



## LITERATURE AS A MIRROR OF THE SOCIETY: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF LENRIE PETER'S POEM - The Fence

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### Abstract

*The context-dependent nature of meaning in literary texts is seen as the core value that qualifies them as the mirrors of society. This paper investigates the language use in Lenrie Peters' poems namely The Fence with a view to exploring how linguistic choices in a literary text can truly represent both the contents and the intents of the society of its setting. The paper draws upon the context-based theoretical persuasions of both Critical Discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional Grammar. Analysis was focused on ideational Meta function of language as well as pragma-semantic meaning inclinations of the text. Material process had the highest percentage under transitivity analysis. This suggests that the referent society in the text was a very busy one where different activities were taking place. However, the fence-sitting posture of the writer throughout the text showed the value contrast of the protagonist in view of happenings around him. The pragma-semantic implications of words and figurative choices in the text foregrounded its themes of confusion, insincerity and his contrasting ideological positions in the referent society. The work concludes that Literature is not only a reflection, but also a representation of the realities of the society of its setting.*

**Keywords:** Literature, CDA, The Fence, Transitivity Analysis, Linguo-pragmatic Analysis

### Introduction

When literature is described as a mirror of the society, the general belief is that it is as a medium of representing the world around us. That is the imitation of the diverse characters, attitudes, events, as well as the socio-cultural configurations of the human society. When it is viewed more technically, It will be right to say that the content and the intent of literature are products of artistic and practical imaginations and ingenuity of the literary thinkers, as they arise from their sheer personal intuitions and creativities. This notion might have informed Orilope's (2017:11) view that "literature is an imaginary but plausible narrative" and also "as the imitation of life".

However, it may be important to construe things a little further from other perspectives. On the one hand, literature as a mirror of the society may be seen as a reflector of the realities of the human condition whose material virtues and values are directly sourced

as well as society's order of events - an enterprise that provides reliable records of identity for a particular human society. On the other hand, as a mirror of the society, literature does not only document the facts and figures of the happenings in the society, its inventories, one may submit, are nothing but the incontrovertible representations of the human experiences of the world in which it is set. And, in this case, literature performs the archival function of providing custody for the dos and don'ts of the society for the required socialization, acculturation and integration of the unborn generations.

Arising from the background above, Orilope (2017:11-12) does not only aver that "the materials of literature are drawn from the author's experiences and observations of life" but also true is the fact that "the major concern of literature is the condition of man in the society and how to represent" and "project" this condition "with symbols in a way that this condition becomes meaningful". Given the foregoing, one may hold that literature has the existence of the

society, and, by this reason, humanity, as the basis for its involvement. It is important to critically examine how literature, and, particularly poetry, serves as a reflector of the human society and as the characterization of its ideologies.

### **CDA, Ideology, Poetry and Language Use**

CDA is an analytical approach which has the aim of revealing the hidden contents and intents of a text or talk. It also has the underlying motive and/or the presumption that the linguistic resources that are deployed in discourses are not in any way dispensed with neutral tendencies.

Scholars believe that discourses do not evolve in a vacuum. Rather, they are both contextually based and pragmatically construed. The general belief is that it is the societal indices and/or constraints that manifest as the primary evolvers of human discourses. CDA, according to Taiwo (2007:219) is “a method of discourse analysis that reveals the way discourses are used every day for signification, power relations and development of new knowledge.”

As an approach to discourse analysis, CDA evaluates the communicative values and the ideological perspectives of a text via the instrumentalities of the linguistic and non-linguistic resources and their manner of deployment in a text ( Onyema and Onyema, 2015:236). The fact here is that the appropriateness of examining the ideological cum socio-cultural underpinnings of a communicative output, such as a poem, through its linguistic and rhetorical deployment, cannot be overemphasized. This belief may be justified given the understanding that CDA, an analytical research approach, investigates the relationships among language, ideology and power with the aim of taking an explicit position in a socio-political context via its attempt to explore, expose and resist social inequality in texts and talks (Wang, 2010:1).

