

A Paradigm of Lamentation in Three African Poems

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ABSTRACT

The search, what constitutes the pure identity of African Literature, continues among historians and literary scholars. In this paper, we try to unmask a silent literary weapon which is at the disposal of many conscious African writers perhaps unconsciously anyway. The purpose is to make understanding of literature especially African literature easier. Our emphasis is on the common themes expressed in the selected poems. The new historicism, which upholds that writing history is a matter of interpretations, not entirely facts, is the theoretical approach on which this paper is premised. The paper ends with a conclusion that lamentation is a literary weapon through which many African writers create or enact the required consciousness on their readers because the device is a constant decimal in African literary creations across generations: from its inception (pre-colonial period) through the colonial and the post-colonial era (till date).

Key words: Literature, Paradigm, Lamentation, Myth, Ritual and Neo-colonialism.

1. Introduction:

Literature is not just a piece of writing, which only entertains. It is equally, at the same time too, a means of expressing ideas, views, opinions, experiences, feelings, body of knowledge, cultural values as well as teaching moral lessons and healing souls. Literature has turned out to be a medium of apprehending contemporary or conventional realities through the exposition of the socio-cultural and political experiences of a given society; since it (literature) is a product of a particular human society. It is far from being ambiguous that literature buys into the expressive function of a given language. And, the understanding of culture and the society, which are potential ingredients on which literature is premised, paves way for an effective development.

The word lamentation, as used in this paper means an expression of great sadness or disappointment. It is viewed as a paradigm. A typical example or pattern of something and that "something" in this regard represents African writings, specifically the three selected poems. Truly, lamentation has become a regular aesthetic and ideological pattern in not only drama and prose but also in poetry. As a sociological approach, lamentation is a fusion of methods any writer uses to criticize, investigate or evaluate a particular phenomenon or situation in a given human society with a view to demand for socio-political or economic changes.

"Literature, whether handed down by the word of mouth, or in print, gives us a second handle on reality; enabling us to encounter in the safe, manageable dimension of make-believe the very same threat to integrity that may assail the psyche in real life; and at the same providing through the self discovery which imparts a veritable weapon for coping with these threats whether they are found within problematic and incoherent selves or in the world around us", Achebe (1988:117) .

Myth simply expresses "our tribal habits of conceptualization", Philip Wheelwright (1966). He continues by explaining that the primitive world perception which entails taboo, totem, magic, legend, initiation ceremonies, death chants, worship of gods and goddesses makes up the term myth. Myth is used in literature as "expressive symbol". Reacting to the relationship between myth and ritual. "Ritual connotes a way of doing and myth a way of envisaging are of a special, not of an everyday sort and imply in their turn in a belief in a penumbral reality, something extending beyond yet interpenetrating with the affairs of mortal men", Wheelwright (1966). He extends his explanation by saying: "the mythopoetic vision involves a certain ideas of nature, for a myth, whatever its undertones of psychic extrapolation, tells a story whose locale is the world "out there". To be certain, myth as a contested concept is protean in its meaning possibilities: it is interpreted as "illusion,"

“legend,” “false propaganda”. Without mincing words, these are surrogate terms which suggest that the characters, personae and actions of literary compositions or any other art forms have qualities which make them representatives of types of classes and / or ideas.

Myth might again be explained as “belief,” “custom,” or “convention,” all of which tend to suggest meanings of value and virtue. Myth is at times equivalent to “racial memories,” “unconsciously held values,” “rationalizations created by an individual,” not necessarily in the form of literature, of basic social or class conventions and values, concepts which may be as inclusive as the “togetherness of the community mind”.

However, “The meanings of Myth in Modern Criticism”, x-rays a clearer definition of the concept - myth. “Myth or myths are opposed to facts, to ‘cataloguable and manageable phenomena’ to the logic of ordinary knowledge, to positivism, the empirical, the finite, to the logos, to the intelligence and will, and to the consciousness”, Wallace W. Douglas (1966). He believes that “myth... originates in passionate, poetic, or institutional views of reality in the unconscious, the dream; in memories of the primordial, the mystery, the primordial mystery; in the world of spirit, of value, of an extra dimension; in the imagination, or in man’s now suppressed or denied awareness of his sin.”

It is the balance, which can be deduced from these perspectives on myth that we corroborate with in this essay.

