

**AN ANALYSIS OF NWADIKE'S POEM *ỤWA QJQỌ
NKE A* - THIS TERRIBLE WORLD**

BY

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Abstract

Abnormal conducts and behavior is at the increase in the nation today. This has negatively influenced the standard and quality of life in the socio-economic and moral trend on the failing society. *Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach.* This led to the study of the poem. Literary writers use the medium of poetry to unfold the ugly societal and moral ills prevalent in the society with the intention for a transformable and positive change. The aim of this study is to analyze Nwadike's poem - *Ụwa Qjọọ Nke a* (This Terrible World) in the poetry text Akonuche (2006) focusing on the themes or messages which the poet wants to convey to the people. The study adopted a survey research method. Findings reveal that people no longer have the fear of God in all they do and by the terrible life people are living, the horrible way of life of the people, they seem as if they are challenging God, that He cannot do anything to them. For the poet, man in a nutshell disdains God by their evil actions. The study also outlines the language and stylistic expressions in the poem, concluding with suggestions on how to re-direct and re-mould the morally debased society.

Introduction

The lack of a strong commitment to Godly values and the lack of a clear moral compass, are responsible for many of

the ills in the society. Many contemporary poet voices their concern towards this ugly trend. The poet in the poem - *Uwa Ojọọ Nke a - This Terrible World* laments on the constant troubles of life because of the many evils and leprous activities going on in this terrible world. Akintola Benson (2017) remarks;

*Today the fundamental social values are
destroyed, things literally fall apart, the
centre fails to hold and the myriad of
alarming occurrences confront us;
terrorism, prostitution, disregard to
education, endemic corruption, and a
vicious cycle of imbalance in the society.*

To make matters worse, people continue to indulge in sinful living, provoking the wrath of God. However, it is the inert desire of the poet for the culprits involved in desecrating the society to change for the good of all.

Innocent Uzoma Nwadike's Poem

Professor Innocent Nwadike is a prolific writer – a poet, a novelist and a playwright. He is always deeply concerned in the moral values of the people. His concern through his poems we see him as a philosopher, a nation builder, an evangelist, a preacher, a prophet, a priest, a character moulder, a missionary, a social reformer and a wise teacher. Poetry makes it possible for the reader to participate in the personal experience of the poet. The poet uses most of his poems to attack the moral misdeeds in the society in order to create a change. In some of his poems edited in Akonuche (2006) for example, *Ndị Nne Chaplensi St. Pita, UNN* (Mothers of St. Rita Chapel UNN) he extols the mothers in that church for their devotions and labours in the vineyard of Christ, praying that God will surely reward them in heaven for all their good works in the house of God. In *Ugo* (Eagle) he advises that people whom we look up to as role models should never behave anyhow or soil their hands in evil because people are watching. In *Arọrọ M Mrọ* (I had A Dream),

he dreamt of the impossible transformation in the country like, an end to sufferings, leaders helping the poor masses, no more making money in churches, no more greed, jealousy, oppression etc. stressing that if such a time comes in this country, we know that the rapture time is near.

In *Nigeria Oma* (Reputable Nigeria) the poet distastefully, bares his mind on the moral laxity and the type of lifestyle in the society, lamenting that the sins in Nigeria is worse than the sins in Sodom and Gomorrah. In *Ije Uwa* (Journey of Life) he asserts that no one knows the plans of God, or what tomorrow might bring, therefore all should reflect deeply on the type of life he/she is living. In *Chineke Anyị Dị Egwu - Our God is Awesome* he extols God as a powerful creature who knows the innermost intentions of all man. In *Mmadu - Human Beings* the poet advises that all humans should desist from pride, oppression, strife and do right in order to attract the mercy of God. In *Mahadum Naijiria - Nigeria University* he criticizes the calamitous behavior of lecturers in the universities and advises them to beware of the type of life they live for God visits the sins of the father on the children and children's children. From the poems we see the poets' concern as a preacher and an evangelist for the people to be on the right track with God in order to receive His blessings. It disturbs and pains the poet and wants to win the people back to God because he knows that sin destroys man. From the poems we see that the poet was greatly influenced by his religious and Christian background. His works attests to his concern for the upkeep of moral values. The soul searching mission of the poet is to present the gospel or word of God to the people and transform the citizens morally for a better society.

