

A Stylistic Reading of Selected Poems from Niyi Osundare's *A City without People*

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Abstract—This paper critically examines the stylistic traditions and innovations inherent in the poetics of Niyi Osundare, one of Africa's most renowned literary-linguistic artists. Using the Text World Theory (TWT) as conceptual framework, it penetrates into the poet's mind with the intention of answering the fundamental questions in stylistics: why and how has the writer chosen to use particular words, sentences and metaphors (imagery) in particular ways to achieve particular objectives. Ten poems are purposively selected from the anthology titled '*A City without People: Katrina Poems*', published in 2011. In a way that speaks volume to his literary genius, Osundare makes the reader involved in the artistic depiction of the ruinous aftermath of the great Hurricane Katrina tragedy through the poetic use of the English language. The data, explored through the aforementioned theory, project the personal and communal feeling of loss, destruction and alienation in a way that unites the different (pieces of) poems as a whole unit (text). The findings reveal a style that, reminiscent of the vintage Osundare, validates his place as one of the few poets who maximise the total potentials of language in the rendition of art.

Index Terms—style, TWT, Osundare, hurricane Katrina, discourse world

I. INTRODUCTION

Niyi Osundare is, unarguably, one of the most prolific poets in Nigerian history. This claim stems from the sheer volume of his works and the many awards and laurels he has garnered all over the world. He has also been widely proclaimed as one of the best poets to ever come out of Africa. Although, a lot has been written about the literary style and content of Osundare's poems, the consistent nature and size of his literary output nevertheless place him in a conspicuous position not to be ignored by curious scholars in the field of stylistics and literary criticism. The subjects matter of his poems, his choice of words and eloquence which is highly influenced by the Yoruba oral tradition all make his elegant compositions endearing.

Many scholarly works have been written on Osundare and his art. Anyokwu (2011) examines the use of indigenous Yoruba concepts in Osundare's works through a literary perspective. He posits that the poet employs imagery, metaphor and concepts that pay particular homage to his ancestral origin in the vivid projection of themes that are dear to him which such as (in)justice, class struggles, social decadence and massive corruption. Also, Oripeloye (2006) investigates how Osundare's use of "old narrative elements to portray the mood of modern society". Here, the poems of Osundare are seen as greatly influence by the free flowing style of Yoruba folklore. This, again, is corroborated in Anyokwu's (2013) treatise on myths and mythology as themes that are commonplace in any Osundare anthology. He describes the poet as an artist that is well vast in the knowledge and appreciation of his linguistic and cultural heritage.

To complement these literary approaches, some stylisticians have also critiqued Osundare's works from linguistic perspectives. This list includes Dick (2015); Addo (2015); Jimoh and Odetade (2016); and Aminu and Oluwagbenga (2017). The way Osundare uses deviation for stylistic effects in his works is studied by Dick (2015). He submits that 'Osundare is a poet who is quite sensitive to language, who is prepared to exploit even the seemingly insignificant of forms to achieve stylistic significance', (p.2). Addo (2015) also investigates the stylistic use of sensual and sensuous imagery in interpretation of authorial intents on climate change and depletion of the ozone layer in Osundare's *Eye of the Earth* (1986). The paper concludes that Osundare humanises nature and thus, cautions against its mismanagement with expressions like the earth is 'ours to plough, not to plunder'.

On their own part, Jimoh and Odetade (2016) critically analyse the stylistic import of lexical choices made in Osundare's caustic put-down of Nigerian politicians in his poem titled 'Blues for the New Senate King'. In what they term a 'socio-stylistic' endeavour, they submit that Osundare satirises the ills of his society by employing usual linguistic resources in unusual poetic manners. This view is corroborated by Aminu and Oluwagbenga (2017). In their own thesis, they examine examines how Osundare 'creatively employs grapho-lexical features to convey his socio-political messages in his poems', (p.2). Here, the poet's penchant to dexterously manipulate the both his native Yoruba and the English languages for maximum stylistic cum aesthetic effects is reinforced. The findings reveal an artistic commitment to the moral, educational, spiritual and socio-economic betterment of his environment through the use of poetic talents.

Of course, there are earlier publications that have done credible justice to the stylistic hermeneutics of Osundare's works. Examples of such works are Tamure (2003) and Alu (2008). They both set off to appraise how Osundare's

familiarity and dexterity with both Yoruba and English languages combine to give the world masterpieces of literary art bordering on creative genius. The ingenious manner the poet incorporates Yoruba words and phrases into his literary compositions and thereafter gives new meanings to this hybrid linguistic innovations are highlighted. An example of such artistic ingenuity is the word ‘executhieves’--- a compounding of the words ‘executive’ and ‘thieves’. All these are testament to Osundare’s literary proclivities which are an eclectic blend of both the ordinary and the extraordinary.

