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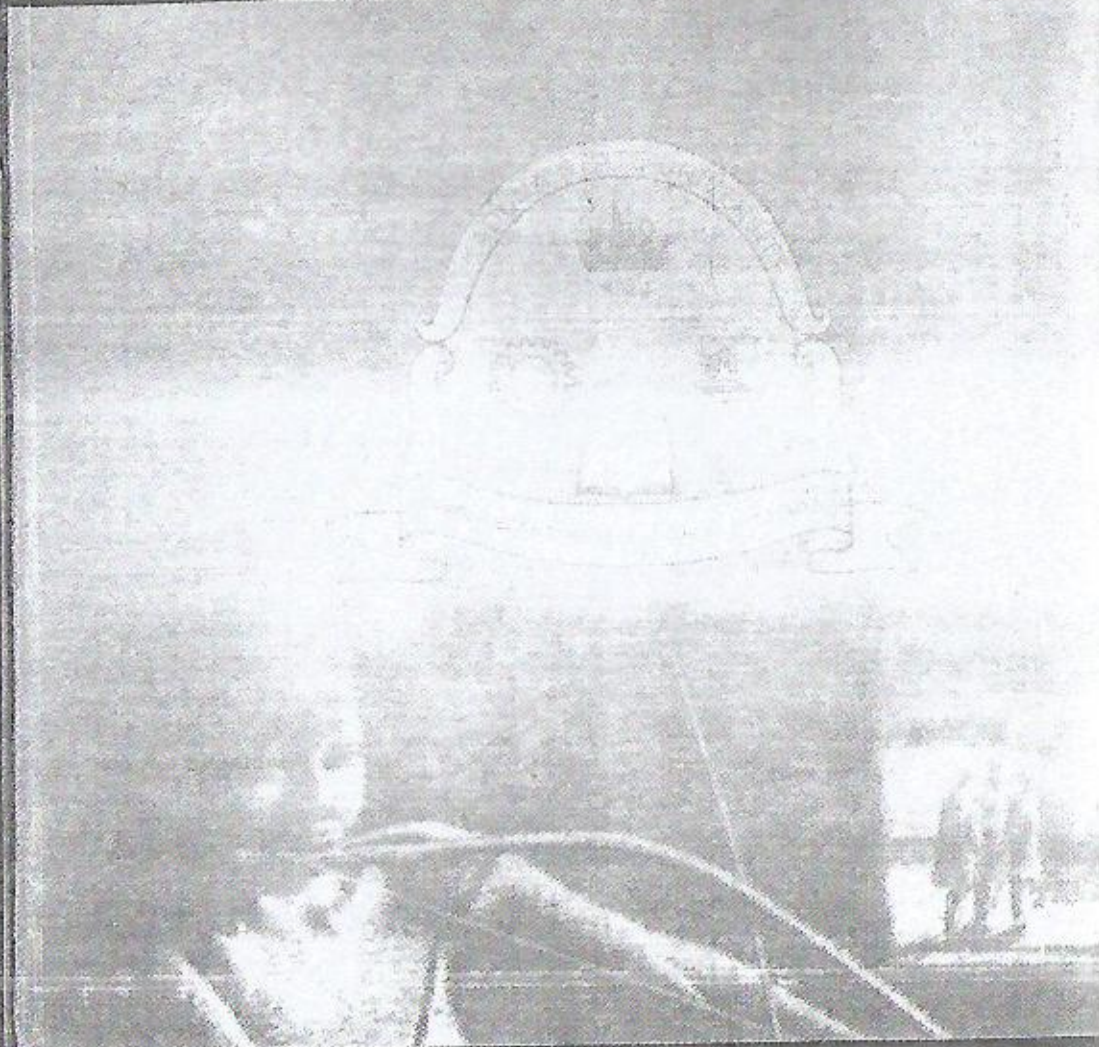
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NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

KADA Journal of Liberal Arts was until this 6th volume, the official journal of the Faculty of Arts, Kaduna State University Nigeria. It has now been taken over by the University haven judged and appreciated its quality and regularity. It remains a medium by which well-researched peer reviewed papers from scholars on wide range of topics in the Humanities in Africa and the World are published bi-annually.

