

Overview and Tracking of Modern African Poetry

¹Bartholomew Chizoba **AKPAH**
E-mail: *chizobamnwapah@gmail.com*
akpahbartholomew@yahoo.com
+231 881 811 586

&

Samson Olatoyese **JAYEOBA**
Email: *jayejaye2017@yahoo.com*
+234 806 346 7918

¹*Department of Languages and Literature*
College of Arts and Sciences
William V. S. Tubman University
Harper, Maryland County, Liberia

²*Department of General Studies*
The Polytechnic Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State Nigeria

Abstract

Tracking the beginning of modern African poetry has remained a mystery to many students of Literature. This work, therefore, aims to demystify the history of modern African poetry, redefining African poetry, identifying the leading voices of colonial and post-independence African poetry as well as examining the major thematic preoccupations or the 'Africaness' of African poetry of the written expression. The paper traces the history of African poetry and establishes the recentness of modern African poetry. The New Historicist theoretical approach is adopted in this work so as to trace the past and connect with the present. It concluded that Ibadan and in particular the University of Ibadan played a significant role in the development of modern African poetry. Also, political conflicts and socio-economic issues of post-colonial African states appeared to be the major concerns of contemporary and new generation modern African poetry.

Keywords: overview, tracking, modern African poetry

Introduction

Poetry is perceived as an expression of man's inner feelings and emotions which can be expressed orally or reproduced in written form. Man and poetry have been in existence from time immemorial. It is arguable that poetry is about the oldest literary genre in man's history. Though, it is difficult to state exactly when poetry started and who started it, but there are evidences to show that the first poetry possibly has a link with the relationship between man and nature and between man and man. These interactions usually lead to special or intense feelings of happiness, deprivation, joy, disillusionment and so on. Expressing these feelings orally or in the written form could be poetic.

The concept of how modern is modern African poetry is political. This paper is of the view that modern African poetry has an impression of political and historical dimension. The term "modern" is an indication of a departure from the old form especially the aspect of oral tradition poetry. It is worth knowing that prior to the advent of "modern African Poetry", poetry was characterized by traditional oral rendition often characterized by strong combination of music and oral performance. This can be seen in the rendition of work praise poetry also known as guild poetry, court poetry and other traditional praise poetry common in traditional African society.

Jacobs and Tedlocke (1972), quoted by Okpewho (1988) described oral poetry performance as one "compared to a dramatic monologue in which the performer supports, his verbalization with a due amount of semantic component in the form of gestures, grimaces and the like". In an effort to demystify how modern is modern African poetry, this paper traced the development of modern African poetry to the exposure of Africans to western education. This started with those captured as slaves but were privileged to receive western education. To Okpewho (1988), "we may best begin with those who were captured as slaves in early youth but were able to overcome the limitation of severe life and proved themselves skillful users of a forced tongue". This was the case with Olaudah Equiano, an eighteenth-century slave and one of the earliest Africans, to write English poetry as a result of his education from the West. The stanzas are taken from Equiano's *Miscellaneous Verses or Reflections on the*

state of my mind during my first connections of the necessity of believing the truth and experiencing the investigable Benefits of Christianity:

Well may I say my life has been
One scene of sorrow and of pain;
From early days I griefs have known,
And as I grew my griefs have grown:

Dangers were always in my path;
And fear of wrath, and sometimes death,
While pale dejection in me reign'd
I often wept, by grief constrained.

When taken from my native land,
By an unjust and cruel band,
How did uncommon dread prevail!
My sighs no more I could conceal.
(Adrian A. Roscoe 1971:14, 15)

The poem is a meditation on the agonies and Equiano's lamentation in the slavery experience. This paper is of the opinion that Equiano verses stand as a useful starting point in tracing the history of modern African poetry. His, is a typical example of colonial poetry which contained autobiographical memories of his enslavement. However, Adrian Roscoe (1971:15) posited that Equiano's style:

owes nothing to Africa. Yet the continent is present in the writer's mind, for he retains the memory of his enslavement".... One might argue that he is the first West African to use the metropolitan language against his masters, a weapon which later generation of African spokesmen were to use so skillfully".

