

Orality in Contemporary African Poetry: The Example of Ezenwa- Ohaeto

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Abstract

This paper argues that utilising the techniques of oral resources by African poets does not necessarily reflect political undertone but an acknowledgement of the aesthetic functions of the oral forms. Using a combination of literary and lexicon-rhetorical devices for analysis, the paper examines the deployment of oral modes in African poetry through a reading of Ezenwa-Ohaeto's poetry collection, *The Chants of a Minstrel* and how it contributes to the overall aesthetic purpose of the poet. The paper concludes with a bold affirmation that the poets' adaptation of oral styles and techniques surpasses that of writing against the "Other."

Keywords: African poetry, orality, Ezenwa-Ohaeto

Introduction

There is a large volume of published studies describing the place of orality in writing; scholars like Deborah Tannem (1980), Walter Ong (1982), Brian Street (1984), Albert Lord (1987), Jack Goody (1987), and Eileen Julien (1992) among others have examined its theoretical foundations. A good number of African scholars have equally interrogated the subject from different perspectives (Mapanje 1974, Anyidoho 1991, Ngugi 1993, Nwachukwu-Agbada 1993, Ojaide 1996, Biakolo 1999, Bodunde, 2001, Gyamfi, 2002). What we know about the existing research on the transfer of oral elements to the written form in African poetry largely interpret it as a response to the perceived hegemony of Africans by Europeans. But this is not always the case, reading African writing as a literature of reaction does not necessarily give considerable attention to either the aesthetic element of the oral forms or their functions.

This article contends that utilising techniques of oral resources by African poets is not only for political purposes, but an acknowledgement of the poets' recognition of the aesthetic functions of the oral forms. The poets' adaptation of oral styles and techniques surpasses that of writing against the "Other." This article, therefore, gives attention to the specific deployment of oral modes through a reading of the Ezenwa-Ohaeto's *The Chants of a Minstrel*. It examines elements of indigenous performance in the work and how they contribute to the overall aesthetic purpose of the poet. It explores how creative inventiveness of the poet contradicts the prevalent perception of African poetry as a literature of reaction. It contends that Ezenwa-Ohaeto's adaptation of oral cadence is merely aesthetic transfer rather than a platform for a political expression.

The adoption of oral forms from the indigenous ethnic language features prominently in much of Ezenwa-Ohaeto's poetry. He consistently explores the rhetoric of African performance in which traditional song, music, dance, and the spoken word achieve prominence. This feature of oral performance is noticeable in his poetry collections, including *Bullets for Bunting*, *If to Say I Be Soja* (If I am a Soldier) *I Wan Bi President* (I want to be the President), *Songs of a Traveller*, *The Chants of a Minstrel*, and *The Voice of the Night Masquerade*. Out of the six poetry collections produced before his death in 2005, two of the poetry collections were written in pidgin English as a reflection of "linguistic experimentation in the creative process of the postcolonial societies" (Ojaide, 1996:17). Looking through the compositions in the collections, a significant influence of the Igbo traditional genre of satire spreads through them. The choice of the satirical mode from the oral tradition implicitly influences the detailed content and form of the collections.

Theoretical Framework

The essay draws on theoretical insights from Leech (1991) and Talib (2002) to demonstrate that language is one of the central concerns of Ezenwa-Ohaeto's poetry. While linguistic analysis constitutes the main concern of Geoffrey Leech and appears to validate the visibility of language use, Ismail Talib draws attention to discourse conventions associated with indigenous languages in Africa. In exploring Ezenwa-Ohaeto's aesthetic strategies, therefore, the concern is not primarily linguistic analysis but to demonstrate how the poet creatively achieves what Jacqueline Bardolph (1984:151) calls "effective oral stylisation of oral characteristics in the written medium."

Writing Orality in the Chants of a Minstrel

The expression of oral features in the collection materialises at two major levels. First is at the level of the choice of cultural figures, where different voices are projected. The second involves the deployment of specific oral features. The title of the collection, *The Chants of a Minstrel*, clearly anticipates the omnipresence of indigenous performance strategies in the poetry. The idea of performance creates immense possibilities for adapting everyday idioms and poetics of oral performance. The collection freely draws on the vast repertoire of indigeneous oral literary forms and inhabits the intersection between the written and the oral. This mixture is obviously illustrated in the poet's preference for "chants" instead of poetry, suggesting an emphasis on the rhythm and sound of the words as well as their performance values. The terminology, chanting, also suggests the performative nature of the poetry. It anticipates musicality rather than speech. In other words, the preference for 'chants' foregrounds the adoption of viva-voce thought of which writing is only a vehicle for expression.

