

COMMUNICATING REALITY THROUGH POETRY: A REVIEW OF ZAKARI SULE MUSA'S *ECHOES FROM THE THEATRE*

Ottah, Gabriel Alhassan

Department of Mass Communication, Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria. ottahgabvoice@gmail.com

Corresponding Author's email: ottahgabvoice@gmail.com



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ABSTRACT

This work reviews the anthology of Zakari Musa Sule, Echoes from the Theatre, with special focus on the ideology, concepts and messages communicated through literary tools to convey issues of contemporary concerns to Nigeria, Africa and the world at large. The poems are 142 in all, running through the 249 pages of the collections. Textual analysis was used as the instrument for assessment and conclusion in the work. The review takes a look at communication in literary terms, techniques and dictions that convey creative use of language, use of imagery, application of didactic expressions and use of emphatic and sound devices. As it is expected of an ideal review, I also pointed out the strengths of the work, which include economy of words and achievement of musicality through literary elements; and the attainment of clear communication through poetic language. One of the weak points in the collections is the one-sided criticism of the then ruling Peoples Democratic Party, instead of a balanced composition with at least a poem on the present government of the 2-year old All Progressives Congress. The critical observations were meant to allow for improvement in subsequent editions.

Key words: Poetry, Communication, Poetic Licence, Literary Elements, Poetic Language.

Introduction

A media scholar doing a review of a literary work as it relates to communication often reminds one of the portrait of a journalist given by Ugwu (2000, p. 1) in Ogazimorah-edited, *Inside the Newsroom*. He says "to the average man in society, there is one understanding of who a journalist is. He is all-knowing. In villages and city centres where a group of people are gathered, they look up to him for information and sometimes education." This description perfectly

positions every sound, critically minded and well-read media personality to do an objective and academically accepted review of a collection of poems like this.

Communication takes place through the media of print and electronic. The print media include newspapers, magazines, books and journals. The contents of the print may be in form of prose, poetry or even drama and music. Communication in printed form is,

unlike the broadcast form, permanent and can be easily referred to.

African literature is a veritable medium of projecting the African ideological practice and the socio-political chronicle of the people. It is also a communication medium for the projection of our culture and beliefs to the world. For instance, in Amadi's *The Concubine*, African communities as projected in the work believe that one does not die without a cause. It must be in connection with one's failure to do something or doing the wrong thing.

There are three genres of literature, namely, drama, prose and poetry (Okoye, 2014). Drama is the genre of literature which is meant to be acted. Usually, casts assume the position of characters in the play and interpret through imitation of the actions and speeches with elements of improvisation. A play is divided into acts and scenes and is best appreciated either through stage acting or in the films as movies. All the movies on the television channels are the products of interpretation of written plays by actors and actresses. Examples include Wole Soyinka's *Jero Plays* and *The Lion and the Jewel*; William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *Twelfth Night* and *Romeo and Juliet*; Ola Rotimi's *The Gods are not to Blame*, *Kurunmi* and *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi* and Sola Owonibi's *Peace by Peaces* to mention a few.

Prose, on the other hand, is a continuous writing often divided into chapters, sub-divided into paragraphs. It is a narrative that enables the author known as the novelist to describe situations in his own language while using the inverted commas to quote the direct speeches of the characters. Examples of prose include Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*, *Things fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease*; Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*; Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*; and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born*, to mention a few.

Of the three genres of literature, only one speaks volumes in a few words. Only one observes the stanza-and-line format, and indeed, only one is, according to Wordsworth, the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquillity. And that is poetry. In poetry, there is a high dosage of economy of words. Because of its nature, only a few literary giants adopt it. It is for the serious-minded. According to Aristotle, poetry is the most philosophical of all writing which has truth as the main object. On this, Okoye (2014, p. 2) defines poetry as "an emotional outburst or powerful expression of emotion and feeling which concerns itself with truth and beauty." To the communicator, poetry may be seen as a medium of making powerful intra-personal communication known in written or verbal form. Since poetry deals with emotion, it is usually the product of the mind, which is communication within the individual. Such emotions purge in form of poetry. For this reason, poetry is usually associated with creative use of language with a high sense of economy of words. The allusions and figures of speech employed to bring home the message are sometimes clouded in the emotional outburst.