Given Taiwo’s (2007:218) observations that “our words are never neutral, they carry the power and the interest of those who speak or write”, it may be evident that literary outputs, as mirrors of the society, may not only be seen as iconic representation of the societal codes and constructs, but may also be described as actually the recapitulations of the societal realities. In the case of poetry, this may be held to be particularly so as one reckons that poetry is “a superior form of creation” and “an outburst of a mind duly possessed by philosophical ideas” (Gboyega, 2003:5, Bodunde 2007:230, and Alabi, 2017:245). Thorne (1997:251) writes on the function and nature of poem:

The language of poetry is both poetic and expressive. It has wide range of functions: It can entertain; arouse emotions and provoke thoughts; it can describe, evaluate and inform; the texts can be poetic and intense, or ordinary and conversational. By considering the linguistic and stylistic features of poem, it is possible to come to the conclusion about the poet’s intentions. The contents, forms and style will give the readers clue to the meaning and often there will be an underlying message or theme which is revealed only on close reading

When one uses the Thorne’s (1997:251) position above as a guide, one sees that some of the underlying messages in the poem under the current study are ideologically encapsulated and can only be uncovered by deploying appropriate theoretical approach such as CDA for its ability to appraise the ideological values of the linguistic choices in the text. This idea is particularly motivated by the observation that much scholarly effort is yet to be directed at this area of research. In order words, while it is on record that the body of knowledge has actually recorded a fair proportion of CDA

researches in diverse texts since its inception in the early 80’s, it may be observed that much cannot be said to have been done in the area of poetic discourse

For instance, Mahmood et al (2011) undertook a Critical Discourse Analysis of News Headlines of Budget of Pakistan FY (2011-2012) where it is concluded that headlines were representations of the editors’ ideologies regarding their political inclinations though they claim to give purely neutral information. Jegede (2015) did an examination of the language and ideology in the Nigerian newspaper editorials. He submitted that editorials help to articulate a better understanding of the news media and the unique use of language and text.

In the areas of poetry, some of the very few scholarly researches into CDA of poetry include among others Onyema and Oyema (2015) conducted a critical discourse analysis on one of Ojaide’s (2007) poetic collection entitled “Eco-Poetry” namely, *Tales of the Harmattan: Environmental Rights* in order to examine the informational and ideological contents of the poems. Their conclusion was that the poet was able use special linguistic strategies to achieve societal consciousness towards the environmental rights of the people. Majeed and Mahmood’s (2019) investigation into the Critical Discourse Analysis of figurative language in the selected poems of Langston Hughes with a view to explaining the implicit meanings inherent in the figurative language of the poems. The study revealed that, doing critical discourse study requires a vast knowledge of the beliefs and ideologies of the discourse composer. It is in view of this conclusion by Majeed and Mahmood coupled with the observation that researchers have not applied CDA to the evaluation of Lenrie Peter’s poems which are noted for their enormous imbue ment with African/Nigerian socio-political ideologies and conditions that prompted this paper.

### **Aim and Objectives:**

The current paper therefore aims at exploring the ideological undertones of Lenrie Peter’s poetic piece titled *The Fence*. This is with a view to analyzing the linguistic choices and their manner of deployments in order to serve as tools in the text for the delivery of the thematic focus as well as the microcosmic representation of the socio-political order of the larger society in which the poem is a product. The specific objectives for the realization of this aim are to:

- (i) identify the different linguistic resources used in achieving the poet’s aim;
- (ii) explain the communicative functions of the employed linguistic resources and;
- (iii) conduct a critical discourse evaluation of the deployments of such linguistic resources

### **Theoretical Framework: SFG and CDA**

The article is carried out with joint insights from the theoretical perspectives of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). From the CDA perspective, hybrids of views which border on contextual conditions of language use in any society by some notable CDA theorists such as Fowler’s et’al (1979) Critical Linguistics, Van Dijk’s (1985) Socio-Cognitive theory, as well as Wodak’s (1996 & 2001) Discourse Historical Approach are incorporated. These are supported by the Halliday’s (1994) Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). The belief is that insights from these perspectives will provide a critical view of the

text under analysis. It has not only been argued that CDA and pragmatics have a common foundation in SFG, but also that SFG and other theories in pragmatics are integral parts of CDA (Hazemain 2012:1179, Wang 2010:254).