Another typical example of the colonial poetry otherwise known as slave poems is "Young Africa's Plea" by Dennis Osadebay which expresses the poet's confusion and uncertainty of the educated Africans in their quest for national liberation:

Don't preserve my customs
 As some fine curios
 To suit some white historians tastes
 There's nothing artificial
 That beats the natural way
 In culture and ideals of life
 Let me play with the whiteman's way,
 Let me work with the blackman's brains,
 Let my affairs themselves sort out.
 Then in sweet rebirth
 I'll rise a better man,
 Not ashamed to face the world.
 Those who doubt my talents
 In secret fear my strength;
 They know I am no less a man.
 Let them bury their prejudice
 Let them show their noble sides,
 Let me have untrammelled growth,
 My friends will never know regret.
 And I, I never once forget.

The poem is more of a nationalist poem; the poetic personae protests whiteness naturalization of African artifacts. Adrian Roscoe (1971: 16) says of Osadebey's "Young African's Plea" that "the inferiority syndrome, the most devastating result of colonialism is here in all its glory" For example, the poem is not a call or a plea to preserve Africa's customs but a demonstration of the poet's nostalgic feeling to a heritage he believes to be too individualistic as against the service of the content known of African poetry. Jahn (1962) quoted in *Modern Poetry* –from Africa edited by Gerald Moore and UlliBeier (1963), argued in *Munty* that the genius of African poetry is Collective:

In African poetry the expression is always in the service of the content; it is never a question of *expressing oneself*, but of expressing *something*...Nor is the African poet ever concerned with his inner nature, with his individuality (23)

Similarly, the advent of the European colonial rule in Africa, especially African countries colonized by France takes us to the next stage of the development of modern African poetry. The policy of assimilation adopted by the French colonialists also influenced poets of that era who were severed and alienated from their poetic culture and traditions from which they had sucked thereby posing a threat to the survival of their indigenous traditions and background. Thus, the introduction of the policy of assimilation was to turn the attention of the *assimile* back upon the one factor which the colonizer wanted him to forget his blackness, Gerald Moore and Ulli Beier (1963:15). The effect of long years of alienation of Africans in France produced a feeling of rejection and subsequently, the assertion of Negritude movement was developed. Pioneers of the Negritude tradition/movement were the like of Senegalese Sedar Senghour, David Diop, Birago Diop and Congolese poets U Tan'si and Bolambo. The word, "negritude" was first formed as a concept by West Indian Poet, Aime Cesaire.

The Negritude poets celebrated their cultural inheritance with strong feelings of pride and admiration. They romanticized African past, expressed their longings for a physical and spiritual re-union with Africa due to their sojourn and experience of colonization in France. Also, the desire to create an authentic African traditional setting made them appreciate the activities of their ancestors. This is captured in Birago Diop's Poem "Souffles" (known as "Breadth" as published in Bassir's *An Anthology of West African Verse* (1957):

Listen more often to things rather than beings.
Hear the fire's voice,
Hear the voice of water.
In the wind hear the sobbing of the trees,
It is our forefathers breathing.

The dead are not gone forever.
They are in the paling shadows,
And in the darkening shadows.
The dead are not beneath the ground,
They are in the rustling tree,

In the murmuring wood,
In the flowing water,
in the still water,
In the still water,
In the lonely place, in the crowd;
The dead are not dead.

