

LITERATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT: THE DYNAMICS OF NIYI OSUNDARE'S ECO-POETRY FOR SECURITY, JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY NIGERIAN SOCIETY.

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ABSTRACT

The global paradigm shift in exploring literature to approach environmental issues is relevant in the 21st-century African literary discourse for the development of society. The Nigerian literature in English is protest-oriented and utilitarian. It serves as a medium of interrogating social decadence for the development and transformation of society. Niyi Osundare, a foremost and vibrant Ikere-Ekiti born Nigerian eco-poet and social activist, condemns negative forces of 21st-century activities and the unscrupulous Nigerian leaders for their corrupt practices which impact negatively on the people, their psychic and the environment. These vices subsequently; negate integral human security, sustainable environment, and the development of the country. There has been an extensive critical focus on Osundare dwelling on issues that plague humanity and the continent. His contributions to the environment and the ecosystem, particularly as regards issues of justice, equity, fairness, security, and sustainable human and national development of the 21st-century Nigerian society, as advocated and entrenched in eco-criticism, need more critical focus. Against this backdrop, this paper seeks to address Osundare's dynamic eco-critical approaches to create awareness to engage issues of justice, equity, fairness, security, and development, especially in the 21st Nigerian society. The eco-critical literary discourse which writers use to approach literature from the ecological perspective which is also relevant to the 21st-century Nigerian society is adopted for this study. This paper, therefore, examines Osundare's selected poetry collections to articulate the poet's ecological engagement to demonstrate that Osundare's poetry serves as a veritable tool for sustainable development. The poet extols the lost glorious environment of primordial times with nostalgia and advocates a healthy environment that will enable the entrenchment of justice, equity, and fairness which will ultimately engender development in the present Nigerian society. As the poet pursues justice, fairness, and equity, he parades contradictions inherent in contemporary Nigerian society and attacks leaders and their cohorts whom he depicts as inhuman, selfish, materialistic, and corrupt. The paper concludes that environmental decadence and human rights abuses will ultimately bring about existential dread, underdevelopment, and insecurity if nothing is done to check the anomalies because they will bring about a catastrophe that will result in the extinction of the fauna and the flora. While on the other hand, ecological justice, equity, and fairness will help to bring about development and national unity in society.

Keywords: Literature, Environment, Development, Security, Niyi Osundare

INTRODUCTION

Niyi Osundare is a forceful and dissident eco-activist Nigerian poet, is endorsed by scholars (Dare 2003: 157, Aiyejina, 1988: 123-125) as unique in his criticism of the dichotomy between the oppressed and their oppressors and environmental, socio-political, cultural, and economic ills of the 21st century Nigerian society. Dwelling on these thematic preoccupations, Osundare alerts his readers to a possible catastrophe that will befall mankind if nothing is done to halt the looming environmental crises. His poetry demonstrates that there is a constant degradation of Mother Earth/environment, water, and air pollution which are very crucial for development, security sustainability, and existence. These occurrences and their constant ruination will ultimately endanger humanity and bring about the possible destruction of the fauna and flora.

To discuss Osundare's eco-activism, some of his poems taken from the collections *Village Voices* (1984), *The Eye of the Earth* (1986), *Moonsongs* (1988), and *Waiting Laughter* (1988) will be analysed bearing in mind the poet's vision of social justice, equity, fairness, and security to examine how the texts are relevant and applicable to today's environment and sustainable development in Nigeria, by extension, in Africa as a whole. The poet's trend of thought and engagement on the ominous despoliation of the environment, its exploiters, and their victims will be taken into consideration in this discourse. The poet feels nostalgic about the good old days before the present eco-degradation when the environment was nurtured and had a symbiotic relationship with humankind. The present-day Nigerian society with all its attendant negative vices of modern technology and people's lifestyle brought about by modern technology, negate human progress and alienate man from nature. It is a paradox that man who stands to benefit from the lustrous environment if it is properly managed, nourished, and kept healthy, is regrettably guilty of its balkanization and the injury inflicted on the same Mother Earth and its natural resources. Man and the environment as a whole which are nature's gifts suffer from the negative forces of climatic change, land degradation, flooding, air, and water pollution, and other forms of destruction which go on daily and hinder optimal human and national development.

