

**PROTEST POETRY AND THE EXPOSURE OF STRUCTURAL INJUSTICE IN
SELECTED POEMS OF NIYI OSUNDARE**

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EMENE, ENUGU STATE.**

JUNE 2026

TITLE PAGE

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**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF
BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE (B.A) IN ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES.**

SUPERVISOR: DR. CHIJOKE EDWARD

JUNE 2026

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

This is to declare that this research “**Protest Poetry and the Exposure of Structural Injustice in Selected Poems of Niyi Osundare**” was carried out by **Eze Chiagoziem Bonaventure** with the registration number **GOU/U22/ENG/074**, under the supervision of Dr. Chijioke Edward, I have duly acknowledged the sources from which ideas and extracts have been taken. Therefore, this is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Arts (B.A) degree in English and Literary Studies.

Eze Chiagoziem Bonaventure
GOU/U22/ENG/074

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to God Almighty for his grace and guidance throughout the course of this work.

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I give all glory and gratitude to God Almighty for His grace, wisdom, protection, and strength throughout my academic journey. His faithfulness made the successful completion of this project possible.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how protest poetry exposes structural injustice in selected poems of Niyi Osundare, namely “My Lord, Tell Me Where to Keep Your Bribe,” “A Villager’s Protest,” and “Not My Business.” The study investigates the representation of institutional corruption, abuse of power, political betrayal, social inequality, and resistance within the poems. The research is anchored on Postcolonial Theory and Critical Discourse Theory, which provide analytical frameworks for examining the relationship between language, ideology, power, and oppression in postcolonial societies. Adopting a qualitative and interpretative research design, the study employs close textual analysis to examine the thematic concerns, stylistic devices, and discursive strategies used by the poet. Findings reveal that Osundare presents corruption and abuse of power as deeply institutionalized realities sustained by failed leadership and neo colonial structures. The poems further portray political betrayal and social inequality through the marginalization and exploitation of ordinary citizens by political elites. The study also establishes that protest poetry functions as a powerful medium for social consciousness, resistance, and ideological confrontation. Through satire, irony, symbolism, rhetorical questions, repetition, and oral poetic elements, Osundare transforms poetry into an instrument for exposing injustice and advocating social transformation. The study concludes that protest poetry remains relevant in challenging oppressive systems, amplifying marginalized voices, and promoting social justice in contemporary African societies.

Keywords: Protest Poetry, Structural Injustice, Corruption, Resistance, Postcolonialism

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Protest poetry has remained one of the most enduring forms of literary engagement in African literature, especially within societies grappling with political instability, economic exploitation, and institutional decay. In Nigeria, poetry has functioned not only as an artistic expression but also as a moral and ideological weapon against injustice. Poets have consistently deployed verse to interrogate power, expose corruption, and give voice to the silenced majority. This tradition situates poetry as a public discourse rather than a private aesthetic indulgence. As Abayomi Awelewa and Rosemary Osariemen Awelewa argue, Nigerian poetry has historically fused artistic innovation with social protest to confront governance failures and human rights abuses (34). Protest poetry therefore becomes a site where literature intersects directly with lived social realities and political struggle.

Niyi Osundare is one of the most socially engaged poets in Nigeria in this tradition of protest poetry. A second-generation Nigerian poet, Osundare, deliberately avoids obscurantism and moves away from obscure language and towards the public. His poems are grounded in the common people's experience, and continuously challenge systems of inequality. It is noted that Osundare's poetic sensibility is not a detached one, but one that is driven by a sense of ethics, which is based on justice and social responsibility. Despite Osundare's presence on the geographical and diasporic terrain in his writing, his poetry always remains in a critical consciousness of the Nigerian socio-political realities (149), says Wumi Raji. This is especially pertinent for considering protest poetry as a vehicle for revealing the injustice of the system.

Structural injustice is the kind of injustice discussed in literary studies, which is not a single instance of injustice but injustice that is part of the social, political, and legal system. This is an injustice that is perpetuated in the normalised practices that favour the powerful and

disenfranchise the weak. In Nigeria, institutions like the judiciary, political leadership, and security agencies have been a frequent source of perpetuation of these inequities. Osundare's poems rehash multiple occasions in which the structures play against the common good. Chukwunwike Anolue notes that "Osundare's overall poetic message is one of challenging systems that threaten the human and ecological health" (88). Satyajit Ray's protest poetry thus addresses an injustice, which, far from being a random occurrence, is a social pattern.

The poem 'My Lord, Tell Me Where to Keep Your Bribe' is a strong condemnation of judicial corruption as an injustice of its kind. The judiciary is debased by the greed and corruption of its members, as they are exposed as such through the satire, exaggeration, and never-ending imagery in the novel, *Osundare*. The poem depicts the judges and the lawyers as agents of crime and not of justice. Poems, Onyebuchi Nwosu notes, expose the corruption as an institutionalized evil that is deeply embedded in the Nigerian legal culture, and not just a moral failing of a few corrupt individuals. (47) *Osundare* has played the issue of bribery as commonplace and normalised, revealing the judiciary as a structural instrument that defends the crime and punishes the innocent. The courtroom is then metamorphosed into an institution that betrays the poem.

The poem not only exposes corruption, but it also brings to the fore the impact of the injustice meted out by the court on the entire community. *Osundare* paints a picture of a country whose justice is for sale, elections are rigged, and impunity is openly practiced. The judiciary is called the "last hope of the common man," and is shown as the ultimate shelter for the rich who are criminals. Odinaka Melvina Onyegbu believes that in the depiction of judges, *Osundare* shows that greed and unbridled materialism are undermining the values of the legal profession (62). The poem's disturbing pictures highlight the connection between the structural decay, social decay, and public despair. In this regard, protest poetry is a type of institutional exposure.

“My Lord, Tell Me Where to Keep Your Bribe” takes a look at the institutions of justice, while “A Villager’s Protest” probes political corruption and the problem of government. The poem reflects the cyclical nature of the exploitation of rural communities during election times, as politicians give them lavish promises that end up being broken after they have been elected. Political leadership is performative and deceptive in Osundare’s eyes, and is fostered by the ignorance and vulnerability of the masses. However, Abimbola Dapo Adelowo et al. point out that Osundare always puts the focus on the common man in rural areas in order to reveal the disparity between the classes and their neglect (20). The poem reveals the gulf between the people it purports to represent and political power. Protest here comes in an ironic and also in a collective memory form, not in a confrontation form.

In the poem, not only are the villagers victims, but they are also victims of repeated deceptions. In the images produced by Osundare, politics looked good and pleasant to the rural poor. The power is fleeting, but in its misuse, it is unforgiving. Emmanuel Akanwa and Ugochukwu Ogechi Iwuji point out that the theme of failure of leadership as a cause of social exclusion in Nigeria is a recurring one in Osundare’s poetry (73). The poem exposes the structural injustice, which is communicated from generation to generation as villagers experience injustice in their daily lives. The protest poet is then a voice for those who don’t have a political voice.

In the poem “Not My Business,” the focus of the poem is on state repression and the complicity of the public in the face of authoritarian rule. The poem is set in a context of arbitrary arrest and disappearance, and dramatises the effect of fear on suppressing society. The chanting over and over again is a sign of a terrible culture of indifference that lets injustice flourish. Osundare shows how the silence can be equated with the collaboration of the common man in the machine of oppression. This characterization conforms to the wider protest tradition, which sees apathy as being “morally responsible. The poem uncovers structural injustice, as well as social disengagement, when it comes to state violence.

Osundare's individual stories of Akanni, Danladi, and Chinwe provide a human face to the politics of repression and bring the statistics to life. The poem isn't abstract; it situates injustice in the things we do or see in our lives, in our homes, and at work. The storyline of the poem is heightened in moral terms. In protest poetry, such personalization is important to awaken collective consciousness, Abayomi Awelewa and Rosemary Osariemen Awelewa argue (42). This is Osundare's technique, where he shows how the structural injustice slowly moves up until it reaches even the most apathetic onlooker. The poem comes to the conclusion that fear is a method of governing.

As a whole, the three chosen poems demonstrate a unified vision of protest that challenges - interrogates - judicial corruption, political betrayal, and authoritarian repression as a system. Osundare isn't just scribbling on the failure of the existing structures, but rather considering them to be reinforcing each other, perpetuating inequality. In his poetry, he has insisted that what is supposed to protect society has, in fact, become an oppressor. The optimism of Osundare isn't negating decay; rather, it is about an openness to the cause of moral reflection, as pointed out by Chukwunwike Anolue (133). Protest poetry is a form of resistance, of memory.

This study, therefore, falls into the category of protest literature in Nigeria, which uses the medium of poetry to critique and transform society. The study reads and reflects on the texts through "My Lord, Tell Me Where to Keep Your Bribe," "A Villager's Protest," and "Not My Business" to highlight the way Osundare satirizes, ironizes, and portrays the structural injustice of the texts. The poems as a group are a testament to how injustice is entrenched in institutions and perpetuated by silence, greed, and power abuse. Literature, in this context, functions as a counter-archive that records truths suppressed by official narratives. It is within this intersection of poetry and social conscience that this study locates its critical inquiry.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite Nigeria's rich literary tradition of social criticism, structural injustice continues to dominate the nation's political, legal, and social institutions. Corruption, abuse of power, judicial compromise, and political betrayal have become normalized features of governance, resulting in widespread inequality and public disillusionment. Institutions designed to protect citizens increasingly function as instruments of exploitation, leaving the common people vulnerable and unheard. While protest poetry has long served as a medium for exposing these injustices, scholarly attention has often focused on broader political themes without adequately examining how specific poems dramatize structural injustice as an institutional failure. This is particularly evident in studies of Niyi Osundare's protest poetry, where the interconnectedness of judicial corruption, political deceit, and social apathy has not been sufficiently explored through close textual analysis. This study therefore addresses this gap by examining how selected poems by Osundare expose structural injustice and interrogate the systems that sustain oppression in Nigerian society.