Zakari Musa has printed his name in the list of literary icons in Nigeria like Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, John P. Clarke, and beyond, like John Keats and Robert Browning. Back home, he is one of the very few Nigerian poets to have put together poems of this volume. *Echoes from the Theatre* is a collection of 142 poems under the headings of Social Justice, Love, Religion, Logic and Riddles, Death, Philosophy and Nature, Memories and Epilogue. The title itself is symbolic as it suggests that instead of watching the *dramatis personae* perform at the theatre, we hear the echoing of poetry from behind the stage impacting on the visual and auditory imaginations of the audience. This analogy is predicated on the features of

the front cover and the contents of the work. The cover has the picture of a beautiful theatre with alluring stage designs. There are four milk-coloured empty chairs at the centre of the stage facing other empty chairs meant for the audience.

Just as the writer of the foreword, Rotimi Jegede, described the anthology as a movement, the poet himself says what urges him to express the largeness of the mind in relation to the vastness of the universe among other issues, is inspiration. The audacity of inspiration has culminated into the moulding of this pot of poetry

Study Problem

Over the years, various media-related studies have concentrated attention on such issues as impact of the media on democratic development, health, population, economy, the law and agriculture among others. Some of those studies usually state audience perceptions and the theories of the press. We have had several studies on the implications on media contents and the media of such contents on different categories of audiences.

When research is carried out on the print media, it is usually on newspapers and magazines. Print in form of books with poetic contents that communicate reality does not really have the patronage that other media enjoy among media researchers. This is the literary lacuna this study stands to fill. There is the need to study and analyse the aspects of literary communication that inform, educate and entertain society. This need therefore constitutes justification for the review of Musa's *Echoes from the Theatre*. For the sake of this review therefore, we consider the poems, the language, the audience, literary techniques adopted for effective poetic communication in realistic terms; the message of the poet and the strengths and weaknesses.

Objectives of the Study

1. To text-analyse the collections of Zakari Sule Musa's *Echoes from the Theatre*.
2. To highlight the literary tools used in communicating reality in the poems.
3. To identify the aspects of the literary works that inform, educate and entertain readers.

Textual Analysis

The poet, Zakari Sule Musa, opens his work with a prologue in which he invites readers to "what the word is worth." Here, he receives readers into his "...sing-song in rhythms" and advises them that as he makes his speeches, "let yours practice what it preaches." From the circle of words, the poet is optimistic about his ability to stitch readers' minds to his in the journey of poetic reading and appreciation.

In section 1 where the poet talks about social justice, he is quick to lament the oppression of the poor by the leaders (politicians) who he describes as "politricians." (see line 1 stanza 2 of *Fields of Harvest*). Here Zakari laments that our society is at the mercy of:

Politricians and tricksters
Betrayers and fraudsters
Who live by fresh bones and foetus.

He expresses concern over how our leaders steal resources meant for the people, trade our God-given items and "sniff the life out of the black ant." Unfortunately, nothing happens to nip this in the bud. This line of thought is also communicated in some African poems. For example in Mazizi Kunene's *To the Soldier Hero*, the poet laments the untold hardship visited by Langula (a symbolic name for a military dictator) on the people. Also, in Christopher Barlow's *Building the Nation*, the poet portrays the dance of shame by the corrupt leaders in Africa, who, on the pretext

of building the nation, amass wealth for themselves at the expense of the masses. As the poet narrates it, the selfish politicians do not have concern for even the common people like their drivers who work for them. A related metaphor is Adekoya's *Chichidodo* a title apparently derived from Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born*. In Armah's novel, Chichidodo is a bird that hates excreta with all its life, but it eats maggots which not only survive by eating excreta but also live and thrive in it. So, using this idea, Adekoya derives his title to exemplify the tendencies of corruption in Africa. It explains how we hate corruption but like the authors of corruption, who, in Anyanwu's (2016) opinion are the people of the western world. In the face of the suffering, the citizens are helpless; and Zakari seems to be making a similar observation.

The second poem, *Moments of Monuments*, becomes more specific and satirical of the party that led Nigeria through the thorny wilderness of corruption all those years. Satire is a literary tool used by poets, novelists and playwrights to point out through exaggerated effects, a particular ill exhibited by an individual, an organization or a government. George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born* are good examples of political satires; just as Wole Soyinka's *Jero's Trials* exposes religious hypocrisy exhibited by some pastors in Africa. Zakari's *Moments of Monuments* carefully refers to the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) that controlled power in Nigeria for 16 years. The communication pattern adopted leaves one with the hunch that this is a satire to wail the woeful performance of the PDP. The following lines justify my suspicion:

People have deceived people (line 1, stanza 1)
 People have denied people (line 1, stanza 2)
 People have dribbled people (line 1, stanza 3)

Papa has deceived pikin (line 1, stanza 4)
 People have drowned people (line 1, stanza 6)
 People have damaged people (line 1, stanza 7).

