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Repetition in Ojaide's *The Fate of Vultures and other Poems*

By

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Renowned creative artists of all generations can be said to share a common attribute: the ability to make and to reinforce their points. While the first, (that of substance) may enjoy a relative similarity of approach, the second, (that of driving home the points) has generally tended to vary considerably, and may include a preference for contrasts, for symbolization and/or for purposeful repetition. A study of Ojaide's poetry, particularly his *The Fate of Vultures and Other Poems* easily suggests that he (Ojaide) belongs to the third group – the group that dominantly employs repetition for a reinforcement of the matter being communicated.

This article identifies repetition as a recognizable feature in Ojaide's *The Fate of Vultures and Other Poems*. It analyzes and attempts a detailed discussion of repetition within and across various poems; often explicitly, occasionally implicitly – in isolation (as subtypes) and in combination with others. The article concludes that Ojaide's success in the portrayal of various facets of human life and society and his creation of poetic unity in this collection are traceable, in large measure, to his impressive use of repetition.

The African Writer and Medium of Expression

It is now generally known that the African writer has a choice: to use his mother tongue (L_1) or to use any of the nonnative languages, (second (L_2) or foreign) as his medium of expression.

Each choice has justification: if he uses his L_1 , he has the opportunity of being entirely original and contributing to the development of his language. But he knows about the problem of restricted readership and sometimes even the difficulty of achieving equivalence in a world of technological advancement. Also, when the almost inevitable need for translation comes, the writer is aware of inescapable loss or departure in the process. If he uses an L_2 or a foreign language, he begins by admitting a certain degree of incompetence¹ and a certain amount of departure from originality in his idioms. However, he soon turns those into advantage, contributing to the enrichment of his medium quite apart from an assurance of reception by a large target audience.

Because of the advantage and the demerits of each choice as sketched above, each African writer has tended to experiment now in one language, then in the other! But when academic, political and social arguments are brought into the issue – the need for getting as many people as possible to share in the intellectual contributions, the desirability of linkage in a linguistically heterogeneous geopolity like Africa and the imperative of gaining from the on going nativization of nonnative languages (particularly English) – the African writer

often chooses an L₂ or a foreign medium for the expression of his ideas. Tanure Ojaide has chosen a medium which is both L₂ and official in Nigeria – the English Language. He has used this medium in a manner that maintains its links with the English of the L₁ speakers while at the same time allowing for identifiable features that mirror the African and more specifically the Nigerian environment. We shall now isolate concrete evidence of this unity of core features in his general use of this medium in his poetry before getting down to a consideration of a particular issue – Ojaide's use of repetition in a particular collection: *The Fate of Vultures and Other Poems*...

Language Use in Ojaide's Poetry

Ojaide is a Nigerian and so his medium of expression (English) is essentially, in fact inescapably, the variety of world Englishes generally known as Nigerian English. Of the sub-varieties within this subtype, he can be said to belong to the third variety², that which has faultless syntax, conforms generally to rules of educated usage and can be appreciated by other educated users globally. Expressions like the following are clearly acceptable to all educated users of English and indeed may be adjudged sophisticated in their contexts:

- (i) ...it took the cause of the country into its expanding heart (p.2)³
- (ii) I grew strong from the trials of want (p.9)
- (iii) They stare at me with flaming eyes, biting their lips in regret for letting me pass (p.29)

- (iv) His ears strain for passionate music (p.52)
- (v) But the plague struck, answer to prayers... p.84)
- (vi) They would give us what we want if only we wanted what would weaken our subject-resolve. (p.84)

As stated above, the aptness of each expression is best seen in the context of its usage: in the first illustration, the "expanding heart" is apparently reminiscent of the inexhaustible patience of the committed masses who are resolute in fighting towards their goal of changing things for the better. This expanding (elastic) heart is far from the helpless patience of the animal; it is the patience that has a target... a mission to achieve. In the second the elegance of the expression stems from the idea of deprivation: the poet is denied everything by way of hospitality...he is given a bone instead of the flesh. But his will, in spite of this, is undaunted. In the third, the story of uncommon bravery is unfolded: the poet confronts savages who, faced with superior breeding, knowledge and wisdom have no choice but to surrender, though with regrets later, for "letting me pass". The fourth illustration can be said to be uncommonly elegant when seen as summarizing the superiority of Okigbo over the others – the younger poets. The author "strains his ears and keeps them poised to capture the kind of artistry he associates Okigbo with. He cannot be tired: he will continue to strain his ears until the "women become men", until the younger poets achieve his (Okigbo's) kind of poetic mastery and singular sophistication.