Although it also studies Osundare’s stylistic use of language, this present study, however, takes a departure from most of the earlier works on Osundare’s poetry, by focusing on how he documents the destruction left behind by the 2004 Hurricane Katrina of New Orleans in *A City without People*. The excellent depiction of this particular tragedy in verse prompted the researcher’s attempt at analysing a select corpus of poems from the anthology. The artistic predilection for a particular theme that runs through a literary collection is the preoccupation of this paper.

II. PERSPECTIVES TO THE STUDY OF STYLE

Style has been dissected from differing scholarly perspectives. Some of these include style as choice, personality, statistics, temporal issue, and genre and so on, (Enkvist, 1964). Each perspective has its own merits and dialectic suitability, as far as the polemic need is concerned. In other words, the perspective through which scholars handle the concept of style is usually dictated by the motif of writing or the anticipated result of that particular academic undertaking. In this present paper, therefore, the concept of style as personality becomes necessary. This is because creative interests are subjective and are formed and cemented by a set of linguistic patterns and recurring themes. It also includes such details as sentence formation, lexical borrowing, diction, linguistic innovations, graphological patterning and the presence or absence of rhymes. All these indices combine to form what we regard as a writer’s style. Breuer (2008) states that style was initially viewed as an expression of personality while saying that it (style) connotes or manifests personality patterns writ large. Indeed, it would not be far-fetched to say that literary writing, like any other human endeavour brings out particular and idiosyncratic traits of the individual into it, (Bamigboye, 2016).

Style is the man, so goes a saying made popular by Count Buffon, a sixteenth century French patrician. The underlying argument in the statement implies that what actually embodies/constitutes an individual are the habits, predilections, norms and characteristics that could be easily attributed to the person. These personal embodiments all come together to form the personality of that particular individual. In the case of poets, muses or whatever triggers their imaginative and creative proclivities are assumed to be part of their aesthetic whole. All these point to the seemingly inseparable union between the artist and his art or between the poet and his poetic collections. In this case, we can then argue that Osundare’s personality is reflected in his diction. This is in consonance with Salvador (2008:237) who submits that ‘choices taken during the process of writing a literary work are nothing more than the expression of the writer’s personality’.

III. METHODOLOGY

Ten poems from the anthology are purposively selected for the study. *City without People* is divided into five parts named ‘Water, Water!’, ‘After The Flood’, ‘The Language of Pain’, ‘Katrina Will Not Have the Last Word’ and ‘Afterword’ respectively. Six poems are selected from the first part with one each coming from the other four parts. The analyst is convinced that the selection meets the purpose of this particular paper.

IV. CORPUS STYLISTICS

Stylistics is the study of authorial style in text. This is done (of course, through strictly linguistic parameters) with ‘analytical rigour and explicit commentary’ on the reasons why and how a text is the way it is, Bellard-Thomson (2011: 55). Corpus Stylistics, however, is a branch of stylistics that involves the investigation of a bulk or collection of works with related values, either in terms of authorship, genre, period or thematic preoccupations/subjects. The central idea here is to determine the extent or otherwise of the commonality of stylistic features present in the collections. Such texts are subjected to corporal scrutiny, with the establishment of a common style as the basis of investigation.

Although, a corpus stylistic study usually involves large caches of data which could sometimes run into millions in volume (Biber: 1990; Semino and Short: 2004) and Sinclair (2005) admonishes that ‘it is important to avoid perfectionism in corpus building’ (p.81), it is, however, our argument in this paper that since the thesis of the study remains the examination of traces of similarities in the deployment of authorial themes and language, this particular academic endeavour is therefore justified on that particular premise.

V. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: TEXT WORD THEORY

Text World Theory, basically ‘investigates how language, together with the context in which it is produced/received, leads the reader of a text to build mental representations for the situations being described, despite not necessarily having been present for the original event’, (Hargreaves, 2012, p.1). It could also be a fictional account of a real event or just the creative result of literary imagination, (Werth 1999, Gavins 2007). In all, the way the reader connects with world built through authorial ingenuity and how this ‘world’ is sustained is the treatise in TWT. A writer’s perspective,

together with the imagery and deployment of available linguistic resources, creates in the reader's mind, a world situated in the text only. This 'text-world' then continues to reflect developments that are occasioned by new information which are textually provided.