And the extent of damage is very disheartening as it affects "our nation, our map, our flag." In the poet's estimation, "people have destroyed people."

The result of the destruction is captured in the subsequent poem, *Forgive Africa*. As he puts it, there should be forgiveness for "the many years we have kissed hunger and never a good meal." In *Nigeria i, ii* and *iii* the poet presents the true picture of Nigeria politics and government. It suggests suffering in the midst of plenty.

The year 2016 was Nigeria's 56th Independence Anniversary. To mark this, Zakari has a paradox, *The Crawling Might* in which he laments 56 years of slow motion. Paradox uses opposite ideas to convey meanings and this practice is common to most poetic communicators. A striking instance is Segun Adekoya's *Here and There*, in which there is an extensive use of paradox to explain general human issues irrespective of location. After 56 years of attainment of independence from the colonial masters, the problems staring us in the face are captured like this in the lines of Zakari Musa Sule:

56 years of auto and plane crashes
 56 years of greed and corrupt practices
 56 years of flouting ego
 56 years of happy shares for kidnappers (21).

It is not celebration as one would have ordinarily seen it, otherwise, the poet would not ask any one to "teach me then your 56 dance steps."

As we make progress, we come across *Kogi, Why this Cry?* The poet adopts apostrophe to address Kogi, a state that is "our own whole home." The state capital, Lokoja, is also mentioned as Nigeria's first

commercial capital. It is the training ground for emissaries and warriors and city of slave trade and our centre seat to the state. With all its splendour and with all challenges, there is hope as expressed in stanza 12 lines 1, 2 and 3:

May we smile at the rock for just a while
Laughter will rock our hearts to silent sleep
May we role the stone to make a home. (31)

In Section 2, the poet opens our eyes to issues of love and he believes that “love is the string of slavery which no committed member of the bond is willing to break” (38). Consequently, God is love and should forgive us our sins, beginning from Adam and Eve. Also, *The Voice of Love* eulogizes the beauty of a woman. Love, according to Zakari, comes from God and it comes in-between a man and a woman; from mother to child and vice versa; it is comparable to the moon, which does its work for all mankind without discrimination. Love, as aptly described by Alfred Lord Tennyson in *The Beggar Maid*, “the moon in the clouded skies” cannot be hidden, no matter how thick the cloud is. Such is the beauty of love. Love naturally provides jingles for singles and eyes for the heart to see even beyond beauty.

The poet goes further to portray perspectives of religion in literary aesthetics. In Section 4, we are face-to-face with Logic and Riddles. The poet believes that “if logic is logically illogical, it may be housed in the domain of philosophy.” To this end, philosophy and logic are like twin brothers together and apart. Thus, logically or logically illogically, we have *The Tenth Planet* as the law.

Section 5 revolves around death, and we are made to understand in *Death has come too Close* that death is a driver with global license who forges into cliffs and caves. Since death is inevitable, the poet becomes didactic in stanza 3:

Wipe then your tears and fears
Wife, child or the sobbing hubby
Rejoice not for life, nor weep for death
It’s a play with acts and scenes
Raise the curtains and await their fall (91).

In his collections on death, Zakari paid glowing tributes to the late icon of Igala politics, Dr Steve Achema. In the classical elegy, the poet aptly describes the sorrow in the hearts of Igala people on Achema’s demise. To put the sorrows behind, Zakari has a sonnet, *Songs of Courage*, in which he says death is not worth the worry as what should concern mankind is how to record prodigious achievements while alive because death is inevitable. After all, in William Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, the king says “death, a necessary end will come when it will come.” Consequently, instead of singing *Songs of Sorrow* as done by Kofi Awoonor, Zakari Sule Musa chooses to sing *Songs of Courage* saying:

Death is not worth my thought
What to do or that that I ought
I am the lease of earth-time
To seek a vexed verse or find a fine line
Before the close of day or night

Zakari’s desire and prayer for mankind in general is communicated in the subsequent lines:

In the twilight on the threshold
Before the expiration of my leasehold
To power the willing race-horse
Grant me the enabling ace-force
The grave opens before everyone’s cave (92)

To cap it all, Zakari returns from a prayer mood to declare what he thinks of: “I think of the earth and not what is save, not of deaths and when they come.” This communication of optimism carries the weight of didactic influence on readers to be hard working while

still alive instead of thinking of the inevitable death.