Ultimately therefore, most of these attendant realities have influenced the compositions of many African writers. The vices and follies in African societies as a result of colonialism and post independence madness tagged “Neo-colonialism” set a stage for sensitive and visionary creative writers. Hence, literature has the potency to develop and enhance people’s level of consciousness and sense of value judgment.

2. Analysis of the selected poems

To theorize the concept, Paradigm of Lamentation, the following poems are selected at random: Kwesi Brew’s “The Executioner’s Dream”, Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali’s “Nightfall in Soweto” and Niyi Osundare’s “They too are the earth”.

Through the selected poems, it is evident that creative writers get hypodermic inspiration from their class or social stratification. When adding his voice to the issue of Art and class interest, “For the class in dominance, it is an extra tool for criticizing hegemony; for subordinate social class, however, art must aim at conquering man’s alienation paving the way for the liberation of his inhibited creativity and ultimately the restoration of his full human dignity” Ayu (1986:31).

The writer as a human being is himself a product of history of time and place. As a member of society he belongs to a certain class; he is inevitably, a participant in the class struggle of his times. As a writer in a given society, it does not make a difference whether he is allowed to write or not; whether what he writes; is controlled or not and whether he is espousing this or that class outlook, Ngugi Wa Thing ‘O cited by Akingbe, N. (2004).

For the restoration of humanity, creative authors struggle to disseminate information necessary for human beings to solve their societal problems through awareness. “Art shares its destiny with the social forces which are struggling to resolve the contradiction rendering both society and true individual between true community and true individuality. Therefore the need no longer has the exclusive and imprudent character it had when he was considered an outcast”, Vazquez (1977:33).

2.1 Kwesi Brew’s “The Executioner’s Dream”. First, Brew belongs to the older generation African writers, the forerunners in Africa. Violence in a form of ritual is the emerging issue of discourse which portrays the poem as a naturalist piece of art.

Extermination of human being through barbaric act of ritual killing in some African communities particularly before the advent of Christianity and Islam is the focus of Kwesi Brew in this poem. The poem is a critical attack on the condemnable practice of sacrificing human being for gods or any other reasons. In the traditional African societies, it is usually found out that some people engage in the killings of fellow human beings for rituals. The

poet therefore laments on the horrors and shock of such untimely snatching of human lives. As a matter of fact, violence paints something evil, dreaded scenery.

‘Ritual, festival and play belong to one paradigmatic set. A play, like ritual, constitutes a stepping out of real life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own; (limitation of time); it also take place in a marked off space, the playground and ritual stage sharing this ‘ limitation of space’; it assumes a fixed, culturally ordained form, constituted of ‘elements of repetition and alternation which are like the warp and woof of a fabric’; it is a ‘contest for something’ as well as a ‘representation’ of something. . . it ‘creates order and is order’, and in an imperfect world, it brings temporary perfection’, Tambiah (1979). Ritual is “a synchronization of many per formative genres, and is often ordered by dramatic structure, a plot, frequently involving sacrifice or self-sacrifice, which energizes and gives emotional coloring to the interdependent communicative codes which express in manifold ways the meaning inherent in the dramatic leitmotiv. . .”, Turner (1982). Ritual contains a distanced and generalized reduplication of the agonistic process of the social drama. Ritual, therefore, is not ‘threadbare’ but ‘richly textured’ by virtue of its varied interweaving of the productions of mind and senses.

In the opening stanza, the persona recalled he had a hideous dream where he saw a pretty eye in the hands of the executioner. The eye, “glittering, wet and sickening”. The victim was helpless and this makes the eye glittering and begging for help. The word ‘wet’ here can be interpreted as being suffocating because the victim was chained. His hands and feet were tied down, waiting for his execution. As a result of all these hideous imagery, the sight itself becomes disgusting, “sickening.” The executioner’s eye is also an eye-sore for it was described as “... a dull onyx set in a crown of thorns.” The persona, the speaker or the poet laments that he does not know that it is so cheap and easy to kill when the executioner dropped his victim on his lap.

In the second stanza, the persona or poet lashes out against the wanton killing in a rhetorical question.

What horrors of human sacrifice.
Have you seen executioner?

