The word, ‘festival’ in this context is itself orality. It is an occasion where the ways of life of the people are displayed in the observance of their festival. It is full of performance and hence we need the “flute and heavy drums” for the performance.

In lines 26-27 is another element of orality, which focuses on ‘lore’ which is knowledge handed down verbally in the form of stories or historical anecdote “nurtured by fairy truths” (line 27). These stories which we know, are not true are supported because of the fairy instinct. There is performance here as well since there are people gathered to listen to and contribute to these tales through their singing, asking questions and passing comments, as well as drumming and dancing. In line 32 there is another element of orality and performance as “elulu’s sleepless throat/ Mauled the minutes, harried the hours.” In the past when there were no clocks and watches, the following were very important in the keeping of time: the sun, the cock crow, and certain birds like “elulu” helped in times of old in telling the time to the people so that they are not beaten by time in their day to day activities. “Elulu” was always at performance for the throat was never asleep but always chirping at different

times telling the time. It is “time which wombed the moon/ to bear the sun” (line 36-37). This suggests that, in keeping time, the moon is ushered in, in the night, and at dawn the moon gives way to the sun to take over.

Another element of orality employed is repetition and this is evident all over the poem. It brings about musicality and, of course, in music there is performance. “A green desire...” (lines 1 and 4); “This is Oke Ubo Abusoro” in lines 52 and 59 “A forest of million trees,” “A forest of milling trees” lines 69 and 70 respectively. “Iroko wears the crown of the forest,” lines 77, 80 and 83 “Don” repeated in lines 177, 180, 188, 192, 196, and 198; “My parting eyes...” lines 212, 234, and 243. There is also orality in the use of local names of things, places and water bodies, trees, among others: “elulu, Oke Ubo Abusoro, oro, agbegilodo, oganwo, babalawo ayunre, ogbese, Osun, aladura and patonmo” (p.4-11). The use of so many words in the poet’s language depicts his love for his tradition.

Elements of performance are again implicit in lines 199-201: “like a flock of green aladura/ in their noise- and -sand retreat/ Behold, too, these prayers.” Aladura is a kind of church that believes so much in drumming, clapping and dancing in offering prayers to God. Everything about them is noise and movement of the various parts of the body. It is therefore obvious that whenever Aladura is mentioned, music, clapping and dance and the vigorous shaking of the body come to mind.

“The Rocks Rose to Meet Me” (In this poem, Osundare explores diverse elements of his oral tradition such as: personal pronouns, oral narrative and the dialogue form as in folktales, the pantheon of gods, the ancient rocks and “Babalawo,” traditional priest, curse prayer, repetition, chorus and verse kind of structure, music.)

The poem is in a dialogue form, made up of about fifteen (15) unequal stanzas, that constitute unequal lines and unequal length. “The rocks rose to meet me” is also similar to “Forest Echoes” because it reveals the destruction of the forest through the indiscriminate cutting down of trees by humankind (p.5). While “The rocks rose to meet me” is repeated in lines 1 and 34, 80, 89, 108, 113, 116, it is about the destruction of another aspect of nature – the rocks. The people again destroy rocks in order to get gold. The rocks that are being destroyed are the rocks that are said to possess powers; in other words, the rocks are regarded as their gods. So, in digging for gold, they destroy these rocks, “But how dig the gold/without breaking the rocks”.

The persona in stanza one is said to have visited his home after a long time. He talks about the rocks that “Rose to meet” him probably on arrival; in his home town, the rocks are at very strategic points where you cannot help but see them first. So the persona which, in this case, is likely to be the poet himself, uses very powerful images so that one is able to see the rocks like human beings rising and coming towards him. This, of course, is personification. In this same stanza, he mentions the name of one of the gods- “Olosunta,” a rock in Ikere, worshipped yearly during the popular “Olosunta festival” reputed to be a repository of gold (p.17). The rocks are all personified and this is significant because the people of Ikere treat them so much - like gods. Thus “Olosunta spoke first/the eloquent one/Whose mouth is the talking house of Ivory” (p.13 stanza one) and Osundare continues by using repetition in lines 5, 8 and 11, 28, 33 to emphasise the fact that the rocks are not ordinary because they speak like humans do, they communicate with the people and solve their problems and in the last two lines of stanza 1 (lines 12-13) we learn that “Olosunta” serves two purposes: he is a god that the people worship, and at the same time, he provides for

their economic activities, “gold” for sale. So he is “the riddling one whose belly is wrestling ground/ for god and gold.”

The poem, as already stated, is in a dialogue form as in African traditional lore. We are told in the second stanza what “Olosunta” spoke. This is why the whole of stanza 2 is in a quotation form showing us the speech of “Olosunta.” In the speech, the rock, “Olosunta,” accuses the persona who in this case happens to be the poet. The accusation levied against him is that he has kept away from home for too long and also far away in the Western world:

“You have been long, very long and far,
said he, his tongue one flaming flash of unburnable grimes
“Unwearying wayfarer,
your feet wear the mud of distant waters
your hems gather the bur
of furthest forests;
I can see the west most sun
in the mirror of your wandering eyes.” (p.13)

The rock in its speech accused the persona of having wandered away from home for such a long time and taken to “the westmost sun,” suggesting that the poet/ persona has taken to the lifestyle of the westerners. The persona uses historical allusion in referring to the western world. We are told in stanza three that as “Olosunta” speaks, he smiles and the trees responded by “Swaying their heads/in the choreography of his moving lips” (p.14).

The persona again in his narrative tells us the order in which the deities spoke and how they did it. The god, “Olosunta spoke first”, is repeated in lines 5, 8, 11, 28

and 33. In his displeasure, he hits the destroyer, “the haughty man” in the head. People are so much greedy that they have killed the god and are after the gold. This suggests that, “Olosunta” is no longer revered and worshipped for the spirit that dwells in it but because of greed, the rocks are being destroyed just to get wealth. So “Olosunta” says: “Time’s undying sword awaits their necks/ who deem this earth their sprawling throne.” In lines 41-42 “Olosunta” talks about the punishment that awaits those who put the natural resources of the earth in total disarray and this is suggestive of a curse.

“Oroole,” is said to be the “next” to come and his awesomeness is described in lines 52 – 58. We also notice that “Oroole,” is mostly fighting the “Slave master” who is destroying the rocks that have power that the people at the same time worship. The “Slave master” does this in order to get the gold deposited in them. The persona further states that their poor harvest is as a result of the destruction of these natural resources.

In lines 80-86, the persona makes use of adjectives to describe the height, texture shape, size and state or nature of these rocks that “rose to meet” him:

Tall rocks, short rocks
Sharp rocks, round rocks;
Some with the staid steps
of war-vike warriors
others with gaysome gaits
of pandering pilgrims. (P16)

In lines 92 – 100 the persona mentions serving the invisible toe-marks of “Esidale.” Esidale is one of the ancestors and he is believed to have powers and he

still operates. He is not visible but his deeds are visible, hence the persona says, “I saw the invisible toe-marks of Esidale.” In the preface to this volume, “Olosunta and Oroole are wonder siblings of Esidale. They are worshipped” (preface ix).

The poem ends as it started, “The rocks rose to meet me.” The awesomeness of the rocks is again called to mind as “At every step the earth shook/like ancient deck/trees trembled from roof to root.”

The poem, “The Rocks Rose to Meet Me,” is full of the elements of orality and in almost every line. The poem is in a narrative form and there is dialogue as we have in the traditional way during the oral storytelling act. In stanza two (lines 1-9) there are also many Yoruba words. There is a foregrounding of their Yoruba belief system as some of the pantheon of gods are mentioned such as “Olosunta.” In stanza one alone, “Olosunta” was mentioned three times (lines 5, 8 and 11) (p13). In the last line of same stanza one, the persona lets his readership know that “Olosunta” is a “god” and “gold” suggesting that “Olosunta” is their deity and also their livelihood. “Oroole” is another god mentioned in line 52 and is said to come “next.” The voice is said to be “ancient” and “tremulous” in the morning air. The word “ancient” portrays that these rocks that possess power have been with them since the beginning of time. “Esidale,” one of the ancestors, is also mentioned in line 92. This ancestor is also one of the deities of the poet persona for he is also said to be a spirit that is powerful. Within every stanza and in most lines, there is a repetition which is a suggestion of music. There is music also in the way “Olosunta” spoke and when he (Olosunta) was still speaking, “The trees” were “swaying their heads/ the choreography of his moving lips.” This is a kind of display - a dance. The last but two lines, which are set apart is like a refrain. It is also musical. There is also song and singing in lines 116 -117: “The rocks rose to meet my wanderer eyes/ singing songs...” It can therefore be said that

the arrangement, stanza and chorus type of structure is orality, as it is done in the past where the performer and the audience are close, face to face, in performance. The rocks being shown as speaking is orality. The people believe that their gods speak to them through their “Babalawo,” a traditional priest. “Olosunta spoke first” and “Oroole came next.”

The element of performance is at the beginning, immediately after the title. It is suggested in a pair of brackets that the poem is “(To be chanted with agba drum throbbing in the background).” These drums cannot be played without beating them differently and people also dance or nod their heads or display other paralanguage which is not put down on paper. So, if “agba drums are throbbing (p.13), then there is agba dance. There is another element of performance in lines 25 and 26: “Choreography,” a kind of style in dancing, a sequence dance routine. In performance, a lot goes into this kind of dance and it cannot be mentioned without diversity in its performance. In line 92 there is another element of performance “The drums quieting.” They have reduced the tempo and this may be due to the fact that the poet persona wants to usher in another ancestor, “Esidale,” whose “toe-marks” are invisible. So, probably as a sign of respect, the beatings of the drums are lowered. The poet passes his message - the human experience using elements of orality and performance with personification.

“HarvestCall” (The elements of orality in this poem are: basic of the Yoruba “Oriki”- praise song, the Yoruba pantheon of gods, ‘Babalawo’- traditional priest, local names, repetition, music and dance, dirge and proverb as they exist in Osundare’s oral tradition.)

The poem is made up of 20 stanzas divided into four parts. Part I is again made up of 3 stanzas of unequal lines, Part II is only two stanzas with 17 lines, Part

III is only one stanza with nine lines and the last part has 21 lines all about the rich harvest from which the farmers harvested a lot of food items and that suggests why the stanzas are many. In all, the lines are unequal lines that are numbered 76 and most of the words employed are monosyllabic. The poet makes use of full stop (9 times), question marks, (4 times), semi-colon. (2 times), colon (2 times), comma (7 times) and brackets (4 times). Throughout the poem the poet made use of six different punctuation marks.

This poem is in appreciation of the bounty of the earth. In the poem, the persona talks about how earth has been so generous in providing for humankind whenever they planted their seeds. He talks about how the harvest has been so great. The poet persona uses different kinds of sensuous images for the scene to be so true and to show how charming the crops being harvested are. Beginning with one of the people's staple foods, yam – “lyanfoworogi” is repeated in lines 1, 5, 8, and 25. The repetition may be due to the fact that it is very important to the Yoruba people and yam is eaten in diverse ways as “asaro,” portage “garnished in green” (line 2) or as pounded yam (line 3). “Yam is ripe and randy” and so in peeling it, it “raged a noisy war against the knife (line 10) “furu”, (line 12). The king of yam is said to provoke those who behold it for “mouthful clamour” (line 12). Those who take it as pounded yam cause a fight between the “mortar” and “pestle” (p.18) in the process of pounding in order to get the dough to swallow in “anger of hunger.” (line 17).