1.3 Aim and Objectives

The study aims to examine how protest poetry exposes structural injustice in selected poems of Niyi Osundare. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. reveal how Osundare represents institutional corruption and abuse of power in the selected poems;
- ii. examine the portrayal of political betrayal and social inequality affecting the common people;
- iii. explore how protest poetry functions as a tool for social consciousness and resistance.

1.4 Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

- i. How does Osundare represent institutional corruption and abuse of power in the selected

poems?

- ii. In what ways do the poems portray political betrayal and structural inequality?
- iii. How does protest poetry serve as a medium for social awareness and resistance in Osundare's work?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant to literary scholarship and social criticism as it deepens critical engagement with Niyi Osundare's protest poetry. By foregrounding structural injustice, the research highlights how poetry exposes systemic failures rather than isolated acts of wrongdoing. The study contributes to Nigerian literary criticism by offering a focused analysis of judicial corruption, political deception, and public apathy as interconnected structures of oppression.

The research also underscores the relevance of protest poetry in contemporary society, demonstrating how literary texts remain powerful tools for social critique and moral intervention. By linking poetic representation with lived Nigerian realities, the study reinforces literature's role in challenging injustice and awakening collective responsibility. Furthermore, the work serves as a resource for students and scholars interested in protest literature, African poetry, and the relationship between art and social change.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to three poems by Niyi Osundare: "My Lord, Tell Me Where to Keep Your Bribe," "A Villager's Protest," and "Not My Business." The study focuses on how these poems expose structural injustice through satire, narrative, and protest aesthetics. While the poems are situated within the broader Nigerian socio-political context, the research does not attempt a general survey of Osundare's entire poetic corpus. The analysis relies on close textual interpretation supported by relevant critical works, ensuring depth, focus, and scholarly validity.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews relevant literature related to the study. It examines the conceptual and empirical works on protest poetry, corruption, betrayal, and resistance, with particular attention to Niyi Osundare's poetry. The chapter also identifies gaps in existing studies to establish the need for the present research.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.1.1 Protest Poetry

Protest poetry is a poetic production that addresses issues of injustice, oppression, and structural inequality through the art of language. It can be described as facing socio-political realities face-on and being independent in challenging the prevailing systems of power. Protest poetry is one of the poems Damla Yeşil explains is intrinsically linked to collective movements and moves in spaces that are activated by resistance and social agitation (45). It is a poetry form that flourishes in situations where people and communities find themselves with other ways to express themselves than through the formal political format. Uses common language and rhymes and often imagines something that will be emotionally appealing to a large number of readers. Protest poetry is thus not simply aesthetic, but also very functional and is used to fight an ideology. Its significance is that it can help to create collective awareness from personal grievances.

Some of the hallmarks of protest poetry are that it's critical, urgent, and seeks to break through into the dominant narratives. Uses rhetorical techniques including exaggeration, repetition, and direct address to emphasize its message. The juxtaposition of feeling and thinking is what makes activism poetry, April-Rose Geers notes; it is an intensity of feeling and thinking that resonates with the lived experiences of suffering and resisting (112). The duality is what makes protest poetry (and all poetry for that matter) possible at both intellectual and emotional levels. Language is often very simple and symbolic, and is accessible yet deep. Protest poetry is also often not

neutral, claiming for itself the point of view of the oppressed. It is both through these features and in the process of using them that it can be a tool for awakening critical awareness.

In the African literary landscape, protest poetry has emerged as a reaction against the imposition of colonial power, disappointment after gaining independence, and the continuing socio-political problems in Africa. It mirrors not only the histories of the continent of exploitation and identity but also of governance failures. Protest aesthetics, as a feature of Nigerian poetry, has consistently addressed issues of justice—both human and environmental injustice—argue Sule Emmanuel Egya, Margaret N. Agu, and Safiyya Adam (78). This tradition places poetry in a position of being active in society in the process of change and not just a reflection of reality. Many poems in Africa are both spoken and written and augment the communal and performative aspects of the poem. It is based on folk tales, proverbs, and native languages to strengthen its authenticity. Protest poetry, therefore, continues to be very much influenced by cultural and political realities in Africa.

Protest can also be a transnational phenomenon, and is linked to common experiences of marginalisation and exclusion. It frequently overlaps with the other movements of dignity, identity, and equality for oppressed people. In many situations, communities have stood up against cultural and political oppression through resort to protest poetry, as Wahida Parveez points out (63). This shows how protest poetry is a means of protest in all societies. All of the above have a common motivation: to challenge injustice and call for change, but the context may differ. Protest poetry thus forms a network of resistance narratives across the transnational. It links struggles in the local to global social discourses on justice and human rights.

Also significant about protest poetry is its use of literary elements like irony, satire, and symbolism in the expression of its message. These devices can be used by poets to examine authority without compromising on being subtly artistic. Saddik Gohar points out that in some oppressive systems, the contradictions are revealed through the use of irony and symbolic

language in the work of protest poets (29). Satirists denigrate corrupt leaders and institutions and thus cast doubt on their legitimacy. Irony, however, shows up differences between political statements and what actually happens in people's lives. There are multiple levels of meaning in the text achieved through symbolism. The style of protest poetry is both intriguing and subversive. They also provide added durability of the message in various situations.

Protest poetry serves as a means of collective action and action itself, a space between art and action. It can be used in conjunction with other forms of protest reflectively and ideologically. For poetry, the protest practices exist side by side, as it is argued by Stefan Benz, Marcel Hartwig, and Hannah Schoch, it inspires collective consciousness and action. This relationship highlights the dynamic relationship between literature and social movements. Poems turn into areas in which the concept is clarified, feelings are expressed, and resistance is maintained. It is a mirror and a catalyst for the change in society. This way, protest poetry leaps the barriers of letters.

Moreover, protest poetry is a tool for resisting silence and erasure by giving voice to those who have been silenced and erased. It helps to address the marginalisation of some groups through highlighting their stories. Poems can break the silence and say that which may be unspoken or silenced in a prevailing discourse, as Alison Phipps points out (54). It is in such a setting of censorship and repression that protest poetry, because of its power, is so effective. It offers an alternative history, an alternative reality, which contradicts the official history of reality. It helps to open up a discourse and makes it more democratic. Poems become a means of recovery of agency and identity, a recovery of protest.

With respect to Niyi Osundare's poetry, this comes out as an important aspect of his poetic style and ideology, namely, protest poetry. His works always have to do with injustice, corruption, and the decay of societies. In Africa, Niyi Akingbe points out, protest poetry may take the form of confrontation or subversion, attacking systems of oppression (117). Satire,

simple language, and a firm moral perspective are all hallmarks of this approach and are found in Osundare's poetry. His poems address the lives of the people and are critical of the leaders. Protest poetry can be an effective way of revealing structural injustice through his work. It also brings a message of literature as a tool to change society.

2.1.2 Corruption

Corruption involves the misuse of power given to someone for a specific purpose, typically in ways that benefit the individual or individuals involved and hurt public interests and the integrity of the institutions. It can be expressed in many different ways, such as bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and misappropriation of public funds. In some societies, the fact of corruption is able to destroy the institutions and the confidence of the population in these institutions. Chukwuebuka Uchenna Oraegbunam elaborates how corruption has played a huge role in Nigeria's economic hardship and a lack of social stability (10). This exposes how corruption is a system and how it has a huge impact. It's not just an individual act; it's a structural issue that is part of political and administrative structures. This is because corruption becomes a major issue in the country, both within the political arena and in literature.

Corruption frequently has a stronghold within governance and impacts processes of decision-making and implementation of policies. It misallocates resources and focuses on people's interests rather than the interests of the population. Ijeoma Susan Ilechukwu highlights the manifestation of corruption in institutions like the electoral process and civil service in Nigeria, with corruption affecting the results of the elections and jeopardizing Nigeria's democratic process (241). This institutional aspect makes it hard to get rid of corruption. It is accepted as a norm in systems that are supposed to account and be transparent. The fact that corruption persists is an indication of underlying governance system weaknesses. As a result, it remains a development constraint of the nation.

In literature, corruption is typically depicted as a disease that permeates society at all levels. It is exposed by using the narrative and poetic techniques by the writers and reveals its effect on the common people. Onyebuchi Nwosu and Chika Ose-Agbo believe the poems of today's Nigeria vividly represent corruption as a characteristic of the political condition in Nigeria (95). Literature becomes the place of critique and reflection through such representations. It exposes the impact of corruption on people – its poverty, its inequality, its disillusionment. Abstract ideas are frequently made specific in literary works and thus more coherent and meaningful. This will improve the reader's understanding of the experience of corruption.

Leadership failure is also closely associated with corruption; the leaders who are in power focus on enriching themselves rather than the public. These failures leave a gap between the leaders and the citizens whom they are supposed to serve. Bartholomew Chizoba Akpah notes that most leaders in Africa have consistently disappointed in holding accountable, resulting in the masses suffering (6). This is an indication of the moral aspect of corruption as the violation of public trust. It is indicative of a leadership problem in most of the postcolonial states. Often, the crisis is conveyed in literature through the portrayal of leaders, who are symbols of decay and irresponsibility. The depiction of such scenarios makes the need to deal with corruption more pressing.

