

SATIRICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ELEMENTS IN SOME SELECTED POEMS IN *IJE UWA*

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Introduction

A poet is a person who is usually more sensitive to sights, sounds and sensation of the world around him, behaviour of people, their follies, their sufferings, concerns such that they seek for wisdom, ask questions and examine issues about life. Poetry as one of the three genre of literature is the reflection of life and human experience. It serves as a watchdog of the society. It offers people opportunity to express themselves on social, political and moral issues affecting the society. A literary artist (poet) does this, by satirizing the weakness of character or vices in a given geographical setting.

It teaches moral lesson, inculcates discipline, good moral values in individuals as well as instructs people to conform to the acceptable moral standards maintenance of law and order in the society. People apply their knowledge of literature in their day to day experience in life. According to Egwudu (1979: 1) literature "as a mode of expression, not just subject that expresses something but rather, it is the way, manner, or method in which something is said or written". A number of poems have been examined with the idea of finding out the satirical and philosophical elements in those poems. The poems are unpretentious, persuasive and full of grace and tenderness. The selected poems in *Ije Uwa* are compose with fastidious, melodic and meticulous choice of words.

The study aims at exposing the extent to which the writer of the selected text through her works have gone to mirror the events of life, portraying the cultural value and explore varieties of human experience in Igbo community. It aims at portraying man in his society, examining and interpreting human behaviours in societies of past and present while projecting into the future. The reader will find it easy to understand what the poet has said in his mind. Based on this assertion one can deduce that a poet is a person who is naturally sensitive to his environment. It can also be seen that the anthologies in *Ije Uwa* are all about man and his society. They examined man as a social being. The look at human virtues vices as products of varying circumstances. It studies man's success and failures, his strengths and weakness and how these are affected by time and environment. The poems arouse pity, sympathy and tenderness.

Review of related literature

Satire and philosophy have been in existence since man and his culture started to exist. Ever since, people have been contributing to the growths of these two aspects of knowledge. One of the scholars of contributors to satire is Ngugu (1969:5-6). "The satirist

sets himself certain standard and criticizes society when and where it departs from these norms, he invites us to assume his standard and share the moral indignation”.

The wikipedia encyclopedia says, satire is often defined as a literary genre or form although it can be found in graphic and performing art. Satire in the modern sense of the word is found in many artistic form of expression, including literature, plays, commentary and mass media, publications. This is correct because satire could expressed in oral works like speeches, orations, recitations and written works as well as the products of painters (p.3). Satire focus on those things which can correct people from the level ways of life in order to be better than they are.

Fiecknoon (2004:2) Says “it is interested in comparing satire with comedy, and that what makes it different from comedy is that in satire there is usually a clear and overt didactic intention, but in normal situation people of their inescapable human limitation”.

This definition is correct but does not go to the point of giving profound meaning of satire. It fails to define satire as a critical work that aims at talking of one's bad behaviours in order to make his change his ways of life. Jonathan (2005:10) sees satire “as a mirror in which people see everyone's face except their own”.

His idea about satire is very accurate because one who criticized others idea not likely see anything about oneself. His back is always clean. Ronald (1928:34) describes,

The satirist as a kind of spiritual therapist whose function is to destroy the root causes of the major diseases of the spirit like hypocrisy, pride and greed. But the satirist does not necessarily confine himself to such moral cancers.

He is observing that the satirist criticises other people and feels that he has no need for corrections. Cuddon (1977:20) points out; “Satire as a poem in which wickedness or folly is censured”. He says that the true end of satire takes it upon himself to correct, ridicule the follies and vices of society. In our modern society, we have poetry texts like *Uche Bụ Akpa Ulari*, *Obiageli*, *Ije Ụwa*, *Akọ Bụ Ndu*, *Uche Bụ Afa*, *Akpa Uche* etc

Anozie (2005:10) in his poem "Naijiria" satirical emphasizes that Naijria is a good nation that is blessed with natural resources like oil. One of the finest oil in the world but its leaders are corrupt. They mismanage and squander the wealth of the nation.

Thus: Naijiria (pg15)

Igbo: Ndi Ọchịchị eteela m unyi n'ihu
Ha bụ ndi isi aba okpu
Ndi eze onye agwalam
Akunuba m amaala afọ n'ala (stanza 2 line 4-7)

Translation: Our leaders have brought shame to me
They are indisciplined
Leaders turn deaf ears to advice
My wealth has been impervious

Anozie, the poet mentions in the poem "Ndorondoro Naijiria" says that everywhere is always rowdy during the time of any election. The evil people use their fellow human beings for ritual purpose. As a result of unsafe situations people live in great fear. The poet's view of the dangerous situation is expressed thus:

Igbo: Tigbuo, zogbuo, ebe nile ana-ekwo ekwo
Mmadu ka e ji agwo ogwu
Otu anya ka e ji arahu ura
Onye obula chorọ ichi (stanza 3 lines 2-6)

Translation: Smack and trample to death everywhere
very rowdy
using man in carrying out ritual sacrifices
Everybody sleep with one eye open
For everybody wants to rule.

One of the scholars that wrote a satirical poem is *Ogugua* (1988:52) who in his *Ono na di achọ di* criticizes that some married women have bad attitudes. Their bad attitudes make them to be wayward. These women forget their oaths of matrimonial lives and do a lot of bad things just because their husbands have financial problems. The poet states this below.

Igbo: O bu gi mere nwaanyi m ji ego luta
Ghara ibu ihe n' anya di ya.
Oge obula nyara akpa ya pua
Agarachaa ji wee hapu umu na di were biwe
Ndu masiri ya (stanza 6, lines 6-9)

Translation: The woman I got married to
You made the woman I paid her bride price
To worth nothing before her husband
Always going out with her bag slung
For which the elegant lady left her children and
Husband
To live her life the way she likes.