In the third stanza, yam is said to be the king so it “wore the crown” (line 18). This shows how important yam is to the people, among the other crops. The suitors are not left out in describing the importance of yams, for suitors are charmed by yam that is compared to a young, pretty, shy girl who allures suitors' attention deliberately. This shows how beautiful and appealing the harvested yams are.

In the last stanzas in part IV, we are told “the music lowers in tempo.” The persona moans the loss of some crops like the different kinds of beans, pumpkins and others that are gone. They were so beautiful so the persona regrets the famished state of the earth and he takes to asking questions:

But where are they?

Where are they gone: (p.20)

A colon is used to list all the crops that he (the persona) asks: where are the “aroso, geregede, otili, pakala” (four kinds of beans in Yoruba land) that are no more, though the farmer got plenty of all they planted, the yams, beans, the pumpkins the pods and seeds, they are no more because humankind no longer care much about the earth. Each time, the persona asks, “where are they?” before bringing the crop or name of plant so there is continuous repetition in lines 1, 2, 5, 7, 11, 14). In line 14, the question is asked twice and the persona adds ‘gone.’ “Where are they gone?” similar to the first 2 lines. The undue activities of people have taken everything away. The persona continues to lament in the last thirteen stanzas about the crops that are no more.

The first part of the poem is like the praise poetry of the Yoruba people called “Oriki.” There is suggestion of music right after the title, which states it should be chanted to lively ‘bata’ music. Bata is a kind of traditional Yoruba drum. It is traditional for the Yoruba to offer praise to any deserving, be it human or non-human, it is the right thing to do. Thus, it is right to praise and appreciate the bounty of the earth. This is why Osundare deploys this oral act. In almost every line, there is a local Yoruba word. It is the tradition of the people to make good use of their language and the poet utilises his native language generously.

The staple food the people eat is part of their tradition so the poet personifies mentions “Iyanfoworogi” because yam is very important; he “Won the crown” (line 18). On every important occasion among the Yoruba, yam is a must, especially the pounded yam. In lines 14-15 “mortar” and “pestle” are mentioned, which are used for getting yam pounded. The whole poem is a huge ball of personification. The writer treats non-human without life such as food crops, tubers beans and the sky, etc., as if they are humans.

There is suggestion of music after the title “Harvestcall.” The nature of Yoruba language itself, the poet says, is musical and so he suggests, “to be chanted to lively bata music.” “Bata” is a kind of music in which the men dancers throw their big garments around them and carry out certain steps and displays. This is another performance element -including the paralanguage that will come to play in performance but which are missing on paper - not stated.

In part IV, as well, there is the element of performance. The poet, in this part, suggests that the music be lowered in “tempo” and the music “beginning solemn” to a sort of lamentation because, those plants, seeds, cereals, tubers, beans are no more so he asks several times, “But where are they?/where are they gone”. It is now sadness that sets in just as in the performance of a dirge, whereby people shed tears and ask questions. This is another element of orality. So, in the poem, there is a mixture of joy and sadness. The sadness towards the end is what leads to the singing of a dirge. There is regret for the famished state of the earth so there is the question, “why?”

There is repetition between stanzas and lines - inter and intra respectively. “This is Iyanfoworogi” is repeated in lines 1, 8 and 25. In lines 14 and 15 we have “The pestle fights the mortar,” and “The mortar fights the pestle.” respectively with the position of the pestle and mortar inter-changed. In lines 33 and 36 we have “Once

here in May” repeated and finally we have the highest form of repetition in lines 1, 2, 5, 8, 11, 69 and these lend musicality to the poem. Where there is music, there is bound to be performance of various kinds. The whole poem itself is full of personification which, all together, brings about special effects in talking about the human experience

“Let Earth’s Pain Be Soothed” (The elements of orality that Osundare employs in this poem are: repetitions that are clearly visible inter and intra, refrain and verse form, music or song typical of the oral form, “Oriki”- the Yoruba panegyric.)

This poem has thirteen (13) stanzas made up of forty-four (44) unequal lines. It is about drought. The poem begins with a refrain which is repeated throughout, after each verse. Each of the refrains is in two lines and the first word in each line has its first letter capitalised and the verses only have the first letter of every word at the beginning of the stanza capitalised. This could be an emphasis on the seriousness of the problem that the ordinary man faces and at the same time there is hope being restored through the suggested revolution. With the theme of drought, the poet talks about the pain and hardships of the society. “The sky carries a boil of anguish/Let it burst.” “The Sky” stands for the society and the “boil of anguish”- the pain and hardship – what is wrong in the society. “Let it burst” is the urge to revolt and this is repeated for emphasis.

In the second stanza, the persona sees the drought to be serious because our earth has never lingered so dry in the season of falling showers (3 and 4): it is the time it is supposed to rain but there are no rains. In stanza 4, the poet makes use of transferred epithet in saying that the hills are suffering from the drought. He indirectly refers to human beings ironically. The places that used to be very rich - “The cradle of green,” meaning, the fertility of the land is no more; this is as a result of drought. The

refrain suggests that it seems it will rain but doesn't. The poet also alludes to the pains of certain places of the society:

Dust

Dust in brewing kitchens

Dust in eating places

Dust in busy bedrooms

Dust in scheming boardrooms

Dust in retrenching factories

Dust in power brothers (p.28)

Stanza nine is the repetition of "Let it rain today/Let it rain" throughout the stanza so that they may "sing" and "earth may heal her silence" and that there may be plenty of food and children may bath and "bawl and brawl" (line 36). In the whole poem, there are only three full stops and one comma. The scarcity of punctuation marks may be due to the fact that rain has been scarce.

The style of refrain and verse is typical of the oral tradition. With the refrain, the poet advises the down-trodden to revolt. Word / phrases like: "song sing," "bawl," "brawl," "lilt" (lines 26, 36, 42) are all suggestions of music. This is the practice in the traditional system whereby the audience and the story teller, are brought close. The poem, like a typical oral piece, opens with a dedication "(for the one who brought rainy news from Under - the Rock to the accompaniment of a flute and/ or the rain drum.)" The person will receive pleasantries and praise as in the Yoruba panegyric "Oriki" and there is suggestion that with either of the two instruments, there is going to be performance. The people who enjoy the will sing, clap and dance as well, there are going to be other paralanguage as well which is not covered here and can only be seen in performance. Examples are the body language, high and low pitches, among

others. The repetitions used inter and intra also contribute to the musical element. There is a great use of personification as earth, sky and plants are personified from lines 1 to 44. The poet, figuratively, speaks against the ills of the society and the world at large and advocates a revolution.

“RAINDRUM” (Music, dance, chorus and verse form and repetition as in the oral form are the elements of orality that the poet borrows from his Yoruba tradition of old.)

The poem is composed of six (6) stanza poem of unequal lines. The title of this poem is capitalised completely. This is probably an indication that the outpour of the rain is heavy. The first stanza is made up of three lines; and the next two stanzas, two and three are four lines each; and the fourth stanza, which is set out like a chorus, is made up of six lines; and the fifth stanza is again three lines; the last stanza is only one line which is only a word: “Renewed.” In all, the lines are twenty-one (21). The punctuation marks employed are only three commas and one colon. The poem talks about the early rains after a very long period of drought. There is happiness and peace is again restored and as the rains set in, things turn around for good. As a result:

Streets break into liquid dance
gathering legs in the orchestra of the road
streets break into liquid dance
gliding eloquently down the apron of the sky

There is repetition in (lines 1 and 3). This shows how happy everyone is because the street has experienced rain and this repetition contributes to the musical element in the poem.

“Dance and “Orchestra” are elements of orality. As already mentioned, the Yoruba people are music and dance-inclined. At the mention of dance, a lot is brought to mind. The title, ‘Raindrum’, is equally a suggestion of music. The poem is set out like a chorus and its verses. Stanza four is structured like the chorus; it is the only stanza with six lines and on a different line, not on the same straight line like the others but indented to the right. This is another element of orality. In the Yoruba story telling act, we have the story-teller who sings the verse and the listening audience, who join in at the chorus. This brings the two groups close together in performance.

The poet mainly employs personification. “The roofs sizzle at the walking touch, talkative like kettledrums tightened by the iron fingers of drought” (p.32). The subsequent stanzas are also personified but, in between, there is simile in line 3 above. Stanza 4 is a complete metaphor showing how dry the riverbeds are, the pastures are browed; the noons are very hot and the night “grilling.” The cornfields are “earless” and tubers are tired. The poem, though very short, has very powerful images. For instance, to mention but one, in (line 19) we envisage the lightning “strike” the match stick of rain (visual imagery).

The few punctuation marks in the poem probably suggest that the rains have just set in and everyone including the poet is carried away in happiness for they are all renewed as is stated in the last line and the only word in that line is “Renewed.”

“Who says that Drought was here?” (The elements of orality in this poem are the refrain which is like the chorus as in the storytelling oral art form and the time for telling the stories in the traditional time is mentioned, the local proverbial bird is also referred to.)

The poem is made up of nine (9) stanzas of unequal forty (40) lines set out like verses and refrains (4 verses and 5 refrains). The refrain is a repetition of:

With these green guests around
who says drought was here? (lines 6-7)

The repetition is the only aspect that rhymes in the poem. This refrain sounds like a mockery on drought that threatened the ordinary people's very existence. The poem talks about the importance of rain to humans and non-humans alike. It is all about the end of drought. The vegetation becomes green again, unlike during the time of drought when "pastures" were "browed" (p.33). The refrain is a question which asks "with these green guests around/who says that drought was here?" suggesting that the way the whole place is green again, it is difficult to believe that, earlier, there was drought.

The vegetation and everywhere roundabout have seen rain and plants and crops and herbs and palm have grown and this is so because "the rain has robed an earth / licked clean by the fiery tongue of drought" (lines 5-6).

There is orality in the structure. The refrain which is repeated after every stanza, is again like the chorus implying audience participation. The storyteller and the audience are seen to be close. It is also a repetition before and after the subsequent stanzas or verse. In the third stanza (lines 5 and 6), are other elements "and the hovering hawks talon the tale/to the ears of the deafening sky." In some of the folktales told in the past, birds like the hawk are used just like humans and through them certain secrets are revealed, and at times not secrets but certain truths are made known. At other times, certain people visit their loved ones so as to let them know that they (the dead) are no more and they also let these loved ones know that they have been killed. At other times too, birds visit people to warn them of impending

harm or calamity yet to befall them; all of the above is possible through these hawks. The persona suggests that the hawk with the help of its sharp, curved toe made the story to reach the sky because the ear was taloned and the sky that is said to have paid no heed, this time heeded and that was the reason for the rain.

In the sixth stanza, there is “herbal joy” (line 1). In the past, the people of old did not have knowledge of orthodox medicine and there were no other ways of getting treatment when they were sick except through the taking of herbs. The rains have caused the herbs to grow again so there is joy because the people will get herbs to drink and some to bath with.

There is another element of orality in the eighth stanza (line 3), “twilight.” In the past, this was a very important time for families. It is a time somewhere in the evening when the sky is beginning to darken. It is the time when every household settled down to tell tales - folktales to their young ones; it is the time when the young ones are taught moral lessons, they are taught manners; things that have to do with their tradition are passed down through such stories.