Consequently, Osundare confronts and disparages inept Nigerian leaders and their collaborators in his poetry whose evil machinations and ineptitude impact negatively and inhibit security and development in Nigeria. The thesis of this paper, therefore, is the argument that the environment is linked to the socio-economic, political, and cultural activities which invariably intersect and interfere with human existence and the country's security and development. These variable indexes are inextricably tied to the discourse on the integral human and national development and sustainability because the environment interfaces with people's activities making it central to human existence and development. The environment is defined as the elements, factors, and circumstances that can affect the development, action, or survival of living things. The Merriam Webster.com dictionary defines the environment as the complex physical, chemical, and biotic factors found in a given area. These interconnected features and elements include the climate, soil, and living things that act on the ecological community of an area which determines its survival, growth, development, and security. This definition maintains that the environment is the total of ecological resources of a given area (Omoweh, 2005, 130-180). The resources include culture, literature, flora, and the fauna of a given environment. Thus the environment is the core of a people's existence and socio-political, economic, and cultural activities. It is therefore justified for the poet to use the environment as a tool and image-making of his eco-activism for optimal cohesion, national security strategy, and development of the country. On the other hand, Eco-criticism which is adopted and relevant for this study enables eco-writers to explore ecological issues in literary discourse. Rob Nixon sees the relationship between environmental issues with that of the 21st writing as he links it to the problem of European and American oil conglomerates who work in league with some despotic African rulers.

THE DYNAMICS OF NIYI OSUNDARE'S ECOLOGICAL PREOCCUPATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Eye of the Earth is the persona's indictment of the oppressive Nigerian system of government. He draws the populace's attention to the injustices that are inflicted on the land to put an end to the oppression meted out on the environment. This is borne out of his love for harmony, fair play, democracy, and the development of his country especially since he was born and brought up in a rich rural Nigerian environment of the Ikere-Ekiti, his home place under the tutelage of his father who was a farmer, singer, drummer, and composer. His mother too was a singer and a storyteller. The poet's paternal grandfather was also an herbalist and a drummer who had an ample influence on him which consequently helped his poetic career and his love for nature. In this direction, Abdu confirms that the positive effects of the poet's training are harmonious with nature and curative roots/herbs which predispose that barks, leaves, roots, and trees are medicinal, therapeutic, and soothing because they promote health, life, and sustainable growth and development (Osundare, 1986: 24-25).

The poet pursues the ideals for the restoration of the idyllic traditional African community to restore its purity robbed by modern technology and modern lifestyle. He writes undiluted anti-imperial eco-poetry which captures the decay of traditional ethos; showing that corruption, poverty, inequality, injustice, etc. lead to stasis, underdevelopment, and existential crises. Thus he declares that:

If there is a passionate nostalgia in the rendering it is the legitimate
Flame of the inevitable fire often kindled when an embattled present
makes a forward thrust difficult (surely not impossible) and looking
back becomes one of the weapons against a looming monster,
(Osundare, 1986, xii).

One finds it difficult to pursue Osundare's admiration of the status quo when critical elements for its actualization seem anachronistic in today's 21st-century society. One can only look forward to revitalizing the natural environment for integral human and national development which is not only possible but commendable.

There is a renewed interest in the use of the environment as an instrument to express love for nature and discuss existentialist problems and expose issues of fundamental human rights and socio-political and economic predicaments in a society. Consequently, Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth* pays tribute to Mother Earth and condemns corrupt practices which take place in high and low places in Nigeria, and expresses hope for a better societal transformation stressing that the earth, and indeed mankind, is threatened and abused. Deploring the technique of flashback and reminiscence as a poetic trope, Osundare ushers in the magnificent Nigerian environment in the opening poem "Earth". This poem which serves as a cultural totem symbol is the "Temporary basement" and "lasting roof" of "compost bed" (Osundare, 1986, 1). This shows that the earth is the only home for human beings because it provides man with a place of abode and means of sustenance.