In the fifth, "the plague struck" suggests the suddenness of the vengeance, a kind of outcome... the answered prayers. For the sixth illustration, there is the beauty of expression explicable in terms of the well-known behaviour of the undisguised oppressor ready to compromise only when he (the oppressor) knows he has something to gain!

To justify our initial statement in section 1.2 above we shall now see how Ojaide, in addition to his sophistication, uses the English language to mirror appropriately, the reality of the Nigerian environment.

As a Nigerian he is himself conversant with certain lexical items which tend to be common in the Nigerian situation and such items feature freely in this text. The following are among the easiest to identify:

Murtala, Sankara (p.20)
Shankari (p.11); Benue (river, pp.83.85);
Agbarha (p.59); masquerade (p.38);
Gombe (p.47); harmatan (p.33);
headgears (p.6)

As practically every Nigerian knows, Murtala is the first name of the Nigerian Head of State (General Murtala Mohammed) who was assassinated in 1976, but who has become the Nigerian legend for societal improvement; Sankara and Shankari are other proper names. Agbarha and Gombe are names of places. Benue is a major river in Nigeria (also the name of a place); harmattan is one of the main Nigerian seasons while the word *masquerade* is often used to describe a particular cultural display on festive occasions⁵. There are also

word combinations and phrases which have specific meanings in the Nigerian situation. These include:

Pit-latrine (p.88);
pocket-lift (p.11);
market-wise (p.80);
market-lift (p.90);
debt-collector (p.97);
eel-touch (p.82);
vain-ululations (p.36);
loud-mouthed (p.64);
promisory-notes (p.63);
saviour-totem (p.13);
green and white-flag (p.69);
Hausa and Tangale (p.46);
fire-eaters, bone-crackers and iron-benders (p.63);
planted malice in my-body (p.9);
a plague to his grains (p.44);
compliment coated curses (p.89)

Although the above are largely self-explanatory, it should be useful to add that while *pit-latrine*, *debt-collector*, *saviour-totem*, *green and white (flag) Hausa and Tangale*, *market-lift* for instance, have hardly any more meaning than what we can gather from the contexts, other expressions like

pocket-lift
market-wise
eel-touch and
compliment coated curses

are a lot pregnant: the first suggests the insatiable desire of many Nigerians (and others elsewhere) for riches which are for themselves alone; the second, the desire of a good number of people for good bargaining; the third, the superlative smoothness which not only the abandoned ferry but also abandoned iron anywhere loses; the fourth, a kind of final word about pretence by those who seek favour or have only slim opportunities for revenge!

From the brief illustration above, we can identify one feature of Ojaide's diction, word combinations and choice of phrases: economy of usage. This is so because each choice of word, e.g., Agharha or headgear; each phrase, e.g., fine-filéd matchets (p.2) or plague to his groins can be elaborated upon extensively in line with the realities surrounding the contexts and occasions in which they are used.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that in spite of Ojaide's international distinction in English usage and his sensitivity (cultural and physical) in word choice and combinations, he appears to have also been influenced by earlier poets like Wole Soyinka, Christopher Okigbo and Dennis Brutus. For instance, Ojaide's open admiration of Christopher Okigbo in his "Okigbo Listens to New Poets" cannot be a mere idle attachment. Again, Ojaide adopts spatial and temporal saving devices and sometimes uses nearly exact word combinations from both Dennis Brutus and Wole Soyinka. Words like:

earthwide (p.8);
sweep-away (p.11)
salvation-seekers (p.50);
prison-houses (p.12);
will-dozer (pp.74;75);

cash-lamed (p.80);

~~yester-faces~~ (p.77)

are a ~~powerful~~ reminder of usage in, for instance, Dennis Brutus'

"A troubadour I Traverse":

wide-flung (line 2);

mistress-favour (line 13);

arrow-brand (line 14)

and in Wole Soyinka's "Telephone Conversation":

lipstick coated...gold rolled (line 8); cigarette-

holder piped (line 9);

pillar-box (line 13);

wave-length adjusted (line 21).

In one instance, both Ojaide and Soyinka have used a rather charming innovation, hide and speak even though both have used it in different contexts and with different punctuation marks:

hide-and-speak (Soyinka);

hide and speak (Ojaide)⁶

Put briefly therefore, Ojaide in his *The Fate of Vultures* ... has, in general, used the English language to communicate his sensibilities to international as well as national audiences, and above all, has done so with a mind to furthering the concrete realities of the Nigerian cultural as well as physical

environment. We shall now examine the way he uses the device of repetition of some of these attributes, to convey his message in this collection.