In lines 8 and 10 there is another direction of music in “brailles a tune/ and weaverbirds pick up the chorus.” Here, instead of humans as in the act of storytelling when we have the storyteller and the audience performing the tune and chorus, birds are rather doing it. The brailles give tune and the weaverbirds take the chorus. This is performance implied, and anyone who has listened to different birds perform will know how beautiful it is. The poem, in a nutshell, shows that rain after drought wakes plants and the vegetation comes to life; and everywhere is green; humans and all other creatures are happy because most of their problems, brought about by drought, will be solved. Performance takes place because the birds are in two groups whereby one

gives the tune and the others “pick up the chorus.” The only difference here is that the performance is carried out by the non-human nature.

“Farmer-Born” (Osundare, from his traditional oral art forms makes use of the local names and words, the reference as of old to iroko as king of the forest, repetition, song and music.)

“Farmer-born” is a five stanza poem with thirty-one lines. Each stanza begins with a repetition “Farmer-born peasant-bred” (lines 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5). The poet discloses in the preface to this anthology (p.ix) that he was actually “Farmer-born, peasant-bred and that he “encountered dawn in the enchanted corridors of the forest. Suckled on the delicate aroma of healing herbs.” In other words, he was a farmer like his father and they used herbs for treatment in times of sickness. In those days, our fore-fathers had no clocks to help them rise but the cocks “rang the bell of dawn.” This enabled them to be at the farm very early.

In this poem, the poet identifies himself with the common man for whom he writes. As in stanza one, the poet goes to farm early to make farm beds and plant tubers and in stanza two, he says he comes to farm very early. It is around that time that the earthworm is also out and he traces them and he equally experiences dew. The persona keeps long on the farm and when the hot sun is out and he is also hungry, he takes refuge under the “iroko” tree. In stanza three he has perceived the ‘aroma’ of fresh trees felled in the forest and he plucks ripening pawpaw; and in stanza four, the mushrooms have spread out like umbrellas before him, he trod under the dried leaves and hears the noise, and as for the “opening pods” he has enjoyed what he calls their “songful clatter.” This is the noise they make when they are mature and dry then they freely burst open. In the last stanza, he talks about how the places they used to farm and also feed themselves have been turned to classrooms. This is an aspect of

modernisation. This is a disparity to “Harvestcall.” (p.18). The persona calls this an invitation for “hunger to take a seat” so he condemns this practice in (p.49). “This earth is ours to work not to waste/ours to man not to maim/this earth is ours to plough, not to plunder”; this similar situation is also mentioned in the last stanza in (p. 45) and similarly in (p.19) stanza (5).

The poet persona lays emphasis on the fact that he is a farmer, at the beginning of every stanza - farming was an age-long activity in the past. It was the major occupation of the people. Through farming the people got their local foodstuffs. “Iroko” (line 11) was in the past regarded as the king of all trees and the poet makes mention of sitting under it when the sun was at its peak and also ate under the trees.

A local name is employed, “Apee.” He also talks about “rattled,” “rustled,” “The compost carpet of fallen leaves,” “The songful clatter/of opening pods.” These are all musical in nature. For instance, if you have been to the farm and have experienced these things, one will appreciate better. It is like music and one who has not experienced these will not have a feel of what the poet means. These only come to be in performance; you need to tread on them to have a feel and that is performance. One cannot experience the musical nature without stepping on them. The poet does not openly suggest music but there is implied music which can only be brought to life in performance.

Punctuation marks are scarcely used here. There are only three of them, hyphen is greatly used (13 times), full stop, (3 times) and comma only once (1).

“They too are the earth” (The elements of orality present in this poem are the Swansong - a kind of dirge, the structure is like a chorus/ verse as in the oral form and there is also repetition.)

“They too are the earth” is a five-stanza poem with twenty-six (26) unequal lines. The stanzas are all five lines each with the exception of stanza (4) which has six (6) lines. There are no rhymed lines but the first line of every stanza is repeated, “They too are the earth (lines 1, 4, 6, 9, 11, 14, 16, 19). But in the last stanza, we rather have a slight alteration in the syntax. “Are they of this earth?” (lines 22, 24) and the very last line is completely different with a question mark attached “Are they?” Stanzas 1 to 4 talk about the various forms of deprivation and destitution. Stanza 1 is about the poor trampled upon by the rich (line 5). The persona sees no reason why they should suffer such because the earth belonged to all who dwell on it:

they too are the earth
the swansongs of beggars sprawled out
in brimming gutters
they are the earth
under snakes kin shoes and Mercedes tyres (p.45)

In line two (2) of this first stanza, we see “swansongs of beggars sprawled out.” The swansong is about a legend from the Greek mythology. It is a song said to be sung only once by a swan during its life time, when it is dying. It is a final farewell that the swan sings so as to bid goodbye to enable it depart the world. The persona compares the song the beggar’s sing to that of the swan probably because their only hope will be the passersby otherwise hunger may kill them. The poet refers to it because it is a final farewell appearance if there is no help. The poor beggars are therefore said to be singing sorrowful songs begging for their last before death.

Stanza 2, which looks like a chorus not on the same line with the others, talks about the experience of those who are sweating seriously because of the unskilled

labour they are doing for others. For example, the “millions hewing wood and hurling water” line (8).

In stanza three (3), it is about many who have lost their lives in the mines so the poet posits:

they are the earth.
the distant groans of thousands buried alive
in hard, unfathomed able mines
they are the earth
of gold dreams and blood banks (p.45)

Stanza 4, which is also structured like stanza 2, and is also treated like another chorus, reveals the aged who are dying far away “in harrow abandoned hamlets” there are also several women who are “battling centuries of/ maleficent slavery,” lines (20-21).

The poet starts giving a litany of human suffering and declares that the ones who are suffering, some of whom have died, are also of the earth. In the last stanza, the tide turns and the poet rather asks whether those destroying the forests and hills are of the earth because these people want to live and rather destroy the earth so lastly he lays emphasis on the question “Are they?” Meaning the destroyers, are they of the earth? This is the only place that he uses the question mark (?).

The arrangement of the poem is like the pattern of chorus and verses as in the oral narrative system. After each verse, we see the chorus which is indented to the right. The verses are on the same straight line while the two serving as the chorus are also in the same indented positions.

There is “Swansongs” in line 2 which is an element of orality. This is a borrowed element of orality from the Greek mythology and it is in the form of a dirge. So there could be pain and tears and other paralanguage which are not visible on the face of the sheet. .

There is another implied suggestion of music in the performance of swansongs. The beggars are actually singing, using different parts, and it is possible there would be tins or cans and the begging bowls to accompany their song of sorrow. The repetition at the beginning of each stanza is also a contributing factor to the musical nature and therefore implied performance.

The whole poem has only two (2) punctuation marks – one comma and one question mark (stanzas 3, line 3 and 5 line 5), respectively. This could be an indication that because as in the traditional setup, the dirge is meant to flow from beginning to the end. The performer sheds tears freely without obstruction; bringing several punctuation marks could obstruct the flow of the musical nature of the dirge, so there is reduction in the number of punctuation marks.

“Our Earth Will Not Die” (Swansong- dirge, music, dance are the elements of orality employed in this poem.)

This is a thirteen (13) stanza poem of unequal length and lines which are forty-eight (48) in number. Some of the lines have only one word and two words on a line and others as many as eight (8) words. In the first stanza in which we find a word or two on a line, the poet lists the various sufferings from the destructive activities of the lake that is “Lynched,” seas are “slaughtered,” the mountains are “mauled” (p.50). The images the poet employs here are visual and auditory; you either see them or you

hear them. After each stanza, there is a refrain which is one line “our earth will not die.”

The poem, just like “Who says drought was here?” and “What the earth said”, carry messages of hope; that despite what the earth has gone through, such as exploitation, it will overcome the selfishness of humankind.

In the second stanza, the persona talks about the destruction of the sea and its fishes through the deadly waste and chemicals that factories channel into them (lines 11-16). In stanza five, the persona asks questions and he speaks about the harm caused the fishes and the “whale” in particular who is singing a song of sorrow before departing this earth, as the legend behind the swansong puts it. The persona wants to find out “who lynched the lakes. Who slaughtered the seas? Who? /Whoever mauled the mountains. Whoever? (lines 18-20) and there’s again repetition on the “who?” and “Whoever?” after each line to create effect and emphasis. The last on the stanza, “Whoever?” (line 20) is emphasis, that no matter who did it “Our earth will not die” as in the immediate stanza that follows it stanza 6. Also immediately in (stanza 7) the persona talks about the rain that falls which is not an ordinary rain but it is also polluted and it destroys forest trees. In stanza 8, it is about the amputated trees now referred to as “weeping willow”, (line 26) that “drip mercury tears/ in the eyes of sobbing terrains (lines 26 – 27). The terrain is personified as “weeping terrain.” The stanza is brought to an end by revealing that both human life and that of the meadow are at stake as they are the final recipients of all these poisonous substances, for “a nuclear sun rises like a funeral ball. Reducing man and meadow to dust and dirt” (lines 28 – 29). But in stanza 9, the persona says, as usual, despite all these, “But our earth will not die.” In the tenth stanza, a list of the lives that have been destroyed, is given

Fishes have been destroyed in water. Fishes

Birds have died in trees. Birds

Rabbit have died in their burrow. Rabbits (p.51)

After each line, the poet foregrounds the creature that had been destroyed. This is done in a stylistic manner and at the same time, it shows how serious the problem at hand is. And despite all these, in stanza 11, the persona again, says, “But our earth will not die” (p.51). In the last but one stanza, which is the longest of all the stanzas, the persona is hopeful so with this spirit he says that “Our earth will see again (lines 36)” and with a new rain, new sun and every other thing destroyed will come to life again and “The sea will drink its heart’s content” (p.51). The poem comes to an end in telling all and sundry that “this earth is indeed ‘Our Earth’ beginning the first letters of the two words with a capital letter.

At the beginning of the poem, after the title and just before the first stanza, in a pair of brackets the poet suggests the poem be played “To a solemn, almost elegiac tune”. This is similar to the dirge. It is a mourning song which is performed to show that things are not well, or to show that there is a loss or some other problem. There are a series of destructions and, above all, death is hovering above all. In lines 15 and 16, the whale is singing the “Swansong of parting waters.”

In the performance of a dirge a lot goes into it. The dressing and appearance of the performer is critical, the bodily gestures, the movement, the paralanguages, which are invisible on paper there are even the wailing and other facial movements that are equally absent on paper. Before the last but one stanza, there is another suggestion in another pair of brackets that “(music turns festive, louder)” because “Our earth will see again” everything earth has been deprived of will be restored. The

wind will play its tune (line 39) “trees twittering,” grasses dancing” (line 40). “A new rain tumbles down/ in drums of joy” (lines 45-46). These are elements of orality. There is artistry in: the wind will play the tune and the trees twitter and grasses dance. There is division of labour here in the carrying out of the performance. This performance is what brings orality to life. The adjectives and verbs used in this second part where the poet says “music goes festive.” There are the strong verbs like: ‘rise’, ‘rock’, ‘twittering’, ‘tumbles’, ‘dancing’, ‘drink.’ These verbs and adjectives depict excitement as against the verbs and adjectives that are used in the first part that suggest sorrow and mourning, such as: ‘lynched,’ ‘slaughtered,’ ‘mauled,’ ‘killed,’ ‘staggers,’ ‘coughing,’ ‘wailing,’ ‘chilling,’ ‘reducing,’ ‘amputated’ and adjectives like: ‘arsenic,’ ‘poisoned,’ ‘sickly’ and ‘balding’ that are strong negative visual and auditory images. This, perhaps, is why the mood is that of sorrow and mourning and hopelessness in the first part of the poem as against the second part, in which there is hope.