SCOPE

The fully refereed Journal seeks to promote deeper understanding of issues via scholarly researches in the disciplines of the Humanities: Languages/Linguistics, History, Literature, Religious Studies, Education and disciplines in the Social & Management Sciences etc, useful to students, researchers, academics and other specialists, while also taking the interests of the general interests of readers. Thus, contributions are to be presented in a manner that any informed and interested reader appreciates the quality of its contents. KADA's Editorial Policy is not committed to any ideological prism or political viewpoint, even as it recognizes that a wide range of multi-disciplinary approaches are fundamental in understanding those wide range of issues surrounding disciplines in the Humanities. It equally appreciates that opposing viewpoints and ideologies, which have shaped and is still shaping the understanding/misunderstanding of issues in the Humanities are legitimate in academic discourses. KADA journal publishes unedited contribution from reputable academics of the rank of Professor free of charge especially if such contribution is within the scope stated herein.

SUBMISSION OF MANUSCRIPT

The Editorial Board hereby invites well-researched articles, review articles and book reviews on all aspects of the Humanities for the next edition of the Journal. Manuscripts could be submitted in English, Hausa, French or Arabic. Contributions in languages

other than English must be accompanied with 1000 words abstract/summary in English.

All submission should be double-spaced typed, leaving enough margins on both sides and should not be more than 8,000-10,000 words or 18 pages of one side of A4 size paper. Author(s) should forward original manuscript and two clean photocopies of their articles to The EDITOR, KADA Journal of Liberal Arts, Faculty of Arts, Kaduna State University, PMB 2339, Kaduna, with a non-refundable assessment fee of Two Thousand Naira only (N2000). Electronic version will only be required for the final submission after satisfactory corrections of the assessed paper are effected. Contributors will be entitled to 2 copies of the edition in which their articles appeared. A separate sheet of the title page should contain author(s) name(s), contact address and institutional affiliation, rank and author's areas of specializations. A short one paragraph summary of the paper's main thrust and contribution to knowledge should be aptly given on a separate sheet titled 'Abstract'. Quotations exceeding 40 words should be indented and single-spaced.

The American Psychological Association (APA) style using the author's surname, year and page number (where necessary) incorporated in the text and given in parenthesis is the only acceptable reference style for example: (Chafe, 1999:1-4). Only works actually cited should be listed at the end of the typescript under a highlighted heading **Works Cited** and arranged in alphabetical order. In the case of books, the bibliography should contain the author's name, date, title, publishers and place eg Ezeldeen, M.A. (2007) *A General Guide to Pharmacopoeia for Nigerian Patent Medicine Practitioners of Nigeria*, Baraka Press Kaduna. Same applies to unpublished theses except that the title should be in inverted commas eg Ashafa, A.M. (2002) "The Military Factor in Nigeria's Foreign Relations 1960-1999" (PhD) University of Jos, Nigeria. For Journals, titles should be italicized, volume, number and the pages indicated after the name of the journal, which must be underlined eg Babajo, A.K.(2005) "*Nigerian Authors and Prosaic pornography: A Critique of Audee Giwa's*

Marks on the Run" Journal of Nigerian Literary Society, Vol xi, No 1 pp1-17.

KADA Journal of Liberal Arts is bi-annual and submissions can be made any season of the academic year but contributions are only published subject to satisfying all the conditions stipulated by the Editorial Board. For further enquiries contact The Editor (08029123744) email: abashafa@yahoo.com

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March, 2012

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Investigations and Sanctions on the Niger-Delta Socio-Economic Vices: The Resolutionary Poetry of *Tanure Ojaide* Binta Ibrahim

Abstract

The Nigerian Niger Delta comprises of the Delta, Rivers, Abia, Imo, Bayelsa, Akwa-Ibom, Cross River, Edo and Ondo States. In these areas over the years, the activities of the Niger Delta militants have shaken the Nigerian government in particular and the polity in general. This made the government proactive in resolving the problem leading to not only the creation of the Ministry of Niger Delta, but also the Amnesty Programme adopted by the Yar'adua's administration. This paper analyses Tanure Ojaide's poems as it redefines the need for negotiation as a tool for regenerating the Niger Delta region.

Introduction

Many critics have discussed the contents of Tanure Ojaide's poems as fundamental elements, used as instruments for the portrayals of the delta people's identity and valued environment. However, further critical insight into ojaide's poems in particular; "Invoking the warrior spirit" and *The Fate of the Vulture* reveal the aesthetic notions and values foregrounded by Ojaide are more of resolution experimentation and applications of words conceived in the people's myth and poetry as evident in the context of the poems. What Ojaide presents is a picture of what a post-modern Niger-Delta should look like. He exposes the problems and apply measures that can lead to the end of the biting conflict in the area.