Repetition within Poems

The first word in 'The music of pain', the first poem in Ojaide's *The Fate of Vultures*... is a forceful, single-word imperative: "Listen". With its implied subject "you" we can see clearly that the word "Listen" excludes the speaker and so, may, additionally, be assigned to the subgroup of jussive imperative⁷. By excluding himself, the poet creates a desirable distance from which he addresses his audience concerning the suffering in the community. He makes it clear that he wants

... to shame
chiefs of selfish rule

and that everyone must part ways with distraction and listen to him.

At another convenient position (in line 31), he invokes the same attention:

"Listen" adding that his command is no childish affair ... at forty he is mature enough to know what his mission is. He repeats the word finally in the penultimate line and gives a reason why everyone must listen: nobody in his right mind can ignore "the music of communal pain".

In the same initial poem, the word "song" is repeated at strategic points. First, he shows that his "song" is not an

ordinary one – it is analogous to crying, indeed deep lamentation to which the audience must pay attention:

I do not cry in vain
For my song I sought
The chorus of resistant cries
To excoriate the land's scurvy conscience.

Soon the poet's song metamorphoses into a plural - "songs". He personifies these, seeing them as soldiers in the original sense, soldiers ready to correct societal wrongs. In the next lines, the poet states in convincing (almost exaggerated) terms, the incalculable potency of his "songs", a warning to those who do not believe and so may ask: "what can song do?"

He reaffirms that his songs can do a lot, from the ordinary to the mysterious: "They are a swarm of mystery bees." Up to this point in the poem therefore, we can say that the word "song" and its plural "songs" as well as its alternative, "cry" are used at least 8(eight) times... to reinforce the idea of lamentation of a mature man (of about 40) and the collective suffering of the society.

In the same poem, we have repetition of these personal pronouns: "I", "they" and "my." With the repetition of 'I', the music becomes a personal assignment, a self-inflicted duty:

I do not cry in vain
... I sought
the chorus of resistant cries
I invoked Aridon for trails
I dressed my words with steel shaft

I wanted communion to shame.

To emphasize his personal commitment further, he uses the possessive pronoun "my" in several places.

For my song I sought...
I dressed my words in...
My songs became the land's infantry
My song has captured the roar of lions
... listen to my song.

Having made the song a personal endeavour, he now uses the personal pronoun "they" three times in place of the noun "songs" or "music" to explain its worth,... its venom as an instrument of redress:

They have the bite of desperate ones!
They are fine-filed matchets...
They are a swarm of mystery bees.

In the key poem of the collection: "The Fate of Vultures", repetition plays a significant role in the poet's criticism of the Nigerian society. Here, the opening line refers to "Aridon", the "memory god", the "mentor", the god of justice, the only hope. Aridon is invoked to salvage the deprived people in the land:

O Aridon, bring back my wealth
From rogue-vaults

The above is an instance of an expression of a strong desire, in fact a direct prayer and hence an indisputable case of nonjussive volitive⁸:

In the 5th stanza, i.e. line 32, the prayer is repeated. The repetition has a compelling tone: it is couched in a down-to-earth manner... a kind of disarming candour:

...they had all their free days,
let today be mine.

In talking about the vultures, the poet takes an exception, and by implication repeatedly warns his audience about what they must not do:

I would not follow the hurricane
Nor would I the whirlwind

for the obvious reason that such irrational action would result in great, yet avoidable suffering. Through this repetition, the poet goes on to state why he would not want to mislead those who follow him; why he would not like to be a quotable illustration of incompetence (lines 12-14). There are two points which the audience⁹ cannot miss here: first, the personalized entreaty in the near-refrain:

I would not...
Nor would I...
I would not...
I would not...

Second, the formality demonstrated in the operative word with the accentual location on *NOT*, making the determination more emphatic. An informal negation "wouldn't" would have carried

a casual air but more importantly would have altered the accentuation placement to the modal auxiliary WOULDn't, thereby creating a different impression... determination still, but less forceful.