The poet employs the following punctuation marks: Full stop (16 times), commas (9 times), question marks (3 times), semi-colon (1) and most of the lines are run-on lines. Stanzas (2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 13) are full of personification and stanza (7) is metaphor. In the last but one stanza, there is simile (line 34). All of these, together with the elements of orality and performance, aid the poet in the conveyance of the message of hope for the people.

3.2 Analysis of the Elements of Orality and Performance in the Poems from *Songs of the Marketplace*

In the poems from *Songs of the Marketplace*, the analysis begins from the cover of the anthology which displays certain people playing various musical instruments – the guitar, small drum, big drum, the oval kind with a pointed handle

and beads around it, etc. to bring about music and dance – performance. The title itself is a suggestion of music; if there are songs, people will clap and even employ other musical instruments and, of course, there will be some dancing to the tune. Osundare is therefore deeply rooted in his African and for that matter Nigerian, Yoruba realities and experiences. This poet and the others in this category of “the new poets have taken the language of poetry, the diction of figurative expression, to the market-place – to the popular daily press even.” (Preface, *Songs of the Marketplace* p.ix).

Osundare’s poetry reveals the deprivation of the majority in the post-independence era. It is about the oppressed and the down trodden, “the dispossessed” (ibid). He leaves enough room for the down-trodden masses of the society. The poet solicits for one of the world’s oldest producers that people least think of - the peasants, the tillers of the soil. These particular people are the ones that Osundare writes for and defends. Analysis of the selected poems begins below.

“Poetry is” (The elements of orality that Osundare employs from his oral art forms are song, singing, dance, lore, gong.)

In this first poem, the poet defines what poetry is to him. This gives us his vision of poetry. It is societal- oriented, for he quotes Pablo Neruda in his epilogue, “I made an unbreakable pledge to myself that the people would find their voices in my song” (p.2).

The first stanza reveals what poetry is not. It is not a secret that is accessible to only a few people; it is not a quiz for the learned and it is not something that is buried in the Greek and Roman ‘lore.’ The poem is made up of six stanzas and 33 lines, the first four stanzas have six lines each. Stanza five has only three lines and stanza six,

has six lines, but unlike the others, in each line of this last stanza we have only a word each in which the poet redefines poetry and probably he wants to spell out the meaning clearly enough for all to pick. All the lines are run-on-lines without punctuation marks employed. The only punctuation marks visible are found in lines 14, 18, 26 and 27. There is apostrophe ('s) which talks about possession. A full stop is found at the end of the whole poem.

The last five stanzas rather disclose what poetry is. In the second stanza, poetry is a lift for life. It gets many people involved in the action for future events and it moves “more minds” to act. And stanza three says it is the short and simple song of the hawker; the persuasive and expressive language of “the gong”; it is the music of the “market place” that is well understood and the light emitting ray of the reflecting light, “the grasses morning dew” (line 18). Osundare continues by saying poetry is:

What the sole tells the dusty path
What the bee hums to the alluring nectar
What rainfall croons to the lowering eaves. (p.4)

The persona goes back to what poetry is not, again in stanza five - it is not something only the oracle knows that you have to go to the shrine to find out from only the traditional priest or priestess after the kernel had been thrown. In the last stanza, poetry, he says, is “man's/ meaning/to/man, you read or listen and it makes meaning to the reader or listener then and there without any consultation for its meaning to be revealed.

In the first stanza (line 6), the poet goes outside his country and Africa as a whole and refers to the Greek and Roman lore, “Grecoroman lore” (p.3). He refers to

knowledge acquired on subjects such as oral local traditions handed down by word of mouth and very often in the form of stories told or historical anecdotes.

“Gong” (line 15) is another element of orality. The gong is a metal beaten to summon people or even a whole village to the chief. The gong is so powerful that you cannot remain adamant when you hear it. It is also used as a musical instrument, among others, for a beautiful blend. In some villages the gong is used to sing the praises of the would-be bride around her village for the village folks to get to know her better before the official day for marriage. “Poetry is” in line 16, is referred to as the lyric of the marketplace – music of the marketplace. The marketplace itself suggests music as the different voices of so many buyers and sellers, present, blend to form music. “Hawkers ditty” in line 2, ditty is a short simple popular song. In this case, it stands for the familiar repetition of invitations by sellers to buyers to come and purchase from them. In stanza (4, line 21), there is also music “music to the dancing leaf.” Lines 23 and 24 equally have music inherent in them as “bee hums to the alluring nectar/rainfall croons (singing or murmuring or singing gently). In stanza 5 (p.4), we come across the ‘oracles’ “kernel.” This is another orality, which, is already mentioned, has to do with the deity or a shrine dedicated to the consult of the gods where people go to consult a priest or priestess in times of trouble, need or uncertainty.

“Poetry is,” has implicit performance element. The poet does not mention performance but it is implicit. One cannot talk about music, to the dancing leaf, hums and croons without performance. For performance brings all alive.

“Siren” (In “Siren,” the elements of orality that Osundare borrows from his oral tradition are music, cultural dancers, repetitions at the beginning of almost every stanza and beating of drums. These elements help the people to socialise with one

another in the community in times of joy in celebrations such as marriages, initiation rites, festivals of all sorts and competitions. And in times of sadness such as in the celebrations of burials, funerals, wars and famine.)

This is an eight-stanza poem with (57 lines) with a question mark in the first stanza, two commas in the second stanza same (line 5). The use of an apostrophe (s) is in stanza 3 line 5 and stanza 8 lines 2 and 4. It employs only one period, placed in the last stanza (p.23). There is a bracket in lines 16 and it closes at 17. Each of the stanzas, with the exception of stanza eight begins with repeated “siren.”

The whole poem is about the social economic situation of the ordinary person that he, the poet, exposes. It discloses the care and time the poor have for those in power, “the visiting power” and the lack of love and care of those in power towards the poor populace. In their poverty, they still deprive themselves of food and keep away from the day’s work in order to make their “visiting power” happy and welcomed but they (the power) on the other hand have no time to listen to the problems of the populace. The poem is titled, “Siren” and it is qualified immediately below the title as “(Music of the visiting power)”.

Stanza 1 talks about the unusual security measures put in place whenever the president and other dignitaries are visiting. The “police acrobats on motorbikes” come displaying with their whip to clear the way for the “worthy ruler.” This is a kind of humour to ridicule the so-called leaders in power who should never share “the right of way.” The only question is asked in the last two lines of this stanza, “for which worthy ruler/ever shares the right of way?” (lines 5 and 6). Next, in the second stanza, the persona talks about the constitution of the convoy at the back of “Mercedes” and they are said to be “very far, from the maddening crowd.” The people are so enthused

to see their president but the visiting power are so far from them that they are prevented by the armed security from reaching them.

In stanza three (p.2), the populace is described. The oppressed and down-trodden are described as “kwashiokored children/ waving tattered flags”. These people are said to be going hungry for the day because of the visitors (lines 16 and 17), just to “cheer their excellences” (p.21). The people are out there with their cultural dancers and they are “dripping drums of sweat/in raffia shrouds.” In the same stanza, the party men are going about “to keep the crowd in place” (lines 21-22).

In the fourth stanza, the “visiting power”, the “Excellencies”, are accused of playing ignorance or not seeing the problems the people are facing; the problems which are vivid and visible everywhere they turn: the potholes (line 24) the “land debowelled by erosion/cornfield withering,” lines (28 – 29), yam “tubers smaller than a palm kernel,” (line 31). All of this the power pretends not to see. On the contrary, the Excellencies love to see the entertainments “and banners” (line 34) and even the sound of “beautiful words” (line 37). In stanza six, the persona accuses “their Excellencies” of having “no time for dry days/ and dark time to talk about the high cost of foods, the lack of hospitals, lack of schools and roads just because “their Excellencies are not here/ for the begging bickerings/ of a faceless rural crowd (lines 45 – 47). In stanza 7, the persona reveals the hypocrisy of the Excellencies who pretend that they love the people and pretend to cheer them and of course pledge to do things for them which they will never do. But the “Excellencies” enjoy the way the populace is enthused about their visit but they the (Excellencies) care not about the impoverished state of the people they visit. The last stanza ends in a revolutionary temper, that even the babies on their mothers’ backs will surely question them in the near future.

After the title, the poet puts into parenthesis “(Music of the visiting power)”. Every first line of every stanza, with the exception of the last one, begins with the repetition of “Siren – siren – siren”, and the siren itself is musical in nature. In the third stanza (lines 8, 9 and 10) are other elements of orality: “Orchestrated cultural dancers/dripping drums of sweat/ in raffia shrouds”. This is a critical aspect of the people’s tradition. The cultural dance that the people perform is one of the ways of life of the people, their tradition. In singing and drumming, they are not only standing but they are as well dancing for the cultural display is accompanied with drumming and dancing. Even the sweat of the dancers is compared to “drums.” Orality is brought to life in performance. The performance is implied and not stated. It is only after the title that the persona calls it “Music of the visiting power” the drums and other instruments are beaten, to create music, and music is often accompanied by dancers.

“Ignorance” (The following elements are foregrounded from the poem: proverbs, Yoruba mythology and Babalawo - traditional fetish priest is mentioned as well.)

This is an eight-stanza poem made up of thirty-six lines. The poet makes use of run-on-lines throughout and as such there are only three punctuation marks employed: the colon in line (2), question mark in line 30 and the full stop at the end of the whole poem (line 36).

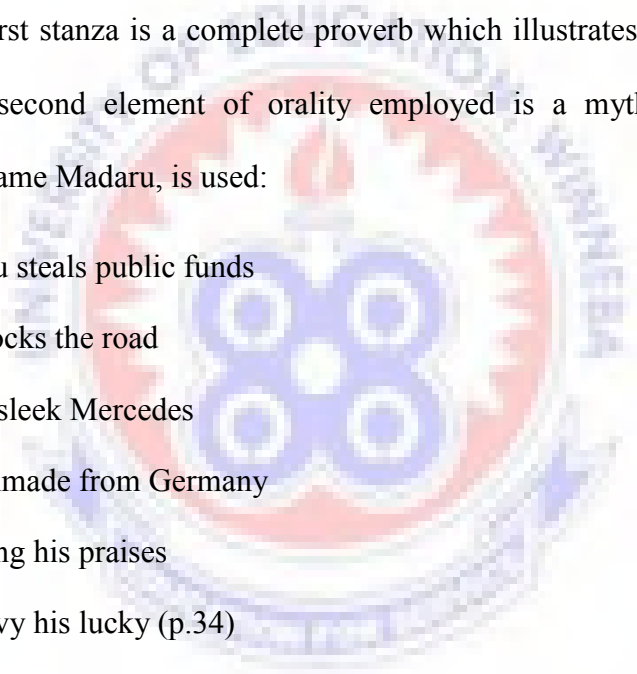
In “Ignorance,” the poet condemns through ridicule, some modern practices which, to him, are foolishness. These so-called social practices are carried out, out of ignorance. To reveal this ignorance, the poet employs orality in the form of proverb and parable. In the first stanza, he (the poet) talks about the cow that is longing for a journey to London where it will be turned to corned beef. People are so interested in the immediate fame they will get from their particular deeds but they fail to think

about the end result which will be very bad and at the same time out-weigh the enjoyment. In the subsequent stanzas, the poet persona gives various scenarios of ignorance. People are rushing for the white man's countries; they are rushing for countries outside theirs where they do not really know what awaits them in the forms of hardships and other cruel conditions, including death. To some, these conditions will eventually dehumanise them and make the rest of their lives on earth a hell. The poet persona questions, "how could sheep all agree/ to give their crown to a wolf?" (p.34). This is taken from the animal story in which the wolf yearns for the co-operation of the very animals it constantly feeds on. Osundare, very often, uses the wolf as the metaphor for the wealthy in society who feed on the poor and helpless for their survival.