This article examines the artistic forms in Ojaide's poetry as revelations of the resolutionary commitment of the poet to his land and his people, beyond this present modern age. The article assesses the traditional icons and aesthetics used by the poet as envisaged re-establishing strategies for and structures of the Niger-Delta modern philosophies and culture ways. This article also traces and presents the effects of the poems as a reconciliatory and unifying spirit behind the in-coming complexities introduced by the economic intruders and looters into Niger-Delta. The existing

beliefs philosophies and vision form the traditional functional value, on which the poet rests his points and laments. Ojaide moves to develop new forms of consciousness and perfectly regularize and systematizes these forms with the Old forms. He proves that a distance from the social activities of the people will give the people a paradoxical doctrine and lead to their total confusion. His poetry as discussed in this article is the hallmark of a new Niger-Delta, both in the present and in future

Towards a Re-structure of the Niger-Delta Area

Invoking the warrior spirit

a. Ritual Chants

The collection of poems in "invoking the warrior spirit" opens with a traditional song titled *mbira*. The poet emphasizes that this popular lyric song at leisure and during hardship by the people is a deliberate echo of tradition purposely meant to reinforce the poet's ancestor's perseverance and to also scare off the strangers of the land who are referred to as "ghostly clans" Ojaide personifies this echo which he says multiplies his voice, a voice that has become a wizard. He compares the fear of the Urhobo man to a shaking and trembling tree; thereby delimiting him to nothing before his much value cultured. Ojaide eliminates fright with songs i.e. "fending off fear and keeping awake" (p.15) he heightens this auditory sensibility with another song titled *Oghereghe*. This later song is ironically presented as a natural composition accommodating the new trends of event prophesized by an insane woman whose name is also known as *Oghereghe*:

Generally, in traditional African societies, madness is usually attributed to attacks by evil spirits, which are believed to positively affect the thinking capacity of the mad victim. The assumption is that mad persons in turn communicate with these spirits, receive messages from them for onward transmission to the public. Hence, the utterance, of a mad person in the Niger Delta region is not taken with levity. Madness is distinguished from witchcraft theme earlier on referred to by the poet Ojaide himself becomes a wizard

confronter of global challenges. And it is in this notion that he talks of "*Oghereghe*" who though a mad woman, become a legendary figure in the Delta community. *Oghereghe* communicates through inspiration and press information to her people in madness "for it is only a mad person that can tell the truth". The mad sees what others do not see Ojaide's supposed medium is therefore more symbolic here than the message. The message becomes more effective based on the medium. Thus, Ojaide draws on the concept of madness from the resourceful riverine setting of his people to mainly connote openness against secrecy of the unknown friend. The iconic materials used by Ojaide are the weapons which the poet as a chanter uses to depict historical and social circumstances. He allows what is traditional to remain domineering and remarkably persistent in the rhythms that come out of the poems in *invoking the warrior spirit*.

If the song reads the palm, who will not listen to find the way out of the dizzying dark hole? (p.17)

The palm is an undetectable and important part of the human body. The song is therefore presented as a unifying symbol of the delta thrones. What Ojaide seems to be saying in these lines is that once the thrones remain strong, the natives cannot be deprived of their freedom to pay homage to the native powers? Homage is paid through poetic incantations, chants and invocations such as:

Buffalo that drives bushfarers from its dominion of leaves, crocodile that policies the water from the river to the sea, Eagle, mardnal of sky, that supervises our airspace, from your conglomerate of power, Great Iwri, you who cannot be fully known, give me enough to be firm and free (p. 16).

Hence, to the "enslaving ship; Ojaide mutters: "one single shot may not knock the leopard down but forays of barbed words will mortally wound the demon".(p.22).

Collectivity of the Niger-Delta people is further emphasized by the repeated use of the first person pronoun 'we' and Ojaide uses this in conjunction with strong metaphors. He picks on the destructive

diction of 'vulture', 'butcher', 'silver blade', hyena' 'victims of cloud' 'fallen warriors' to picturise the intruders of cultures thus: We have frozen the hyena's smile with a chant... mbira o mbira o mbira o. the sandfly's song ruins the paradise of the palace, the abuse song stands the swaggering one upright, strip the robber of his swathe of network charity, break the staff of the torturer chief of flukes.

Dig a bottomless hole beneath the leopard's throne who says the elephant is not scared in the jungle.

When it thunders and its head's shattered nerves, who say the lion is not confused in a burning bush?

This poetic piece titled 'mbira' therefore consist of a warrior's diction chanted in 'anthem of recovery' and "dance on the mass grave of vultures" presuppose a ritual, meant for seeking further protection from the ancestors otherwise symbolized as the warriors. No wonder Okome (2002) reviews Ojaide's debates on "a communal need, the urge to recreate an environment that his generation could bequeath to posterity" The poets attempt can be clearly seen in essence, is what can be seen as cultural renaissance. The melody of Niger-Delta songs, rhythm of the dance movement, accompanying the songs and used for ritual purposes, project not only the culture of the people, but create room for natural unity and traditional cohesion, serving as the agent of peace and progress.