The poet probes that manner of excitement that heartless murderer derives from carrying out the act or “What agonies of tortured men/who sat through nights and nights of pain” can he visualize. As a matter of facts, the poet laments if the executioner is an amoral, who has a dead conscience and cannot feel remorse for those victims that are “Tongue-tied by the wicked sapor.” Sapor is painted as wicked because when it is pierced through the jaw of the victim, it cuts the tongue and leads to instant death.

In the third stanza, the persona, poet or speaker points out that nature itself kicks against this unfair and brutal violence caused by this cruel practice of killing fellow human beings. He says:

These white lilies tossed their little heads then
in the moon-steeped ponds;
there was bouncing gaiety in the crisp chirping
of the cricket in the under growth
And as the surf-boat splintered the waves.

The above lines depict that nature which includes human life is beautiful but that the executioner does not recognize and appreciate the gift of nature and its beauty and that shameless insensitivity of the executioner makes him indulge in wicked act.

The lamentation in the poem is further enhanced by the imagery of horror enacted by the poet. For instance, the eye of each victim sparkles as a result of death staring him/her in the face. The executioner is painted as a sadist who derives satisfaction and pleasure from these slain innocent victims.

horrors were your flowers then
The blood-bright bougainvilleas
They delighted you.

In the last stanza, the executioner is seen shading crocodile tears (insincere tears) as he offers his gift of wanton killing of human beings.

The poet’s mood of gloomy and his tone are ironic, mockery and daring. However, there are some other literary techniques employed by the poet to showcase his piteous feeling. Irony, metaphor, personification and rhetorical question are typical examples of literary techniques in the poem.

The following expressions from the poem are ironic because they hide their true meanings.

“I dreamt, I saw an eye, a pretty eye”
“I saw a rainbow in your eyes”
“I did not know you were dead...”

The dying victim can't be looking pretty, while awaiting his/her last moment and there can't be any rainbow in the eyes of the killer, who has no pity with his prey. The speaker also knows that the victim is dead. The poet makes use of this device to reduce the unpleasant scenario and the shock there-in. Expressions such as “hot imploring eyes”, “moon-steeped ponds”, “gift of a dull onyx”, “blood-bright bougainvilleas” and “each crystal shone” are direct comparisons. The poet makes use of the expressions to make readers as spectators of the gruesome killing as in real-life situations. To make the whole situation in the poem appeals to our sense of sight and vision, the poet transfers certain attributes of person/human being to non-persons.

Examples: “These white lilies tossed their heads then”
“There was bouncing gaiety in the crisp chirping”

To portray his anger and displeasure, the poet asks a lot of questions which do not require answers.

Examples: “What horrors of human sacrifice
Have you seen, executioner?”
“Why do you now weep
And offer me this little gift
Of a dull onyx in a crown of thorns?”

Also, in an attempt to create sound effects, the poet uses alliteration as can be identified in these groups of words: “Tongue-tied”, “Surf-boats splintered”, “Saw sitting”, “blood-bright” etc.

With onomatopoeia, the poet heightens the poetic atmosphere which dominates the poem. Consider the following words which even suggest their meaning through their sound: “glittering”, “horrors”, “sappor”, “tossed”, “splintered”, “flash”, etc.

In brief, the horror of ritual sacrifice in the traditional African societies and the dangers of such an act preoccupy the mind of Kwesi Brew in this poem. However, the poem has a universal appeal considering the issue of terrorism or terrorist attacks in the contemporary human societies. In the poem, violence has a message and that message opens toward death and this set the stage for lamentation on which we set our search light.

2.2 From Gold Coast, Ghana to South Africa, the culture of lamentation in African writings is further intensified with the baseless human persecution before 1994. In **Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali's** “Nightfall in Soweto”, apartheid, a wicked caste-system of government in the then South Africa is the background of this poem. The poem is set in South-west-town abbreviated as Soweto. It x-rays the agony and dangers that the people of Soweto are confronted in the night. Night is marsh, precarious and highly dreaded by the black inhabitants because they are subjected to all forms of inhuman treatments in the hands of the white police, the agents of pain, oppression, killings, vengeance and all forms of evil. “Nightfall in Soweto” reminds readers of poems of Dennis Brutus, a South-African poet especially “The sound begins again”, where the poet captures the siren in the night, the thunder at the door and the shriek of people in pain.

Elegy, popularly described as a song of sorrow, mourning or grief and epic, which are a sub-genre of lyric are established feature of second generation of African writers, which Mtshali belongs. For instance, at the period of emergence, the poetry of Kunene and Brutus was predicated upon the socio-political milieu necessitated by apartheid, (Olaoluwa Senayon,2008).