The poet deploys the *Oriki* praise song and Yoruba mysticism to personify and reverence this valuable and magnificent Nigerian to demonstrate that it represents spiritual material, and physical entities. These vital features provide man with air, water, and food which are means of human existence and security. The earth is therefore important in the affairs of man and also in Osundare's poetic vocation. As the "breadbasket and compost bed" as captured in the poem (Osundare, 1986,1), suggests that any calamity that ravages this vital entity, will not only be disastrous but will ultimately become endemic and threaten the corporate human existent. The world is now a global village; with technology, capitalism, and globalization, what takes place in Nigeria, will ultimately affect the world and vice versa because any destruction inflicted

in the Nigerian environment, will ultimately have an adverse and continental consequence on the global human race. The poet's early presentation of the pristine and tranquil environment of old in the "Earth" in such a lofty and magnificent image, tells of its importance in the affairs of man and his existence. This lustrous structure presented in "Earth" contrasts with today's degradation and pollution. The monumental tragedy and decadence of these natural resources will almost be irreversible for human survival if things continue the way they are. These apocalypse signs are ominous and they portend an impending danger for human survival.

The Eye of the Earth also captures the Nigerian environment which is not only impoverished but dilapidated in a most deplorable state as a result of exploitation and neglect. Hence, the rainforest of traditional African society which used to wear "a garment of a million mirrors" is now juxtaposed and transformed into today's desertification and urban cities to which civilization has subjected the once-thriving environment; turning it into a famished debased death trap. The poem "Forest Echoes" is also replete with such death imagery and symbols that forces of industrialization have subjected the once pristine green world into. The trees in the forest for example are now being tortured and wounded by the businessmen/merchandise sawyers who drill and cut the trees for use in the industries. The business merchants destroy nature most horrifyingly because of the capitalist economy which is driven by self-interest and exorbitant profit-making venture without any recourse to preserving that which is vital and constantly being explored and exploited. This oppressive economic enterprise which the timber merchants subject the natural environment depletes and turn it into a desert. Jeff recalls that the trees which used to be found in the Nigerian environment are now "reduced to mere stumps" (Osundare, 1986 68) like "a finger missing from a crowned hand" (Osundare, 1986, 5).

The unpatriotic economic sabotage of the 21st-century merchandise business enterprise entails that humanity and the environment are confronted with a worsening deterioration that will ultimately lead to famine, poverty, and diseases. These will consequently bring about underdevelopment and lack of progress if nothing is done to check this looming danger. The destruction inflicted on land by the timber merchants amounts to human rights abuses and man's inhumanity to man which does not make room for justice, security, equity, and development. When one's land which is one's heirloom and source of revenue is denied him, Osundare maintains in his poetry that it is an injustice that amounts to human rights abuses. Every human being is entitled to a right to a safe and healthy environment, security, and a fair share of what belongs to him especially in a democracy. This is why humanity is at the heart of the poet's concern for a healthy productive and sustainable human and national development.

The poet pursues a socialist policy that upholds justice, freedom, and equity which are fundamental to all beings. He is prompted by the sudden surge of crises and injustices which he witnesses daily that are suffered by human beings, nature, the environment, and in the society as a whole and so he engages in a transformative agenda that supports class freedom or the struggle for the control of goods and services against capitalist economy controlled by a minority bourgeoisie. His poetry creates awareness in the populace who are the workforce or class of laborers for them to control goods and services. The poet educates and inspires the deprived to struggle for the control of goods and services as a right of every individual. In doing so he opts for means of production, distribution, and exchange to be controlled or regulated by the people so that capitalism should be overthrown knowing that capitalism enslaves workers/laborers and puts Nigeria, and indeed Africa as a whole at a disadvantage in the realm of the contemporary polity. The bane of capitalism is evil and this wicked cannibalism needs to be abolished because it breeds unhealthy rivalry inherent in the survival of the fittest and the existence

of queens, kings, and slaves. This is the fundamental dynamism behind colonial imperialism and Africa stands to lose in this unholy wedlock. Osundare is committed to resisting capitalist exploitation and negative aspects of globalization in *The Eye of the Earth*. He concludes that Osunadre's main task in the collection is a reconstruction, transformation, and security strategies that will engender optimal utilization of human beings and natural resources for optimal national development (Nwagbara, 20121).

It is argued that literature is usually deployed towards humanist and environmental justice. A people's environment and their experience have consequences on their fundamental human rights, language, literature and development, and even the security of an individual and consequently, that of the society. He also argues that it is justice and fair play for people to have access to fresh air, clean water, and a pristine environment which stimulates the development and a rise in the standard of living (Ojaide, 2007, 3-4). Slaymaker also recognizes the theme of justice, equity, and fairness in African literature when he questions the rationale behind the murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa whose kangaroo death sentence and extra-judicial execution went viral and attracted international rejection from writers and human rights activists who pleaded that his life is spared. He also appreciates the rich steam of approaching environmental justice through literature to promote a fitting paradigm for building democracy and sustainable development in the society (Slaymaker, 2001, 68).