Satanic criticism of corruption in poetry is usually done through the use of satire and irony; it brings the absurdity of corrupt practices to light. Sarcastic remarks about those in power, to shake up their authority and legitimacy. Poets often portray leaders as being insincere and aloof from the people (12), Chukwuebuka Uchenna Oraegbunam explains. This is a discrediting of the political and governmental elite. It is also a symptom of the masses' frustration and disillusionment. Poets use satire to establish a critical moment and environment that is interesting and powerful. Poems are thus a good medium to address corruption.

There are also socio-economic consequences of corruption, as it also leads to poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment. It forces resources to be used on things other than education, healthcare, and infrastructure, which are essential services. Corruption has debilitating effects on national development, curtails progress, and perpetuates inequality, Ijeoma Susan Ilechukwu explains (243). This is a reminder of the impact of corruption on society's structure. The issue is more than just political; it's social and economic as well. Often in the literature, they are mentioned as an expression of the need for change. It does so, it brings awareness, and critical engagement.

Poetics speaks of corruption as a collective matter and asks for collective action. Poets appeal to the resistance and accountability of both leaders and citizens. Poems can be a way of mobilizing and reawakening against corrupt practices, say Onyebuchi Nwosu and Chika Ose-Agbo (102). This is to emphasize the potential of literature to change lives. It is more than criticism: it is motivating to action and change. Poems, then, are a means of advocacy and social action. It challenges and prompts the reader to reflect upon and question the current system.

In conclusion, the ubiquity of corruption in the realities of life in Africa is what has maintained it as a recurring theme of African Literature. This question is still being addressed by writers as a way to contemplate and influence public attitudes. Bartholomew Chizoba Akpah believes that African poetry has always criticised leaders who are corrupt and demanded accountability and justice (9). This is to reinforce the moral and political power of literature. It also makes an important point about the fact that the issue of corruption is always timely and fits into the literary narrative. Ongoing interaction helps literature to play a role in combating corruption as a whole. It continues to be an effective means of criticism and change.

2.1.3 Betrayal

Betrayal in politics means deceit and dishonesty on the part of political leaders to those who put them in office. It may manifest itself in the form of acts of opposition to what is expected in public, ethics, and constitutional duties. In most of the postcolonial societies, betrayal is a constant aspect of the government, which focuses on its private interest rather than the interest of the nation. The problems that Onyejizu points to in African poetry are the failure of leadership, which is characterized by authoritarianism, corruption, and maladministration (12). This reflects the fact that betrayal does not happen by chance, but is ingrained in political systems. It's a sign of a lack of leadership ideals and realities. Thus, betrayal becomes a pivotal aspect of studies of administration in literature.

Political betrayal is connected with leadership failure, which is a failure to fulfil the responsibilities of the leader to the people. This has a tendency to spread disillusionment and loss of faith in the public. Those leaders who resort to improper means or misuse authority effectively forfeit what gives them their authority – the social contract. There are often character flaws among political leaders in Africa that fail to meet the expectations of society, Oladipupo argues, as is evident in African literature in every instance (34). Such failures are not just of administration; they're moral and ethical failures. They are a sign of a lack of accountability and responsibility. Thus, literature becomes an evocative and critical depiction of the effects of this betrayal.

Nor does betrayal apply just to the nature of a broken contract; it also means a broken social contract: the relationship between the state and its citizens has been broken. Citizens have expectations of protection, justice, and development, which are not fulfilled. The establishment of a 'rule of law' will lead to feelings among the people if its leaders fail to meet these promises. According to Odinaka Melvina Onyegbu, corruption in the judiciary is the betrayal of the law

and the moral duties an individual is expected to uphold when he/she is placed in the position to administer justice (6). This points to betrayal as it plays out in institutional contexts. It does not only apply to political offices, but to all institutions of governance. This betrayal is systemic, and it widens the crisis of society.

In literature, betrayal is generally symbolised by stories that emphasise the difference between the promises of politicians and what actually happens. In the world of literature, writers employ a variety of techniques, such as symbolism, satire, and characterization, to reveal the deceitfulness of leaders. These depictions are used to condemn the immoral evil of the rulers of the day. Fòlárànmí Dáúdà SÀLÁÛ points out that today's African poetry is often characterised by its focus on issues of bad leadership and irresponsibility in politics as major themes (15). Literature thus makes a space of 'uncomfortable truths' through such portrayals. It exposes the impact of wrong leadership on society. This helps to emphasize the function of literary criticism for the benefit of society.

Another form of betrayal is what the masses suffer because of bad governance, in both the economic and social aspects. A lack of good management or misdirected resources leads citizens to suffer from underdevelopment and poverty. This is a vicious cycle that will cause suffering, resulting in inequality and frustration. As Nigerian citizens have suffered economic losses and hardships due to corrupt political practices, Mnguember Vicky Sylvester gives a brief explanation of why (9). This is a reminder of the price of betrayal to man. It is not just a concept, it's a reality for many. The impacts of such changes have been well documented in the literature and are crucial to stress the need for reform.

In addition, betrayal in the literary world is occasionally conveyed in silence and trauma, such as is experienced by those who cannot speak out about their experience. This quiet is the silent voice of voiceless people and silent suffering. Those who are victims of violence and systemic

failure are commonly silenced, and there is a level of betrayal that occurs from those who are supposed to protect them (20), notes Adewuyi Aremu Ayodeji. The dimension contributes to complexity in the notion of betrayal. It reveals how it impacts material, psychological, and emotional health. This is represented in the literature in subtle ways and by symbols.

The theme of betrayal in African poetry is an ongoing one that is reflective of general historical and political situations. It reflects the continuing problems of the post-independence states in having good governance. These realities are described and/or condemned in the works of the writers. Poetry, too, argues Raphael Chukwuemeka Onyejizu, reflects society and reveals the flaws of leadership and its impact on society (14). This helps to confirm the notion of betrayal as a literary and socio-political issue. It plays an integral role in the stories of African societies. Literature is then used to record and to fight betrayal.

In conclusion, betrayal is always a key element in comprehending leadership and the masses. It captures the weaknesses, paradoxes, and dilemmas of governance processes. Betrayal is revealed, examined, and questioned in the literary text. Literature is an important tool for questioning the failure of leadership and calling for change in society, Olalekan Oladipupo concludes (40). This demonstrates that betrayal is a major theme in literary analysis that has stood the test of time. It also highlights the significance of literature in the accountability aspect. Betrayal is thus a target of criticism and a call for change.

2.1.4 Resistance

Resistance is defined as opposition to challenging and confronting oppressive structures and unjust systems in society. Literary resistance can be seen in the themes, language, and stylistic aspects of the text, which challenge the dominant ideas. It is a symbol of the resilience and strength of individuals and communities in their efforts to take control of their lives when

oppressed. The Nigerian poetry is a socio-political commentary with protest, which sees literature as a voice of dissent, as explained by Abayomi Awelewa and Rosemary Osariemen Awelewa (18). This points to the fact that there is in itself a link between literature and resistance. It demonstrates the process by which art can be used as a means to protest against injustice. Resistance is thus a thematic and a functional aspect in literature.

In literary works, resistance means a challenge to the norms and power systems in place. The works of writers criticize authority and reveal the inequalities in society. Defiance can be manifested in a variety of ways, including narrative, image, and tone. Poems as a direct instrument of resistance, through confrontation and social criticism, is what Godday Eromnonsele Ehimen argues for (147). This allows literature to become a part of the discourse of society. Moves from the passive response to the active response. Resistance is then a characteristic of politically aware writing.

Poems that protest are especially effective weapons of resistance because they are a vehicle for voicing the complaints of a marginalized community. It's a place where people's voices are not heard in the mainstream. Protest poetry is accessible and emotive; it mobilises readers and listeners. Josephat Adoga Odey, Patrick Odey Ogar, and Romanus Aboh observe that resistance can be found in poetry through revolutionary language, which is a language of action and, which in turn, will be a language of change for the people (13). This is a glimpse of the power of poetry to change lives. It points to the part of poetry in promoting unity and opposition. Protest poetry is then a tool to change society.

Resistance in literature is also associated with the concept of social justice, in which writers call for human rights, equality, and fairness. They and their works call into question the systems of oppression and inequality. Often this advocacy is in the form of criticism, jokes, and symbolic representation. The leaders are frequently held accountable for their actions in

Nigeria's poetic works, and their efforts to improve the country are also put forward through their art (5). This helps to strengthen the moral aspect of resistance. It treats literature as a means of moral involvement. Then resistance is an avenue for justice.

Another aspect of resistance is its ability to sensitize readers' consciousness towards society. Reading promotes thinking and thinking about problems of society. It makes people aware of injustice and to question and challenge the existing systems. Poems, in turn, can bring about consciousness to the masses and motivate them to action, according to Idaevbor Bello and Lilian Onyeiwu (72). This is an emphasis on the role of literature in education. Demonstrates that resistance is not only a matter of opposition, but also a matter of enlightenment. Literature thus becomes a site of transformation, an intellectual and social change.