Gavin (2007) itemises three conceptual levels through which every text could be understood: the discourse world, the text-world and the sub-world, respectively. The discourse world is 'the situational context surrounding the speech event itself', Werth (1999: 83). Also, the text-world is composed of world-building elements/words that are used to establish a space/setting or location of the world that has been created. Finally, the sub-world is any minuscule time, space or location that is introduced, no matter how briefly, from the main setting of the text. The three levels all interconnect and are important milestones in the beginning of authorial narratives, plot development, twists and turns and the eventual closure.

In Hargreaves' (2012) treatise of le Carré's *A Perfect Spy*, she is able to establish the presence of five Sub-Worlds which are distinctly created by the use of deictic references and other words. This is apart from the major Text World that dominates the particular extract. One can therefore argue that TWT helps the reader connect with the writer in the relay of events and how they are perceived. It is, however, a measure of the conscientious reader's commitment to textual elucidation that nothing is missing in the progressive presentation of the message.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS

In '*The Lake Came to my House*', the context of the poem is the very beginning of the Category A Hurricane Katrina. Osundare uses the word 'began' in the very first line of this initial poem to create a world already in the mind of the reader. This simple yet profound literary initiative is typical of the poet-laureate. The reader thus anticipates when what actually 'began as a whisper among the leaves' will eventually turn into one of the most destructive forces in recent hurricane history. The image is created of a gathering storm, the strength of which nobody knows at this moment. From this rather innocuous opening, the second sentence of the poem recalls the 'wanton' and reckless destruction of the wind.

The second stanza in this excerpt offers the world-building words necessary for the discerning reader to construct an initial mental representation for the scene. 'Hooves', 'wounded house' and 'trampling rain' all evoke strong images of an 'attack' being suffered. Also, the stanza is a departure from the beginning one, as we can mentally picture the escalation of the destructive nocturnal activity of the rain. The reader is taken along in this seamless transition between nature's otherwise benign composure and its violent side. The Text-World is sustained by expressions like 'pit pat', 'bing bang', 'trampling rain', 'shouldering roof' and 'wounded house' which eventually set the tone for a scene of panic, endangerment and chaos. The reader is able to project this scenario and share in the bewilderment of the persona.

Osundare recalls how the 'wind dropped a pool in my living room', and 'the sky rumbled like a stricken bull', consistent imagery that project a chaotic scene. The reader is regaled with the lightning that zigzagged its fire through the author's room. Through the use of figurative expressions like simile (the sky rumbled like a stricken bull), metaphor (wind-driven, tornado-tormented) and personification (my shuddering roof; my wounded house; careless streets; the lake overran its fence), the poet succeeds in creating a vivid imagination of the present danger in the mind of the reader. He also never forgets to lampoon city administrators who built 'Levees... with levity' that could easily be overrun by angry waters while collapsing 'like hapless mounds'. The play on the consonant sound /l/ and the similitic comparison both connect to provide a picturesque appraisal of the event.

In stanza seven, Osundare graphologically shifts the textual positioning by indenting the two lines with about five centimetres:

*Roads lost their names,
Streets their memories (p. 13)*

This is done probably to make the reader digest the messages therein: of familiar roads losing their names, their identities and streets, the memories that had kept them alive. From these two lines, readers are taken back to when the roads and the streets were peaceful; a certain Sub-World that now seems gone forever. The reader is made to imagine the periods of tranquility as against nature's abrupt dislocation of same. The poem concludes that in stanza eight by cementing to memory the 'torrential torment' that enthralled New Orleans the day The Lake came down his street and 'took away my house'.

In the second poem under analysis, Osundare intensifies his diction to accurately portray the aftermath of Katrina. Aptly titled '*Liquid City*', the poem resonates with high imagery and powerful descriptions of havoc. 'Liquid nights' are compounded by the sounds of restless winds who 'whip Treetops with the fury of their branches'. Famous streets, crescents and boulevards 'dissolve into nameless pools'. Indeed, the nameless, heartless and waters have come to claim ownership of precious estates built and run by people of high pedigree. The use of the word 'dissolve' especially lets the image of flood waters linger in the mind of the reader. The poet recalls seeing houses floating and 'in search of missing roofs'—a testimony to the devastation that has taken place. He further laments the fact that his city 'went away with the storm without leaving a forwarding address' in tear-inducing stanza that ends this particular poem.