Listen more often to things rather than beings.
Hear the fire's voice.
Hear the voice of water
In the wind hear the sobbing of the trees.
It is the breathing of our forefathers,
Who are not gone, not beneath the ground,
Not dead

The dead are not gone forever
They are in a woman's breast,
A child's crying, a glowing, ember
The dead are not beneath the earth,
They are in the flickering fire,
In the weeping plant, the groaning rock,
The wooded place, the home.
The dead are not dead

Listen more often to things rather than beings,
Hear the fire's voice,
Hear the voice of water.
In the wind hear the sobbing of the trees,
It is the breathing of our forefathers

The poem captures African's belief in the cyclical existence, the reincarnation of the dead as well as the co-mingling between the dead and the living. In reaction to criticism which followed the concept of negritude by some poets such as Soyinka, Mphahlele and perhaps Okigbo, who stated that negritude is a manifestation of inferiority complex or racialism, Senghor submitted that negritude is neither racialism nor self-negation. In his essay "Negritude: A Humanism of the Twentieth century" re-published in 2007, he argued that:

The most recent attack comes from Ghana, where the government has commissioned a poem entitled “I Hate Negritude” as if one could hate oneself, hate one’s being, without ceasing to be no, negritude is none of these things. It is neither racialism nor self- negation. Yet, it is not just affirmation, it is rooting oneself in oneself and self-confirmation. Confirmation of one’s being. (101)

Senegal is the only African mainland which one can really say witnessed *assimilation* in practice. In other French colonized African countries, the assimilation policy was not practised until after 1946 and was subsequently abandoned altogether as official policy some decades later.

While the reaction to French assimilation policy was cultural, that of British colonialism was political. It is a common place of history that liberation movements were stronger, and developed much earlier, in Nigeria and Ghana, than in Guinea, Mali, Senegal, and the Ivory Coast” (Adrian Roscoe, 1971.27).

Statements by nationalists of the Anglophone countries like Nnamdi Azikwe, Obafemi Awolowo (Nigeria) and Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana) tended to be political and journalistic with a view to gaining independence from the British colonial masters. This is evidence in the way these nationalists of blessed memory abandoned poetry and journalism to further consolidated their political aspirations. On the other hand, French West African, statesman like Senghor, the first president of Senegal was noted both as a political leader and poet who has been able to stamp respectability in the history of poetry and politics.

This paper is of the opinion that the experience of North African poetry is slightly different from other parts of black Africa. Its multiple colonial experiences of Arab, Islam and Christianity is manifested in the region’s moral and political themes that characterize poetry from the North Africans. Dasylya and Jegede (2006:116) posited that “the poetry of Ahmad Shawqi al Fanjari, Mahmud al Barudi of Egypt, and Al-Bajjal, Masudi of Tunisia moral and religious structures serve as masks for committed aesthetic and socio-political issues. Unfortunately, the impact of the Islamic religion and subsequently their use of the Arabic language make their works not easily accessible.

Put differently, Anisa Talahite (2007), in an essay “North African Writing” says that “North African Writing offers, a perspective that cannot be strictly confined within the geographical boundaries of North Africa”. In other words, it may be difficult to confine or categorize North African poetry within a particular geographical space. Talahite posited further that:

From a linguistic and cultural point of view, it is part of Arabic literature, a category that includes the literature from the countries both of North Africa and the Middle East. North African writing is therefore determined by the sense of belonging to an Arab nation which shares the same language and culture and to a certain extent, the same religion (38).

The North African poetry is, therefore, highly influenced by Arabic language and the Islamic religion; it is usually a force of writing and common destiny among the Arab people. However, it is pertinent to note that some North African countries like Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria as former members of French colonies saw the growth of literature, particularly in poetry written in French. Thus, the French language became an instrument through which North African poets battled the colonial imposition. This can be seen in the poetry of Amina Said “On the Tattered Edges” anthologized in Ojaide and Sallah (1999):

on the tattered edges of my unraveling memory heiress of time
the water and sand sing in my veins
before my eyes springs
abundance ringed round by the barest deserts
of your horizon less freedom your prison without-bar
you rediscover a destiny in the figurines born of hard might many
strange through until a name comes to mind.