Osundare, an avowed ecologist, frowned at "the virulent advent of Europe's merchants" businessmen who have turned "native farmers into coca-coffee-cashew croppers" and the usual big yam farms that have "succumbed to weeds" and so "a cancerous god called MONEY crashed in from across the seas with a blind sword and a crown of noisy gold" (Osundare, 1986, xi-xii). This "virulent" contradiction which Osundare condemns, shows that this economic marriage between Africa and the West and the presence of their merchandise business adventure in Africa and Nigeria by implication, makes the internal economy suffer from this lethal external aggression. Osundare's criticism of the negative forces of capitalism articulates his preference for the traditional African environment and socialism and the engagement which he projects as a lifesaver and alternative development path.

The rain forest symbolized by the Iroko and Palm trees represented in "Ours to Plough Not to plunder" (Osundare, 1986, 48-49), capture the Nigerian environment and other natural elements like birds and animals which are "ours to plow and plant" and "not to plunder". This poem is Osundare's criticism of capitalist and imperialist commodification of nature and its resources. It is a paradox that the valuable and sustainable African environment which symbolizes life, wealth, and development, is replaced by forces of deprivation, poverty, wreck, death, and underdevelopment, a condition currently being experienced in African countries. The Iroko tree is revered as the king of the forest and a metaphor for longevity, royalty, and greatness, from where Kenwood is got; and the palm tree which is also valued as an economic tree; are chopped down and killed by the "scourge of the sweating sawyer" and "the champion machete" in the poem, "Forest Echoes". Nature's gift for the benefit of humankind is annihilated in a most barbaric manner because of the global capitalist economy where the trees are constantly "wounded by wanton machetes" and cut down by the greedy merchants with their "curing cutlass of the *babalawo*" (Osundare, 1986, 48-49). This senseless destruction and cutting of trees lead to erosion, deforestation, desertification, and droughts, and consequently low per capita income and poor standard of living. This scheme constantly ravages Nigeria and by extension Africa in the 21st-century society.

“The Rock Rose to Meet Me” is also a criticism of the oppressive capitalist system and a template for a harmonious relationship between man and nature, because if there is no environmental security, there will not be any human and national security and development. The poet celebrates *Olosunta* and *Oroole*, the rocks at Ikere his homeland as sacred symbols that represent the people’s wealth which is presently being desecrated by capitalism. The poet therefore portrays and personifies *Olosunta* as a god that is a desideratum and an embodiment of man’s socioeconomic viability. This is because the rock produces gold for the people and serves as an embodiment of the people’s spiritual and physical existence. Conversely, this ancient totem symbol is hacked and hijacked by the West, in the form of imperialism and the senseless connivance of African inept leaders in the form of neocolonialism. Consequently, the community and her means of livelihood personified by the rock are also commandeered and confiscated by imperialism. One, therefore, concludes that the Western comprador bourgeois and their African allies connive and endanger humanity and their means of livelihood making it a nullity. Additionally, their cultural image represented by *Olosunta* and *Oroole* is also desecrated and destroyed. Hence, the culture and economic life of the people which make for growth and development, are also badly affected and destroyed.

Yam, a staple food eaten in Nigeria that wears the “crown” and other foodstuffs, including cash crops, which provided sustenance for the population, job, and revenue for economic growth and development, are negatively affected. The raining/harvest season symbolizes a period of rebirth and reforestation because it is a period when foodstuffs and vegetation flourish because of the rains which usually have plenty to eat and drink after the period of drought which is a time of scarcity. In “Harvest Call” the poet persona restates the fact that the barns of yam have disappeared and advocates that environmental violators should desist from destroying that nature:

in the reign of swollen roots
amid a retinue of vines and royal leaves
between insistent sky and yielding earth,
the sun mellowed planting pageants
into harvest march,
a fiery pestle in his ripening hand (Osundare, 1986).