'*Water Never Forgets*' opens with the author informing the reader of the possible reasons the floods came. World builders like 'steal its swamps', 'un-fin its fishes' and 'trample its shells' are used to 'show' the reader how humans exploit nature maximally. This brief Sub-World takes the reader's mind to the activities that may have had direct connection with the flooding:

*'When we scoop its heart
steel its span
and cement its stomach
It never fails
To roar back and reclaim
Its trespassed honour (p. 19)*

In the lines above, Osundare lets the reader 'see' the direct impact mining, irrigation, fishing, dredging and other economic and infrastructural activities have on nature. Consequently, the 'water has its own memory' and, at the right time, bares its fangs in reclaiming its honour. The memory of Mother Nature is so sharp that its 'mindscape of echoes' is recalled while:

*Its mouth sizzles
With vengeful teeth*

The overreaching exploitation of nature is has its benefits no doubt, but the destruction it eventually brings is far beyond the advantages.

The persona reiterates his compelling argument about the sadistic fury of nature in 'Omiyale', the fourth poem under analysis. The incorporation of the Yoruba word into the collection is significant. *Omiyale* literally translates into 'water branched into the home' and, according to the narrator, is 'absolutely uninvited'. In this particular poem, the flood waters have now turned into a storm in the ocean. The escalation of the torrents is visible in the waters which 'tore through the windows like a desperate burglar', leaving in its wake 'daubed... paintings, capsized... mugs, satanic colours... on my sofa, tossed... TV and a swollen carpet floating in the sea. The description is so graphic and leaves no one in doubt as to the desperate situation the poet is in that very moment. The world of chaos, destruction and loss is presented with dystopian accuracy.

Stanza five of 'Omiyale' opens with the 'drunken fridge' suddenly opening up its contents exactly as a stuporous inebriate would. The 'watery depth' swallows up 'a frozen tilapia', 'acres of rice' and 'oceans of rare spices' who could not tinge 'the mouth of the foraging felon'. Again, the waves 'micro-waved' the oven: an ironic turn of roles for the microwave. It 'swallowed the stove' and put everything single arrangement asunder. Even in the midst of the pandemonium, the authorial play on words still helps the presentation style in evolving and inescapable violent picture in the mind of the reader. The 'monochromatic mess' made of the poet's wardrobe is followed by the flood 'hitting the street' in his 'favourite garment'. Osundare successfully personifies Katrina as a burglar who is 'greedy' and takes possession of all it could gather, while maliciously destroying the ones it could not take.

'*The Rain Has A Story*' opens with a flashback to the beginning of the rains that actually precipitated Katrina. There are haphazard movements between the Discourse and the Text Worlds as represented by the irregular shifts in the lines of each of the six stanzas of the poem. Examples are stanzas one and two which read:

*This year's rain
Has a story
As viscous as its waters
Fetid as its freight of ruined fortunes (p. 24)*

Perusing through the excerpt above, a Discourse World is created by the reference to the rains of that particular year. The 'story' to be told generations to come concerning the rains will be as putrid, rotten and foul as its 'waters'. Osundare recounts the travails of the inhabitants of New Orleans in these unequal and sad lines. The year's song is 'sour like its whistling winds' and 'sad like its funerals'. The preponderant use of similes to compare the scenery to dark, sinister and unappealing images achieves its objective in the sulphuric ambience of Katrina the reader is now largely familiar with. The poet claims the downpour has stolen the people's name (since Katrina is now being eerily tagged with New Orleans) and 'danced on the graves of many dreams' – a metaphor for the unfulfilled ambitions and desires of the many people who perished in the great floods. The unequal lines represent the unequal yokes, sadness, trauma and grief being shouldered by the living casualties of the aquatic disaster. The images are real, clear and picturesquely offered to the reader in crisp verses.

In '*Death Came Calling*', a more contemplative account of the Katrina tragedy is introduced. The opening lines themselves attest to the survival instinct of the poet:

*Death came calling
It never met me at home (p. 25)*

Here, the inevitability of death is stated, even in the poet's avoidance of the grim reaper during Katrina. Instead, Death met his guardian angels who ensured that the poet comes out of his ordeal alive, unlike some others:

*It met Olosunta, Father of Rocks
It met Oroole, Ruler of Lofty Heights
It met Esidale, Founder of Earth and Sky
It met Ifa, Source and Living Wisdom (p. 16)*

The invocation of ancestral gods and Yoruba mythical figures foregrounds, in the minds of the reader, the poet's affinity to his roots; a fact that has not been eroded even in his travails in New Orleans, far away from Ikere- Ekiti, his hometown. These gods 'shielded' the poet and preserves him from imminent death. Indeed, we are treated to a scenic

portrayal of a mortal being guarded by metaphysical forces during a conflict with natural forces. The belief or otherwise of the reader in the metaphysical is tested in these few lines; judging from the picturesque narrative being painted by the persona.