The poet makes use of several proverbs in talking about how ignorant humans can be. Proverbs are well valued in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. Proverbs are regarded as the essentials of traditional knowledge because the metaphoric representations carried through them become an important source of lessons that people have to learn. African proverbs are based on human observations of the things that have to do mainly with nature. This is why Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* refers to proverbs as the oil by which words are eaten. This submits that wherever a conversation is going on, the people are bound to use some amount of proverbs. Proverbs are therefore meant to teach lessons which are either to persuade, to condemn, to praise, to exhort, warn, admonish, dissuade, or curse, among others. The Yoruba are very fond of this very act. According to Okuwowo (2012), "Writers like Chinua Achebe, Ola Rotimi, Osundare, and Femi Osofisan who write in English, have made a virtue of proverbs in their works." Osundare and many other scholars are proud to do so because their works derive their strengths from their cultural and ethnic

backgrounds. One immediate benefit of oral written contact is the preservation of the tradition of the oral culture, both in its ‘pastness’ and progression into the future, serving as an attraction and a bridge into the written format.” Raji Oyelade (1999:74), quoted in Okunowo (2012:1), has observed that “there is virtually no substantial controversy about the value of proverbs in culture, and the significance of proverbs in Yoruba traditional societies as repository and verbal effulgence of wisdom is indeed proverbial.” We need not wonder why Osundare therefore deploys this verbal form in his volumes.

The first stanza is a complete proverb which illustrates ignorance as the title reveals. The second element of orality employed is a mythology in Yoruba, a character by name Madaru, is used:



Madaru steals public funds
and blocks the road
with a sleek Mercedes
custommade from Germany
they sing his praises
and envy his lucky (p.34)

Similarly, the poem “Udoji” (p.35-36) and “Reflection” (p.37 – 38) are both proverbs that Osundare uses to constantly throw a light on traditional wisdom compared to the foolishness of politicians and other contemporary people who occupy leadership positions but lack the spirit of judgment to see that they have failed the populace.

The proverb is meant to be performed and performance brings it to life. In line 24, there is implicit element of performance, “they sing his praises.” In singing praises, we imagine how the praise-singing is carried out, the praise-singer may come to where the one whose praise is sung is, so that he would see him, and in the course

of performing, the praise singer is sprayed with some money. The praise may be accompanied with drumming and some dances. To sing praise is not just as it is on paper but there is more to it in performance - the body movement, gestures, facial expressions and other paralanguage are not taken care of on paper.

“Udoji” (The elements of orality present in the poem are: proverbs and wise-sayings.)

The above poem is made up of four stanzas with twenty-one lines. The whole poem does not have a single punctuation mark from the beginning to the end. It is also strange to note that the beginning of the first word in the first stanza, instead of a capital letter, rather begins with a small letter:

the stepmother afraid
of being thought wicked
feeds her stepson
till he constipates (p.35)

Just like “ignorance,” as already stated above, the persona reveals the foolishness and lack of wisdom of those who approved the “Udoji Awards” in the proverb of the stepmother. “Udoji” is the name of Chief Jerome Udoji who, in 1975, headed a salary review panel which released a huge sum of money. During that time, some in the private sectors received the “inflationary salaries and arrears” (p.35). The name of this man, Chief Udoji, became a metaphor for his bonanza. People got the money but it could buy little or nothing as:

now pockets burst with arrears
but market stalls are empty
gari is dearer than eyes
a naira cannot buy a yam (p.35)

The poem exhibits the corrupt and damaging nature of the Nigerian political leaders who will indulge in doing something they know very well will have a negative effect and create hopelessness for the future without minding, just because they are selfish and are at the same time, greedy.

“Udoji,” just like “Ignorance”, is enveloped in proverbs. In lines 1-4 is the proverb of the stepmother and lines 5-8 is another proverb of the “braggart.” Another wise saying is at the last stanza lines 17-18 “when a bribe is heavy/it impoverishes the giver.” These elements of orality, which are wise-sayings are said to express obvious truth and also offer advice. It is very true that when someone gives a bribe that entails a lot, probably his/her life savings, the person who gives it will definitely become very poor and not any better but worse. As usual, life in orality lies in its performance though there is no visible suggestion of performance, there is implied performance in proverb and if nothing at all, there is Paralanguage, probably in the rendition, the way it is said, the way the head, eyes are put, the direction and position all sum up to performance but they are absent on paper.

“Reflections” (These are the elements of orality in this poem: riddle, wise-sayings, proverbs, incantation and Babalawo-traditional priest have been used profusely.)

This is a six stanza poem with twenty-eight lines. The lines are also run-on and this is the reason for the very few punctuation marks used. There are no punctuation marks in the first stanza. In the second stanza, there is only one semi-colon. Stanza three has none. In the fourth stanza, we have the quotation marks, both double and single quotes (a pair each) and commas used four times within the stanza. In line 18 the comma was used twice and in line 19 also, it is used twice. Line 21 has a colon only at the end of the line. In the last stanza, line (26), there is a hyphen in the middle of the last two words, “steam-shovel” and the only full stop that brings the

poem to an end is found in the last line, (28). The poem, “Reflections,” like “Udoji” and “Ignorance”, is one in which the poet employs another element of orality, the wise-sayings or proverbs, almost throughout the poem. Osundare reflects on and exposes the corrupt and damaging nature of the so-called leaders who think only about the present or today but never about what to leave for tomorrow. In other words, they strip off tomorrow when they get today; they render the future blank in so doing. This is a reflection of the poet on the realities on the ground. The leaders waste everything in the state, and at the same time, they complain of dryness:

The babalawo charms off the clouds
But marvels at a scorched land
The lizard feeds on its own brood
And wonders why they say it buries
Its future is its guts; (p. 37)

In “Reflection,” the poet objects to the order in which the world is socially organised and so he compares it to ‘the Solel Boneh’s steam-shovel.’ This is because ‘it scoops earth from one place/ to fill up the hole in another’ (p.38): the gain of the wealthy is the loss of the poor. Poverty he sees as another’s repercussion of some other person’s wealth.

The poem is full of the elements of orality. Just as in the previous two poems, the poem is full of proverbs, incantation, a ritual chanting of magic, words or magic spell by those who are deep in the tradition it is done to charm or render the other party powerless so as to make the powerless succumb to the more powerful and mightier one.

In the first stanza, for instance, we have riddle (lines 1-4). The whole of the second stanza is a proverb and at the same time we find incantation in it. The “babalawo charms off the clouds/ but marvels at a scorched land” (lines 5-6). This is a display of hypocrisy by the “babalawo” because he holds the clouds thereby preventing the rains and the same ‘babalawo’ is surprised that the land is dry. Why won’t it be dry when he the traditional priest prevents the rain from falling to the earth? The poet makes use of local names like “babalawo” “kwashiorkor” “The word “babalawo” itself is orality. It is the name given to the traditional doctor that helps the people to know the wish or the mind of the gods and he also heals them spiritually and physically with herbs and other concoctions. This is one of the belief systems of the Yoruba people, an aspect of their religion to consult their gods through the “babalawo” so as to get their problems solved; to know what the future holds for them as individuals and as a people and also to find out why certain calamities befall them. Finally, the ‘babalawo’ leads them to offer sacrifices to their deities. To consult the deities is an age old tradition of the people of Africa and the Yoruba in particular. It shows the power the traditional priest is said to possess as a spokesman of the gods and healer of the people. “Kwashiorkor” (in line 23) is malnourishment. It started as a local term but is now accepted and understood worldwide. These lines (22-25) juxtapose the undernourished and the overnourished, the “Cocoacoffeetea growers” and the “cocoacoffeetea drinkers, respectively and yet the preacher says “We are all equal” (p.38). Probably, the equality is before God and not between humankind for the rich get richer from the produce of the poor who, on the other hand, are getting poorer and even malnourished as stated (in lines 22-25).

In the third stanza there is another proverb which illustrates how the character “Ayederu empties the government treasury for a generous donation to a/Church

Building Foundation”. Lines 10, 11, 12 portray a sort of “robbing Peter to pay Paul.” This shows complete ignorance, for “He receives special prayers” is belittling. The pastor is happy and does not find out how such money was acquired and the giver has stolen money and he comes to receive the so-called special prayers in God’s house. The word structure in lines 12 and 15 is quite different from the rest, probably because it is so to show disapproval and to satirise the giver and the receiver, for the poet capitalises every first letter of the words in the two stanzas.

Again, the persona ends the last stanza on another proverb in which the world is compared to “Solel Boneh’s Steam-Shovel” that “Scoops earth from one place/to fill up the hole in another” (lines 27-28).

There is again performance in this poem. It is implicit and not explicit. In line 5, the traditional doctor “babalawo” cannot charm clouds without incantation. It is the words that he pronounces alongside his demonstrations that helps in the achievement of performing the act of charming. The power in words and for that matter, incantation is brought to action in performance without which it is nothing but words on a piece of paper.

“On Seeing A Benin Mask In A British.” (The elements of orality the poet deployed in this poem are: god, deity, shrine and deshrined, chorus, Yoruba local words, riddles and proverbs are the elements of orality present in this poem.)

This is a six-stanza poem with 28 lines. Every first letter of the first word in every line begins with a capital letter. The poet employs a run-on-lines and this is the reason why there are few capital letters, just like the previous poems. The stanzas and lines are unequal. The lines of the stanzas from the first to the last are made up of 5, 4, 9, 4, 2 and 4 respectively.

The poem is about the stolen artifact which was a symbol of the Festac '77, a cultural festival in which Nigeria as a nation, in particular, displayed her rich cultural heritage to the world. The poet laments how the deities that the blacks revere so much are treated with disrespect and are humiliated by foreigners. This is about the destructive effect of colonialism on the culture and traditions of the Africans and more especially on the African religion and on their deities. The poet talks about how this deity was missing from her home in Benin City, where she was most reverent and was later found at the British Museum as the title depicts, "On seeing a Benin mask in a British Museum" (p. 39). This deity, now found at the Museum, is said to be "gazed at by curious tourists savouring parallel lines on her "forehead" (line 12 -13). The poet further describes how this 'god' is removed from the shrine and he uses the word-"deshrined." This suggests that the aliens commit sacrilege against the god who is in a strange land and "where it stands chilly/ Away from your clothes," (lines 10-11).