The madman and his monster as
though they were dying furious
digging their own graves in the
depths of violent sleep.

and in the
sands of
memory Only
the tracks of
two bodies
And no one
notices
The cold enemy
Returning calmly

To prowl with the stark morning
They are only whispers
I shall go out under the sun
To sing with loudest voice
(The New African Poetry: An Anthology, 1999:73-74)

Said is a Tunisian born in 1953 “On the Tattered Edge” was translated from French by Eric Sellin. The poem is an attack against the French colonialists under which Tunisia gained independence.

Modern African Poetry and the Ibadan Node

Arriving at a credible answer to mapping modern African poetry will not be complete without x-raying the role played by the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. As captured by Gerald Moore and Ulli Beier (1963:2), it was in the late 50s that a new generation of poets began to show themselves, notably in Nigeria. With the exception of Gabriel Okara, all these young poets studied at the University College, Ibadan. The list of Nigerian writers who were trained at Ibadan is long, and includes novelists such as Achebe, Amadi, Nwapa, Munonye and Nwankwo among others. The poets are Soyinka, Clark, Segun, Aig-Imoukhuede and Okigbo (Adrian Roscoe 1971:27).

Worthy of note is the fact that the writings, themes and styles of these ‘new’ voices in the literary circles was a departure from the old poems. The old here relates to the idea or concern of enslavement which characterized the colonial poems, the feeling of alienation and exile which was the concern of the negritude movement. Since these “new” generation of poets studied at the University College, Ibadan, they were

able to grasp a literary culture without suffering the sense of deprivation and a sense of alienation which afflicted Negritude writers as well as the pre-colonial poets.

Thus, their writings are free from slogans or stereotypes. Notable among these poets who can be concluded as the precursors of Nigerian poetry and indeed “modern” African poetry are the likes of Wole Soyinka, Christopher Okigbo and John Pepper Clark-Bekederemo. These poets were highly influenced by the works of Dylan Thomas, Pound and Hopkins, Shakespeare and even Aeschylus.

Consequently, the University of Ibadan became the rallying point for literary and poetry development in Africa. The University introduced a syllabus in African literature. Also, students who were upcoming artistes were given opportunities to write in a magazine called *Horn* of which J.P. Clark was its first editor. And subsequently, in 1961, the *Mbari* writers and Arts Club, founded by a German writer and critic Ulli Beier was established in Ibadan. Ulli Beier invited Okigbo to be one of the original *Mbari* committee members together with Georgina Beier, Wole Soyinka, J.P. Clark, Chinua Achebe, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Amos Tutuola, D.O. Fagunwa, Denis Williams Demas Nwoko, Uche, Okeke, Francis Ademola and Janheinz Jahn, the ethnologist. The *Mbari* club later served as a ladder of success to the birth of modern African literature. It established a publishing house where Okigbo eventually became an editor. It started the publication of the works of its members. In addition, South African poets faced with the challenges of the cruel apartheid era in South Africa were offered opportunities to publish their works. Hence, the works of South African poets like Dennis Brutus and Alex La Guma were also published. The *Mbari* club promoted the creation of a true movement of contemporary African artistes, who were poised to generate a new artistic culture, harmonizing the contents cultural traditions and the technical language medium. It is also important to note that, the *Mbari* publishing house also helped to publish works from Ghanaian poets such as Kofi Awoonor-Williams, Gambia’s Lenrie Peters among others.

The Birth of *Black Orpheus*

In addition to the *Horn* magazine and the establishment of the Mbari club, another important landmark which also served as a source of literary expression of African poets and writers was the founding of the *Black Orpheus* Journal in Ibadan which was the English-speaking equivalent of the Francophone *Presence Africaine*. Through the *Black Orpheus*, Nigeria poets as well as notable poets across the continent published their poems, short stories and carried out other literary experiments.

The writings of these poets were a departure from the old. The concept of what is old according to Tanure Ojaide (1995), is relative in African literary history, if we bear in mind that serious modern African poetry in English started only in the late 1950s. It was by the late 1960s that most of the known modern African poets matured or established themselves as powerful voices. These include among others Christopher Okigbo, Wole Soyinka, J.P. Clark, Kofi, Awoonor, Lenrie Peters, Okot P 'Bitek, and Dennis Brutus.