Resistance is also manifested in the aesthetics of the writers, such as the language, form, and style. They're employed creatively to support the defiant message. Many writers play with literary form, which can break the rules of traditional literature. In the realm of poetry, Abayomi Awelewa and Rosemary Osariemen Awelewa point out that imagery and symbolism are key elements that make resistance more effective and powerful by adding more depth and meaning to it (22). This shows the relation between the form and content in literature. Displays the role of beauty in the force of resistance. Literature is an art and a politics.

In addition, often in literature, resistance is not individual, but collective, a reflection of the collective experience of communities. The purpose of writing is not merely to communicate the writer's ideas but to represent the ideas of a larger group of people. This is a collective aspect that reinforces resistance. Godday Eromnonsele Ehimen says that the role of resistance poetry is to use communal voices to resist oppression and call for change (150). This highlights the need to unite in struggles against resistance. It underscores the importance of literature in

the process of establishing a collective identity formation. Resistance is then made a collective effort.

Finally, resistance is one of the key theories in the comprehension of the function of literature in society. It reflects the power of literary texts to challenge, criticize, and change social reality. Literature through resistance asserts its relevance and power. Resistance poetry continues to stir action, Josephat Adoga Odey, Patrick Odey Ogar, and Romanus Aboh conclude, because they see a more just society in the future, a society they are working for through resistance poetry. This underlines the pivotal role of resistance in literary studies that has remained constant over the years. It also emphasizes the transformative power of the writer's words. Resistance is thus a stylistic approach as well as a political one.

2.2 Empirical Review

The empirical review delves into the current literature in the academic field of protest poetry that addresses structural injustice. It emphasizes the ways in which other scholars have investigated the use of poetry as a tool of resistance, critique, and social change. The review is divided into three main categories: protest poetry and structural injustice, corruption in African poetry, and studies on Niyi Osundare's protest poetry. This architecture also enables an easy consolidation of what has already been produced and to highlight the missing points, which are the subject of this work, the realm of discourse and structural injustice.

2.2.1 Studies on Protest Poetry and Structural Injustice

Igirigba and Eneyo analyse the rhetoric of protest in selected African poems from a post-colonial perspective with the focus on literature as a tool that can be used to question the colonial legacy, neo-colonial oppression, and the failures of post-colonialism. Protest poetry is defined as an artwork of resistance, an artwork that questions authoritarianism and the

imbalance of society by language and style (128). It argues that protest poetry is an anti-dominant discourse that challenges and seeks the transformation of the dominant power structures. This reflects the present research in recognizing protest poetry as a means to reveal injustice and defy an oppressive system, as reflected in the current research. The present research also recognizes protest poetry as a means of revealing injustice and challenging oppressive systems in a similar manner to this present research. The present study, however, does not focus on the general context of protest as found in postcolonial struggles, but rather on the specific context of structural injustice and how the discourses found in Niyi Osundare's poetry expose the concepts of systemic corruption, betrayal, and inequality.

In Adrian Adelokun, the poet examines the concept of protest in the poetry of post-apartheid South Africa, exploring and elucidating the ways in which poets express their protest against racial oppression and socio-economic inequality. The study shows that poetry can encapsulate historical trauma and current disillusionment, and can be a way of social critique and mass consciousness (52). It has been concluded that "Protest poetry is still necessary in raising awareness and calling for change in society. This is like the current study in that poetry is the vehicle to social consciousness and resistance. It is, however, contextual in scope because while the past work is about apartheid and racial injustice, this study deals with structural injustice in Nigeria, and how corruption, betrayal, and abuse of power are represented in the poems of Osundare.

In a scene where the rule of law is so vulnerable, Egya, Agu, and Adam discuss the use of poetry as a tool to protest against the violations of human rights and the environment in Nigeria. The study shows how poets reveal the system failures of governments and multinational exploitations through protest aesthetics through the lens of post-colonial ecocriticism (218). It ends with the conclusion that poetry is of critical importance in foregrounding injustice and

bringing awareness. The present study's focus on the use of poetry as a means of uncovering systemic injustice and resistance therewith is congruent. The present study on institutional corruption, political betrayal, and structural inequality, however, is more of a further expansion of the discourse of the reviewed study, which focuses on environmental and human rights issues, with the selected poems being those of Osundare.

In her comparison of the works of Muhammad al-Fayturi and Langston Hughes, Gohar explores the role of protest poetry in the face of racial oppression and historical injustice in Africa and the African diaspora. It uncovers how poetry can shift a collective suffering into opposition and to reimagining suppressed histories, counter-narratives (81). It concludes that protest poetry, as an instrument of revolution, is concerned with the recovery of identity and resistance to domination. This is similar to the present study, which considers poetry as a tool of resistance and critique of society. But the cross-cultural and racial emphasis is quite different; the present study starts with the socio-political realities in Nigeria and interrogates structural injustice through Osundare's poetic discourse.

In the area of constrained speech, Nkoala examines protest songs as rhetorical devices and their capacity to infuse ideas of resistance without directly making the call. The study ends with a conclusion that artistic expression is an avenue to give voice to what is left silent politically (9). This is consistent with art being recognized as a means of resisting and becoming aware, as expressed in the present study. The review work, however, is limited to music and oral performance, and the present study is different in that it investigates written protest poetry and a discursive construction of structural injustice.

Akingbe discusses the term “radical rudeness” in Stella Nyanzi's poetry as a method of dealing with political tyranny. The study shows that the unconventional language and satire are used as means of subversion against authoritarianism (66). This is similar to the current study in its

emphasis on stylistic resistance and critique of power. However, it differs in its focus on linguistic impoliteness as a strategy, whereas the present study emphasizes broader discursive patterns of structural injustice in Osundare's poetry.

Ogar and Odey examine violent language in African and African-American poetry, state that protest poetry reveals the oppression faced by Africans, and offer the idea that it serves to heighten revolutionary awareness among the masses. Concluding that the poetic devices, such as allusion and proverb, are used to judge the existing socio-political decay. This is in keeping with the theme of this study, which is poetry for revealing injustice and resistance. It does not, however, share this comparative and stylistic perspective, but rather the one taken in the present study, which is discourse and structural injustice in a Nigerian context.

In *Maya's Dissent against Racial and Gender Discrimination*, Sadaf and Rahman analyze Angelou's poetry and reveal how the literary tools she uses communicate dissent and foster social transformation. The research is thus building up to the conclusion that protest poetry is still a very potent means of challenging injustice and changing societal values (64). In contrast to the current study, this work also focuses on poetry as a means of resistance and awareness, much like the current study. It does, however, differ in thematic and geographical focus, for it focuses on the life of African Americans, while the current study questions systemic injustice in Nigerian society in the light of Osundare's poetry.

2.2.2 Studies on Corruption in African Poetry

Akpah looks into the financial and political corruption of some selected poems from Africa and uncovers the poet's ability to report on corruption and its attendant effects on the masses. The study does not just identify corruption as a personal sin, but as a structural problem in governance, the economy, and the postcolonial state formation as well. Using thematic and

stylistic analysis, the research shows how imagery, satire, and symbolism are employed to reveal the embezzlement, betrayal of leadership, and increasing divide between the ruling elite and the common citizen (60). It also maintains that poetry serves as a moral repository of the lived experiences of the oppressed people, and at the same time, exposes the corrupt leadership and calls for accountability. This is consistent with the subject of the current study, which is institutional corruption and abuse of power. It is different from it, however, in its comprehensive overview of African poetry within context, while the present study presents a more focused discourse analysis of corruption as a structural phenomenon of Niyi Osundare's selected poems.

Ilechukwu discusses corruption in Kola Eke's poetry in the light of the New Historicist theory, where literary text is seen as revealing the corruption of both history and the system in Nigeria's political institutions. The study highlights that corruption is an entrenched socio-political phenomenon, stemming from its colonial roots and entrenched in post-colonial governance failures. The research explores the relationship between text and context, illustrating the way that poetry reflects real-life experiences of injustice, bribery and institutional decay (242). It also uncovers how socio-political realities are being reconstructed in a poetic form, which allows it to be a reflection and critique of the corrupt systems. This is akin to the concern in this study with systemic corruption and the socio-political implications of this. It is, however, different in theoretical orientation and in analytical perspective since the former given review emphasizes the historical contextualization, while the latter highlights discursive strategies and linguistic constructions of corruption in the poetry of Niyi Osundare.

From a Marxist perspective, Nwosu and Ose-Agbo analyze how corruption is embedded in Amali's poetry, focusing on how corruption is grounded in class struggle, economic exploitation, and unequal resource allocation. The study shows the ways in which poetic

images of corruption reveal the contradictions of capitalist institutions and the plight of the exploited proletariat under the exploitation of an oppressive leadership. It also shows that poetry can be a revolutionary instrument that can help to build class consciousness and organize class resistance against the exploitation at the system level (99). The authors argue that modern poets in Africa continue to fight against corruption and call for social change by exposing it with their literature, which has an ideological direction. This is parallel to the ongoing research and theory on the medium of resistance and awareness in poetry that is ongoing in the current study. It does have a more explicit Marxist slant and a more general ideological perspective; however, in comparison, the present study is a discourse-oriented analysis that investigates the representation and construction of corruption in language in Osundare's poetry.

Sàlàú examines political subjects in modern Yorùbá poetry and reveals that corruption and bad leadership are key issues in the literary consciousness. The paper examines the uses of indigenous language, oral history, and symbols to challenge governance and reveal the moral bankruptcy of political elites. It emphasizes using proverbs, metaphors, and rhetoric as ways to encode resistance and to communicate dissent in culturally specific contexts (30). The research also suggests that Yorùbá poetry is a socio-political commentary, which reflects the frustrations and aspirations of the people for a change. This is comparable to the present study, which deals with the themes of corruption and political criticism as dominant themes. It is different, however, in terms of linguistic and cultural focus, being based on Yorùbá poetic traditions; in contrast, the present study examines the work of Niyi Osundare in English language protest poetry from a discourse-analytic perspective.