Mtshali's poem, ‘Nightfall in Soweto’ begins with a comparison matching night with a dreaded disease, a feared disease which afflicts a healthy body and destroys it beyond repair. In stanza two, the poet laments on one of the heinous crimes which is committed in the night.

A murderer's hand,
lurking in the shadows,
clasping the dagger,
strikes down the helpless victim.

It is evident that people hide in the cover of darkness carrying different dangerous weapons and pouncing on their innocent defenseless victims. It is either the policemen who are catching supposedly black miscreants or some helpless, frustrated blacks, killing their perceived oppressors or venting their anger and frustration against the unfriendly system; this of course, makes night a ravaging disease.

The third stanza of the poem presents the poet as the helpless unsuspecting victim, who is slaughtered every night in the streets. "I am the victim" is symbolic because it refers to the totality of the suffering blacks in Soweto and other heavily dominated black settlements during the period under review. This generalization accounts for the use of the word "Streets" in the third line of stanza three since one person cannot be in many streets or be slaughtered every night at the same time. Hence, the lamentation here is of great density, which can even be extended to sufferings black people suffer elsewhere under the sun.

The fourth stanza depicts the overall effect of the inhumanities and atrocities which takes place every night on man:

Man has ceased to be man
Man has become beast
Man has become prey

These lines demonstrate that man has stopped to be man because man is now afraid and frightened. Manliness has departed man. Again, man in its generic or universal form; that is, human being that is ought to be humane, accommodating and friendly has sadly become the victim/prey of the bestial man. The refrain: "Man has" amplifies the lamentation of the poet.

In the fifth stanza, the image of the beast and its prey is re-echoed where the poet says that he is the prey or quarry who is being constantly oppressed in the night.

I am the prey;
I am the quarry to be run down
by marauding beast
let loose by cruel nightfall
from his cage of death

The state of helplessness which people find themselves at night when the oppressive and inhuman machinery and agents of the said apartheid are at work are well expressive in the above lines. Apartheid and its evils is the marauding beast hunting black Africans as preys.

In the sixth stanza, the victim cries out in anguish expressing his despondency in several rhetorical questions:

Where is my refuge?
Where am I safe?
Not in my match box house
Where I barricade myself against nightfall

The victim, the persona or the poet also recounts his disturbing experiences during nightfall. He trembles as he hears the footsteps of people, police and government agents. Many times, he hears deafening knock at the door.

I quake at the deafening knock at the door.
"open up!" he barks like a rabid
dog thirsty for my blood.

It is in fact clear that nights in South Africa are really always characterized with troubles for the innocent blacks during the apartheid system of government. The poem concludes with a lament on night. If nights are full of risks and dangers as they experience in South Africa, why should night have been created at all?

Nightfall! Nightfall!
You are my mortal enemy
But why were you ever created?
Why cant's it be daytime
Daytime forever more?

In his own view on the Liberation Struggle, Memory and Freedom in South Africa, Olaoluwa Senayon (2012) remarks that the South African liberation history was also characterized by a nonparallel persecution that translated into exile – literal and metaphorical – for both victims and perpetrators alike. It also accounts for why the liberation history provides a strong motivation for reflections on many planes in the wake of the official collapse of apartheid in the 1990s.

In a gloomy mood and an unpleasant/harsh tone, the poet expresses insecurity arising from oppression and man's inhumanity to man which emanate from an apartheid regime.

To achieve this great artistic creation, the poet employs several literary devices such as irony, apostrophe, simile, rhetorical questions, repetitions and personification. For example, irony permeates the entire poem to indicate people, institutions and situations. For instance, it is ironic that night; a time to rest, relax and renew one's energy turns out to be the most dreaded time in Soweto. In a normal situation, night is quite and soothing, ironically, it is cruel and unsafe as showcased in the poem.

Nightfall is directly addressed in the poem especially in the first and the last stanzas: Nightfall! Nightfall! Why were you ever created? We can also note the rhetorical question embedded in the above quotation which enhances the poet's lamentation on the subject-matter.

In lines 1 and 2, "Nightfall comes like a dreaded disease..." And, in lines 30 and 31, the expression "he barks like a rabid dog" present us effective mental pictures of the destruction which night unleashes on the black victims through the poet's use of simile.