In what may be described as the most ironical of all poems in this collection — Compatriots — we also have noteworthy instances of repetition. The poet begins the poem by referring to his most direful antagonists: "My worst enemies are gathering strength." From this point the reader begins to wonder why a poem of the above title should begin with this line. Soon it becomes clear from the attributes that they cannot be the poet's compatriots in the literal sense if they can bring down the eagle and destroy its abode and do all sorts of evil and then succeed in changing a "love anthem into a rampage drum." In the second stanza, the clause we began with is repeated, apparently to show that the enemies are of various groups: while those in the first stanza are many and unnamed, those in the second are identified as pretenders who masquerade in the guise of priests! These so-called priests (again the poet's compatriots) are engaged in all sorts of evil ranging from idol worshipping to the shedding of innocent blood. To round off the poem and clarify what may have remained of the mystery surrounding the title, the poet repeats "My Worst enemies..." and warns the reader that such are his (the poet's) compatriots: "My worst enemies, my compatriots!".

Finally in this select survey of gainful repetition, we take a look at "The Man in a Borrowed Frock." In this poem, the poet's anger is at its peak, and the first line — pungent, abrupt, complete and of stanza status — points the way to this assertion:

"Don't let him go without a savage kick."

The invective begins from the words in the title: why is the man in a borrowed frock, not borrowed robes? Is it to complete the picture of oddity... of naked plagiarism? The poet shows that he has used the word "frock" consciously so he repeats the utterance in line 10 with the addition of the word "white." A person in a white outfit is easily noticed, so the incongruity too will be easily noticed. Meanwhile, he explains why the "savage kick" is deserved and why the civilized world should not be shocked even by an undisguised reference to feaces:

Show him what he shat
The odious mound of his greed
Let him sit by his shame
And savour the fuming smell.

The poet continues his disapproval of the proceeds from the self-published writer: he is described as a mean thief bent on exploiting readers without contributing anything to knowledge. To drive home his exception, the poet repeats the substance of the first line but instead of staying within the confines of the forceful negative imperative: "Don't ..." he goes berserk, almost pleading with himself... on oath:
"Never let him go without a savage kick:"

Repetition Across Poems

There is hardly much of an exaggeration in saying that practically all poems in the collection we are dealing with here

have one form of purposeful repetition or the other. What appears to be more striking however is that there are also repetitions across the poems, a situation that creates unity in the entire collection.

For example, words like

assault, robbery, hurricane,
shame, misfortune, dirge,
vulture, misery, stamped,
missile, disaster, crimes;

compounds like:

rogue-vaults, prison-houses,
blood-sniffing, harmattan-cold,
desert-menaced;

groups like:

bloody face, hopeless age,
stinking charms, deadly weapons,
bundle of tricks, vicious greed,
lakes of tears, sharp tongues
hurled into jail, scorn
impotence, unpredictable lords

which feature freely in this collection at once suggest the suffering in the land (more precisely in Nigeria), and the protest against such suffering. A closer look at the words suggests social, political, economic and even educational protests. We can attempt a categorization of these signals of sufferings

- i) hurricane, harmattan-cold, desert-cold, desert-menaced, vicious greed tend to relate to the economy;
- ii) shame, stampede, crimes, robbery, prison-houses sharp tongues apparently suggest social or educational problems;
- iii) missile, deadly weapons, hurled into jail may remind us about the political hazards of today.

No serious content is suggested by this categorization however, as the listings can shade easily and perceptibly into each other.

In addition to such a general feel of the tone of the text occasioned by the above repetition of misery, of pain which "ravages the land", there are other rather more substantial images of protest which pervade the collection. For instance, reference to the word "eagle" is made in, among others, "The Fate of Vultures" (line 38). Here, the eagle is in a dilemma, gasping for breath:

... shorn of proud feathers sand-ridden,
mumbles its own dirge gazing at the iroko it
it can no longer ascend ...

In "When Tomorrow is Too Long" (line 23) the eagle is humiliated; "he" is imprisoned: "... in a glittering cage." In "The Banner of the Future", the word "eagle" is mentioned in two places: in line 3 where reference is made to the eagle in Nigeria's Coat of Arms – the symbol of our national strength – and in line 27 where two characteristics of the eagle are mentioned: its distinction and strength as shown by the way it maintains total balance when it perches "and" its unending

vigilance, shown through its "thrust of eyes". In "The Beast of Change" (line 34) the eagle is shown as an object of inspiration, an object of wonder, a target to aim at.