In his lines on Philosophy and Nature, Zakari gives the portraits of *True Fun*, *World Women Writers*, *Rifts*, *Incarceration* and the punning of *Rain and Reign*, all of which point to issues of life and its surrounding. Life, the poet feels, is circled in creases of crises, but one could have fun through poetic adventure.

Here again, the poet adopts the popular maxim of the late activist and motivational speaker, Martin Luther King Jr, *I have a Dream*, but unlike King, the dream of Zakari is that:

One day, Shakespeare's peers appear
Rising to the sonorous voices and tongues
Of Africa's lyrical gong-songs (222).

The poet is optimistic that one day Africa will experience peace and tranquility and witness an environment devoid of starvation, oppression and corruption. Then, African Shakespeares will appear. This optimism is equally re-directed at Zakari Sule Musa who hopes to attain the status of William Shakespeare in literary communication world. This expression of hope tallies with that of David Diop in his *Africa* where "that tree that grows among white and faded flowers" will put smiles on the faces of the African Nation again.

The bias of the poet for Africa is manifested in his different versions of poems relating to the continent. They include *Time in, Africa*; *Africa, I am*; *Africa*; *Sun in African* and others. In sections 7 and 8 which focus on memories and epilogue, the poet concludes his collections with more poetic philosophies. He suggests that personalities in transit should receive wishes of glorious mercies. But just as we are about to sleep, Zakari Musa dazes us with elegies of the most popular human being on earth in the person of Nelson Mandela. Recall that when Mandela died on 5 December

2014, up to 93 Heads of countries of the world trooped into South Africa to condole the country. All media stations shifted attention to the lives and times of Madiba; and newer versions of songs and poems emerged in respect of the great man. Joining the many lines is Zakari Musa in his *Nelson Mandela*. Mandela represents the positive side of Africa as encapsulated in stanza 2.

Yours is a philosophy in the skyline
You have knitted this beautiful black land
To the entire life-breathing earth
Our axiom speaks our idiom
And no race anymore suppresses this race
You have won this grace our miming ace (228).

On Mandela, Zakari has soothing words for Africa:

Africa, weep no more
There is but a man who shed all coloured tears
For twenty-seven dreadful crazy
years.....stanza 7
Mandela has murdered death
Beyond the breadth of earth.....stanza 8

Back home, our creative writer beams searchlight on the late Professor Francis Idachaba and Dr Steven Achema both of whom he equates with Mandela in his *Resurrection*. Again, while Professor Idachaba is a colossus that has gone to sleep, Igala political iroko, the late Prince Abubakar Audu is a *Candle light in the Wind* which got blown out when its splendour and brilliance was most useful in Kogi political metamorphosis.

The epilogue gets us more disturbed. Such collections should have no end. Perhaps, Zakari, in his world of poetry does not really agree with music icon, Celine Dion, in her *Goodbye the Saddest Word*. Yet we come to terms with the author's perspective of goodbye. It is goodbye from voyage to a realm of soaring grace. It is goodbye from wandering

minds of sovereign race. It is goodbye from renaissance to realism.

Rating among Poets

One may say the works of Sule compare favourably with those of world-class poets like David Diop in his *Africa*; Mazizi Kunene in his *To the Soldier Hero*; Richard Nturu in his *Pauper*; Lenrie Peters in his *The Fence*; Wole Soyinka in his *Telephone Conversation* and *Abikwu*; John P. Clarke in his *Casualties*; Robberts Brownings in his *My Last Duchess*; Robbert Frosts in his *Mending Wall*; David Herbert Lawrence in his *Snake*; Alfred Lord Tennyson in his *The Beggar Maid*; Thomas Hardy in his *Sacrilege*; John Keats in his *Ode to the Nightingale*; Williams Wordsworth in *The World is too much with Us*; just to mention a few. He has successfully compiled poems that address contemporary issues in Nigeria, Africa and the world at large. For example, while David Diop eulogizes Africa as a place with “proud warriors in the ancestral savannah” in his imagination, Zakari Sule Musa describes the continent as a place of hope where:

We see the feet of the sun
Scratch the face of the silent earth
We move on the earthly time
We read our tales by the beauty of the moon
Knowledge and wisdom stream in by her light

Using volume as a barometer, we are also moved to rate Zakari high as he has up to 142 different poems inside one anthology. This is an uncommon feat among contemporary poets in Africa. Besides, Zakari Sule Musa’s communication of reality manifests in his use of classical allusions and sound devices that champion him out as a creative writer. Some of the literary tools adopted would be pointed out to justify this claim.