Night is personified in the poem. It is evil-personified as a wicked fellow. Consider the following examples: "Nightfall comes like a dreaded disease seeping..."
"Cruel night ... I tremble at his deafening knocks, crunching footsteps ... he barks like a rabid dog..."

The epic in Mtshali's work can be connected to the history of apartheid in his natal country South Africa, which of course i.e. no more a new to the entire world and will remind so for the generations yet unborn. The heroic gladiators and role players in the struggle especially Nelson Mandela, the living legend contribute to what makes the history fresh and touching. All that the memories of these calculated human actions induce in the poet, personal or speaker of "Nightfall in Soweto; is an undiluted lamentation. The destruction of human lives and, or the plundering of mother earth. It is the bitterness of this unholy human treatment by man and to man that confronts us in the formal verse of Mtshali, whose lyricism is both epic and elegy.

During the sixteenth century, Philip Sydney in his Defence of Poetry underscored the classical perspective, which views poetry as something that instructs and delights. However, Percy Bysshe Shelley, in the nineteenth century, sees poets as 'the unacknowledged legislators of the world.' Extending this facts to the contemporary realities, the Africa writer is not only an unacknowledged legislator but also an 'imaginative leader 'and a 'guiding sensibility' of his society because he bears witness to the vagaries of time and history his art has the potential; 'to create alternative realities, to push further the frontier of quotidian actuality through a relentless thrust of fresh imagination, its ability to create new answers for old questions and pose new questions for old answers, its concern for beauty, for the harmonious elevation of the human spirit, and therefore its capacity for 'seducing' us from ugliness, for healing rifts and stifling fragmentations' (*Stubborn Thread*). On this juncture, we attempt to examine one of the poems of Osundare, a Nigerian poet whose art stands out among African poetry of the English expression. Osundare's art is poetry of revolution. Like many of his contemporaries, he sees himself as a seer, a visionary, a social crusader, a human activist, a political commentator, a bard, a singer, and as a matter of fact, a story-teller(raconteur). As a result of obvious lingering social and economic woes in the continent of Africa, the poet finds himself seriously involved and then implicated in the wider crises of his community. He buys into indigenous power abuse, mass impoverishment, corruption, collapse of social amenities, alarming rate of unemployment, poverty, and ignorance owing to high level of illiteracy and other obstacles and challenges. 'The poetry of Osundare, to all intents and purposes, is committed to social change', Anyokwu (2009).

As a form, Osundare chooses pastoral elegy to express his feelings with the aid of lexical items such as oceans, rain, light/shadow, forest, roots, twigs, trees crust, core, and leaves among others. In other words, the landscape of his poems is principally objects of nature. Truly, an overwhelming deployment of nature and traditional Yoruba

oratory is pragmatically displayed in poetry of Osundare. His art is premised on the mythic cosmos of the Yoruba, whose belief and metaphysics are deep in animism although the poet's socialist-materialist principle/ideology is strongly rooted in his Western education.

2.3 In *Niyi Osundare's* "They too are the earth"; the poet preoccupies himself with the deplorable conditions of various classes of oppressed people and their oppressors. The beggars, the rich oppressors, laborers, miners and water fetchers, helpless aged people as well as women dominated by men are the groups of people identified in the poem.

In the first stanza, the beggars who are making their last appearance are presented. In their dirty clothes and environment, the beggars shout and run after passers-by for alms in order to have at least their daily bread. The persona or the poet craves our indulgence that this category of human beings also belongs to this world. "They are the Earth". Still in the first stanza, the poet shifts his attention to another category of people who are also of this world but, there is sharp difference between this group of people and the former. Their presence is painted with the affluence around them, "snakeskin shoes and Mercedes tyres". They are the upper class of human societies, the rich people.

Second stanza identifies another set of deprived and suffering people of this planet. They are the ever sweating wood cutters and water fetchers, with their grim faces. They are confused and frustrated because everywhere to them is open wound. "Muddy every pore like naked moles".

In the third stanza, another unhappy category of people of the earth receives the attention of the poet. They are the miners. They dig for coal or other mineral resources underground. They run into danger to earn their living and sustain their lives. Sometimes, the mines cave-in and bury the miners underground. Only their distant voices are heard as they groan and beg for help until they die and are heard no more. The most painful thing is that their bright ideas and hopes are buried with them. "Of gold dream and blood banks." With this, the persona catches our sympathy because they also belong to the people of this world.