In the poetry of Idris and Halima Amali, Onyejizu examines how corruption, authoritarianism, and leadership failures are affecting Nigeria's socio-political landscape. The study aims to compare the various approaches of the different poets in exploring the themes of the failure of

government, social injustice, and the decay of institutions. It shows that poetry is a tool through which realities of political repression are mirrored, and transformative leadership and moral governance are called for (140). Moreover, the research emphasizes the importance of poetic language in the formation of public consciousness and a critical attitude towards the socio-political problems. This coincides with the current study's theme of corruption as a matter of the system and poetry as a critique and reform tool. The approach of this work, however, differs from that of the previous one in that it gives a comparative analysis of several poets, while the present one is a more focused and in-depth analysis of structural injustice and corruption in Niyi Osundare's selected poems.

2.2.3 Studies on Niyi Osundare's Protest Poetry

Adelowo et al. discuss Niyi Osundare's poetry as a means for the common people, and argue that Osundare's poetry always promotes social justice and also highlights socio-economic inequality. The study places Osundare in the tradition of poets in Africa who use poetry as a tool to resist oppression and marginalization in society. The authors' careful text analysis shows how these techniques of satire, imagery, and the use of indigenous linguistic resources are effectively used to bring into focus the actual situation of the masses and to highlight the dominance of the elite (72). The study also suggests that Osundare's poetic voice has the potential to engage in an act of voicing, a voice that gives agency to those who are voiceless, a voice that exposes structures of injustice. This is in the spirit of the present study, which is on inequality and social awareness. But it has a different focus: while the emphasis is on characterisation and representation of the people, the present study highlights the mechanisms of construction and maintenance of structural injustice.

In this piece, Akanwa and Iwuji examine the topic of social inclusion in Niyi Osundare's poetry, which reflects his probing into the divisions of class, the lack of leadership, and systemic

exclusion. The focus of the study is that Osundare's poetry is a reflection of the socio-political realities of postcolonial Nigeria, the entrenched marginalisation of the lower class, and the entrenchment of inequalities in the institutional systems. Through the study of motifs and themes, the authors demonstrate the ways in which poetic language is deployed to “provoke” against the hegemonic structure and “call” for a more equitable social system (110). According to the study, Osundare's works reveal the increasing disparity between the privileged and the disenfranchised, and urge for social change. This has parallels with the current study in that it is concerned with inequality and failure in leadership. It also contrasts with it in that it is primarily interested in inclusion and representation; the present study expands the analysis to include the aspects of institutional corruption and betrayal, and to the broader issue of structural injustice.

Nwosu in his article, examines judicial corruption in the poetry of Niyi Osundare as a way to unveil the irregularities or problems that exist in judicial and governmental structures. The study points to Osundare's creation of pictures of flawed justice systems where law enforcement and judicial personnel become agents of oppression, instead of agents of equity. The reading of the text, in close detail, reveals the use of metaphor, irony, and narrative voice to denounce the corruption of justice and the normalisation of corruption (63). It also suggests that Osundare's poetry can be used as a medium to sensitise the public and force them to doubt the legitimacy of the institutions and hold them accountable. This does very much correlate with the present study, especially in terms of the corruption and institutional critique aspects of the study. This study, however, takes a different approach to judicial corruption inasmuch as it does not focus exclusively on specific instances of structural injustice within selected poems, but rather examines multiple dimensions of structural injustice within the selected poems.

In Niyi Osundare's poem *Not My Business*, Fasasi delves into the notion of meaning and interpretation, stating that the meaning of any literary work has a relative stability even in the face of differences in interpretation. The study relates to interpretive theory that looks at the way that linguistic structure and thematic elements shape readers' meaning and that multiple meanings are possible. It demonstrates the main concepts of oppression, complicity, and social responsibility (39) and how the poem challenges the passive acceptance of injustice. This is somewhat similar to the current study in terms of its approach to the concerns of its themes, but it is quite distinct in terms of analysis. While the reviewed study focuses on hermeneutics and meaning-making processes, the current study is more interested in a socio-political critique and discussion of the discursive construction of structural injustice in the text.

Ekhatior discusses the use of satire in the poetry of Niyi Osundare and shows how this stylistic tool is an effective means of exposing political hypocrisy, corruption, and decay in society. In the study, it is shown that satire is a tool used by the author, Osundare, in revealing contradictions in the leadership system and at the same time keeping the critical tone that is acceptable to the masses. The poet uses exaggeration, irony, and humor to unsettle the dominant narrative, to question the legitimacy of oppressive systems (95). The study shows that satire strengthens the poet's social function as a critic and makes the impact of the poetry of protest more convincing. This is in tune with the ongoing study that recognizes the strategies in poetry to expose injustice. There is, however, a difference as the present study takes a discourse analytic approach to satire, while the former focuses specifically on satire as a stylistic device, encompassing several linguistic and thematic strategies.

Wosu examines the sociological themes in Niyi Osundare's poems, some of which are common characteristics like corruption, inequality, exploitation, and abuse of power. The study places Osundare's work in a general socio-political framework of Nigeria, thus making it a poetry that

is reflective and critical of the socio-political conditions which shape day-to-day lives. The research takes a sociological perspective in order to illustrate that literature reflects society and can be a catalyst for change (97). It also highlights the role of the poet in the public discourse and the impact of his/her work on society. Similar to the present study, there is a theme of corruption and inequality. It has a more generalized sociological approach, however, as does the present study, which is more specifically focused on protest poetry as a discourse of structural injustice.

Niyi Osundare's poetry is discussed in terms of agrarian themes with special focus on economic and ecological aspects of his poetry by Abdullahi. The study explores the themes of land use, environmental degradation, and rural livelihoods surrounding Osundare's poetry and showcases how he participates in issues that will help to promote sustainable development and ecological justice. The research shows how agrarian discourse is connected to other socio-economic issues, such as poverty and marginalisation, through a process of analysing imagery and thematic concerns (118). It examines the nature of Osundare's poetry and its critique of the prevailing systems of development, but also outlines other modalities of development based on equity and sustainability. This corresponds with the current study, which is concerned with the poet's engagement with social issues; however, it has a much different focus, with the study focusing on economic and ecological discourse rather than the structural injustice and protest poetics which underpin the current study.

2.3 Summary of Review of Related Literature

The survey of related studies has looked at some of the most significant conceptual, theoretical, and empirical inputs on protest poetry and the speaking out against structural injustice, mainly the works of Niyi Osundare. On a conceptual level, the literature has defined protest poetry as a type of artistic resistance that questions power structures, fights against oppression, and gives

a voice to the voiceless. Besides, it uncovers that corruption, inequality, and systemic failure are the main concerns of African literary criticism, often illustrated using satire, symbols, and other rhetorical devices. Yes, these ideas are intertwined since protest poetry is both a mirror of societal realities and an instrument for social change.

For the empirical dimension, the articles that have been reviewed illustrate that many scholars have studied protest poetry both on the African continent and worldwide, and have mostly focused on such topics as resistance to corruption, inequality, and failure of leadership. Though most of these works are either broad comparative studies or they focus on only one theme, like satire, environmental justice, or class struggle. Even though there are some that deal with Niyi Osundare's poetry, to be fair, they largely look at general social trends, stylistic features, or major thematic concerns without devoting ample space to the analysis of structural injustice as a discursive concept.

To sum up, the main shortcoming of the literature lies in the scant attention paid to the question of how structural injustice is the systematic product of and represented through discourse in protest poetry. This research aims to fill this void by conducting a detailed study of a set of Niyi Osundare's poems, analyzing the ways in which language, imagery, and poetic devices expose the issues of institutional corruption, betrayal, and inequality. In this way, this paper enriches the literature by leading readers to a deeper insight into protest poetry as a discourse of structural injustice.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the theoretical and methodological framework adopted for the study. It discusses the theories that guide the analysis of protest poetry and explains the methodological procedures used in examining how structural injustice is represented in selected poems of Niyi Osundare. The chapter further outlines the research design, sources of data collection, and method of data analysis employed in the study. Through these frameworks, the study adopts a qualitative and interpretative approach to analyze how literary expression functions as a medium of resistance, social critique, and social consciousness.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical structure acts as a tool for the study in that it offers the concepts with which the chosen poems are interpreted. This research is based on Postcolonial Theory and Critical Discourse Theory since both of these theories highlight problems of power oppression, ideology, resistance, and social inequality. On one side, Postcolonial Theory is concerned with the consequences of colonial domination and the new colonial structures in post-independence societies; But Critical Discourse Theory looks at how language and discourse serve to maintain and challenge systems of power. Together, the two theories constitute a suitable structure for showing how Niyi Osundare's protest poetry reveals structural injustice and calls for resistance to oppressive socio-political systems.

3.1.1 Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial Theory is a literary and cultural approach to analysis that looks at the political, social, economic, and cultural legacy of colonialism and imperial domination. The theory examines and looks at the impacts of colonial powers on the identity, culture, and institutions of colonized societies, as well as any lingering impacts after political independence has been achieved. Postcolonial scholars believe that colonialism is not over after Independence and

continues to exist in neo-colonial institutions, political corruption, economic exploitation, and cultural domination.