**UWA QJQQ NKE A
TERRIBLE WORLD**

THIS

A gaara si na m nwere nku
Agaara m efeli
Felie, feba n'ime igwe
Ebe Chineke bi
Gbuo ikpere n'ala, kooro ya
Ihe umuwa mere uwa

Uwa nke a dika egwu
O di egwu, nwanne m.
O na-eyi m egwu.
O gwoto agwoto
O pitoto apito.

Chineke Nna,
I na-ahukwa ihe umuwa na-eme?
I na-anukwa ihe umuwa na-ekwu?
Na-emetu uwa oma I kere,
Jiri ya na-agba bopolu,
Jiri ya na-eti epele.

I ma na umuwa nwee ike,
Ha gaara ama gi ura,
Kwatuo gi n'ala,
Ma juo gi i bu onye,
Si gi bia ka gi na ha nwalee,
Si gi ka a matakene n'etiti gi na ha
Mbe naabo nke bu oke

Maka na o na-abu nwanza rijuo afo,
O kwe Chi ya mgba:
Maka na o na-abu dibia nujuo afo,
O buo mgborogwu n'ajo ohia.

Mana umuwa chefuru na otu ubochi
Onweuwa azochie n'ebube
Mee nke o ji buru Chi
Mgbe ahụ onye chere na ya bu anwanwu
Echeli ihu n'elu,
Ghasa ukwu, ghasa aka
Mechie anya, mechie onu
Togboro ka ogwe osisi
Iji kuziere umuwa
Na uwa bu ihe efu
Had it being I had wings
I would have flown up
Fly up and fly into heaven
Where God dwells
Kneel down and narrate to him
What man has turned the world into

This world is terribly evil
So terrible my brother
It baffles me

It is horribly evil
So very horribly evil

God the father
Do you see the actions of man?
Do you hear what they utter?
Staining the good world you created
Playing it like football
Making fun of it

Do you know that if men had the power
They would have slapped you
Pushed you down on the floor
And ask you "who are you"?
Asking that you come and compete with them
Saying, "let us know between you and them
Who is stronger?"

For when the weak
Challenges its god to wrestling
When the herbalist fills his stomach
He fetches herbs from the evil forest

But the men have forgotten that one day,
The owner of the world will come in glory.
Perform what makes him God
Then, he who thinks that he can never die
Faces up,
Stretch out legs and hands
Closes eye and closes mouth
Lying like a log of wood
In order to teach men
That the world is vanity
Nwadike, I. (Akonuche, 2006)

Ụwa Qjọọ Nke a (This Terrible World)

The poem written by Nwadike, I.U., is a lamentation poem that decries the state of the wicked, ugly and terrible state of living in this desperately wicked world we are living in. There are very many atrocious and abominable activities going on in the face of the world. The poet is so concerned that he is burdened and engages on a dialogue with God, asking God whether He is aware of all these horrible activities going on in this world. The themes are:

- A. Desire for freedom from life's troubles
- B. Atrocious activities in this era
- C. The vanity of life

The societal evils witnessed in the day-to-day livings seem to increase and take a higher alarming dimension. The evils people indulge in, in this present age is becoming alarming, such that most writers are speaking from the same voice. There is a quest and desire to be free from all the commotions and evils of this life because of so many sufferings and wickedness today. Hence, the poet writes:-

A gaara si na m nwere nku	Had
it been I had wings	
A gara m efeli	I
would had flown up	
Felie, feba n'ime igwe	Fly
up and fly into heaven	
Ebe	Chineke
Where God dwells (Stanza 1 line 1-4)	bi"

Man is entangled with so much challenges and difficulties in the society, so the wish and longing to be free is quite understanding. Olebara (1975) in the poem '**M ga-abu udele**' wishes to be a vulture so that he can be left alone by himself. The vulture is a bird that virtually, nobody wants or hunts so it is free to move about. Onyekawu (1989) in the poem "**Aga**

m abụ ikuku”, wishes to be free because the air is free at ease with all things. Nobody troubles the air. Every living being depends on air to survive. Ogunjiofor (1975) in “**Ọ dị m nọ ka m bụrụ nnụnụ**” wishes to be a bird that flies and sings freely in the air undisturbed. The society is troubled with so many vices like:- Kidnappings, lack of freedom to move, lack of freedom to air ones opinion or expression, assassinations, bombings, shootings, bloodsheds, genocide, Boko Haram attacks, political and religious strife, suppressions, bribery and corruption, suicide bombers. All the sufferings and hardships cause fears and anxiety so the poet wants freedom. He expresses with a heavy heart, the rate of evil in the world. A lot of atrocities and evil deeds are going on in our societies today; wickedness, sacrileges, abomination, iniquities, immoralities e t c. All these represent and cause harm, destruction and misfortune. As the poet laments of the various atrocities going on in the face of the earth, he remarks:

Ụwa nke a dị egwu	This world is
terribly evil	
Ọ na-eyi m egwu	It baffles me
Ọ gwọtọ agwọtọ	It is horribly
evil	
Ọ pītọrọ apītọ	So very
horribly evil	

A glimpse at the vanguard news says it all *Doctors spend 9hrs on 16months old girl raped by 16yr neighbour*. Okutu (2007) reports that doctors at the Federal Teaching Hospital Abakaliki Ebonyi State spent nine hours of intensive operation to save the life of one year old girl who was raped by her mother’s neighbor. The bible records that the heart of man is deceitful above all things and is desperately wicked, who can know it? (Jere. 17:9) when the poet writes,

Chineke nna,
God the father,
Ị na-ahụkwa ihe ụmụụwa na-eme?
Do you see the actions of men?
Ị na-ahụkwa ihe ụmụụwa na-ekwu?
Do you hear what they utter?
Na-emetọ ụwa ọma ị kere
Staining the good world you created,
Jiri ya na-agba bọọlụ
Playing football with it
Jiri ya na-etị epele
Making fun with it?

(Stanza 3 line 1-5)

The actions of people these days are alarming. Such rhetorical questions from the poet to God like:

*God the father, do you see the actions of men”
Do you hear what they utter?
Do you know that if men had the power
they would have slapped you and pushed you
down on the floor and asked you, who are you? (stanza
3 & 4).*

Paint a picture of a country filled with confusion, disorganization, chaotic living. The poet is rather disturbed by the calamitous state of living in the country. People do whatever they like, forgetting that no single sin goes unpunished and that we reap whatever we sow, sooner than later. To give valid examples of what is happening today in order to “see the actions of men” as portrayed by the poet, Uzoigwe and Ogbu (2014:1) writes that there was a standstill at 3 – 3 Junction at Nkwelle Ezunaka and different parts of Onitsha metropolis when thousands of Anglicans took to the streets protesting the destruction of Ebenezer Anglican Church

Oyolu Oze by some people...the vandals who were said to be more than one hundred, allegedly drove into the church compound with about three caterpillars and one bulldozer and pulled down the church structure. They reduced the church building to mere rubbles and debris on the ground.

One may ask, what would lead any sane individual to contemplate destroying God's temple? Who will authorize the destruction of the temple of God? Is he not afraid of the wrath of God? This generation is going down to an alarming behaviour and provoking God to wrath.

To cite another example, Kwakpovwe (2014) writes that, a 30 years old man, Nwado Chukwudi Awam, was paraded openly for beheading his father, Michael Awam, 56 and eating the father's neck and head. When the police went for him, he was waving the matchet which he had used to cut his father's head and threatened to kill anybody that got close to him. He was however, overpowered and arrested. On interrogation he confirmed that he had heard a voice telling him to go to the village and kill his father. It is greatly alarming, at the rate of evil activities, done by people in this wicked generation. As the poet rightly observes in (stanza 2):

<i>Uwa nke a dīkwa egwu</i>	<i>This</i>
<i>world is terribly evil</i>	
<i>Ọ dī egwu nwanne m</i>	<i>So</i>
<i>terrible my brother</i>	
<i>Ọ na-eyi m egwu</i>	<i>It</i>
<i>baffles me</i>	
<i>Ọ gwọtorọ agwọtorọ</i>	<i>It is</i>
<i>horribly evil</i>	
<i>Ọ pītorọ apītorọ</i>	<i>So</i>
<i>very horribly evil</i>	

Another glimpse of ritual killings all over in the society reports Rotimi (2014:19) writes that a slave camp was discovered in Ibadan, this is a shrine where captives were

randomly raped and offered up for rituals after vital organs have been taken out of their body. These ritual killers, pick their victims in broad daylight, push people into the vehicle and carry them away in the presence of eager on lookers without anyone asking questions. Since certain categories of Nigerians such as security men are thought to be above the law, they can do as they please in public. They can arrest or shoot other citizens at will. Ritualists now disguise themselves as law enforcement agents and with this trick, carry people into slavery for rituals and keep them for months without anyone knowing. This is how some people found themselves at the Ibadan slave camp. These criminal and unbelievable operations take place in the Nigerian society. Human lives are wasted without consequences. The poet continues to lament thus:-

I ma na ụmụwa nwee ike,	Do you know that if
human beings had the power	
Ha gaara ama gi ụra	They would have
slapped you	
Kwatuo gi n'ala	Pushed you down on
the floor	
Ma jụọ gi I bụ onye”?	And ask you who
you are”?	