For Ojaide in this text therefore, the eagle is both a reality and a symbol: the eagle is a bird among birds and Nigeria's choice of it in her coat of arms is clearly symbolic of our position in global politics and diplomacy. The poet's central concern is not recounting of the eagle's strong points but a protest, (indeed a lamentation), about the evil days which have befallen our otherwise proud country. The repeated use of the image is apparently commensurate with the numerous problems which have beset our nation. The poet in one instance, even ends on and unhappy, a pessimistic note, indicating that the enemies have not only brought down the eagle but have also "felled irokos on sight" making any hope of recovery a far cry from the reality!¹⁰

The eagle and the iroko tree are generally known to go together, the latter being the popular choice of the former... for perching. So, with the repetition of the word "eagle" there is naturally a repetition of the word "iroko", even though this is not done in a one-to-one correspondence, and in identical contexts. Thus, in addition to the many references already made to the iroko tree in our discussion above, separate references to this image are also made in "The Wanderer's Victory" (line 7) and in "The Banner of the Future" (line 32). In both, iroko trees are admired and respected: they are "pillars of faith" and their roots are needed if we are to be able "to embarrass the hurricane" – to withstand the numerous trials of life. Almost certainly, the big lessons about the eagle and the iroko tree may have been missed or understated if the two had not been used in many poems and as repeatedly as they have.

Two other ideas which have been used and repeated several times across the poems in this collection are *confusion* and *resultant gloom*. Confusion is brought into focus through the repeated use of the word "stampede"; gloom is emphasized through the constant reference in many poems to the funeral song — "dirge". The use of the word "dirge" is particularly striking as it is apparently shown to be a part of the national tragedy: the eagle mumbles it (p.12); we originate it through our inordinate desires and we dance to its tune and so become an inseparable part of the gloom (pp.55; 77); even nature seems to support this gloom as the wind "settled to whistle a dirge" (p.6). Through this repetition therefore, the collective and explicable Nigerian dilemma is given vent.¹¹

With regard to the repetition of the idea of confusion, two directions are indicated through the use of the word "stampede." First, there is reference to unending rush for material things:

What else will beauty claim
In the stampede for cash? (p.56)
Then buyers from the sapping wilderness
Stampede, outbidding
And crushing the cash-lamed (p. 80).

Second, stampede is repeated to show the unruly attitude of the community, which "stir the assembly to stampede." We can see thus that the issue of *stampede* (like that of *dirge*) is used to highlight another bane in our society, the inadequate display of self-control.

Repetition of Sounds/Patterns

Two other major issues in this matter of repetition are those of sounds and sound patterns. Both sounds and patterns have tended to accord with the message in each poem. For instance, in "The Music of pain", some kind of musical effect is created probably to serve as a balm to the painful message. This is done through the repetition of voiced sounds: long vowels – monophthongs and diphthongs; other vowels as well as voiced consonants – at the ends of specific lines:

listen
I do not cry in vain
For my song I sought
the chorus of resistant cries...
I invoked Aridon for trails
of victories against overlords
who clamped reins upon the jawbones
of upright words...
Listen
A fortyish man does not cry in vain
listen to my song
the music of communal pain.

It is impossible for a careful reader to miss this musical effect, shown clearly at the ends of the lines.

In another poem "My Next Step" there is a suggestion, indeed a pervasion of masculine feeling. To accord with this, the poet chooses the set of sounds which suggest masculinity – consonants – which he uses at the beginning of a majority of the lines:

My next step will go too far
Let it be treason...
For how long will eyes stand bullshit
For how will they watch rather than break up...
My blood is no longer mine, it is boiling.

This masculine touch pervades practically all the other lines, giving it (the poem) the seriousness it is expected to convey.

The last poem in our illustration of repetition of sounds and patterns is "Slave Traffic." This is another serious poem; indeed a recollection of the sufferings of slaves can cause a re-enactment of an otherwise forgotten hostility. So, the poet again chooses the sounds harsh enough for the event:

The Catholic Rock, the desert prophet
(and) the bearded proletariat, these...

Where the poet comments about the riotous nature of slave routes, he is at his best in showing the riot orthographically: combining consonants and vowels at the beginning of the words and employing vowels of different subclasses – diphthongs, long monophthongs, short monophthongs as well as a triphthong to capture this air of riot:

"The slave route is still a riot of traffic:

Witness the "riot" as shown by the combination of sounds:

The - consonant at the beginning; short monophthong (pure vowel) follows.

- slave - consonant cluster at the beginning; diphthong follows.
- route - consonant at the beginning; long monophthong follows.
- is - an otherwise vowel sound at the beginning if it had to be stressed; in this utterance weakened to /s/ (consonant).
- still - consonant cluster at the beginning; short (retracted) monophthong follows.
- a - monophthong weakened to /ɔ/.
- riot - consonant at the beginning; triphthong follows.