The preface to the poetry collection establishes the tone for the oral cadences through the declaration, "my ancestors were minstrels, and I have continued in the same tradition" (2003:8). The "ancestors" allude to the indigenous oral heritage of the poet. The tribute to the indigenous minstrel tradition describes in detail the heritage that enormously moved the poet. Although the notion of "tradition" suggests "from times immemorial," it could be interpreted as a broad category comprising entire indigenous and literary forms available to the poet.

"Continuing in the same tradition" suggests that the fundamental impulse of the poet's work derives from the oral poetic tradition. Since the channel of transmission of Ezenwa-Ohaeto's poetry is not exactly as the oral expression of his ancestors, the continuity of tradition is only relevant in terms of appropriating echoes of the oral rhythm of traditional texts, and of the spoken voice borrowed from the oral tradition.

The Minstrel as the Voice of Conscience

Minstrels as itinerant performers of music are frequently encountered in many societies. Beyond their primary roles as entertainers, minstrels have always been ready-made spokespersons or symbols of poetic assertiveness in the indigenous African society. The minstrel figure in Igbo society of Eastern Nigeria, where the poet hails from, is particularly associated with either the masquerades (*Mnanwu*) or itinerant musicians (*Egwu Ekpili /Okpubo*), who frequently entertain during religious and transition occasions, including puberty, marriage and death.

The Igbo in particular have cultural norms that endow the minstrel and masquerades with exceptional status, powers and immunity. The belief in ancestral worship and the perception of masquerades as spirit beings confer immunity on them. This recognition of masquerades as ancestral beings restrains the living from interfering with their performances, even when the object of performance is under satiric or abusive song.

The minstrel persona in Igbo society functions as a community conscience and enjoys immunity from persecution. This protection empowers the minstrel to significantly contribute to the socio-political well-being of the society through the chants. The wearing of a mask guarantees this immunity, hence, the unrestrained delivery of the wisdom of the tongue and sense of satire.

The minstrel also enjoys exemptions from persecutions because he is reckoned with the drunkards and madmen as social irritants or unserious person. This attitude explains why their utterances are frequently disregarded in that society. The total disregard of these characters' utterances sometimes obliterates the ridicule or criticism of their subject's stupidity and vices.

The fact that oral performance shapes Ezenwa-Ohaeto's imagination evokes the centrality of the actual performance of the poems. The poet tries to achieve this purpose by actualising a context of performance for the poems. The poet indeed acknowledges the fact that some sections of the collections are performed in several locations in Nigeria and Europe, including Bellagio, Berlin and Uppsala. The performance contexts are noticeable in the five divisions constituting the text, including 'the chant of a mad minstrel,' 'the chant of a mourning minstrel,' 'the chant of a musing minstrel,' 'the chant of a sentimental minstrel,' and 'the chant of a wandering minstrel.' Each of the divisions contains an average of five poems and the poet adopts various aesthetic modes in each section of the collection. The compartmentalisation of the poems at another level may reflect variety of generic forms that the poet adapts in the collection, including elegy, lyric, panegyric and satiric.

The Rhetoric of a Mad Man

The first section of the collection begins with the 'chant of a mad minstrel,' consisting of eight poems. The voice of the lunatic as a rhetorical strategy is particularly significant in the collection. The seemingly maladroit utterance of a lunatic is transformed into a practicable mode for social criticism in the hands of the poet. The rhetorical frippery of this persona is creatively appropriated as aesthetic strategies in the collection:

How many lions are killed?
Before an appellation of lion killer?
How many leopards are killed?
Before taking title of leopard killer?
How many times must the rogue perform?
Will the eyebrow outgrow the beard?
If the knee grows bigger than the thigh
A disease has taken residence (26)