At this period of the year, there is usually an abundance of food and cash for merriment. At this time the marketplace translates into “a mob of instant suitors” when commercial activities blossom. Jeff (2009,76) acknowledges that both the rains and the earth have symbolic value in Osundare poetry. In contrast, global comprador capitalism, negative forces of modernity, and technological advancement have dislodged the ecosystem and brought about economic retrogression which brings about low income, poverty, famine, hunger; and forms of existentialist crises and underdevelopment. The poet condemns Africans for leaving their culture and way of life, like farming and agricultural enterprise to pursue modern technology blindly. He queries the disappearance of barns of yam, the pumpkins, and the cocoa pods “which sweetened harvest air” (Osundare, 1986 20). This economic sabotage threatens food and human security, and even existence. It also forces the government to import food, cash crops, goods, and services into the country while agriculture is ignored. All these have disastrous effects on Nigerian’s ecology, internal security, and development. Land in Africa is considered sacred since it symbolizes wealth and heirloom and it is also highly revered and priced. As a result, any attempt made to abuse that which is the source of life, identity, and resources, is considered both as an aberration and a security threat to

humanity and national development. If the environment is destroyed, it will have serious negative impacts on the economy, security, and human existence as a whole.

Issues relating to irregular weather and climate change, drought, desertification, and flood are annual phenomena and unpredictable which lead to a drop in agricultural production and force small-scale farmers to lose their earnings. They also cause many people to live below the poverty level while some people migrate to the cities in search of greener pastures. This results in socio-economic instability and social disparity. The tragedy is that there is over-dependence on petroleum and allied products which is the major source of foreign exchange earnings and the government's interest in agriculture is currently being shifted to petroleum products and oil. Groundnut and cocoa pyramids including palm oil plantations of the pre-colonial era have gradually disappeared. Food and cash crops that Nigerians cultivated in large quantities and exported to European countries before the 1960s have drastically reduced to a subsistent level and the teeming Nigerian population can no longer be supported by internal agricultural produce. In addition, the current wave of insecurity in the country in form of banditry, farmers' herders clash and other forms of criminalities chase farmers away from their farmlands which further worsen food security. Thus, the Nigerian government now imports food and so Nigeria is now a dumping ground for imported food and goods.

His "Homecall" is apocalyptic. It is a signal of an imminent disaster that will befall humankind if the environment continues to be degraded. The poet persona condemns the gap between the rich and the poor people and countries; and wonders what will be the faith of the future generations of Nigerians if the government keeps on investing in foreign products and arms deals which will end up diverting revenue into the hands of foreign governments instead of using the money to invest on food, goods, and services which will inevitably profit mankind and increase food security:

Farmer born peasant-bred
classroom-bled
I have thrown open my kitchen doors
and asked hunger to take a seat,
my stomach a howling dump
for Carolina rice (Osundare, 1986).

The above excerpt captures the negative effects of overindulgence in the importation and subsequent consumption of foreign goods states the dangers of Western education on Africa. This subjects many Africans even the educated elites to lose touch with their culture and nature and depend on imported products and copy foreign lifestyles. It does not seem that the poet is criticizing Western education or its technology per se. What he seems to disapprove of is taking in everything from the West including its culture which is alien to Africa. The poet educates his readers on African virtues and harmonious living with nature despite the changing trends in the new world order because the imposition of European culture on the Africans will make them lose touch with their culture. Hence the advocates for a cultural synthesis to preserve African values that synchronies with nature because the earth is:

Ours to work not to waste
ours to man not to maim.
This earth is ours to plough, not to plunder (Osundare, 1986).

The above excerpt teaches Osundare's readers the value of the environment, hard work, and diligence; and denounces the exploitative technology that is aversive to the African culture.

The Eye of the Earth hinges on the aggression inflicted on man and nature by the man himself who indulges in battering himself and nature. In this collection, Osundare maintains that injustices, agonies and the dichotomy between the haves and the have nots are matters of contemporary conspiracy. He argues that there should be equity and fair play and laments that injustices are inflicted on those who are also nature's gifts. The prevailing environmental ambiance is that man has turned out to be both the ravager of the earth and the ravaged, hence the ecology is an imbalance, compromised and destroyed.