The theory is intimately related to the works of Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. In his influential book *Orientalism*, Edward Said describes how the colonial discourse built up a colonized people as inferior and uncivilized, to justify the rule of the colonists. Frantz Fanon explores the psychological and political impact of colonialism and the call for resistance against systems of exploitation and dehumanization. Homi Bhabha's discussion of the concepts of hybridity and ambivalence attempts to capture the complexities of postcolonial identity, whereas Spivak's emphasis is on the voicelessness and marginalization of the voices of the subordinates in the dominant structures of power.

One of the central tenets of Postcolonial Theory is the power relations between the oppressor and the oppressed. The theory emphasises the fact that postcolonial societies are still subjected to various forms of exploitation by corrupt leadership, economic dependency, inequality, and institutional oppression. It also focuses on resistance, identity, and the fight for liberation. Postcolonial Theory is predominantly applied in African studies of literature to examine subjects that question colonialism, social injustice, political betrayal, and oppression of post-independence African societies.

The socio-political injustice and resistance of Postcolonial Theory to this research are relevant. Niyi Osundare's poetry is a reflection of the realities in postcolonial Nigeria, where the average citizen is still being ravaged by corruption, inequality, abuse of power, and exploitation. His protest poems are critical of the oppressive structures and reveal the shortcomings of the leadership of the postcolonial state. The study uses Postcolonial Theory to explore the poems' criticism of the systems of domination that are characteristic of the neo-colonial era, and their call for social consciousness and change.

3.1.2 Critical Discourse Theory

Critical Discourse Theory (which can be merged with Critical Discourse Analysis) is an interdisciplinary perspective that investigates the ways in which language is used to create meaning and to reinforce social, political, and cultural structures and relations of power. It is more than just the surface level of language analysis and probing how discourse creates reality and affects perception. Critical discourse analysis, as explained by Korosh Almasi Moghaddam, is a way to analyse the ways in which texts and social interactions create and reproduce power and ideology (88). This places discourse into the forefront of society and makes it a force – not a medium – of communication. The theory will be based on the premise that language is never neutral, but always ideologically charged. It is thus concerned with discovering meanings in communication that are concealed. This is of special interest when dealing with works of literature that have political connotations.

Critical Discourse Theory is an extension of the underlying principles of Critical Discourse Analysis, which is focused on the relationship among language, power, and ideology. It argues that discourse is not only a reflection of socio-political reality, but also a construction of it, that it is a reinforcement of dominant discourses, yet at the same time, there is room for resistance. Language is viewed as a means of power to keep the powerful in power and a means of resistance to resist oppression on the part of the marginalized groups. Rai Hassan Iqbal, Ahmad Yasin, and Muhammad Shaharyar Sabiri point out that CDA is concerned with the interconnectedness of language, power, and ideology in social and political spaces (4). This assumption highlights the need for the analysis of texts in their social and political context. In addition, it accentuates the part that discourse plays in the human mind. As a result, the theory offers a framework for understanding the social production of meaning.

It is well connected with such prominent figures in the field of Critical Discourse Theory as Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk, and Ruth Wodak. These scholars made great contributions to the development of discourse studies, bringing to it a linguistic analysis and a social theory. A special focus of Fairclough is on the connection of discourse and social structures, particularly in the case of the former. Korosh Almasi Moghaddam notes that Fairclough's attention is on how discourse constitutes and challenges power in interpersonal interactions (89). Van Dijk is, however, interested in the cognitive aspects of discourse and its impact on ideologies. Wodak's contributions are due to his historical and contextual approach to discourse analysis. These scholars have set the framework for the language-in-use approach as a whole.

Language, power, and ideology are the key themes of Critical Discourse Theory. Language is seen as a tool of power, which is both used and negotiated. Ideologies are found in discourse, frequently in an implicit and subtle fashion, and seem natural or taken for granted. Ruth Wodak stresses that critical discourse studies are trying to deconstruct ideologies and power in a systematic analysis of semiotic information (32). This is a good insight into how dominant groups exert control and influence through the control of narratives and communication. Discourse can also be used in a way to question and deconstruct these dominant notions at the same time. This is a powerful place of analysis, because of its two functions of discourse.

Discourse is then seen as a place of domination and of resistance. It reflects, as well as offers opportunities for contestation and change, existing power structures. Alternate voices are typically dominated and marginalized, thus perpetuating inequality and exclusion. BUT, there are counter discourses that contest these dominant discourses. According to Majid KhosraviNik, discourse is a social action that generates and changes society through communication (120). This view emphasizes the aspect of discourse as dynamic. It reveals that

there is always some negotiation and contesting that is happening to create that meaning. In this way, discourse becomes a field of battle in which power relations are played out.

Critical Discourse Studies is an extremely useful approach to the analysis of texts in literary studies that focuses on how texts relate to social and political issues. Literature is seen as a discourse that reflects and challenges the reality of society. Language is used creatively by writers to reveal injustice, defy authority, and express dissent. On the other hand, Rai Hassan Iqbal, Ahmad Yasin, and Muhammad Shaharyar Sabiri contend that CDA has been widely used in the media, politics, and literature to identify hidden ideologies (6). This is because of its utility in studying protest poetry, in particular. It enables students to gain a more in-depth insight into the role of literature in other socio-political contexts. Literature then takes on the role of an arena of struggle for ideology.

CDT can be used to uncover the ways in which poets resist and challenge oppression by their use of language in protest poetry. Often, protest poetry uses rhetorical techniques like satire, irony, and symbolism to critique dominant narratives. These strategies challenge the traditional meaning and bring to light an injustice. The role of discourse analysis in revealing the function of texts in influencing social and political processes is emphasized by Korosh Almasi Moghaddam (87). This illustrates the applicability of the theory with regard to the analysis of poetic texts. Demonstrates the ability of a poem to be reflective and transformative. Poems of protest are seen and interpreted through this lens as a discursive resistance.

The use of the Critical Discourse Theory for the study is appropriate because the theory is concerned with power, ideology, and resistance; these are the key factors involved in the analysis of Niyi Osundare's poetry. The poems selected are deeply involved with questions of corruption, betrayal, and social injustice, all of which are part of discourse. In critical discourse studies, the aim is to question the basic assumptions as they are held by society, and they are

problem-oriented (33) (my emphasis). It's fitting for the study's goals to reveal injustice in the structure through literature analysis. The theory offers the tools that are needed to question the construction and contestation of power through language. It also enables one to grasp the intricacies of the connection between literature and society. Thus, Critical Discourse Theory is applicable and suitable for the study and research.

3.2 Methodology

The study is a qualitative research design, with a theoretical and interpretative textual analysis. Qualitative research emphasizes meaning, interpretation, and depth as opposed to the measurement of numbers, and therefore is appropriate for literary studies where the aim is to gain some insight into the themes, ideologies, and discursive patterns underlying the text. This way, it is possible to explore the methods of language, image, and poetic techniques used to define and reveal structural injustice in the poems chosen.

The research is basically theoretical, using a discourse-oriented approach to discuss the representation of power, ideology, and social inequality in poem texts. The theory is used to look at the language in an analytical way, as it is not neutral, but instead is active in shaping and mirroring the socio-political reality. The study reads the corruption, betrayal, and inequality through this lens and how it gets embedded in the institutional structure and is reproduced in the discourse of poetry. The study is also interpretative in that it involves a close reading of the poems and looks at how meaning is created in the poems. This enables a detailed engagement with the chosen texts to explore the thematic issues, stylistic features, and ideological implications.

Furthermore, digital humanities are seen in the study as digital academic databases, digital journals, and digital literary archives support the study. These resources facilitate accessibility

to relevant scholarly resources, help with critical engagement with existing literature, and improve the academic rigor of the research.

In this study, the data sources can be divided into primary and secondary data sources; the primary data sources used are textual sources. Selected poems by Niyi Osundare, namely, “My Lord, Tell Me Where to Keep Your Bribe”, “A Villager's Protest,” and “Not My Business,” make up the primary data. These poems are the central texts around which the analysis will be developed, and are rich with textual evidence of corruption, political betrayal, and social inequality. Poetic features like diction, imagery, tone, symbolism, and narrative voice are addressed, highlighting the ways in which structural injustice is built and expressed.

Scholarly books, journal articles, theses, and critical essays on African literature, protest poetry, discourse analysis, and socio-political criticism make up the secondary data. The materials also offer theoretical explanations and background information to the reader, allowing them to grasp the context of the overall literary and socio-cultural setting in which Osundare's poetry exists. They also help in the interpretation of the central themes of each literary work, which include corruption, resistance, and inequality.

For the data analysis in this study, qualitative textual analysis is used. This includes careful reading and critical analysis of the poems chosen to provide a detailed analysis of the thematic, discursive, and ideological elements. The theoretical framework used in analyzing the study focuses on the language, power, and social structure relationship.

The themes of institutional corruption, abuse of power, political betrayal, social inequality, and resistance are identified in the first stage of analysis. Themes of the poems are explored in all the poems selected to gain an understanding of how they all collectively form a criticism of the

structural injustice. The analysis presents special focus on the representation of issues, not as single events, but as systemic and interconnected phenomena.

The second stage involves the analysis of discourse, in which the power construction and reinforcement in language are looked at. Poetic elements such as metaphor, satire, irony, and rhetorical devices are examined to uncover the connections between poetic expression and the defiance of the dominant ideology and the revelation of the hidden structures of oppression. This stage focuses on the ways in which protest poetry is considered a counter-discourse against hegemonic discourses. Specific lines and passages within the poems are analysed, and close reading is used to analyse how meaning is created through linguistic and stylistic strategies. Poetic devices, including imagery, symbolism, tone, and voice, are analyzed to reveal the ways they help to present injustice and resistance. Special focus is paid to the poet's involvement of common people in the areas of power/authority.