Application of Literary Elements for Effective Communication of Reality

Through poetic license, writers are at liberty to adopt any style and language to communicate their points. Consequently, any red-blooded poet like Zakari Sule Musa would adopt figurative language, sound devices and devices that put readers in the state of auditory and visual hallucination. He is very successful in this direction. Let us cite a few examples.

Use of paradox in *A Citizen’s Status*

To better appreciate the meaning and relevance of paradox to literary appreciation, let us subscribe to Achebe (1975, p. 70) who says “where one thing stands, another thing stands beside it.” Also, Abrams (2005) sees paradox as “a statement which seems on its face to be logically contradictory or absurd, yet turns out to be interpretable in a way that makes sense.” Thus, in William Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, the witches believe that “fair is foul and foul is fair.” Little Adindu is said to have shared “tears of joy and tears of relief” in Emmanuel Ebo’s novel, *Hero number One*. In the works of Zakari Sule Musa, paradox comes into play severally. An example is in *A Citizen’s Status*:

I am the blessed citizen
With the right to shelter
Under lovely trees with foul breeze
I am the inheritor of bulging tummy
Tiny feet under dry buttocks
Uncovered head with wilting hairs (17).

A poet claiming to be blessed has attributes of curses (such as bulging tummy and dry buttocks). It is not a blessing in the real sense of it, but the use of paradox for literary communication of reality in poetic terms.

Use of Alliteration in the Bid to Satirize the PDP

As mentioned earlier, alliteration is a form of sound device in which consonants are repeated in poetic communication in order to achieve either lyrical or emphatic effect. In his satire of the PDP, Zakari adopts the alliteration of d and p in:

People have deceived people
People have denied people
People have dribbled people
Papa has deceived pickin...etc (8).

Use of Repetition in *The Crawling Might*

Repetition is a literary device in which a word, phrase or sentence is repeated for the sake of emphasis. Repetition enhances communication as it has the capability to stamp information more permanently on the memory of the audience. It equally enhances the musicality of a poem. African poets are good at using repetition for effective literary communication. Adekoya (2008) in his *Another Wasteland* gives no thanks to the military who usurped power and did not embark on a policy that had bearing on the lives of the common people, except promulgation of decrees. He says:

Decrees and decrees till the land is dead
Kill and kill and kill till the hand is red
Thus is a country fed on decrees
Thus is a country led by decrease
Thus is a country fed on screams
Thus is a country bled to freeze

In Zakari Sule Musa's *The Crawling Might* the repeated phrase is "56 years of..." as seen below:

56 years of slow motion
56 years of vulnerable risk evasions
56 years of a myriad of faltering dance steps
56 years of dreams of blurred visions (21).

There is in all 22 times of "56 years of..." in a poem of 40 lines, showing the extensive use of repetition.

Use of Assonance

Assonance is a sound device which repeats vowel sounds for the sake of emphasis and musicality, and this is found in Zakari Sule Musa's *The Only One I Know*:

Brain drain ailment rain.

In *The World We Know*, there is also the use of assonance in:

Length and breadth
With wealth in health
These are a few of the assonating sounds in the work.

Use of Rhetorical Question in the Title, *Kogi, why this Cry?*, and Pun in line 22.

Rhetorical Questions are asked not necessarily for answers but to create a communication effect, an emphatic effect, on the reader. In employing this, the poet rhetorically asks:

Must we steal our own steel still?

The use of steal, steel and still equally brings to mind the beauty of pun in literary communication.

Use of Dramatic Monologue and Apostrophe in a Poetic form in *Absolute Love*.

Dramatic monologue is employed in communication to allow the audiences understand the thought of the speaker. In drama and poetry, this device is very effective in creating room for clarity and flow of thought on the side of the audience. If the actor or poet does not say his or her feelings, plans and beliefs, the audience would be in the dark, hence the need for dramatic monologue in communicating reality both on stage or in poetic format. Apostrophe comes into play when the person or thing addressed

is absent. In the poem *Absolute Love*, the poet, with the instinct of an imaginative character, speaks to an abstract love in absence:

I will forever stock my I Love You for you
In my larynx for further review (46).

Both monologue and apostrophe are manifest in the lines above.