The poem is structured like a chorus together with its verses, just as we have it in the oral tradition of storytelling whereby we have the audience participation during the time the chorus is sung - this is orality. The element of orality is again seen in stanza two, line 1 in the word "Shrine." this stands for the throne and dwelling of the deity and the place where the "babalawo" carries out his or her divination more effectively. This suggests why earlier, the persona says the god is 'deshrined' because she is taken away from the shrine. There are several elements of orality that the poet employed. In stanza one, line 2, we see "god", stanza 4 line 21 "deity" and five line 26 "god". Stanza 5 which serves as a chorus, is written in a typical, complete, Yoruba mother tongue without any adulteration:

Iya jajeji l'Egbe

Ile eni l'eso ye'ni

The above two lines serve as the chorus and at the same time it is a proverb which suggests that “suffering affects the stranger in an alien land.” This means that there is no place like home. This again suggests that the Africans revere their gods and could never have deshrined them or disrespected them as the westerners do them.

Further, in lines 27-28 is another element of orality, riddle, “when all around are alien ears/ unable to crack the kernel of the riddle.” Riddles are difficult questions meant to be answered. They are like the hard kernel that you have to crack to get the nut which is edible. These two lines talk about the importance of riddles and there is emphasis on the fact that Africans can crack riddles and bring out the interpretation but foreigners such as the Whiteman cannot “crack the kernel of the riddle.”

There is also performance in the structure – the verses and chorus structure which suggests music as in the oral form, the people drum amidst clapping, humming, the audience is touched and they make some steps forward and booming with smiles, the dance goes on together with some other paralanguage that the dancers display. It is only in performance that all of these can be highlighted. Even riddles and proverbs have their procedure in performance and they are better enjoyed when they are performed.

“To The Dinosaur” (Osundare employs the following: music, and proverbs, wise sayings throughout the poem.)

This is a six stanza poem with thirty-three lines. The stanzas and lines are unequal. Beginning from the first stanza to the sixth, the lines range as follows: 2, 5, 7, 6, 9, and 4 respectively. The poet persona uses run-on-lines and as such there are few punctuation marks used.

In “To the Dinosaur” (p.41), a very old folkloric animal is used also as a metaphor for the African oppressors and authoritarian’s bareness. It refers to African leaders who adopt old and undemocratic ways to retain their power and prestige. The poem is a proverb: “Now the gale has blown/ the secret of the chicken’s is known” (lines 1-2, p.4). The whole of the third stanza is also another proverb which is also an element of orality:

If we don’t know
Where we are going
At least we know
Where we are coming from;
Knowing neither,
You have torn down the gate
And asked wolves to tend your sheep (p.14)

Every word in the above stanza is true. It is therefore a simple illustration of truth. This is the reason for qualifying it as a proverb. Stanza four, lines 15-20 is again a proverb. It talks about the so-called leaders who are empty in their heads and have nothing good to give but still they crave for power. Lines 21-26 is a proverb as well. “The owl perches on the Iroko/and hoots out a tune.” Lines 21-22 is also a suggestion of performance, for when the owl hoots out a tune, we are supposed to hear the tune which will inspire the listener to either join in singing or even dance to the tune. This performance is again not done in isolation as ordinary words on a paper cannot perform any action.

“**Zimbabwe**” (The following are the elements of orality that the poet employs from his oral tradition: “Oriki”, Yoruba praise poetry, repetition which signals music, chorus as in the folktale art, and proverbs.)

The poem is a fifteen-stanza poem of unequal (52) lines. There are few punctuation marks; the third stanza has a full stop in line (8), line (47) and line (52). A comma is also used in line (47) and there is no other punctuation mark. This may be due to the run-on-lines used. The poem is set out like refrain and verses of songs in an oral way.

This time, Osundare leaves his country Nigeria for Zimbabwe to show the nature of Africa-experience in that country. The poem, “Zimbabwe”, celebrates the Zimbabwean-independence-freedom from their colonial masters. The poem recalls the struggle that led to this independence. The poet makes a dedication in stanza one to the founding fathers and all who fought the wars of independence (p.52) and the writing is different from that of the rest of the stanzas, every word is italicised for all readers to focus attention on every word there:

*for Josiah Tangogara
for every guerilla who fought the war
that turned Rhodesia into Zimbabwe (p.52)*

The struggle to gain independence in East and South Africa was not a joke. It was a great war fought by the groups called “Mau Mau and Umkhonto we size we” freedom fighters, in Kenya and South Africa respectively. It was with blood of the patriots that freedom in these countries was bought. The heroes laid down their lives to fight for the cause of independence. The poet persona says their blood and relentless fight was not in vain (lines 25-32). In the poem, we get to know that during the war in Zimbabwe, some children lost their parents; husbands were lost by some wives; some parents lost their children. These were the devastating effects of the war. The poet comments that the entire ordeal the people went through and the aftermath

was not in vain because the people of Zimbabwe gained their independence to show because it was worth fighting for that.

The first stanza, which is in praise of the freedom fighters, is again like the Yoruba “Oriki” poetry whereby great men who have done great deeds are praised. The dedication is panegyric. The structure of the poem is also an element of orality because it is a repetition in the form of stanza or verses. The refrain, which serves as a chorus is meant to be sung by the listening audience who also establish their presence alongside the narrator. The words in the refrain “The cock has crowed/ushering in a free dawn,” lines 4, 15, 24, 33, 42 and 48, speaks of the change- the independence. The “cock” in line 4 is itself orality. The cock crow was in the past, one of the ways, that Africans kept their time. The people had no watches or clocks and other modern ways of telling and keeping the time but with the aid of the cock crow, the people of old were able to tell the time at different hours of the day. The refrain, which is evident throughout pages 52, 53 and 54 suggests that the time was due for their independence in Zimbabwe. In lines 6-8 there is a proverb “Iroko has sprouted/in a lot begrudged/to elephant grass.” This suggests that “Iroko,” which is the most powerful tree in the forest, has grown in a piece of land denied the elephant grass. In lines 16-19 we come across ‘hut’ line 18. The poet persona talks about the end of those who loot from the poor what they have in order to make themselves rich. “Huts” is a symbol of village set up those days; it could also be used for poverty. There is repetition in lines 16-19 and in lines 50-52. This is the last stanza. The repetition signals music in the poem. Music is orality because in almost every aspect of life of the people of old and Yoruba in particular is music, they sing and dance. In singing and dancing, there is performance, various body movements are displayed though not explicit but implicit.

“**For Bob Marley**” (Dirge, repetition, music, “Oriki,” praise poetry, the use of the pronoun ‘you’ that signals dialogue, direct audience participation as in the traditional story-telling form are deployed in the above poem.)

This is an uneven eleven-stanza poem with uneven (43) lines. The whole poem lacks punctuation marks from beginning to the end with the exception of the comma in lines 10 and 26, (P. 58), exclamation mark in line 15, which may be due to the fact that the poem is a dirge and a dirge should flow from beginning to the end. The first letter of the first word in every stanza begins with a capital letter and the remaining words in the rest of the lines in the stanza are all small letters but in the third stanza, the first letter of the first word is a capital letters but in addition, the second line has every first letter of the two main verbs capitalised “Get up, Stand up” (capital ‘S’ and ‘G’). It is probably different from the others to lay emphasis on the verbs, ‘get’ and ‘stand’, or because it is the actual title of the reggae star’s reggae song titled “Get up, Stand up.”

The poem, which is in honour of the late reggae star, Bob Marley, is an artistic oral style, a dirge. This is what makes it an element of orality. A dirge is a poem or song sung to lament over a bad situation or mourn the dead. Differently put, a dirge is a mournful music or funeral song. In dirges, people mourn their loved ones because they are no more and this is also due partly to the fact that their memories are treasured and the mourners will miss them for their treasured co-existence when they were alive. Most of the things which the dead did are referred to and demonstrated just as is manifested in this poem, “For Bob Marley.” So, in the first stanza, the persona says: “The songbird has fallen/In the forest of wails/Leaves throb/in the elegy of the wind” (p.57). In dirges, nothing is left unturned as every aspect of the fallen member’s lifestyle is stressed; all their deeds are brought to memory as we see above.

It is worth noting that if they were tormented during their lifetime, their tormentors are also mentioned. This is done purposely to mock and shame them because they pretend to be sad and mourn him but in actual fact, they are only shedding crocodile tears, for it is not that they feel any remorse for what they did to the music star. The poet further made the claim that these people or tormentors have pursued this reggae music star about until he finally dies so the persona says to the persecutors as seen below:

Let them weep
their crocodile tears
in Montego Bay
who chased you
through wood and grass
but now die to frame you up
in mute marble (p.58)

Further, the poet refers to the lyrics of one of the songs of Bob Marley that orders the oppressed not to relax in their state but they should fight for their right in the stanza below:

You ask them to
Get up, stand up
whom oppression crouches
like lethal lumbago
and squatters smells the open secret of the dunghill (p.57)

As in the dirge, the dead are not only mourned but their achievements are equally foregrounded for he inspired many with his reggae during his lifetime to think

positively and to live meaningful lives. In the third stanza, another element of orality which is inherent in the oral story-telling act; direct dialogue in between the act is visible in stanza 5 (p. 57). The narrator's dialogue is supposedly directed at Bob Marley. This is what in literature we call apostrophe; addressing a dead person as if he was present. As such, the poet uses the second person pronoun, "you" as is vivid below:

You who put positive vibration
in the stunned heart
of a deadening lull
consciences were dormant
till you stirred them up (p.57)

The pronoun, "You", is constantly repeated in lines 5, 9, 16, 20, 21, 31, 33 and 38. Through this dialogue form of orality, the poet re-echoes how Bob Marley just like Osundare and many others, moved people to wake from their slumber and dormant state, and new hope and life given them. He continues with the same dialogue form even in the subsequent stanzas (p. 58) there is repetition as well in the poem and it is another very important sort of orality that brings about musicality, and as already stated, it is the involvement of the listening and watching audience, so we notice their participation as seen in the traditional storytelling act. Repetition is distinguished in lines 1, 4, 15, 40 and 43. The poem is then brought to a conclusion in the same way it started, "The songbird fallen" but this time, the first of the last stanza (p. 58) and this songbird repeated in line 1, 15, 40 is orality and equally a suggestion of music. The whole poem is a complete dirge and at the same time it is praise poetry – the Yoruba "Oriki." It pays tribute to the late star while he ridicules the enemies of Marley in the process of mourning the Raggae Star. There is another element of

orality in the last line. It reads: “in the elegy of the wind” (p. 58) ‘elegy’ is a mournful song. It is a musical lamentation of, for instance, a dead person. There is performance because music and performance go together. The one singing the elegy at certain times will cry a lot, speak harshly to those who were enemies of late Marley, so, the tone, pitch and other paralanguage follow the elegy and in most parts of Africa, the colour black is used for mourning so even the costume is not mentioned but in performance, they are important in the rendition to depict grief or sadness.

“**Homecoming**” (The elements of oral tradition employed in this poem are: proverb, incantation, prayer of curse and song.)