### Ideational Function

This represents the cognitive meaning of language and has to do with how language users internally construe or are conscious of their experiences of the real world as expressed through transitivity system of grammar and voice.

Here, the meaningful grammatical unit is a clause/sentence with different choices of processes and combination of participants. Citing Peng Pingping (2007), Wang (2010:257) presents the six process types, their core meanings and participant combinations which shall be employed for the current analysis. This is as shown in the Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Process Table**

	Process Types	Core Meanings	Participants
1	Material	‘Doing’, ‘Happening’	Actor, Goal
2	Mental	‘Sensing’	Sensor, Phenomenon
3	Relational	‘Being’	-
4	Verbal	‘Saying’	Sayer, Receiver, Verbiage
5	Behavioural	‘Behaving’	Behaver
6	Existential	‘Existing’	Existent

### Research Method

*The fence* is one of the sixty-nine poems that make up Lenrie Peters’ (1971) anthology entitled *katchikali*. The poem is purposively selected based on the perceived socio-cultural, political and ideological echoes that run through its lines and stanzas, and which are considered to be always highly representative of the (contemporary) African society at large and Nigeria in particular. The different linguistic strategies employed in the poem are identified, explained and pragma-semantically interpreted given the identified communicative context believed to have necessitated their choices in the text. Hence, the analysis of the ideational functions of the linguistic choices in the poem will be undertaken.

The nature of the current research, as a critical discourse analysis of meaning cum ideological representation, dictates that major attention is given to the interpretive explanation of the marked linguistic deployment. Both qualitative and quantitative analytical approaches will be employed for interpretative exposition of how and why certain linguistic choices are made in the poem. Though, the poem is set in Africa as a whole, the present analysis only ex-rays its Nigerian society’s point of view. This is due to the poem’s indescribable relevance to the cotemporary socio-cultural, economic and political situations of the present Nigerian society.

### Lenrie Peters

Lenrie Peters was born on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1932 in Bathurst (now Banjul), in Gambia to a Sierra Leonean Creole of West Indian or Black American and, a Gambian Creole mother of Sierra Leonean origin Lenrie Ernest Ingram Peters and Kezia Rosemary respectively. He attended the Trinity Collge Cambridge in 1956

and the University College Hospital London in 1959. He also went to Guildford, England in 1967 where he did an advanced course in surgery. He was a pan African writer having being a renowned member of Pan African Movement whose writings always drew attention to the socio-political conditions of Africa and the Africans Duduyemi (2011:236))

### The Fence as a Poetic Piece

*The Fence* as a poem written by Lenrie Peters is a Satire. Its principal intent is the lamentation of a failed socio-cultural, economic and political African society, and the unrepentant inclination to provoke an all-encompassing movement for the resistance against the present order, and, an informed consciousness towards a radical change. Lenrie Peters’ belief is that African society is characterized with consistent lack of ideological fronts and foundations, and, at the same time, full of internal forces of divisions and contradictions. It is explicitly evident in the poem that confusion, contrasts, indecision, hesitation, dilemma, antagonism, division, etc. are the orders of the day.

### The Nigerian Contextual Issues in the Poem

Lenrie Peters’ *the Fence* as a poetic piece may be said to be a metaphor for realities pervading the contemporary Nigerian society in all intents and purposes. Here is a society where stability and consistent direction in virtually all spheres of national life - socio-politically, economically, ideologically etc. are hardly known. From linguistic, religious to cultural etc. points of views, the nation Nigeria has always been described from the pluralistic points of view with no particular centre of unity. The Nigerian society has been socio-politically neither here nor there, and, centrifugal ideological orientations have always characterized polity (Bouchat, C.J., 2013:1-3).

Adebodun (2019:491) wrote that “there is no better proof of a confused Nigerian political class than the one found in the formation of political parties. Making mess of the country’s multiparty system is the establishment of close to hundred political parties”. According to him, “are we suggesting that there are one hundred political ideologies in Nigeria?” Whereas, it is a common knowledge in Nigeria that the country’s party system and democratic processes and practices as well as governmental structure and form cannot be traced to any particular political ideology (Bouchat, C.J., 2013:1-3-6; Chidi, 2015:52-53). Dhikru and Adeoye (2019:3) added that:

“the state has failed in three major areas: security of lives and properties, promotion of the rule of law, and provision of visionary leadership. In conclusion, the nature and characters of the political leadership explains the Nigerian state incapacity for effective governance.”