Use of Personification and Apostrophe in *The Veil of Kindness* in which the poet addresses an abstract noun, kindness, like a person: there is a transfer of human attribute to the abstract noun, a virtue so adored by the poet called kindness:

Kindness, my friend, your highness
Your smooth route has no recklessness.

Use of Oxymoron in *Pure Love*

At the mountain top
And abyss of the valley
Wherever my meal is milled
I should be distant near...(stanza 2)

In the lines above oxymoron juxtaposes two opposite words for emphasis. Here, we have mountain top and valley as a pair of oxymoron, just like distant and near, which are placed side by side.

In all, the collections of Zakari Sule Musa have the basic tools for effective literary communication for ease in understanding and critical analysis.

Zakari's Poetic Concept

Literature as a form of communication is to mirror society and make people do the right thing. Poetry in particular is for the serious-minded. So, the complex language used in the poems is expected. The idea, from start to finish, is a crusade for a better Africa and the world with specific reference to Nigeria, and even more specifically, Kogi State and the Igala Nation. The poet, Zakari Sule Musa, canvasses

a situation where those in positions of authority would lead without corrupt tendencies; a society where basic amenities are available for the common man; a society where people would go to bed and sleep with both eyes closed; a society where divisive schools of thought would not mar our political and religious sectors; and a society where peace and tranquility will prevail and reign supreme. These are realities that make or mar society.

Critical Areas

It is instructive to note that the poems are the products of a long term critical thinking and research, especially in the choice of words and formatting of the stanzas. Poetry is classified into periods, ages and according to rhyme schemes and number of lines and stanzas. We have such ages as nobility, renaissance and romanticism. In terms of number of lines, we have sonnet (14 lines) octave (8 lines), septet (7 lines), sestet (6 lines), quintet (5 lines), quatrain (4 lines) triplet (3 lines) and couplet (2 lines). Of all the lines, Okoye (2014) notes that the most popular composition is the sonnet. And that is why the works of Williams Wordsworth, *The world is Too Much with Us*, and Alfred Lord Tennyson, *The Beggar Maid*, are very popular. Using rhyme schemes, we have alternate rhyme (abab), couplet rhyme (aabb) and free verse (no definite scheme).

The trend overtime is that African poets have not been able to perfectly fit their poems into most of these set standards and categorizations. Zakari Musa broke a jinx as one African to have composed poems with definite numbers of lines to be named sonnets and others. In the earlier review, it was suggested that the poet should trim his 15-line and 13-line poems to 14 lines. In this revised edition which the poet published after 5 months of the public presentation of the first edition, he has not only done that but has also increased the collections from 124 to 142.

Unlike the previous edition, we now have *Before Twilight*, which has two stanzas of seven lines each, thereby making us to have a sonnet; *Harness Your Shares*; *My Song, their Voice*; *The Wages have Sin*; *The World of Money*; *Star*; *Sleep*; *Atonne of Fears* and *Suicide* among others.

We now have more sonnets than before and this is critically commendable.

While we praise the poet for being creative and becoming a foremost African poet with a difference in the composition of sonnets, it is instructive to suggest a review of the rhyme scheme to meet up with world standard. Let us have such schemes as abba, abab, aabb, cdecde as we have in some non-African poems.

Finally, I observed that the poet has had exhaustive discussion on the performance of the previous ruling party, but he is silent on the present APC-led government. In order to strike a balance and be free from possible criticism over one-sided, subjective analysis of governments, Sule should have at least a poem on the Buhari-led administration. We cannot pretend to be blind to matters arising now on the jack-up in the prices of everything except salaries. We have a lot on the whistle

blowing, Buhari's health, Boko Haram, exchange rate, Buhari's public speeches among others. On this note, we ask, if PDP goes for People have Deceived People, etc, what does APC stand for? Can we say all is now rosy for Nigerians under the APC-government?

Conclusion

In reviewing Zakari Sule Musa's communication of reality through poetry, we have seen the power of words and figurative language in bringing home messages that champion the cause of development and peaceful coexistence. We have also seen the use of poetic license to communicate issues that border on love, social justice and good governance. Zakari has excelled as a poetic communicator, his lack of balancing in criticizing the ruling political parties and absence of a definite rhyme scheme not withstanding. It is therefore concluded that *Echoes from the Theatre* conflates resources drawn from his native culture, environment and western poetic characteristic to put his poetry together as the classic example of cross-cultural contemporary textuality.

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