Many of these poets rejected the literary concept of Negritude but decided to celebrate a new landscape which neither poets of the negritude movement nor the enslaved poets have since forgotten. Ojaide (2010) argued further that modern African poetry by these new poets is unique as it possesses "a repertory of authentic African features. This authenticity manifested itself in the use of concrete images derived from the flora and fauna, proverbs, indigenous rhythms, verbal tropes and concepts of space and time to establish a poetic form. Besides, (and unlike in the West), content is more important than form and images do not aim to reflect the sense. Content is not perceived by poets and audience as extra-literary.... In fact, an authentic African world forms the gumption of modern African poetry. This can be justified in the works of Clark, Christopher Okigbo, Wole Soyinka, Dennis Brutus, Okot P' Bitek and others. For instance Clark's "Streamside Exchange" captures a simple dialogue, in a rural African setting, between a child and a bird:

Child:

River bird, river bird,
Sitting all day long
On hook over grass,
River bird, river bird,
Sing to me a song
Of all that pass
And say,
Will mother come back *today*?

Bird:

You cannot know
And should not bother;
Tide and market come and go
And so has your mother.

We can also see a replication of a detailed reflection of a physical Africa and the natural phenomena that inform it in his poem "Night Rain".

Also, Soyinka's "Abiku" and Clark's version of "Abiku" both present a setting of cultural identity of the African myth and landscape. Besides, Soyinka's works also capture Africa's political and socio-cultural peculiarities. Much of his work can better be understood with a sound knowledge of the Yoruba background especially the myth of *Ogun* and other traditional Yoruba beliefs. This is because like Christopher Okigbo, Soyinka uses private images as potent features for his imaginative life. This is seen in his poem "Death in the Dawn":

On the hoe. Now shadows stretch with sap
Not twilight's death and sad prostration.
This soft kindline, soft receding breeds.
Racing joys and apprehensions for
A naked day. Burdened hulks retract
Stoop to the mist in faceless throng
To wake the silent markets - swift mute
Processions on grey byways... on this counterpane, it was

Sudden winter at the death
Of dawn's lone trumpeter. Cascades
of white feather-flakes... but it proved
A futile rite. Propitiation sped
Grimly on, before.
The right foot for joy, the left, dread
And the mother prayed, child
May you never walk
When the road waits, famished.

Traveler, you must set forth
At dawn.
I promise marvels of the holy hour
Presages as the white cock's flappe
Perverse impalement - as who dare
The wrathful wings of man's progression...
But such another wraith! Brother,
Silenced in the startled hug of
Your invention - is this mocked grimace
This closed contortion - I?
(Moore and Beier, 1963: 145-146)

However, Soyinka and Clark as well as some aspects of Christopher Okigbo's poems have been criticized as being Eurocentric. Such critics lay their claim on the premise that Soyinka, Clark, Okigbo modeled their poems after European practitioners; William Shakespeare, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Gerald Manley Hopkins, W.B. Yeats and the French symbolists. Chinweizu *et al* (1980: 172) identified Hopkins as the dominant influence among them. In other words, Soyinka, Clark and Okigbo, to Chinweizu *et al* are seen as imitators of Hopkins's style, thus he asserted, they are suffering from "Hopkins disease".

In his note to "Death at Dawn", Soyinka explained that while driving to Lagos one morning, a white cockerel flew out of dusk or down and smashed itself against his windscreen. A mile further, after the place of the accident, he came across a ghastly accident of a man in a

freshly smashed accident. Here the idea of a cock as a sacrificial offering and propitiation is conveyed in the poem.