It is in the context of the foregoing that the critical analysis of the *The Fence* – is viewed in relation to the Nigerian society in the current research effort.

### Textual Presentation

1. **The Fence**
2. **There where the dim past and future mingle**
3. **their nebulous hopes and aspirations**
4. **there I lie.**
5. **There where truth and untruth struggle**
6. **in endless and bloody combat,**
7. **there I lie.**
8. **There where time moves forwards and backwards**

9. with not one moment's pause for sighing,
10. there I lie.
11. There where the body ages relentlessly
12. and only the feeble mind can wander back
13. there I lie in open-souled amazement
14. There where all the opposites arrive
15. to plague the inner senses, but do not fuse,
16. I hold my head; and then contrive
17. to stop the constant motion.
18. my head goes round and round,
19. but I have not been drinking;
20. I feel the buoyant waves; I stagger
21. It seems the world has changed her garment.
22. but it is I who have not crossed the fence,
23. So there I lie.
24. There where the need for good
25. and "the doing good" conflict,

26. there I lie.

#### Textual Analysis and explanations

The analysis is segmented into two broad parts namely, the ideational analysis, which comes up first, and the pragma-semantic cum linguistic analysis which follows after. The order is as follows:

#### Ideational Analysis:

The Ideational analysis represents the cognitive meaning of the language use and has to do with how language users construe their experiences of the real world as expressed in linguo-semantic terms through **transitivity** and **voice**. Here, the meaningful grammatical here unit is a clause with different choices or processes of combination of participants as explained above. The table below displays the transitivity analysis of our text according to each stanza of the poem:

Table 2: Trasitivity Analysis Table

Stanzas	Linguistic Entities	Processes	Core Meanings	Actors	Goals	Circumstances
1	-Mingle -lie	-Mateial -Material	-Doing -Doing	-The dim past and future -I	-Their nebulous hopes and aspirations	There where
2	-Struggle -lie	-Material -Material	-Doing -Doing	-Truth and untruth -I		-There where -In endless and bloody combat -There
3	-Moves -lie	-Material -Material	-Doing -Doing	-Time -I		-There where -forwards and backwards -with not one moment -for sighing -there
4	-Ages -can wonder -lie	-Material -Material -Mental	-Doing -Doing -Doing	-The body only the feeble -mind -I		-There where -relentlessly  -back -There -in open-souled amazement
5	-Arrive -do not fuse -hold -contrive -goes -have not been drinking -feel -Stagger -seems -has hanged -is  -Have not	-Material -Material  -Material -Mental -Material  -Material	-Doing -Doing  -Doing -Sensing -Doing  -Doing	-All the opposites -I -my head I I I It -It -I -Who -I	-the inner senses -my head -the constant motion -the buoyant waves  -the world  -her garment -the fence	-There where -To plague the inner senses -to stop the constant motion -Then -round and round -so there

	crossed  -lie	-Mental  -Material  -Relational  -Material -Relational  -Material  -Material	-sensing  -Doing  -Being  -Doing -Being  -Doing  -Doing			
<b>6</b>	-conflict  -lie	-Material -Material	-Doing -Doing	-the need for good -the doing good I		-there where  -there

**Table 3: Quantitative Analysis of the Processes in the above Transitivity Analysis**

Process Types	Number of Processes	Percentages Represented
Material	19	79%
Mental	3	13%
Relational	2	8%
Total	24	100%

**Table 4: Quantitative Analysis of the Actors in the above Transitivity Analysis**

TYPES OF ACTORS	FREQUENCY	PERSENTAGES
Pronominals	'I' = 12 'IT' = 2	= 52% = 09%
Nominals	9	= 39%
TOTAL	23	= 100%