The concept of madness among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria is slightly different from the general perception of it. Ezenwa-Ohaeto underscores this outlook in an earlier essay, “Poetic Eloquence: The Concept of Madness in Igbo Proverbs,” where he argues that “madness serves as a mask for the brave in confronting kings with the truth” (214). The lunatics’ abnormal behaviours and ambiguities of language are artistic tools for conveying thoughtful messages. There is a sense of urgency and speed in terms of tone that are unmistakable as the persona interrogates his environment. The choice of a declamatory tone proves inevitable for the speaking voices of the drunkards and lunatics encountered in the collection. For example, in ‘the minstrel chants of lunacy’ and ‘the chants of a tipsy minstrel’, we see the connections between the restlessness of the speaking voice associated with drunkards and madmen on the one hand, and the mood swings, performative impulses and monologues displayed by the minstrel persona in the text. The unstable state of the lunatic’s mind coupled to the perspicacity of the minstrel renders a perfect balance between “the playful and the serious” for the audience contemplation of the social political landscape. More specifically, the connectedness of personalities of the madman and the minstrel as rhetorical voices of conscience in ‘The chant of a mad minstrel’ heightens the angst towards the socio-economic contradictions in the poet’s environment. The poetic licence enjoys by these personae aesthetic implements deployed by the poet to produce specific effects upon the audience through their sensitivity to sound. The following verse demonstrates this encounter:

You are asked to fetch fire
You claim lack of hunger
Are you asked to fetch fire? (21)

Do you struggle for rat’s ears with fire?
Do you wrestle with fire over dry grass?
Do you joke with fire over gunpowder?

The flurry of rhetorical questions in the above verse, which tends to hide seriousness of the issues, establishes the turbulence in the heart of the persona. The chosen style in the above verse is obviously satiric as the persona deploys irony, humorous imagery, ridicule and sarcasm.

The first division in the collection is preceded by an introductory poem, 'Pre-chant,' where the poet persona contextualizes his pedigree, his artistic background and the authenticity of his training just like an indigenous minstrel would do by proudly declaring his genealogical background:

I am man of moods
I am man of chant...
I come from a village of chants
I walk to the city of chants. (12)

The persona's claim, 'I am man of moods', anticipates the kind of rhetorical strategies that are at work in the performance. The emotional impulse of the persona is creatively embedded in the many guises, speaking voices and characteristics of performance in the text. In other words, variety of artistic experience provokes the imagination of the poet, including drinking, travelling, and mourning. This development probably explains why the literary text under discussion generally reflects different generic modes of poetry—elegy, panegyric, poetry of abuse and the satirical.

To the reader who seems unaware of his antecedent, the persona provides his background, declaring, "I come from a village of chants." The fact that the persona comes from "a village of chants" suggests that the "local" overwhelmingly shapes his identity. There is also a mastery of a variety of village experiences and reverberations of village voices through the combination of satire and rhetorical devices. The reference to one's antecedent or genealogical line is generally done at the beginning of African oral performance. This self-introduction is necessary because of the need for establishing trust and confidence with the audience. This practice is succeeded in the text by an invocation to the spiritual and temporal realms, pleading "come chant with me/ tongues of this land" (12). The "tongues of the land" is a metaphor for the "elders"; the existing practitioners of verbal art, ancestral spirits and divinities in that society. The invitation to the "tongues of the land" to "come" is a way of paying homage to the indigenous elders in the African oral tradition.

The reference to ancestral and geographical origin is immediately followed by the poet-persona's statement of purpose, 'I walk to the city of chants'. Walking represents mobility. Although the persona acknowledges his affinity to the indigenous tradition, he insists that the ultimate direction of his performance is the 'city'. In other words, the rhetoric of the persona is forward-looking; "from the village to the city." There are literary images associated with the village and the city. These images frequently exist in binary forms: the rural and the urban, and from the local to the global. The urban and the rural have been placed in diametric opposition to the advantage of the latter

The movement of the persona to the "city" needs to be clarified. Although there are cities in the country of birth, the direction is towards the cities in the Western world. Hence, the movement is from the local to the global. This outlook probably explains the persona's stimulating tales from the European cities, which are obviously different from the folktales of his African social realities. The insight from the journey to Europe is lucidly articulated in the second section of the collection, "the chants of the wandering minstrel," where the minstrel recalls the diary of multiple images built from his globetrotting:

I meandered into Mainz
The abrupt declivity of emotions
Juggled Autumnal images in my mind...