Philosophy has been studied by various people. One of the scholars is Grant (2009:5) who pointed out that philosophy involves having love for wisdom. He emphatically states his view thus: Judging by his ideas, philosophical poem will then mean the poem that promotes the love of wisdom. Philosophy can be defined as reflection on the varieties of human experience. The poems are used to educate the young or citizens on the values of society. It can be done either teaching or conversation. It teaches moral. The poet makes use of objects

wayward woman who is not satisfied with one man (her husband). She does not take care of her family and her husband is supposed to be pitied. She has given her love away to another man. She states her observation. Thus:

Ka m tiri uwe kacha mma
 Nwaneku ga-eletara m
 Di rn na umu m anya
 Ndi oyi m ga-echebego m. (stanza 1, lines 4-7).

Translation: let me put on my best cloth
 Baby sitter will take care of
 My husband and my children
 My friends will be waiting for me.

The poet laments the attitude of some women in the society, their husbands are not enough for them, they like to have many friends without knowing the effect. Their baby sitters will be taking care of entire household both of the children and the husband because she is always busy outside and has no time for her immediate family.

Mgbe ahu ihe emebiela
 Nwaneku aburula nwunyedi

Translation: When she comes back home
 Things have fallen apart

She also does this by slinging her with the baby sitter the being elevated to the position of a co-wife with the women of easy value. The imagery in the poem is effective and the language is simple to understand. It strikes the reader and moves his emotions.

Obodo Onicha (pg.10)

The poet exposes the atrocities and corruption in Onitsha community. She presents Onitsha as a city blessed with wealth which has popular markets in it. The poet showcases crime in the community. The city contains a lot of criminal that include armed robbers, rogues, and money doublers. The policemen and soldiers have tried so hard to abolish crime in this city but their efforts were in vain. People are wicked against their fellow human beings.

Thus: A na-apunara ya n'ike
 Ndi uweojii na ndi uwekaki
 Agbaala mbọ ka ike ha ha
 Ikpochapu ndi Omekaome a n' obodo a
 Ma ihe na-ebe ka na-ebe (stanza 4, line 2-6).

Translation: It is snatched by force
 Policemen and soldiers have
 Tried within their capacity
 To rid the town of these criminals
 But the problem persists

The burden in the poem becomes heavier because of the crime in the community. One noticeable element in it is corrupt life style and high rate of crime in Onitsha environs is armed robbery. She narrates when the robbers are in actions and as people hear sounds of gun short they become afraid.

The poem “Obodo Onicha” is satirical, the burden on the poet becomes heavier because of great fear in the city. The image in the poem establishes a theme of despair and sufferings.

Thus: Ụbọchị niile ị nke onye ohi
 Ma otu ụbọchị ị nke onye nwe ụlọ

Translation: Everyday is for the thief
 But one day is for the owner of the house.

The poet goes further to satirize the circumstances of armed robbery attacks. In the situation, the robbers boldly attack their victims and issue directives to them. The owners of the house or other properties fear a lot and obey as instructed.

Thus: Egbe na mma ana ada
 Anyammiri ejuputa anya ọbụla
 Obi ana-eti kpim! Kpim! Kpim!
 Mkpu enweghị ike ịputa n'ọnu
 N'ih iwu ndị abalịdịegwu na-enye
 Ihe mmadu ka
 A na-apunara ya n'ike.

Translation: Gunshot boom and matches cling
 Tears fill all over the place.
 As the heart beats kpim! Kpim! Kpim!
 Could not shout
 Because of orders of night murders
 People's acquisitions
 Are snatched away from their wealth.

She also implied that people were suffering from envy as a result of which the wicked one's attack people unnecessarily.

Translation: Anyaụfụ nye onye ọzọ
 Ekworo na anyaukwu juru obodo Ọnịcha.
 (stanza 5, lines 6 & 7)

Translation: Environs people attack others
 Envy is all over Onicha.

Igbo: Mana ọnwụ ga-egbu nwankịta
 Anaghị ekwe ya anụ isi nsị (stanza 6, line 5, 6)

Translation: But the death that will kill the puppy
 Does not allow it divert attention

In fact the tone of the poem is anger and cry for a change.

Okediadi (2003) in her poem “Onye a goziri agozi ka m bu” pg. 12, allows her character to talk through her mouth. The character is a full fledged human being. She is not handicapped and all parts of her body are complete.

She also mentions that God blessed her with good health and she is not suffering from any sickness. The poet says that our God is a great God, He has shown his blessings upon her. She says that God has blessed her in so many ways for instance He gave her wisdom, knowledge, good health.

Igbo: Akụkụ ahụ m zuru oke
 Aka na ụkwụ m
 Na-arụ ọrụ dịrị ha
 Anya m na-ahụ ihe
 Ma nke pụtara ihe (stanza 1, lines 2-6)

Translation: All parts of my body are complete
 My hands and feet
 Doing their normal assignments
 My eyes see the light
 Even those that are clear

The philosophical poem tends to teach moral and abiding faith in Almighty God that it is only from the creator that blessings come. “Onye a goziri agozi ka m bu” is divided into three stanzas. The first stanza has seven lines, the second stanza has six lines and third stanza has seven lines. The poet points out the profound truth and experience of God’s blessings to mankind.

Conclusion

Having gone through these three poems selected from *Ije Uwa* one can see that the respective poems are to expose and mirror the events of life. The said poems portray the

cultural values and explore many options of human experience in Igbo community. They employ pictorial setting and other imagery to enhance the reader's mind.

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