The poem, “Homecoming,” is made up of six stanzas of unequal lines and length. Immediately after the title of the poem comes a dedication in bracket and italicised, “(for femi, nicole.)” Every letter in this dedication is written in the lower case, including the proper nouns, femi and nicole. This could be linked to the subject-matter, that things have changed drastically and they are no longer the way they used to be because modernisation has affected most of their ways. The whole poem lacks punctuation marks. We see only two full stops present in stanzas one (line 5) and five (line 26). There is also only one comma and it is in stanza four (line 15). No two lines rhyme in the whole poem. The poet makes use of run-on-lines throughout. In “Homecoming,” the poet persona in the company of another or others, visits his birthplace only to discover that things have changed. It is about the destructive activities of humankind against nature. The persona complains about the degradation of nature upon visiting his native land. The persona did not go there alone but in the company of another or others. This is evident in lines 1, 3, 8 and 15. New developments have taken place for:

The land regains all the marks

Lost to sunset
We see all parts as streams
Begin to change their course (p.66)

The parts that used to be their streams are no more so, for the stream itself is no more.

Likewise what used to be there:

Mountains level up with valleys
The horizon extends beyond the eyes
rays informs the forest

The mountains have been leveled and probably, some other structures have been built there; as a result, the beauty of the scene is altered. One thing that used to be remarkable to the persona whenever he was in the village was that, when they shouted, there were echoes, the voice is boomeranged. This time around:

No severing vaults can swallow
our voices, no boomerang
agitate our throats

The persona after his complaints, he warns the perpetrators who probably may be the government officials or the wealthy to put an end to this practice in the form of a proverb and the sentence type is command:

Let all prostrating lizards
stand
Let all lions abate their terror
Tell all pounding elephants
a trodden forest sprouts nothing
but twigs of famine

Tell the greedy fowl
to stop guzzling the eggs
of its own brood. (p.67)

By this proverb, which is also an incantation, the persona advises those who feel unconcerned to drop their lackadaisical attitude and those terrorising to put an end to that. The destroyers should stop causing damage to what is for all of them. In the last stanza, the persona, just as in one of the old traditional practices, he places a curse on the destroyers:

Let all fence builders
break their hammer
Let their hand suffer
arthritic arrest
who mean to stir hornets
on a peaceful world

There are elements of orality in stanza two (line 8) and stanza three (line 1). The persona makes mention of stream and mountains. These are some of the icons that the people of Ikerre reverence because they believe they have powers. In the fifth and sixth stanzas, as already mentioned, the proverb and the prayer of curse offered are also very important elements. In the traditional prayer, there is that “tit for tat” mindset, whereby you wish your enemy evil especially in return for evil. Another important element of orality is the singing of songs as seen in line 13, “and trees sing to one another.” Incantation is one of the elements of orality mentioned above. Incantation is the use of evidently magic words. In other words, it is the ritual chanting of certain words that are said to be magic and by so doing, one can cast a spell on another. In this act, the weaker side bows and succumbs to the power of the

mighty one. This is very significant among the Yoruba people, as might is displayed through this act and the intriguing nature of incantation is unraveled; otherwise, it remains just words on a piece of paper that moves nothing. Singing and dancing is equally an element of performance. Singing and dancing is part and parcel of the African and, in particular, the Yoruba. Singing and dancing go hand in hand. The tone, the way the voice goes, the kind of instruments beaten, and how the people danced is not visible. There is therefore more to what is put on a piece of paper. The people may also have been clapping their hands and moving their bodies charmingly, the smiles and laughter are also not catered for. As already stated, it is only in performance that orality is brought to life. In cursing, there is also performance in the posture and even the way the face is in appearance because the one who curses will not be doing it to an enemy with smiles all over, the body movement and the facial expression which we see in performance are all missing on paper.

3.3 Conclusion

In sum, it is the elements inherent in Osundare's mythology and wrapped in performance that the poet employs in the creation of his literary works. He has presented the social, political and economic daily realities in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular and elsewhere. Osundare does not pursue art and aesthetics blindly but for the social function of art. He travelled the length and breadth of his nation to gather the experiences as seen in the poem "Excursions" (p. 7-15). The element of orality and performance are mainly implicit in *Songs of the Marketplace* and in *The Eye of the Earth*, it is explicit. In *The Eye of the Earth* and *Songs of the Marketplace*, the poet did not spare his oral tradition and his Yoruba (African) language; Osundare utilises the literary devices of his Yoruba origin in his poetry and this is to advance his African (Yoruba) language. He is so conscious of his cultural

root as an African. The principal features of his orality in this selected poetry volume includes: repetition, the deployment of proverbs, the refrain, the pronoun and the praise address of good people and inanimates non-human nature and human nature. In all, proverbs are greatly used. Osundare hits on the important aspects of tradition and he shows that Africa is rich in the use of proverbs, among many others. In a nutshell, orality and performance are indispensable in the African society; orality mirrors the society and performance makes the mirror used clear and alive.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This research sought to identify the elements of orality and performance in selected poems of Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth* and *Songs of the Marketplace*. In this study, the focus was on the content analysis.

4.1 Findings

In *The Eye of the Earth* volume, Osundare discloses humans' total dependence on the earth using many of the elements of orality. On earth, we feed, work and worship; we begin with earth and end in the earth, where we are finally laid to rest.

Based on the investigations of the selected poems, it is discovered that Osundare does not only employ the elements of orality in his poems but also those of performance. This is true because in the selected poems from *The Eye of the Earth* and *Songs of the Marketplace* volumes under study, all the poems have the elements of orality and performance. He uses these elements in stanzas, lines and even in the individual words. The various kinds of orality covered in Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth* volume range from proverbs to riddles, incantations, and the use of the Yoruba storytelling act and mythology. The structure of most of the poems is like the chorus and verse style. There is the use of repetitions and refrain in the form of chorus and this is also musical. In some of the poems, the poet, draws on the Yoruba "Oriki" praise poetry style, the dirge style, and the invocation of the various deities in the Yoruba pantheon of gods.

Again, the poems in *The Eye of the Earth* volume are mainly about the non-human nature. It is all about the appreciation of nature and condemnation of the

negative human practices against nature. Through the elements of orality he comments on the topography, including the vegetation, mountains, pyramids, rivers and rocks.

Further, Osundare presents these rocks, rivers, pyramids, mountains and hills as possessing powers. In other words, they are worshipped as well. As such, the poet employs volumes of personification whereby human qualities are attributed to them. They (the rocks) “rose” from their thrones to welcome the wayfarer, the poet; the rocks speak with eloquence, because they have mouth and tongue, the tongues of flames. These rocks are also said to smile. The rocks are addressed by proper nouns in the local language and several other human attributes are deployed for them.

Also, through the poet’s presentations, it is vivid that the poet encourages the use of land for the production of their natural, local foods through the people’s traditional farming, for he proudly declares himself a farmer as well. He does not leave out their local herbs for treatment and he kicks against modernisation.

More so, the poet shows his interest in the Yoruba religious systems. He mentions and depicts several deities and the traditional doctors or priests who help their clients to know about the spiritual realm, solve their problems and to know what the future holds for them. The poet persona shows that it is through the traditional doctor “babalawo” that all of these are revealed to the people.

In addition, the poet presents a deluge of the Yoruba words. He himself declares that the Yoruba language is music. Being able to use the Yoruba parlance a lot makes the person a proud son of the soil, a traditional man indeed. It is noticed that some of these Yoruba words that the poet deploy are given the English translation in the footnotes but several others are not; this is a suggestion that the poet could not get

the English equivalents for such words. This therefore makes him a real man of tradition better versed in the local language than the English.

In like manner, in addition to orality, Osundare also makes use of the elements of performance. In this volume, he suggests the following musical instruments for the performance of his poems: the flute, the drums; the drums are further qualified. For some of the poems, it should be the “agba” drum, some heavy drums, “rain” drums. Again, sometimes, the poet suggests the drums should be ‘quieting, lower in tempo and then, solemn’. In the performance of a dirge, the poet suggests elegiac tune; in some particular instances, the music becomes festive and lively. It is also noticed that, in the performance, the poet makes some dedications as to whom the music should be played for and the combination of the musical instruments to be used are also stated.

In a number of Osundare’s poems, there is the use of the dialogue form as is typical of the oral folktale storytelling act; as a result, we come across a lot of pronouns such as: ‘we’, ‘you’, ‘your’ and many others in the poems.

It is again noticed that, in the performance, the poet suggests the accompaniment of music and musical instruments explicitly and in others it is implicit.

Out of the ten selected poems in *The Eye of the Earth*, the element of performance are explicitly suggested in five out of the ten poems and, in one of the poems, it is suggested even twice: for instance, at the outset of the poem, the poet persona suggests the poem be chanted to lively ‘bata’ and towards the last part of the same poem when the persona is full of regret, and commenting on the famished state of the earth, he recommends that the music lowers in tempo, and become solemn. In

total, we can say that out of the ten poems, performance is suggested six times explicitly as against four times implicitly suggested.

Finally, the poems in *The Eye of the Earth* volume have been grouped: “back to earth”, “eyeful glances” “rainsongs” and “homecall”. We again see orality and implied performance in the ones titled “rainsongs.”

Comparatively, in *Songs of the Marketplace*, the poet persona explores the elements of orality and performance. Beginning from the front cover of the volume, we see the picture of people performing the songs of the marketplace, playing different kinds of musical instruments such as the guitar, both small and the big drums, among others.

There are also many aspects of orality showing the way of life of the people such as the ‘gong,’ ‘oracle’s kernel. It is discovered that the poet equally employs a lot of local words such as, ‘Eusa,’ ‘kwashiokor,’ ‘Ikere Ogoga,’ ‘Ado Ewi,’ ‘Efon Alaaye’ and many others.

The poet also talks about the human experience by exploring the three major Nigerian local ways of bombarding a thief in Yoruba, Hausa, and Ibo, ‘ole’, ‘barawo,’ and ‘onye oshi,’ respectively.

Again, the persona does not leave out the oldest form of religious worship so we meet, ‘oracle,’ ‘seer,’ ‘babalawo,’ ‘shrine,’ ‘god deshrined,’ They depict some of the Yoruba religious practices.

Additionally, the use of repetition of words, phrases and parallelism is noticed as he uses the elements of orality to disclose the experiences of both human and non-human natures during the postcolonial era. This is visible both in lines, stanzas and individual words and this contributes to the musical nature of the poems. Note that in

Songs of the Marketplace, the poet's concentration is mainly on the human nature and not on non-human nature.

Also, at the beginning of some of the poems, dedications are made as we have it in *The Eye of the Earth* volume. The poet makes mention of the people for whom they were composed; some are individuals and others are groups of people that the tributes are paid to. Some of the poems are eulogy and others elegy or dirge.

In other areas, too, the poet employed a lot of riddles, proverbs, parables, idiomatic expressions and in some, he goes further to write them in his complete local dialect, Yoruba. There is the use of curse as well, which is very typical of the oral tradition in general.

The poet persona further suggests the elements of performance but, out of the ten poems in this collection, only one element of performance is explicit and this he name: "Music of the Visiting Power", but the others are implicitly employed.

The experience that the poet talks about in this volume is the human nature and not non-human as we have it in the previous volume, *The Eye of the Earth*. The people he meet on his excursion are suffering from one neglect and abuse or the other.

The poems in this volume are divided into: "songs of home and around" and "songs of dawn and seasons". The names given the various groups, as we see, also suggests music as is suggested in the traditional setup of the storytelling act; this also prompts performance as there can be no songs without performance.

Lastly, another presentation of the element of orality is showcased in the poet's use of "the cock has crowed" and "Iroko has sprouted" in going outside his country to Zimbabwe to talk about a similar human experiences. The cock crow signifies the dawn or the ripe time and the iroko stands for the heroes who fought the

oppressors for the liberation of the Zimbabweans. There is reference to Kenya and South Africa as well.