(Stanza 4 line 1-4)

In the society today, a lot of atrocities are committed daily everywhere. Okolie (2012:8) writes that a woman who has often pretended to be insane was caught with a human head. The woman wears rags to create the impression that she has a mental problem. She was caught by some commercial motorcycle riders in the area. According to the reports, the woman while parading with a bag around a busy area, went to a corner, brought out a phone and made calls. She was immediately trailed by a motorcycle rider who pretended to be easing himself. He overheard the woman asking the recipient of her call to come and pick this thing because it was ‘smelling’.

The motorcycle rider quickly alerted his colleagues and they caught the woman, searched the bag and discovered the head. She was then handed over to the police. These are the evil inherent in society. From the actions of evil men, they seem to be asking God the questions as expressed by the poet; *“Do you know that if men had the power, they would have slapped you?”* (Stanza 4, line 1-2)

The deeds of evil men today show that they do not fear God at all. Killings and murders are no more news but the order of the day. What do our leaders do? They are busy looting the nation's treasury, using verbal violence and battling over power. They are busy shooting and discharging tear gas at the vulnerable masses at random whenever they attempt to protest. The world is not full of evil because of those who do wrong. It is full of evil because of those who do nothing.

The Igbo people generally frown at all atrocious, abominable conducts like incests, homosexuality, killing fellow human beings, suicide. Necessary punishment like *ikpu aru* were usually given to offenders in the olden days by the community to appease the gods of the land to make others desist from such calamitous taboos, checkmate evil in the society and promote good moral behavior. But today the traditional order of living has been influenced by the western ideologies. The modern way of living ignores the cultural practices as such, no community has the right to punish people who engage in homosexuality, incests or any abominable acts. All criminal cases should be reported to the police. The police virtually do nothing and the tale of woes continues.

Kwakpovwe (2013) writes that in Northern Nigeria, a middle aged man who attempted to sell his six month old daughter at six million naira was arrested. When questioned, the man admitted committing the offence but confessed to doing it due to poverty. Amaize (2016:7) writes that three men, aged 70years, 65years and 58years respectively and severally raped and defiled a 15 year old girl. When old grandfathers

indulge in amoral behaviour with a 15year old girl, is that not mental disorder? Today, gay marriages and lesbian relationships are no more abominations. People do anything they like and never consider that people reap whatever they sow. Of all the things God created, He regretted creating only man because man is evil and does abominable things not thinking of what or how God will punish him for the evil done, as the poet observes in *stanza 6. But the men have forgotten that one day, the owner of the world will come in glory.*

Dayo (2014) writes that a man allegedly killed his wife in Ondo State after an argument over sharing a bag of garri (cassava flour). He hit her on the head with a plank and she died. There is general collapse of morality among people of all nations. The moral failure in the modern society is quite alarming. This generation claims to be Christians, so many people attend churches but they have rejected God's commandments and God's counsel. When one rejects God's words, we draw God's wrath and it is a fearful thing to fall into the wrath of God.

The poet concludes by reminding men that God is still the owner of the universe and that one day he will come and judge the world over these evils and teach them that the world is vanity.

Our society has become so morally, socially, educationally, politically leprous that nobody knows how to remedy the situation. The leaders themselves do not know which way to go and everything is going down and it seems we are the architects of our doom.

Agbakwuru (2014:45) describes the level of development in the country as abysmal. It is sad that at many decades after independence, Nigeria is still a toddler and unfortunately, we are still being fed like a baby. The many sins in the nation is weighing down and obstructing progress for the citizens. The situation of things in the country is going down and when things turn bad, the poor masses suffer more than the

rich. In this light, the poets' concern is that all citizens should try as much as possible to desist from evil for the glory of God to manifest, and to be free from punishment, for no sinner goes unpunished, no nation saddled with such atrocities like Nigeria shall go unpunished. *Righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach.*

The Style of Writing in 'Uwa Qjọọ Nke A'

Exposition: The poet tries to convey the specific subjects across to the reader in such a way that the reader instantly believes that there are too many vices, prevalent in society and uses such sentences like

'Uwa nke a dịkwa egwu'	This world is terribly evil
Q dị egwu, nwanne m	So terrible my brother
Q na-eyi m egwu	It baffles me
Q gwutoro agwoto	It is horribly evil
Q pitoro apito	So very horribly evil

These show or depict pictures of rottenness, decay, debasement – 'Gwutoro agwoto', 'pitoro apito'.