In the second section of the anthology, the eponymous poem ‘*City without People*’ is chosen for analysis. The title alone evokes a pictorial description of a barren or an uninteresting place. Whether read in isolation or as part of a continuum from the initial poem, this poem still opens with the same discourse world of a city wrecked by a hurricane; a world which is now familiar with the reader as running through the poetic compilation. However, the particular text world created in this poem depicts a wasteland of apocalyptic proportions. The opening four lines attest to this:

*The trees are dead
The birds are gone
The grass is scorched
The worms have vanished* (p. 35)

The Text World triggered by these lines is that of a ‘dead’ setting. There is no indication of life or how it could be sustained. The space is bereft of any essence, value or creativity. This central idea is further reinforced by ‘skeletal houses’ which ‘stare at the sky through their broken windows’. Also, the ‘rot and rubble’ in the streets compare to ‘Golgotha’, a biblical allusion to a place of death. As the readers paint mental pictures of these poetic verses, they are not oblivious of the chaotic mess Hurricane Katrina has left in its wake. The first sign of life does not do much to salvage the sense of lifelessness hitherto imagined:

*Masked undertakers pound the pavements
Bemoaning a shortage of coffins
One rotten trick away from speculators
In fancy phrases and mafia goggles* (p. 35)

Even in this unimaginable crisis, the greed in human nature still abounds in people taking advantage of the misery of inhabitants in the sorrowful process of burying the dead. The ‘vanguard of vultures’ hovering over ‘the twilight sky’ accentuates the odoriferous condition of the Text World. From the questions:

*What do you call a house
Without walls?
What do you call a city
Without people?* (p. 35)

the poet concludes that when something has lost what makes it what it is, it can only be talked about in the past. New Orleans lost its people and thus, lost its value as a city as a direct concomitant of the carelessness in handling a ‘disaster foretold’.

In ‘The Weeping Book’ taken from the third part of the collection, the poet, again, laments Katrina’s destruction of his treasures. He writes, with fondness and in glowing terms, about his book, which is likened to a ‘prattling prince’ containing ‘gems of wisdom’ and ‘golden words’ liberate the mind. The beautiful Sub-World of this book in its mercurial presentation is rudely interrupted by:

*Then came Katrina and its frantic flood
And its gang of mess and mush and mud
Its sweeping plague and rampant rage
Undid my treasure from page to page* (p. 58)

Here, the reader is brought back to the Discourse World of Katrina and indeed the Text World of the Balkanisation of a particular book. Described in such graphic details and with powerful figurative expressions, the reader gets a picturesque sense of what the poet means:

*A maddening mold has eaten the leaves
Which drop down dead in bales and sheaves?
A sickening swamp in my house of mirth
The tomes are robbed of their lively girth*

The uses of alliteration, metaphor and personification in this excerpt help to vividly showcase the author’s visualisation and perception of his loss. Gone are the books ‘pages with their dainty dots’ and all the documentations he made on ‘friendly foes’ and his own personal thoughts have now been ‘submerged in Katrina’s woes’. He mourns the fact ‘a whole life’s labour’ has been washed away, a fact further cemented by the ‘dreadful absence’ of his beloved book who now weeps at its present state of nothingness and valuelessness.

‘NOAH’, the third poem in part four of this anthology, details how the poet and his wife are sheltered by a family in Birmingham, Alabama, just after the Katrina tragedy. Although the Discourse World of Hurricane Katrina still looms large and re-echoes in the mind of the reader, a Text World is created of the poet being rehabilitated. This ‘season of kindness’ is well received and savoured. The poet commends Noah, his father Autumn and his wife who all comfort them:

*When we were sacked by a vicious flood
And nearly lost our precious blood* (P. 83)

These two lines above trigger the memories of Katrina, which have now assumed the psychological status of a Sub-World in this particular poem. Although, the poet still acknowledges there are bigger tasks ahead in the recovery of all that is lost, he nevertheless appreciates the kind gestures of the good people who seek to 'brighten our days'. A Text-World of succour is therefore created and sustained in this poem. This particular image indicates a somewhat triumphant overcome of the terrible challenges the poet faced in the immediate aftermath of Katrina.