Lastly, the analysis is combined to show the power of protest poetry in the realm of social consciousness and change. Thematic and discursive analysis have been employed to give a comprehensive understanding of how Niyi Osundare's poetry reveals injustice within the structures and contests oppressive structures.

CHAPTER FOUR

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a critical analysis of the selected poems by Niyi Osundare in line with the objectives of the study. It examines the representation of institutional corruption, political betrayal, social inequality, and the role of protest poetry as an instrument of social consciousness and resistance. The analysis is guided by the theoretical framework adopted for the study.

4.1 Introductory paragraph

Niyi Osundare is one of the most radical and socially-conscious poets of the postcolonial period and occupies a central place in the literature of Africa today. Osundare was born at Ikere-Ekiti, Nigeria, in 1947, and his poetry resonates with the Yoruba oral tradition, communal philosophy, and political consciousness. Osundare's poetry is interventionist and more practical in its use than purely aesthetic poetry, which aims only at the pleasure of the work of art. He is a constant target of the socio-political reality of Nigeria and Africa in general, including the plight of the common people, corruption, oppression, inequality, abuse of power, and the political power struggle, in his poetry. Osundare's style of poetry serves as a tool of resistance and a tool of social criticism, using satire, symbolism, imagery, repetition, irony, rhetorical questioning, and oral performance techniques.

Osundare is a member of the generation of African writers who view literature as a tool to confront injustice and challenge oppressive systems. His protest poetry is a reflection of the harsh conditions of postcolonial Nigeria, where the dreams of independence have been frustrated by corruption, lack of good leadership, judicial corruption, military dictatorship, poverty, and the collapse of institutions. This goes well with Postcolonial Theory that discusses the existence of colonial structures of domination in the postcolonial societies through neo-

colonialism, exploitation, and political corruption. Osundare's poetry reveals that African ruling elites are recreating the same system of oppression that they had with the colonialists.

For this study, the selected poems are: 'My Lord, Tell Me Where to Keep Your Bribe', 'A Villager's Protest', and 'Not My Business'. The poems speak together of the harsh facts of corruption in institutions, betrayal of the political, inequality in society, oppression, silence, and resistance in Nigerian society. The poems act as discursive interventions to injustice and are a call to social consciousness.

It is a caustic social critique of the corrupt judicial system in Nigeria, "My Lord, Tell Me Where to Keep Your Bribe". The poem is a picture of the judges, lawyers, and judicial systems as corrupt agents who twist justice for profit. The poem exposes the institutional mechanisms that were designed for the protection of citizens, but instead have been implemented to oppress and exploit citizens.

"A Villager's Protest" is about the deceitful political leadership and betrayal of the masses by elected officials. The poem reveals the tactics used by politicians when they are forced to pay lip service to rural communities during election times but then leave them when they're in power. Osundare's vivid imagery and irony point to the increasing polarization of the political elites and the plight of the masses.

In "Not My Business", the themes of fear, silence, and complicity in authoritarian political regimes are explored. From the poem, it is evident that it was written during the rule of a military dictatorship in Nigeria, criticizing the society's apathy towards injustice and showing how silence encourages oppression. The overall message of the poem is that injustice will become universal if it is turned a blind eye to.

The reading of these poems using Postcolonial Theory and Critical Discourse Theory helps readers to understand them as resistance literature against the neo-colonial corruption, institutional violence, ideology manipulation, and systemic inequality.

4.2 Representation of Institutional Corruption and Abuse of Power in the Selected Poems

Corruption and the abuse of power within the institutions are big concerns in Osundare's poetry. In "My Lord, Tell Me Where to Keep Your Bribe," corruption is portrayed as widespread in the judicial system, which is supposed to ensure justice, fairness, and moral responsibility. Instead of serving the common folk, the judiciary is seen as a corrupt institution that is driven by greed and materialism.

The poem opens with the provocative rhetorical question:

"My Lord

Tell me where to keep your bribe?"

This question sets the tone of the poem as being humorous. But "My Lord" – this honorable title for a judge – is used ironically, for even the one who is supposed to uphold justice is depicted as corrupt and unscrupulous. The poet repeats the act of bribing in order to bring about the normalisation of bribery in the judicial system. In the repeated question, it seems corruption has become so commonplace that it is no longer hidden or shameful to take bribes.

The relevance of this is the Critical Discourse Theory since the poem highlights the corruption in the language and power of institutions. In the past, the judiciary gained its legitimacy through the language of law, courtroom ceremony, and the ritual of the court. But Osundare destabilises this institutional power through uncovering the corruption behind the legal symbols. He writes:

"Behind the antiquated wig

And the slavish glove

The penguin gown and the obfuscating jargon

Is a rot and riot whose stench is choking the land."

The "wig", "glove," and "gown" represent judicial power and respectability of institutions. But the poet tells us that there is "rot and riot" under this symbolism. Metaphorically, "stench" implies moral corruption and pollution of society. This passage also illustrates the way in which words and symbols are used in discourse to mask oppression and corruption as part of Critical

Discourse Theory. The “obfuscating jargon” is a reference to the language of the law that seeks to confuse, mislead, and excuse the people from the rule of law.

Osundare further employs grotesque imagery and hyperbole to expose the excessive greed of corrupt judges:

“A million dollars in Their Lordship’s bedroom
A million euros in the parlor closet
Countless naira beneath the kitchen sink.”

The big numbers in the amounts of money highlight the high level of corruption in public institutions. The depiction of money in the household evokes images of corruption reaching into all aspects of the country's life. Hyperbole is used to stir up public outrage and reveal the moral bankruptcy of the judiciary.

The poem is a criticism, from a Postcolonial point of view, of the lack of success of the institutions of post-independence Africa. The judiciary system was left in colonial administration and was supposed to be the enforcer of justice upon independence. But in the postcolonial era, these institutions have been turned into instruments of exploitation and self-enrichment of the postcolonial elites. The ruling class doesn't try to destroy oppressive systems; it merely creates them again to profit from them. Corruption, therefore, is a new type of colonization that creates inequality and oppression.

The metaphor:

“The Law in Nigeria is a vulture
Fat on the cash-and-carry carrion of murdered Conscience”

is particularly significant. The “vulture” is the symbol of greed, exploitation, and predation. As the law is designed to wield justice, it is dedicated to destroying morals. Justice has become cash and carry, and is available only to the highest bidder, the word “carrion” implies. By using

the Critical Discourse Theory, this metaphor delves into the manipulation of discourse by legal institutions, serving to uphold oppressive power structures.

The poem also targets election tribunals and politics as well:

“Scoundrel vote-riggers romp to electoral victory
All hail our buyable Bench and conniving Bar.”

It's clear that there is a lot of institutional decay in the diction of “scoundrel,” “buyable,” and “conniving.” The judiciary is not an independent entity, but a partner in political corruption. This is in line with the Postcolonial Theory's focus on neo-colonial political institutions, which serve the elites rather than the citizens.

Also, “Not My Business” is a case of abuse of power. Excessive use of force and intimidation of people are depicted:

“They picked Akanni up one morning
Beat him soft like clay
And stuffed him down the belly
Of a waiting jeep.”

The example of the phrase “soft like clay” illustrates Akanni's helplessness against the oppression of the State. The vehicle pictured is known as the “waiting jeep,” which is a reference to military dictatorship and institutional violence. The poem is an expression of how an authoritarian regime has the power to suppress citizens by using fear and force.

CDT helps to understand the mechanisms of power in the state, such as intimidation and silencing. The repeated statement:

“What business of mine is it”

exposes the conditioning of ideas in oppressive societies. Ferocious fear helps to numb people to injustice and thus to disenfranchise them. The rhetoric of self-preservation takes the place of solidarity among people, enabling oppression to flourish.

4.3 Portrayal of Political Betrayal and Social Inequality Affecting the Common People

“A Villager's Protest” is a work with political betrayal and social inequality being prominent themes. The poem depicts the politicians as false prophets who will come around to deceive the rural people during the election, but leave them once they are in power.

Repeating “They come” highlights the idea of political manipulation in a cyclic manner:

“They come
armed with sweet words
inflated promises.”

The word “inflated” conveys the sense of hollowness and falseness. Political promises are "over-the-top" and not attainable. The poet uses irony to expose the differences between what is promised during a campaign and political life.

The promises themselves have as their message the needs of the development of neglected rural communities:

“We’ll build schools
We’ll build hospitals
We’ll bring water
To every backyard.”

A politician's rhetorical power is emphasized by the parallel structure. The promises have yet to come to fruition, though. This is indicated in the Postcolonial Theory, in relation to the lack of ability of post-independence leaders in tackling poverty and underdevelopment common to the colony.

The poem depicts politicians as unconcerned elites who put their own interests first, the people's:

“fat cars, juicy damsels
and the best there is
in the world of softness
consume fat salaries.”

The word fat is repeated to signify excess, greed, and corruption. The poor are being deprived, and the political leaders are getting rich. The juxtaposition of the luxury enjoyed by the elite and the poverty of the rural population can be used to show structural inequality within the postcolonial society.