Diction: The choice of words are not that easy to understand because of the constant use of proverbs which are hard to understand until one think twice and thrice before he/she can decipher the meaning.

Tone: The tone is lamentative, condemning and scornful as he criticizes the atrocities and decay observed in the society today.

Figurative Language: The language of the poem is not easy and the poet uses figurative expressions which add flavour to the poem.

Nsinuuda (Onomatopoeia)

i. Q gwọtọrọ agwọ (stanza 2, line 4)

ii. Q pịtọrọ apịtọ (stanza 2, line 5)

These are sounds of decay, rottenness, hopeless situation

Repetition

i. Q dī egwu, nwanne m (Stanza 2, line 2)

So

terrible my brother

Q na-eyi egwu

It baffles

me

Q gwọtọrọ agwọtọ (stanza 2, line 4)

It is

horribly evil

Q pịtọrọ apịtọ (stanza 2, line 5)

So very

terribly evil

ii. I na-ahụkwa ihe ụmụụwa na-eme (Stanza 3, line 2) Do

you see the actions of

men?

I na-ahụkwa ihe ụmụụwa na-ekwu (Stanza 3, line 3)

Do you hear what they utter?

iii. Jiri ya na-agba bọọlụ (Stanza 3, line 5)

Playing it like football

Jiri ya na-etị epele (Stanza 3, line 6)

Making fun of it

iv. Sị gi bia ka gị na ha nwalee (Stanza 3, line 10)

Asking that you compete with their

Sị gi bia ka a makatene (Stanza 3, line 10)

Saying let us know

Repetition of ‘i’, ‘o’, ‘Jiri ya’, ‘Sị gi bia’, makes the poem sound musical.

Proverb:

i. Nwanza rijuo afọ

When the weak/small eats to

his full

O kwe chi ya mgba

He stages a fight with his god

(Stanza 3, line 16 & 17)

ii. Dibia ñujuo afọ

Ọ bụọ mgboorogwu n'ajo ohia (Stanza 3, line 19 & 20)

Proverbs are words of wisdom that makes the reader think twice and thrice in order to figure out the meanings. The expressions adorn words and make the writing artistic.

Idioms:

- i. Jiri ya na-agba ọọlụ
Jiri ya na-eti epele – Making fun of something
- ii. Echielie ihu n'elu (Meaning to die)
Ghasa ukwu, ghasa aka (Meaning not to be alive again)
Mechie ọnụ, mechie anya – Depicts the mortality of man

Simile:

Togboro ka ogwe osisi - Lying like a log of wood
(Stanza 4, line 8)

Assonance:

- i. O gwotoro agwoto
- ii. O pitotoro apitoro
- iii. Echelie ihu n'elu
- iv. O bụọ mgborogwu n'ajo ohia
- v. Ha gaara aa gi ua
- vi. Maka na o na - abu
- vii. Ghasa ukwu, ghasa aka

The repetitions of these vowels sounds, o, e, a, make the poem musical.

Alliteration:

- i. Felie feba n'ime igwe
- ii. Ọ gwotoro agwoto`
- iii. Ọ pitotoro apitoro
- iv. I na-anukwa ihe ụmuuwa na-ekwu
- v. Ghasa ukwu, ghasa aka

Recommendations

In the poem *Uwa Ojoo Nke a*, the poet criticizes the evil and terrible things perpetuated in the society today. This calls for change and repentance from the decay and atrocities that has filled the world. People should desist from evil for sin destroys destinies and careers. Righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach, also no sin committed by a person ever goes unpunished. God made all things but regretted creating only man. Man is filled with evil. People should be careful with the way they behave for one surely reaps what he sows.

Conclusion

The most important responsibility for all is to resolve to re-commit ourselves to instilling Godly principles and values in our offspring. It is the parents' primary and fundamental duty to teach their children the way of God. More importantly it is their responsibilities to teach by words and conduct, that it is important to fear God. In the midst of the economic challenges, one must never abandon the responsibility of devoting time to the task of training the children in the right norms and attitudes to follow.

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