It follows from Tables 2 and 3 above that, with the material process having the lion's share of the transitivity analysis, namely, 19 and 79% respectively, in the first place, the society that is conceptualized by the poet, is a society that is preoccupied with a plethora of physical and material activities – a literally substantial very busy society. And, the material process being the process of doing and happening, what the tables suggest is that the referred

society turns out to be what it is, not for the wants of actions, but either for the wrong actions, or for the actions based on un-thoughtfulness or both. This observation seems to have been justified given the abysmal gap of difference between the mental (process of perception, thought, imagination, etc.) and material processes. Consequently, the affected society grapples with the difficulty to take or have a definitive position of being (which is the relational process – the process of being). (See Tables 2 & 3 above) The society is therefore neither here nor there – which is the state of confusion and dilemma. It is notable here that, the type(s), the nature and the rate of practices, actions and inactions that constitute the commonplace experiences in a society and/or in the life of an individual are the matters of what ideology/ies or world view(s) that is/are sitting deep at the heart of such a society and/or individual.

However, the questions of 'what are even the actual doings/deeds/actions in the society that are being done?', 'who are the doers of those deeds?', 'to whom are the doings being done or directed, and under what circumstances are the doers doing the deeds?', will also arise. The answers to these questions will not only confirm and affirm the dominant ideological orientation(s) of a society, it will also significantly throw more light on its intensity. From tables 2 and 3 above, we can see the types and the nature of doings/activities, the circumstances of such activities, as well as the actors and frequencies of actions. examples can be attested from line 2-15 of the poem.

From Table 4, we see the fact that actor 'I', who appears to be the major morally, idealistically and intellectually conscious character and the most active actor (judging from the nature and frequency of appearances/mentions for activities, i.e. 52% as recorded in the

table), is a mere monotonous and secondary participant, whose nature of activities and/or doings are only in observatory capacity, while all other actors put together, who perform real and primary activities, are not only in the minority, but are also engaged in counterproductive doings. This appears to reflect the situation in Nigeria and/or in most African countries, where the majority of the educated/elitist groups feel too more superior to play practical roles in the nation's socio-political and economic affairs. What they do most is only to sit back, maintaining neutrality as well as evaluating and rationalizing the actions and inactions of those they feel they are morally and intellectually better than, but who decide and control their destinies and fortunes in nearly all spheres of national life. They never take side in the pragmatic sense of it. What they do is to maintain neutrality in the ravaging world of moral and intellectual crisis.

### Linguo-Semantic Cum Pragmatic Analysis

At this level, the different linguistic strategies employed in the text which are analyzed in the tables above, will be explained and interpreted pragma-semantically in line with their presupposed communicative values in the poem under review. The analysis will thus touch on lexicalization cum word classes, voice cum the mood as well as the tense typologies in the text. By implication, it is believed that the analysis, either overtly or covertly, will resonate in the background, the linguistic issues of use such as nominalization and figurative use, context or circumstances of use/actions, thematization cum topicalization as well as actors cum agents of influences in the society as depicted in the text. The analysis is as follows:

**Lexicalization:** Lexical choices that are symptomatic of the thematic and ideological representation and/or preoccupations of the text under examination confirm the scholars' argument that one of the important postulations of Halliday' (1985) is that textual compositions are context dependent and have lexical choices as tools for cohesive unification of thoughts or meaning, as well as for textual thematisation and message codifications. Thus, from the table 2, we can see that the different lexical categories and the syntactic structures that feature them have not only helped to form the author's message/theme of confusion and indecision, they have also projected the ideological standpoints of the author. Hence, the under-listed lexico-syntactic extracts from the poem were chosen by the author to represent the themes of eternal confusions, contradictions, insincerities, indirections, instabilities, disorderliness, restlessness, turbulence, lawlessness/anarchy, wandering, violence, uncertainties, un-thoughtfulness, frivolities etc., all owed to unstable ideology, are aimed to be foregrounded across the poem: (See lines 1-3, 5-6, 8-9, 14-15, 17-18, 20-21, 25, and 26 of the poem)

The pragmatic implications of these themes, as arising from the extracts are superlatively in evidence in the Nigerian contextual summary given in a section above most especially when one considers the highlighted expressions. It is obvious from the extracts that the society is a theatre of ideological clashes and conflicts of interests, first, among the various social classes in the society, and second, between the author's world view and that of the ruling class who seemed to have failed to restore order and champion acceptable norms in the society.