The neglected, deprived aged people attracted the attention of the poet in the fourth stanza. This class of people of the world lives in villages without access to social infrastructures. The poet laments that because of their wretchedness, the neglected old people die in millions everyday. Also, the women who are enslaved and oppressed by their male counterparts get the attention of the poet having presented the plight of the abandoned old people.

In an angry mood, the speaker or the poet laments on whether the people, who exploit and destroy the earth's resources are actually people of the world. With rhetorical question, the poet demonstrates his bitterness thus;

Are they of this earth
Who fritter the forest and harry the hills?
Are they of this earth
Who live that earth may die
Are they?

Then, we too ask, whether those insensitive, myopic political leaders of ours, who loot the treasury and the material/wealth-seeking religious leaders as well as selfish traditional rulers are indeed people of the earth. It is really a pity that human dignity has been thrown into the garbage all over the world. Self-centeredness and egocentricity now reign supreme. No wonder Osundare appeals for attention to the under-privileged and suffering people not only in Africa, but also in the whole wild world and he also cautions the wicked and thoughtless people that destroy the world for their selfish ends.

To successfully construct his message, the poet has employed other poetic devices such as antithesis, refrain and alliteration apart from rhetorical question which propels an angry and gloomy mood laced with an appealing tone.

The conditions of the poor suffering masses are clearly contrasted with those rich people of the upper social stratification. While the poor beg for money in a dirty environment in tattered dresses, the rich wear snakeskin shoes and drive Mercedes-Benz Cars. This figure of speech has helped to x-ray the imbalance, unfair and unjust social classifications which exist in human societies, artificially created for selfish ends. Snakeskin shoes and

Mercedes tyres symbolize the rich who oppress the poor while the sweat grime and groan stand for the poor suffering masses.

The clause or group of words, "They Too Are the Earth" is repeatedly used in all the stanzas except the fifth stanza apart from being the title of the poem. This device enhances the musical quality of this creative production and produces effective sound effects. The device also intensifies the consistency in the poet's preoccupation.

Alliteration as a poetic technique is also used to achieve sound effects and as such, it reinforces the aesthetic quality of the poem. Examples: "Snakeskin shoes", "Hewing wood and hurling water" and "Dreams and blood banks."

Upon the animist universe of the Yoruba and the capitalistic set-up of the Nigeria nation, Osundare preaches for a socialist picture of an egalitarian society of the years to come. By and large, our selected poets have satisfied the true description of genuine African writers as painted by Frantz Fanon. "The native intellectual who wishes to create an authentic work of art must realize that the truths of a nation are in the first place its realities. He must go on until he has found the seething pot, out of which the learning of the future will emerge", Frantz Fanon(1983:181).

A predominant use of the hero myth is obvious in Osundare formal verse. The poet, who stands in for the common people, is visionary, revolutionary and bold to confront his perceived enemy. The exploitative ruling class is the target enemy in this case. While the capitalist ruling elite destroys the earth and lives excessively in luxury, the poor, "common man" lacks necessary basic resources for self-actualization and improvement.

"Osundare's use of Yoruba mythology extends his indigenous belief-systems and metaphysical postulations (Laurence Coupe, 1966). Hence, Osundare's art is mythopoetic as it re-creates, re-interprets and ironically accommodates myth which his Marxian materialistic tendencies should have primarily frowned at and condemned.

3. Conclusion

We have displayed in this paper that lamentation is a literary weapon which some African writers employ in creating the needed consciousness which will enable Africans to cope with the social, cultural, political and economic realities of their societies. And, as we have observed, the poets focus on nature and man with the view to achieve effective social changes in human societies. The common themes across the three selected poems are insecurity arising from oppression and man's inhumanity to man that can also be expressed as fear, helplessness, oppression, discrimination and lack of freedom, which of course have a global appeal. Practically, myth, elegy and epic which cut across the chosen poems largely articulate the paradigm of lamentation as what has become a culture of writing in Africa. The selected writers therefore, are unerringly of Africa and they have demonstrated that the truths of a nation are its realities. These poets, rather than writing for survival, they write to develop human consciousness and consequently to solve societal problems so that human societies can change positively.

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