Contemporary and New Generation Poets

Tracking modern African poetry will still linger on without the examination of contemporary or new generation African poets. The poetry of contemporary and new generation poets especially in Nigeria embraced a gradual shift in the poetic material from nature, culture, individualism and excessive imitation of euro-modernist poets by the pioneer poets. Notable among these poets are the like of Niyi Osundare, Kofi Anyidoho, Odia Ofeimun, Harry Geruba, Tanure Ojaide, Tati Loutard. Others include, Sesan Ajayi, Sola Olorunyemi, Remi Raji, Nelson Fashina, Olu Oguibe. Afam Akeh, Tijah Sallah, Onookome Okome Ademola Dasylva and such others. These poets focus on national, socio-economic, political and class awareness of the contemporary African society against the excessive lyricism of the older poets. Also, there is a change from pro-western individualism to a participant audience performance peculiar to traditional African society. This is evidence in the establishment of the Okigbo Night in the University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University as well as Anthills Poetry series in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. These performances were organized to reach wider audience of both literate and non-literate audience. Osundare for instance, uses common features of the oral style such as direct address and dialogue by including songs and refrains which include his audience as witnessed in traditional performances. This approach of “transactional” presentation is used in his poem “Waiting Laughters”.

Also, another feature that characterizes the works of these poets is the use of allusion. Allusions are made to person, places or events or incidents. There are also historical and Biblical allusions. This is observed in Remi Raji’s poem “Saint Clinton’s Song”:

If I were clinton
I would clinch one more victory
in the lewinskian lap of tender nights.
If I were clinton

I would bite the apple again
and blame saddam the serpent of Iraq
I would dare the jury and clone the truth
in a doublespeak of pleasant lies
I would make the world
watch my tie and not my lie.
if I were clinton
i'd write my name in labial fluid
i would quote myself in verse

EVEN PRESIDENTS HAVE PRIVATE LIVES

as Jefferson Johnson nixon in the mating game
if I were clinton
I would ride on everest of emotion
adonisromeo cupid crucified
in the republican envy
of beasts and barbarians
I shall rise again and spin
on the legendary statue of simple lechery.

I am
the pope of scandals
I do not blame
the smooth negligee
of monica's winks, I kill the oval script
of x-rated lives
and wait for death
by public circumcision

But as I go this gallow of lust
I ask the private saint among the noble:
Cast the celibate stone and let me die: (Raji-Oyelade, 2001)

The poem satirises the Clinton-Lewinsky's sex scandal that rocked the White House in the US during the regime of US former president, Bill Clinton and which nearly led to his impeachment.

In lines four and five above, “If I were Clinton, I will bite again”. The “bite again” is a Biblical allusion to the eating of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden by Adam and Eve. “and blame Saddam the serpent of Iraq” of the third line of the second stanza suggests the poets allusion to the game of blame shifting in which Adam and Eve resorted to when they ate the forbidden fruit, while Saddam Hussein is an allusion to Satan. This is evidence in the perception of Saddam Hussein to the US government prior to US instigated justice that killed him.

The poet in the fifth stanza attempts to assert himself as he confesses his sin of lust and states that he is the “pope of scandal”. The third stanza also alludes to former U.S. leaders who were once engulfed in sex scandals.

Ojaide and Sallah (1999:4), identify two major characteristics of the new African poets to include: self-criticism and growing rebellion against tradition. The authors stated further that new African poets are capable of criticizing themselves as Odia Ofeimuna does in “The Poet Lied”. But more importantly, they criticize their own nations. They do not blame all of Africans problem on Europeans and colonialism. Instead, they blame Africans, especially African leaders, for the continent’s problems. The conflicts expressed in modern African poetry thus reflect not only a clash of cultures between Africans and Europeans, but also are mainly class based conflicts - the exploiters versus the exploited, the working masses versus the indolent elites, the haves versus the have nots... (5).

This implies that the shift of attention from outside to inward scrutiny and self-examination of the socio-political conflicts of African states are major thematic pre-occupations of contemporary as well as new generation African poets. This can be seen in the poetry of New North African poets like Iran Mirsal, Amal Dunqul, Rachid Madani, Muhammed’ Abd al -Hayy Amina Said and so on.