Utilizing the rich African performance poetry the poet exalts traditional ethos and celebrates the environment as he comments on events, nature, and the human condition in *Moonsong*. The poem "I" in *Moonsongs* 1-2, is rendered with the accomplishment of a traditional *woro* drum beat modelled after a cultural marriage dance under traditional African performance. This engagement is colorful, radiant, and energetic. It represents a primordial encounter. Osundare's synthesis of Western and African literary techniques is unique. It reflects the socio-cultural milieu of the environment which exhorts his culture and teaches moral ethics. Here the radiance of the moon illuminates the environment and induces cheer to all in the vicinity. It has a physical, emotional, and psychological influence on the people and the moon represents love, romance, serenity, and fertility in African mythology. Osundare's recourse to orature demonstrates his strong belief that poetry should be rooted in one's own culture to revive traditional African culture in modern African writing.

To this effect, the poet adores and pays homage to the moon which he captures as a woman, matron, and a maiden that "masters the stars" and "the sea". In Osundare's world, the moon is significant and evocative because it is the life wire and core image-maker in his poetic oeuvre just like the earth and rain which he uses to conjure ideas and images. The iconic importance of the moon makes it imperative for the poet to eulogize and personify it as a beautiful maiden who is romantic, erotic, sensuous, and alluring. The moon is presented in multifaceted images in poem "11". Here she is a nurse and a mother sings songs and rocks her baby to sleep. She is masked, mysterious, and dances in "a milky grove" with her captivating eyes and coiled lips which the poet compared to "corridors of a thousand snakes" (Osundare, 1988, 2).

Myths and mysticism inundate Osundare's poetry. The protagonist in the poem "X" is curious and marvels at the mystery of the moon presented as delicate and at the same time rough and resilient. This enables her to play sensitive roles and still withstand the harsh realities of existence and harsh weather with all its challenges without being ruffled as she faces the travails of life and existence:

Tell me, moon,
Where are your wrecks
Where are your wrinkles
Where the creases left
On your wonders robe (Osundare, 1988).

In the lines above, the persona is presented as innocent while Nature is personalized in a multifaceted and harmonious ambivalent conflicting images and symbols. Thus the moon is captured and presented as calm; beautiful, soothing, romantic, and as a nurse. It is also a tough bride. This ambivalent conceptualization of the moon is influenced by African

oral tradition where the moon symbolizes love and fertility and at the same time is conceived as mysterious, complex, and difficult.

Osundare's *Village Voices* also celebrates African culture and comments on the negative aspects of politics and social manipulations, injustices, and environmental degradation in 21st-century African society. Alu (2008, 10) sees Osundare's focus in *Village Voices* as the statement and predicaments of the underdog where rural peasants are "presented as witty singers, jesters and satirists" whose authentic lifestyle is altered in modern society. Adopting the paradigm of a traditional minstrel, the protagonist in "I Wake up this Morning" incorporates oral orchestration of songs, dirges, banter, pomp, and pageantry to domesticate his art and enlighten his readers on the importance of African culture, people, and the environment. His dream society is codified in human rights, dignity, security, and democracy respected by all. Society should be built on the tenets of human rights where citizens have the liberty to own land free from pollution. For the effective entrenchment of human rights and for a new generation of honest people and leaders to steer the affairs of events in the society, he declares that "I wake up this morning" "with a song in my throat" that "a youthful breeze harps the leaves" (Osundare, 1984, 1). This is an urgent message for all which he believes will bring about a new wave of change and rebirth in the society following the poet's vision of civil liberty in a democracy.

CONCLUSION

The poet advocates the development and transformation in the nation by stressing that it is time for "the spinner" to "spin the spindle" and stir the "smiling coals into hissing steel". This is why he does not hesitate to "wear courage like a shield" and condemn vices especially those manipulated by people in authority (Osundare, 1984 1). He is optimistic in pursuing his ideals because he believes that there will be light for humanity at the end of the tunnel. This is why the poem "Our Earth" inspires hope in his readers having visualized that "slowly" but "surely" all that is lost will resurrect "like liquid fingers" "on the aluminum drum" and that "the rain will unite the farmers" to own "barns of lilted yams" (Osundare 1986,30). As a humanist and optimist, Osundare inspires both faith and hope in the people out of his love for the environment and the welfare of the entire human race. His criticism of man's destruction of the earth and man's inhumanity to man end in the persona's abiding faith and positive note that "our earth will not die" but "will see again". The poet ends his pursuit of environmental justice, equity, and fairness on a positive note, by drawing people's attention to the environmental crisis to inspire social change and help to develop the nation.

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