From part five of the omnibus entitled *Afterword*, the last poem for the analysis titled "This City Will Not Die" is studied. In this poem, Osundare describes his hopes for New Orleans, ravaged to the rubbles by Hurricane Katrina, with images of newness, renewal and rebirth. From the Discourse-World of the present state of the city which is:

*Though prostrate now from
The poison of pestilential floods
And levees which toy with
The murderous fury of raging waters;* (p. 115)

the poet predicts a cosmopolitan renaissance in which New Orleans 'will rise again'. This scenario of revitalisation is helped by such World builders like:

*... sick, not dead,
This betrayed City
Deserted,
Not forgotten*

The reader is promised of a city where one 'can hear drumtaps in the distance' and be surrounded by 'the sexy serenade of the sax-o-phone'. Jazz music, the unofficial signature tune of the city of New Orleans is foregrounded to mentally signify the rebirth of the city. To reiterate his position, the 'footless floodwalls' shall soon be replaced by well-manicured pavements and the 'Flood-scorched trees will bloom again'. The 'wounded oaks will stretch its limbs' and revellers back to sweeten up the streets. This anticipatory Text-World is becomes indelible to the reader in the closing stanza of the poem. The poet predicts a World

where the destruction and malice of hurricane Katrina will be long forgotten:

*This City will rise again
This Big (Un)Easy, this neglected treasure*

VII. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the analysis above, one can find that the three conceptual levels could all be found in each of the selected poems. The poet keeps dashing back and forth, as the various themes permit, taking the reader through his beautiful and beloved city which has now been destroyed by nature. The Discourse-World, created in the very first piece of the collection triggers the initiation of the disastrous scenario that runs through the anthology. Triggered by lexical World builders that create mental images and motions of chaos, destruction and helplessness in the face of monumental natural disaster, the Discourse-World of the Hurricane Katrina tragedy never wavered in its omnipresent conspicuousness as the poetic compilation moves from piece to piece and part to part, evolving along the line a thought that overshadows the several glimpses of Text and Sub-Words intricately fashioned and woven together by the commendable artistry of the poet-laureate. Therefore, the reader is left without any doubt as to what the central theme of the anthology is, judging by the adequate supply of image-creating and thought-cementing diction.

Also, the TWT has helped to individuate and personalise the loss suffered by the poet. The Worlds he portrays in the poems help the reader to feel the sense of personal loss and pain as experienced by the writer. One could feel the agony of a beloved city dweller, family man and cultural-aficionado as he bemoans what has now become of his cherished place of refuge, comfort and intellectual curiosity. This sense of personal loss reechoes over and over again in the collection. Osundare uses his beautiful verses to consolidate the personal efforts he undertook in projecting New Orleans and the tragedy that befell it. He mourns the loss of his home and property, weeps over the collective loss of a beloved city, rebukes tepid and indifferent official response in the wake of the disaster that smacked of lethargy and indifference and finally predicts a spiritual and economic resurgence that will attest to the Southern spirit ably entrenched in New Orleans and her resourceful and resilient inhabitants.

Again, we find that the reader has to be a participant in the world the poet has created for him to fully understand and appreciate the weight of the poetic depiction of the Hurricane Katrina disaster. Through the purview and guide of the TWT, the reader is taken through the unwholesome experiences of the poet in such graphic and compelling manner that the agony of loss and pain becomes a shared quantity. Leafing through the pages of *City without People*, one is obliged to participate in the communal catastrophe that culminates in trauma and disenchantment. The reality of authorial experience is made so vivid, moving and captivating by the way it is revealed in deep verses and with captivating imagery.

Finally, the literary gift of aesthetic excellence that pervades the storied career of Osundare reechoes here in prudent execution. The alluring composition of ingenious poetic verses laced with both African and Western cadences and images attest to the eclectic and phenomenal reach of his art.

VIII. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have been able to stylistically explore *City without People: The Katrina Poems* through the engaging binoculars of the Text World Theory. Though in no way exhaustive, the ten poems selected for the particular study have been analysed to show the artistic recall and documentation of the depths of misery Osundare found himself after Katrina. The poems exhibit deft coinages, iconic imagery and a peculiar mastery of the nuances of English that project meaning and create Text Worlds that illuminate the author's mind. The reader is 'shown' a room that has just been devastated by flood. The many World builders employed all create the sense and mental representation of aquatic submersion and the regrets and disillusionment of the victims. The analysis reveals a style that, evocative of the classic Osundare, cements his position as one of the few poets who stretch the total prospects of language in the rendition of art.

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