Perhaps the more interesting aspect of the repetition of sounds in this poem is that in three lines, the riot in the routes is shown not only orthographically but also graphically:

trans-atlantic-atlantic,
trans-saharan,
trans-air.

Here we observe that sounds at the beginning of each line are not only the same, but are also onomatopoeic – formed in imitation of the sound of an engine taking off! The fully voiced sound /z/ at the beginning of each line confirms this: the possibility of even prolonging the /z/ sound to [zzz] or [zzzz] confirms the onomatopoeic effect the more. But there is more to say: trans-saharan (travelling through the desert) is the least comfortable of all the routes mentioned here, and so after the first syllable, a masculine sound – a consonant-occurs, apparently suggesting the discomfort. Trans-atlantic (going by sea) is normally long, but should be more comfortable than

going through the desert. The sound after the initial syllable is accordingly a vowel, but the unclearest vowel /ə/ suggesting this comparative comfort! But trans-air (going by air) is indeed a celebration, even if for a brief moment for slaves! So this most comfortable route is signalled by the coming together of two feminine sounds, a diphthong /eə/ after the initial syllable. Even the entire word "trans-air" is onomatopoeic in another way- /trənz-eə/ suggests not only the suddenness of departure but also the speed that characterizes this means of transport.

Repetition: The Final Phase

Ojaide's conscious repetition in his *The Fate of Vultures and Other Poems* comes out most clearly when we observe that in the first poem of this collection he refers to his age:

A fortyish man does not cry in vain.

and in the last poem, he concentrates on the age:

Now that I am forty.

In one sense, he may be seen to be using this repetition to celebrate his coming of age (physical age, creative age or spiritual age). In another sense, he may be having in mind, the *ḥākneyed* expression:

"A fool at forty is a fool forever". Taking the entire poetry of this collection into account however, he is most likely to be saying that at forty, he is a mature Nigerian; he is at home with the realities of the Nigerian situation; he is saying and mirroring what he sees and knows best. Most importantly, he is saying he has a mission that lies ahead for him to accomplish:

Now that I am forty
I will not abandon my road
(p.98, lines 7 and 8)

Conclusion

We have shown in this article that Ojaide's medium of expression in his collection: *The Fate of Vultures and other Poems* is undeniably the sophisticated variety of Nigerian English. We have also shown that herein lies part of his strength, for he has not only captured the realities of Nigerian experience, but has also satisfied international communicative expectations. We have further shown that of the techniques he has used within and across the poems, the most efficient is repetition – of various issues. What remains to add is that Ojaide has not only achieved poetic excellence but has also charted a unique course for the achievement of poetic unity within texts ... a feat that has come through his organized and purposeful repetition.

End Notes

1. This is not to suggest an unawareness that exact native competence by a nonnative user of a language is neither necessary nor possible: educated nonnative usages contribute to general and specific communication as well as the enrichment of the target language.

2. For more information on the varieties of written Nigerian English, see Adesanoye (1980).
3. To achieve a desirable economy, only page references are given in these and similar listings; the titles of poems are not indicated. Also, all page references are to the 1990 edition of Ojaide's *The Fate of Vultures and Other Poems*.
4. Though gone through transition, Okigbo is revered through his works, particularly his poetry.
5. This is not to say that there are no references to international names and issues; indeed references like *checkhov* and *London club* (p.87); *Gandi* and *Calcutta* (p.20) can be cited in support of this argument, and in support of varied usage.
6. The normal collectional set is here altered: instead of the hackneyed expression: *hide and seek*, we have *hide and speak*. Soyinka uses it in his "Telephone Conversation" (line 12); Ojaide uses it in his "When the plague struck" (section 5, line 10).
7. Jussive imperatives are verbs of this class which have three attributes: inclusion and exclusion of speaker; possibility of using a tag. For more information, see Eka (1994: 47–48; 98).
8. Nonjussive imperatives are of two types: one involves a strong desire or prayer – the volitive; the other involves a mere suggestion – the operative, (cf Eka 1994:99).

9. The word "audience" has been used repeatedly and consciously in this article to prove the point that many of the poems in this collection are dramatic in tone and can, in fact, be acted.
10. Cf. The Poem "Compatriots:" lines 2 and 3.
11. For economy of space, we have again preferred page numbering within the text studied.

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