In Iman Mirsal’s poetry, as an Egyptian woman, she treats aspects of women’s experience in her native country Egypt. This includes experiences of abortion, infidelity as well as the struggle to achieve intellectual and personal identity. She demonstrates this in one of her poems “Confessions”:

No doubt I need a year of hallucinating
 For I must say to .my father
 That the one man who broke me off of desiring him
 resembled him completely.
 I must tell my friends: I have perfect pictures of my face
 all of them are true, all of them are me.
 I'll distribute them to you one by one.
 I have to say to my lover: Thank my blessed infidelities. . .
 Were it not for them, I would not have waited all this time
 To discover an exceptional void in your laugh.
 As for me, I'm about set to make a scandal of myself
 to hide behind.

Iman Mirsal's "Confessions" as well as "Abortion" and "I usually Look Around Me", were translated from Arabic language by Clarissa Burt (Ojaide and Sallah, 2000:53) Like her other poems. "Confessions" is a self-examination of fidelity as one of the social ills, bedeviling the Egyptian society.

In Nigeria, "Breaking News" in Ademola Dasylva's *Songs of Odamolugbe*, and "Siren Sense" I, II and III in Remi Raji's *A Harvest of Laughters*, are examples of such poems that criticize the society they belong to. These poets tend to embrace the Marxist ideology as the mouth piece of the oppressed. The poems mirror the exploiters versus the exploited, the working masses versus the indolent elites.

Conclusion

Poetry, no doubt, is about the earliest literary genre in Africa as it is to other parts of the world. Africans have utilized oral poetry as a medium of capturing and expressing their socio-cultural inter and intra-relationship. However, the written tradition and the development of modern African poetry as a recent development were encouraged as a result of Africa's interaction with western education. This dates back to the exposure of captured African slaves to western education. The experience of slavery, colonialism, and spiritual and psychological torture suffered by Africans during the turbulent moments forced Africans to strive for their voice to be heard. The expression of intense feeling of sorrow,

alienation in lines of writings by pioneer African poets further inspired others to join in the struggle for freedom. Finally, Africans used the opportunity, having been 'culturalized' and educated, in their traditional development to assert and express their feelings. The University College Ibadan, finally provided room for further literary developments and this set the tone for modern African poetry.

References

- Andrian, A.R. (1971). *Mother is Gold: A Study of West African Literature*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Bassir, O. (ed) (1957). *An Anthology of West African Verse*. Ibadan: University Press.
- Beire, U. and Moore, G. (1963). *Modern Poetry from Africa*. London: Penguin Books.
- Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike (1980). *Towards the Decolonization of African Literature* Fourth Dimension Publishers: Owerri.
- Dasylva A.O. and Jegede. O.B (2003). *Studies in Poetry*. Ibadan: Sam Bookman.
- Dasylva, A.O. (2006) *Songs of Odumolugbe*. Ibadan: Kkraft Books Limited.
- Nwoga, D.I. (1967) *West African Verse*. London: Longman Group Ltd.
- Ojaide, T. 1995. *New Trends in Modern African Poetry Research in African Literature* www.jstore.org Accessed June 11, 2018.
- Ojaide, T. and Sallah, T.M. (1999). eds. *The New African Poetry: An Anthology*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Okpewho, (1988). *African Poetry: 'The Modern Writer and the Oral Tradition'* ed. Eldred Jones Retrieved Apr.15, 2010 url. <http://books.google.com/books>.
- Raji R. (1997). *A Harvest of Laughters*. Ibadan: Kraft Book Limited.
- _____. (2001). *Webs of Remembrance*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.
- Senghor, Sedar Leopold (2007). "Negritude: A Humanism of the Twentieth Century" in *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory* Tejumola and Ato eds. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing Limited pp. 29-195.
- Tahahite A. (2007). "North African Writing" in *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. Tejumola and Ato. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Limited.