I frolicked into Frankfurt
Walking under drizzling rain... (30)

I berthed in Bayreuth
I walked into the woods
I bustled into Berlin (31)
I sauntered into Sweden
Coming to rest at Uppsala (32)

I limped into London
Ah London of a thousand tales (33).

It is important here to observe the phono-aesthetic features in the above verse. They are parts of the poet's tendency for phonological echo in the text. The image of the minstrel-persona that emerges from the above verse is that of a migrant, transiting the major cities of Europe. This globetrotting minstrelsy is a departure from the indigenous itinerant bard, who is primarily restricted to the local community.

The absorbing experiences from the European trips directly propel the minstrel persona to render new chants that naturally capture some of the challenges of assimilating European lifestyles. There is as well a literary strategy at work in which the persona's overarching theme evidently projects both the obsessions and the dynamics of multicultural Europe. Much of the concerns are, however, buried in the declamatory and repetitive tones that obliterate the subject. This posture is substantially illustrated in the following verse, highlighting how inscription of tattoos has become a popular culture in Europe:

I read the statement of tattoos
On the face of a lifetime statement
On the arm an advert statement
On the navel a private statement,

I read the statement of rings
An ear ring, a nose ring
A breast ring, a tongue ring
A lip ring, a navel ring
Ringing the changes... (30)

The statements of 'tattoos' and 'rings' depict the norms, values and the popular fashion culture in Europe. The speaker appears astonished about the placement of tattoos and rings in the body. Although the inscription of tattoos and rings are primarily for fashion, but their placements in the body probably suggest contextual representation of self. In other words, where a tattoo or a ring is inscribed reveals the identity of the person.

There are some linguistic items and sounds that are dominant in the foregoing verse. The deliberate repetition of words like 'statement,' and 'rings' absolutely display the beauty of the spoken word in performance. The repetitions of consonants (t/n/g) and near rhyme sounds (read/ear/breast; nose/tongue/navel/ changes) further enhance the musical qualities of the poems. This rhetorical strategy of repetition is lucidly illustrated in the poem, 'A Minstrel Trampling across the Land':

I chanted of lights:
The lights of glowing coals
The lights of flickering camp fires
The lights of a mystical waxing moon
The light of a dusty and pale stars
The light of searchlight beams
The light of car headlights
The light of arc lamps glaring
The light of eye-aching suns (16)

There is the foregrounded repetition of the initial phrase, “The light of,” which runs through the lines as the persona sings of different lights in sequential order. This phonological scheme goes hand in hand with admixture of assonance and alliteration as noticeable in the repetition of /a/ sound in ‘car’, ‘arc’ and ‘eye-arching’ in the last three lines of the verse and the initial consonant sounds /f/ and /m/ in the first two lines. This tendency to use exact verbal repetition with various kinds of lexical repetition is typically an exercise in speaking fluency in African oral performance as parts of aesthetic pleasure. This technique is commonly referred to as piling. It is not so much sense as the sound that matters as the verse is recited in one unbroken breath.

The powerful effect of repetition is equally observable in the repetition of the word “post” in “The Minstrel with a Post-colonial Goat-skin bag”:

Each post has a Goatskin bag
But is there a postmodern muse
For a post-colonial poet or is there
A postcolonial Muse for a postmodern poet? (23)
When is the last post?
I have a postcard without a postcode
It came posthaste without a postmark
I read the post prandial postscript.
Is postcolonial a posterior postmodern?
Is postmodern a postdated postcolonial?
Is there a post coital post? (24)

The preceding verse raises the contradictions associated with the recent enthusiasm for the “post” word in literary criticism. The repetition of the word “post” and the following sounds /p/ and /eu/ that run through the verse significantly echo the persona’s strong objection to the “posts” focus in literary criticism. The repetition of “post” which could have been boring is sufficiently forestalled by the canon of unbroken breath, which ensures high speed delivery.