Leo E. Otoide in "tradition, militia and policy in the Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria" states that:

Group cohesion nurtured by tradition possesses a cohesiveness that can be militant in expression. Traditional values are bonds which assist the capacity and veracity of a people to act in unison. Thus tradition is a ready arsenal from which a group can draw from in moments of crisis which requires confidence and solidarity p.1)

Ojaide put traditional values, beliefs, expressive and non expressive attributes in poetic language. By so doing; he encourages group support and self-reliance. To Otoide, such

attributes serve as "communal rallying points". A rally strategy serving as campaigns against "them"

The Function of the Ancestral Cult: Iwri

Iwri is presented as the biological source (mother earth) of the Niger-Delta people who must come together and seek for unity. Any deviation from the existing practices of the people cannot succeed unless approved by the people's ancestor. The ancestor intervenes in spirit. And this ancestral spirit is invoked by the people through songs and dance used as elements of ritual. Let us listen to this part of the poem for instance:

Iwri waits at the bottom of the precipice to custom us against a hard fall, Iwri fortifies the threatened with uteri that blunts the blades of machetes Iwri keeps the gum from firing at his devotees, Iwri snatches his favourites from peril and throws them into safety (p.17).

Symbolically, among the people, is the iwri cult serving functionally as a fortification means. From its practices, people gain courage. Iwri therefore serves as the mediation essence between the old and the new tradition of the Niger-Delta people. The poet heightens this when he says:

Iwri's clan of children conjure hurricanes to sweep open their blocked way, they raise bees to smite those who taunt them, they force hostile gods to flee the land Afraid for myself at home and abroad, I have gone to the grove like other to imbibe Iwri's draughts, ruled on the forehead with the sacred chalk (p. 18).

Ojaide, faced with the problem of post modernism and showing his concern for his land, works out cultural strategies in poetic forms, for the only possible solution to the problem a hand. He provides the spiritual need for the Niger-Delta people as a paramount factor that can make them come in terms with the new ways, some of which they are yet unknown. He attempts to create for his people the situation which they can cope with despite the acclaimed advantages of the new dictates of western life. In poetic forms, he

works out cultural strategies to be used for the only possible solution and delimits man's insecurity and uncertainty created by the outside world into the Delta society.

In "the forbidden secrets" which is one of the poems in "invoking the Warrior Spirit", Ojaide presents the traditional institution of the Edo people in Ughelli area of Nigeria. Edo is a student ruler in the poem and is the poem the protagonist of the poem. Edo is confined under three months to a secluded house where former rulers were buried. Here, he learns about the taboos and traditions of his people.

The effectiveness of spiritual exclusion is explored in this poem. And only through this can man achieve union in peace with tradition:

I must withdraw to Edon I, initiate, to prepare for the task ahead... in my parrot's tongue to avoid pitfall hurricanes... I look forward to being lost to the world for three months to choose right from countless gifts. The deal is struck who's chosen to ascend the high stool of governance must bear the land's offering... (p. 23).

The notion here is that the training which the new tradition bring, have their forms in the traditional elements that have existence from time immemorial among the Niger-Delta people. What the poet does therefore is to allow the natives to critically deduce subtle fusion of their own elements with the contradictory elements of those he refer to as strangers. Only through this can a progressive Niger-Delta community be ensured.

In Urhobo, Ojaide emphasizes the traditional death cycle belief of reincarnation. The belief that man dies and come back to life to live again; transition the concept of death is so personified in the poem that the reader feels its importance. This notion of transcendence is likened to the metaphorical traditional pounding in mortar. The poem says "Heart pound away in anticipation of communion".

press of women from land of the Iroko went to the Ethiope for their yearly bath. Boat driver that made Delta a family of creeks fish provider that filled every month... you were the greatest of many friends... (p.11).

With the reference to 'Edon' and 'Ivwri'; the riverside ancestors are to allow for recognition of two worlds, both of which are temporary. With this, Ojaide presents and ritual, in Niger Delta area of Nigeria man is presents tradition and ritual patterns of rebirth, in Niger Delta area man is presented as a short-lined being. The issue is man society and transition. He asserts the fact that the luxuriance of the culture is over shadowed by incoming turbulence and desolation. Hence, there is urgency in emergent proclamations such as in the poet's collection of poem "Invoking the Warrior Spirit". Collectivity is further expresses in the words "cults" "devotees" and family. Yearly bath is the annual ritual performed by the riverine people for the cleansing of their polluted land as a result of new technology that has destroyed the "Evergreen Magnate", "Parent Earth". Stronger communion with the land, ancestors and genuine cultural practices are what can lead to a crisis-free post-modern Niger-Delta.