The metaphor:

“The mouth now is too honourable to greet
the belly too obese to bend”

shows an air of self-assuredness and coldness. The “obese belly” represents greed and corruption and the buildup of wealth. When there is a lack of bending, pride and contempt for the normal people are present. After their ascent to power, politicians no longer have a sense of belonging with the people.

Critical Discourse Theory is useful in understanding the manipulation of the masses in the political discourse. Politicians, during elections, use discourse strategically to build false hope

and get legitimacy. Political promises turn into ideology to manipulate "vulnerable populations. Political promises are turned into ideology to manipulate "vulnerable populations. With the acquisition of power comes a change in tone from humility to superciliousness and coldness.

The proverb-like metaphor:

“power is the bird of the forest
which nests on one tree today
and tomorrow pitches its tent
on another”

leaves traces of African oral tradition and puts in focus the impermanence of political power.

As a migrating bird, it is an image that looks to the leaders to be wary of taking on too much.

Social inequality is also very prominently illustrated in “Not My Business.” Akanni, Danladi, and Chinwe represent the common man who is oppressed by repressive regimes. Chinwe's job is taken away, but why? Chinwe is suddenly fired from her job:

“No query, no warning, no probe
Just one neat sack for a stainless record.”

Institutional injustice and abuse of power are evident when one lacks due process. Within oppressive political systems, workers are turned into disposable victims.

Fear and silence are the other forms of inequality to which the poem points. Under a dictatorship, people become selfish: citizens do not pay attention to the plight of others. Such a division of collective resistance allows the flourishing of authoritarian systems.

4.4 Protest Poetry as a Tool for Social Consciousness and Resistance

Protest poetry is the tool in the struggle for social awareness and against oppression that Osundare employs. His poems are not only about injustice, but they are also against corrupt institutions and incite citizens' resistance.

In “Not My Business,” the repeated refrain:

“What business of mine is it”

initially reflects indifference and fear. However, the final stanza introduces dramatic irony:

“And then one evening
As I sat down to eat my yam
A knock on the door froze my hungry hand.”

This abrupt cut may represent the certainty of the oppression. Eventually, the one who turns his/her back on injustice against others is a victim. So the poem's message is that being silent when you're being oppressed is ultimately a death sentence for you as well.

The relevance of Critical Discourse Theory is that it deals with the issues of the poem, which is about the dominant ideology that is that which fosters passivity and self-preservation. Osundare reconstructs discourse, fosters collective responsibility and social consciousness. The poem is then a counter-discourse which challenges authoritative discourses.

In the same way, “My Lord, Tell Me Where to Keep Your Bribe” is a revolutionary work of satire. Osundare exposes the public to corruption by ridiculing judges and the legal profession. But satire turns into a way of resistance to oppressive systems.

The Yoruba expressions:

“Won gb’ebi f’alare
Won gb’are f’elebi”

Build a sense of community and cultural identity. Osundare's poetry in the indigenous language establishes a link between poetry and collective resistance and the oral traditions of Africa. The incorporation of Yoruba signs is linked with the emphasis of Postcolonial Theory on the reclaiming of the indigenous identity and resistance to the colonial/neo-colonial domination.

A Villager's Protest: Resistance comes from awareness, memory. The villagers know about the manipulative strategies of politicians, and they hope for some change in politics:

“Another rain will fall
(its clouds already gathering).”

The metaphor of the rain is an inescapable political change and political accountability. The poem implies that tyrants will fall and go back to those communities that they disregarded.

In this context, Postcolonial Theory takes the task of giving an explanation of how protest poetry can be a means of decolonization. Osundare is an opponent of oppressive political and socio-economic systems birthed by colonialism and is a proponent of social justice and social emancipation. His poetry recovers the voices of the disenfranchised citizens and defends against the neo-colonisation and exploitation.

In sum, Osundare's poetry exemplifies the possibility of literature to be a potent means of political resistance, engagement, and social change. The poet reveals the corruption of institutions, denounces political betrayal, and awakens consciousness against oppression through satire, imagery, symbolism, repetition, irony, and rhetorical discourse.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a summary of the major findings of the study and draws conclusions based on the analysis. It highlights the contributions of the study to the understanding of protest poetry and its engagement with societal issues. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further research and literary scholarship.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study focused on the investigation of the structural injustice that is revealed in selected poems of Niyi Osundare through the use of protest poetry. The study used textual analysis in Chapter Four, as well as the theoretical framework of Postcolonial Theory and Critical Discourse Theory, and based on the findings, the research found the following main findings.

In the first place, the study concluded that institutional corruption and the misuse of power are the main thematic issues in the poems selected. In his “My Lord, Tell Me Where to Keep Your Bribe”, Osundare discovers corruption amongst the judiciary and shows that legal institutions are morally rotten, favouring the rich and oppressing the common folk. The poem exposes the corruption of the justice system through the use of satire, rhetorical questions, irony, grotesque imagery and symbolism, and how trust in the system has been compromised by bribery, judicial corruption, and institutional greed. Also, “Not My Business” depicts the use of state violence, intimidation, and abuse of power against citizens, in the form of arbitrary arrests, fear, and suppression of citizens. The analyses show that corruption and abuse of power are not the exception, but a reality of the institutional structures that have been set up in the postcolonial governance.

Second, the study found that the poems chosen have a strong implication of the political betrayals and social inequalities of ordinary citizens. “A Villager's Protest” highlights how politicians are able to use false promises during elections and then turn their backs on the rural

communities once they come into power. The poem reveals the increasing distance between the political elites and the masses, with the emphasis on the existence of poverty, neglect, and underdevelopment amidst repeated political promises. Osundare is mocking the selfish leadership and the exploitation of vulnerable communities using the tools of irony, repetition, metaphor, and satirical imagery. The study also shows that institutional injustice, economic exploitation, and political arrogance are the causes of the strengthening of social inequalities. The masses continue to be left behind, and the leaders are enriched in wealth and privilege.

Thirdly, the study revealed protest poetry as a strong instrument of raising social consciousness and resistance. Osundare's poetry serves as more than just a form of artistic expression; it is a tool for revealing injustice, challenging oppressive systems, and bringing about collective awareness. "Not My Business" takes one of the characters through a journey of indifference to personal victimization, showing how silent complicity to oppression can be dangerous. In "My Lord, Tell Me Where to Keep Your Bribe," satire is used to unmask and expose the moral rot of their society and corrupt institutions. A Villager's Protest also raises political consciousness by reminding leaders that the power is temporary and reminding citizens of the power of the people. The poems thus serve as discourses of counter-identities challenging dominant discourses of exploitation and oppression.

Fourthly, the study found that Osundare skillfully uses literary devices and discourse strategies in communicating his themes of structural injustice and resistance. All aspects of the oral poetic, including the use of satire, irony, repetition, symbolism, rhetorical questions, imagery, hyperbole, metaphor, and others, are frequently employed to reveal corruption and social inequality. The adoption of African expressions and the oral traditions of the communities also strengthens the cultural identity and collective consciousness of the African people. The poet in these stylistic devices makes literature a place of struggle for ideas and social engagement.

The overall results validate the situation of structural injustice found in the selected poems as having a historical, political, and ideational history within postcolonial Nigeria. In the poems, the legacy of neo-colonial exploitation, mis-governance, and institutional oppression is clearly apparent even after Independence, through Postcolonial Theory. The study shows that language, discourse, and institutional narratives are employed to maintain and/or challenge systems of power through Critical Discourse Theory. Osundare's protest poem is thus a notable moment in African literature that speaks out against corruption, inequality, silence, and oppression.

5.2 Conclusion

The findings of this study support the proposition that protest poetry is a potent tool that can reveal socio-political systems of injustice and oppression in Nigeria in the postcolonial period, in the selected poems of Niyi Osundare. Through the poems, the corruption, abuse of power, political betrayal, and social inequality are very much entrenched in institutional structures and continue to affect the lives of ordinary citizens.

The study reveals that, on top of political and economic structures, structural injustice is also perpetuated through language, ideology, and institutional discourse as analysed by Postcolonial Theory and Critical Discourse Theory. Osundare reveals how post-colonial leadership perpetuates exploitative systems that have been passed down from colonial leadership, disenfranchises the masses, and centralizes elite power. Furthermore, his poems detail the way in which oppression thrives in society through silence, fear, and manipulation.

The study also brings to a conclusion that Osundare makes poetry a tool of resistance and social intervention. The poet satirizes, uses irony, symbolism, rhetorical devices, and oral poetry to question, expose, and provoke a social awakening among readers in relation to corruption and/or questioning authority. Protest poetry thus serves as an artistic and political tool in challenging the injustices and calling for transformation.

Overall, the research highlights the continued significance of literature as a medium of critique of systems of oppression, a means to voice and strengthen voices from the margins, and a tool to champion social justice in current African societies.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for further studies based on the results of this study:

1. Future researchers should work on more Niyi Osundare's and other African poets' protest poems to enhance the knowledge of scholars about the African structural injustice and protest literature
2. Comparative exercises in poetry, drama, and prose are to be conducted to learn how the various forms of literature depict corruption, oppression, and resistance in postcolonial societies.
3. The work could also be extended to explore the correlation between protest poetry and political activism in modern-day African societies, especially the impact of literature on fostering democratic awareness and social change.
4. The interaction of discourse, language, and ideology in African literary texts should be explored in a wider perspective of Critical Discourse Theory and other linguistic approaches as researchers.
5. Interdisciplinary methodologies drawing on literary studies, political science, sociology, and cultural studies should be encouraged to better understand the structure of injustice and resistance of African societies.

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