Repetition as a rhetorical device is a basic principle of the oral art that helps in establishing emphasis. Its uses in the collection is not only limited to words and sounds, but to lines and stanzas as well. These conditions are considerably illustrated in the division titled ‘the chants of a mourning minstrel’, which consists of five elegies dedicated to family members and public figures. There is a noticeable repetition of “they wanted a man / we gave them men / where are they;” in almost all the dirges in the collection. This refrain is especially illustrated in ‘Where does the rainbow live,’ ‘Kolanut lasts long in the mouth of those who value it’ and ‘The tree we used to touch the sun’ (77). The repetition of “where are they?” establishes the sense of loss as the poet laments the departed literary icons like Amos Tutuola, John Munonye and Ola Rotimi. The following verse exemplifies the repetitions of words and sounds that capture the utter helplessness of the bereaved:

But who will open the windows again?
Who will weed the farms?
The weeds even choke themselves. (76)

But who can talk to death?
The language that death understands
Know, the pots take turns to sit on fire
It is the turn of Ola Rotimi. (81)

Where is Mama?
The woman they call Rebecca
Where is Aunty?
The woman they call Mercy
Where is Idu?
The one they call Ambrose
They wanted a woman
We gave them women
Where are they? (72)

The powerful effect of repetition in the above lamentation demonstrates the gravity of the grief. The use of rhetorical voice and direct references to names of the deceased establish the reality of the losses. The poet seeks further to capture the techniques of traditional oral forms through the deployment of conversational tone, use of praise names and titles, and direct address. The following elegy, 'Where does the rainbow live?' captures the utter helplessness of the bereaved:

C. K. N, where are you?
Let the praises be assembled:
Ògbójú ode! Dinta!

Fire that devoured water
Crab that could not be eaten in secret
Hunter that tamed lions. (75)

C.K.N in the above verse is an acronym for Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, the military officer who led the first coup d'état in Nigeria's political history. The poem retrieves him from memory and eulogises him as an accomplished and courageous soldier. There are also interpolations of bits of African languages, particularly Igbo and Yoruba. *Ògbójú ode* is a Yorùbá word and *Dinta* is an Igbo word; both meaning brave hunter. The two words allude to the panegyrics associated with brave hunters in the oral tradition.

The allusion to hunters' saga recalls Wole Soyinka's translation of D.O. Fagunwa's book, *A Forest of a Thousand Daemons*. The novel, originally written in Yorùbá, recounts spectacular encounters of hunters with weird elements in the forest. The noble actions of these hunters are addressed to the military officer in the poem in the following epithets: 'fire that devoured water/ crab that could not be eaten in secret/ hunter that tamed lions.' This epithet alludes to the action of the soldiers in killing corrupt politicians during Nigeria's first republic. Although the coup did not succeed, Nzeogwu succeeded in killing politicians from the Northern and Southwestern Nigeria.

The tactics of rhetorical parallelism are also noticeable in the collection. This element is illustrated in the formal deviation in 'The dilemma of a minstrel:'

Is the village Saint a clever imposter?
Is the clever Saint a village imposter?
Is the willing tool an unwilling fool?
Is the willing fool an unwilling tool?
Are you a self-made fool?
Are you a man-made fool?
Are you convicted by convictions?
Are you convinced by convictions? (20)

This kind of parallelism attempts to juggle words and sounds. Although the meaning of the above is confused, a musical quality is achieved.

Closely connected to parallelism is a fairly large display of humorous word-play in the collection. Word-play primarily involves juxtaposition of similar lexical items to create verbal dexterity. It also serves as part of the aesthetic strategy of the poet to disguise his criticism of corruption and socio-political decadence in the postcolonial African context. This attempt at double-speaks, sometimes, confuses the audience and makes interpretation of meaning difficult, if not controversial. This element is vividly illustrated in the ‘The Minstrel Chants of Identities,’ where the poet plays on the words “chief” and “thief:”

We have a chief-who-is-a-chief
We have a chief-who-is-a-thief
We have a thief-who-is-a-chief
We have a thief-who-is-a-thief. (25)

The alternation of “we have a thief-who-is-a-chief” and “we have a chief-who-is-a-thief,” functions as a refrain at the end of each stanza in the poem. It also provides avenues for generating diverse meanings on the structural positioning of ‘thief’ and ‘chief.’