To uphold the communal wholeness, aspirations and sensibilities therefore, Ojaide's collection of poems in Invoking the not only brought down the eagle but have "felled Irokos on sight" there by creating a far cry from the reality.

From the above analysis, it's being stressed out that, Ojaide's medium in "The Fate of Vulture" is a sophisticated weapon used in eliminating Nigerians experiences and reducing their international communicative expectations.

However, through the use of images and poetic dictions, the exploitative tendency is spelt out for the people awareness. Ojaide employs the use of various poetic data in his exposition of the exploitative tendencies. Many images, compound words and symbols are used for example to represent these forms of malpractice. He used the native poetic medium in a manner that

maintain that it can maintain a balance with the official language. Hence, his native tongue expression like the following are clearly understood and accepted by all levels of English users:

"it took the cause of the country into its expanding heart" (p. 2). The above phrase for instance depicts the hearts of the committed masses who are eager to fight for a goal of changing things for the better.

they stare at me with flaming eyes, Biting their lips
in regret for letting me pass". (p. 29).

The above data is a pointer direct towards the savages that breed superiority knowledge and wisdom, but have no choices than to surrender with later regrets.

But the plague struck, answer to prayers --- (p. 84).

This explains a kind of prayer answered. Ojaide also justify lexical items that tend to be common in the Nigeria situation, such as "Muritala, Sankara" (p.20). Muritala is the first name of the Nigeria Head of State (General Muritala) he was assassinated in 1967, but he becomes the Nigeria's Legend for Societal Improvements. Example of compound words that have specific meaning in the Nigerian situation, and are therefore pragmatic include:

1. Pocket----lift (p. 11)
2. Market---Wise (p. 80)
3. Eel----- Touch (p. 82)
4. Compliment coated curse (p. 89)

And lots more, pregnant with meaning .

The first exemplifies the greed leaders who are insatiable with their wealth; they exploit the economic resources by monopolizing it. The second stresses out the rational intuitive of good bargain existing within the business associates. The third phrase stresses the abandoned ferry, signifying the ruthlessness of the economy; the fourth lines explore a kind of words to those who seek favour or have slim opportunities for revenge.

From the illustration, it's deduced that Ojaide' poetic data is centered on word combination and deliberate choice of phrases and each phrase and choice of word is surrounded by the context in which they are used.

Linguistically, the poem comprises of compound word which appear to be more striking with the use of repetition that create a unity in the entire poem. Further examples are in the:

Shame, misfortune, dirge, assault, robbery
Hurricane, vulture, misery, stampede;

Compound words like:

Rogue- vaults, prison-house-

Blood- sniffing, harmattan- cold desert-menaced

The use of these words in the collection is a strategy selection for the accentuation of the mass suffering on the land, and it also stands as the protest against such suffering.

Conclusion

Ojaide's collection of poem in both 'Invoking the Warrior Spirit' and 'The Fate of the Vulture' contain potential and suggestively effective images of what a post-modern Niger-Delta of Nigeria if peace (spiritual and political) is to be achieved. To enhance cultural cohesion and advancement there must be cohesion of ideas and beliefs. Ojaide deliberately foregrounds the socio-cultural political and economic institutions of the people. He heightens this with mythical belief, governance and practices of the Niger-Delta people. He agitates for the fusion of a new Niger-Delta where all that is native are not left out but carefully fused with new methods of livelihood. Only this he believes can give the individual spiritual peace and communion with his god. Ojaide use of mythical figures such as Iwri and Edon is to accentuate his mission for collective progress, despite all odds. For instance, his post-modern vision can be deduced from the following lines in "Rivers" and "The Forest" (9), where he stresses the importance of the people's cultural sensibility in contemporary existence thus:

Divine courier Sent into Olokun's Underwear mansion, Let your course fill new acolytes with cheerful tales... offerings at river

beaches mirrored coins and icons of cults and devotees. Red/white-robed priestess and her

The use of traditional aesthetics in Tenure in Tanure Ojaide's poems is to amalgamate cultures, reshape societal institutions and suggest ways forward. The expository discourse came out here on Ojaide and his poems is a supplement to the existing literature on Ojaide and it is also an awareness data for the citizenry of Nigeria in the light of the going incontrollable Niger-Delta Crisis.

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