From this study, it was found that there are similarities and differences in the use of orality and performance in the selected poems from *The Eye of the Earth* and *Songs of the Marketplace* in the presentation of the non-human and the human experiences.

In the first place, it was discovered that Osundare, in the selected poems of these two anthologies, makes use of the elements of orality and performance in talking about the experiences.

Again, orality is found in both anthologies in the form of tributes or panegyric like the Yoruba “Oriki” praise poetry, local expressions, Yoruba phrases and words the occupation of the people (farming), the Yoruba mythology employed in the storytelling act, musical elements in the form of repetitions of words and phrases as well as parallelism within stanzas and lines, both inter and intra. The famous act of telling the time in the past, the cock crow is mentioned in both groups of selected poems. The Iroko tree, which is associated with might, the king of trees, is also referred to in both groups.

Further, it was again noticed that the selected poems from the two anthologies performs the eulogy and elegy, both in the human and the non-human natures.

Also, in the selected poems from the two anthologies, the poet introduces the pantheon of the Yoruba deities, showcasing the major way of worship and religious belief systems of the Yoruba people then and this is a suggestion of how dedicated Osundare is to his traditional religious system.

Osundare also employed the curse prayer and the incantation and proverbs, in both volumes.

Finally, in the selected poems from the two volumes, it was noticed that the poet goes outside Africa to the Greek mythology and he uses the swansong, which is a sorrowful song sung by a swan once in its lifetime, when it is about to exit the world, to say goodbye. The poet again decries the unhealthy experiences of blacks in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya to probably draw attention to the fact that, all over Africa, things are going wrong. The poet employs the dirge form in talking about the pains human and non-human creatures goes through as a result of man's inhumanity to man and to the environment.

However, there are some differences in the poet's use of the elements of orality and performance in the two volumes. In the selected poems in *The Eye of the Earth* volume, the poet mainly covers the non-human nature and in the *Songs of the Marketplace* is also solely about the human nature.

There is extensive mention of the pantheon of the Yoruba deities in *The Eye of the Earth* and he even pays tribute to the earth and these deities. But in *Songs of the Marketplace*, the deities are sparsely mentioned. The poet rather pays tribute to some great men.

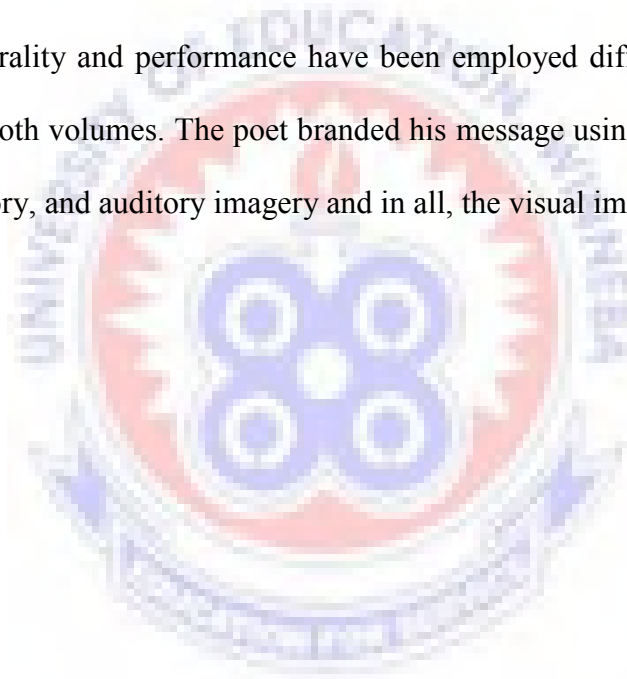
Further, the elements of orality employed by the poet the most in the selected poems from *Songs of the Marketplace* are the proverbs, but this is the least used in the selected poems from *The Eye of the Earth* volume.

Finally, the element of performance is suggested explicitly alongside the different instruments also recommended for the particular poems in *The Eye of the Earth* but in that of *Songs of the Marketplace*. Performance is implied through the use

of repetitions, parallelism used in words, phrases that denote and connote music, both inter and intra and the visible examples given about cultural displays, singing and dancing, among others.

4.2 Conclusion

From the discussions above, it could be seen that Osundare has made extensive use of different kinds of elements of orality and performance in enriching his compositions as he speaks about the experiences of both human and non-human natures in the post-independent era in Nigeria in particular and Africa at large. The elements of orality and performance have been employed differently in the selected poems from both volumes. The poet branded his message using very powerful visual, tactile, olfactory, and auditory imagery and in all, the visual imagery outweighs.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the study of the elements of orality and performance in the selected poems of Osundare's *Songs of the Marketplace* and *The Eye of the Earth* volumes.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study sought to examine the elements of orality and performance in the selected poems of Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth* and *Songs of the Marketplace* volumes respectively. In carrying out this study, the focus was on the analysis of these selected poems.

In this study of the elements of orality and performance in the selected poems for this research, the researcher chose Formalistic theory as the work's theoretical framework. This theory was chosen because these selected poems from the two anthologies were analysed based on the form and not otherwise; this is exactly what the theory is about; that a text should be analysed based on the form and not the content or any other thing outside the text. Osundare believes that things changed for worse during the post-independence era. The populace, especially the ordinary person, experienced untold hardships and sufferings - economically, politically and socially. It was a time when the people were no longer proud of their culture and tradition because they were made to believe that their inheritance was evil and to talk about them was a shame. Osundare, tries to make the people of Africa and Nigerians in particular to be once again proud of their rich heritage.

The researcher sought to explore how orality and performance played a vital role in modern African poetry. Also, the aim was to find out how Osundare used orality and performance in the selected poems from *Songs of the Marketplace*. Finally, the study was carried out to examine how the same poet exhibited orality and performance in the selected poems from *The Eye of the Earth* and to note the similarities and differences in his presentation of these elements of orality and performance.

Centered on the analysis of the way Osundare has exhibited the element of orality and performance in the selected poems from *The Eye of the Earth* and *Songs of the Marketplace* respectively, a conclusion is drawn that in *Songs of the Marketplace*, the poet presented the elements of oral tradition in totality as he combs everything that has to do with tradition as regards religion and worship, foods occupation, praise songs, parables, riddles, proverbs, dirges, music and musical instruments, oral story-telling act repetition and parallelism, satire, curse prayer, incantations, idioms and so on. It is noticed that he went the extra mile to bring out the details of the Yoruba orality. In this very volume, Osundare's focus is mainly on the human nature. On the other hand, in *The Eye of the Earth* volume, the poet equally employs the elements of orality but not in the manner as he does in *Songs of the Marketplace*, and the poet's focus is mainly on the non-human nature; so, after colonialism, Osundare tells us that it is not just the human nature that suffered but the non-human as well, the vegetation, rocks, mountains, forests, rivers and other water bodies and the creatures in them equally suffered.

It is worth noting that Osundare employs immensely the elements of orality and performance in both volumes, just that those of *Songs from the Marketplace* outweigh those of *The Eye of the Earth* in terms of wide coverage and this may be due

to the fact that it is human beings that practice tradition and they employ the non-human nature in their practices of tradition.

A very important finding discovered from the analysis is that, music plays a very vital role in both volumes and this element is noticed throughout, from beginning to the end.

The Yoruba create music and they are equally great dancers. Apart from this, in almost all the poems in *The Eye of the Earth* volume, the author himself suggests that they be played with different kinds of instruments, drums, small and big alike, and flute either explicitly or implicitly. The Yoruba in particular and Africans in general are fond of proverbs, parables, idioms, riddles, and these feature greatly throughout the *Songs of the Market* volume as well.

From the analysis, also it is clear that orality in the form of tales, riddles, proverbs, dirge, wise sayings, prayer of curse, incantations, idioms, myths, legends, parallelism, repetitions, dialectal expressions and song form, chorus, music and dance mainly represent the basis of Osundare's literary tradition.

5.2 Conclusion

Despite the fact that the selected poems employed for this thesis are from two different volumes they both cover unfairness to both categories of non-human and human natures. It is a decry of the evil in society at large. Osundare condemns certain practices meted out to both human and non-human natures inherent in society through the use of the elements of orality and performance.

The way the poet delves into the elements of orality in speaking about the African experience shows that we cannot do without our African heritage. For it is when we use our old ways to speak and correct our new ways that we can really make

headway, for the old ways frowned on most of the habits of today. Osundare's uses of all these elements of orality show the usefulness of the artist to his society. The poet has succeeded in the use of orality to talk about the social, cultural and political concerns of modern Nigeria and Africa. Through the selected poems that have been used for this work, Osundare has ridiculed and created awareness about the impact of the corruption, misappropriation of government funds, mismanagement, and weaknesses of the different Nigerian governments that have led to the gross level of poverty and other social problems in contemporary Nigeria and other African nations. Osundare also shows how important orality is so he also borrows from Greek mythology to show that the issue of orality is universal and important.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

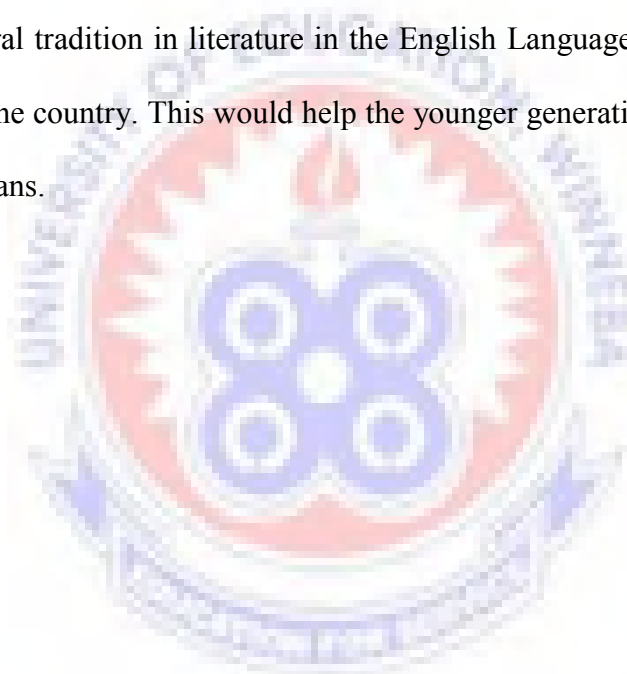
As has already been specified, this work sought to examine the elements of orality and performance in the selected poems of Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth* and *Songs of the Marketplace*. However, for scholarly work on these selected poems from the two volumes, and his other volumes, the following topics could as well be researched into:

- ❖ Identifying elements of love and sex in the selected poems of Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth* and *Songs from the Marketplace*.
- ❖ Elements of Orality: a comparative study of Osundare's earlier poems and later poems.
- ❖ Other researchers could employ the Structuralist and the Feminist theories to look at the form and representation of women in Osundare's poems.

5.4 Recommendations

Poems written by Osundare should be promoted as selected poems for schools in Africa. African poems should be made a must study, during the first semester; so that students, also at the university levels get to know about their rich cultural heritage.

Based on the fact that Osundare is a man who treasures the African tradition, I recommend that the Ministry of Education, in consonance with the Ghana Education Service and the Curriculum Research and Development Division, incorporate the teaching of oral tradition in literature in the English Language syllabi at all levels of education in the country. This would help the younger generations to always trace our route as Africans.



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