A similar example of wordplay can be found in “The dilemma of the Minstrel”, which expresses a sense of dilemma in practice:

Is the village Saint a clever imposter?
Is the clever Saint a village imposter?
Is the willing tool an unwilling fool?
Is the willing fool an unwilling tool? (20)

In another poem, 'The tongue of a mad minstrel' (14), the poet examines the issue of cultural politics of language in post-colonial society, thus:

What is your tongue?
What is your mother tongue?
I have seen mother tongues
I have also seen murder tongues. (14)

The mad Minstrel, in an apparent play on the sound of the words "mother" and "murder," identifies two tongues. Tongue in this context refers to language. At the heart of the subject of language in post-colonial Africa are several issues. Mother tongue refers to the language that is native to a people. It also serves as a symbol of identity of a race or nation. In a post-colonial setting like Nigeria, there are several of such tongues, based on her many ethnic nations. But, three major ethnic languages have subsumed other minority ones. An average African, according to Osundare, "journeys through the channel of two tongues, the native and the foreign tongues" (2000: 15). The foreign tongue, imposed courtesy of colonialism as the language of official transactions, is a "historically compromised medium" (Jeyifo, 2004: 288). It is nourished and moulded by what Oyeboode calls "attitude of mind that is arrogant and contemptuous of the other" (2000: 38). Ezenwa-Ohaeto considers such tongue a "murder tongue":

When action becomes actionable
When deeds become misdeeds
The tongue becomes a murder tongue. (15)

Historically, imposition of the alien tongue on the colonized societies brought about the notion of colonialist superiority myths. This has even made some cultural nationalists advocate the use of indigenous languages in official transactions. For instance:

The post-colonial murder tongue

Erase all historical memories.

The universal murder tongue
We are not in the same world.

The civilized murder tongue
We are all human but there is a BUT... (14)

Even the mad minstrel has his own tongue as seen in the following lines:

I have a tongue
A tongue for chants
An admonishing tongue,

I have a tongue
I have a mother tongue,

I also have a murder tongue
A tongue for your tongues. (15)

One major fact emerges from “a tongue for your tongue,” the mad minstrel has a tongue to constructively engage other tongues, which is the language of poetry. Through this means, he can admonish, as well as ‘murder.’ Just as the minstrel concludes in ‘The mad minstrel plays with fire’ (22), the fire of a minstrel tongue is live coal covered with ash.

The poet deploys different forms of rhetorical questions, which are generally defined as questions that are not expected to elicit any response. The tendency to use rhetorical questions serves different functions, which include expressing strong emotional feelings, providing variety to artistic style and thematic marking. The opportunity for dramatic effect

How many lions are killed?
Before an appellation of lion killer?
How many leopards are killed?
Before taking title of leopard

The use of proverbs is another significant device liberally deployed in the collection. Proverbs are commonly used as one method of demonstrating rhetorical competence and expressions of traditional wisdom in African oral tradition. The poet makes use of different categories of proverbs, which are modified and adapted according to the demand of rhythm and beat. Some of the proverbs are terse and witty, dealing with issues of being considerate, relationship with the less fortunate and self-restraint as highlighted below:

“The Minstrel Chants of Lunacy”
If unkempt hair presages lunacy
Do you imitate the bald vulture?
And make carrion your lunch?

If you make the barks of a lunatic
Objects of merry amusement
Can you wish your child a lunatic? (27)

In “The Minstrel Chants of Identities,” we have:

You are made a king
You are not contented
You wanted to become God?

One who steals a whistle?
Where does he blow it? (25)

Also in “Sentimental Glance Chants,” we have:

When you live near a river
You can hear the voice of fishes
But if you linger on the seashore
Waiting for the crab to fall asleep
You will wait all night. (50)

Apart from the well-chosen witticisms of the proverbs, they serve as strong echoes of rich resources of indigenous culture. Likewise, proverbs are used as titles in some poems, including ‘The calabash does not sink in water’ (77) and ‘Kolanut lasts long in the mouth of those who value it’ (81).

Conclusion

The innovative uses of formal repetitions, the general symphony of phonological schemes and deliberate appropriation of indigenous speech rhythms in Ezenwa-Ohaeto's *The Chants of a Minstrel* testify to the poet's aesthetic consciousness. The transfer of the voice of a minstrel from a traditional context into written poetry illustrates how a striking cultural image can be helpful to interrogate contemporary issues. From the reading of *The Chants of a Minstrel*, we notice a practical expression of verbal forms like word-play, elaborate rhetorical displays, proverbs and declaratory and declamatory modes associated with the minstrel tradition of the Igbo society. From the poet's choice of the African oral forms, we see a rendering and reworking of language that seeks to create something different and fresh. These strategies are largely aesthetic devices, which do not necessarily serve either political or ideological purposes.

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