**Voice, Tense and mood:** It is observable throughout the poem that all the sentences are expressed in both active voice and its attendant declarative structure of mood. The pragmatic undertone

of this is that the communicative emphases are upon the subject(s) of each of the sentences. This is another way of foregrounding the focused themes and messages which the poet wishes to primarily report as the goings-on in the target society. Hence, when one contemplates the meaning implications of the above extracts, and juxtaposes them with the situations in Nigeria from independence till-date, one wonders whether any light has ever been at the end of the tunnel in any sphere of our national life. The singular fact that all the action words are in present tense/continuous forms shows the ever current and undying natures of the activities reported by the poet. Hence, we observe such action words as "mingle..., lie..., struggle..., moves..., ages..., ages..., can wonder..., arrive..., do not fuse..., hold..., contrive..., goes..., have not been..., feel..., stagger..., seems..., has changed..., have not crossed..., conflict..."

**Nominalist/Nominalistic characters as subjects:** This is a referential practice of representation. This is mostly the style in literary texts where figurative use of language is a commonplace for naming referents responsible for actions and/or inactions. Here, nominalism (mostly abstract entities) is adopted to allow the employment of universals as characters for metaphoric/figurative codification of literary meanings mostly for satirical purposes. So, in the text under review, we see a number of such figures of expression, namely, personifications, metaphors, synecdoche etc. See the extract below:

- 2 - past and future mingle
- 3 - their nebulous hopes and aspirations .... Personification
- 5 - truth and untruth struggle
- 6 - in endless and bloody combat .... Personification
- 8 - time moves forwards and backwards .... Personification
- 11 - the body ages relentlessly .... Personification
- 12 -the feeble mind can wander back
- 14 - all the opposites arrive
- 15 - to plague the inner senses .... Personification
- 15 - but do not fuse .... Metaphor
- 18 - my head goes round and round .... Synecdoche cum Personification
- 21 - the world has changed her garment .... Synecdoche cum Personification
- 24 - the need for good
- 26 - and "the doing good" conflict .... Personification

It is important to note that the metaphoric imports of all the figurative expressions employed in the above extracts are superlatively symbolic and, they are pointers to the philosophical cum ideological worldviews that are held by the author. Here, we see that the stream of consciousness the author is remarkably quite antithetical to the goings-on in the society and so, he now appears to be the only odd one out in the entire society. Hence, his position as a fence sitter that is neither here nor there, refusing to take side in any of the societal/national debate. This is the core meaning of the entire poem and, the reason for choice of the representation of its overall title – The Fence

### The Use of First-Person Point of View: (Pronoun 'I')

In literary practice, a point-of-view is the position or the angle of view of the author. It is a mode of representation(s) of the author's message which may largely be very difficult to separate from his/her world view(s) or ideological orientations. Part of the belief here in critical analysis is that the way one conceives the idea of what he/she is going through will hardly be divorceable from

his/her narrative perspectives of the matter. The reason being that if the goings-on had been in line with, or admissible to the moral and intellectual persuasions and values of the writer, the kind of self-isolation, self-estrangement that motivated the manner of employment of the pronoun 'I' and/or the often repeated clause "there I lie" throughout the poem would not have been so obvious in the text. The poet would probably have chosen other term(s), e.g. 'we' which would have been suggestive of collectivity and togetherness irrespective of how odd or comely the deeds may have been. Hence, pragmatically, the choice of 'I' by the writer cannot but spark on ideological departures and dichotomies that exist between the writer and the predominant number of his contemporaries in the scheme of things. This is why his position as a mere observatory participant in the major events is graphically foregrounded while his dilemma as to the question of which side of the societal arguments to belong is eternally inconceivable throughout the text.

#### (a) Situational/Circumstantial Reports

This has to do with how the contexts of situations that surround the goings-on are linguistically represented according to the author's choice. The critical issue here is that a line distinction is made between the goings-on and their manner, gravity and the rate at which they are unfolding. This will definitely have to do with the evaluative capacity and ingenuity of the writer, which, either by remote or by immediate pragmatic implication, will be underlain by the ideological propensities and persuasions of the evaluator. The classes of the linguistic representations for these contexts of situations are mostly adverbial and adjectival in nature. In the text under review, we see such lexico-syntactic choices as "...nebulous hopes... In endless and bloody combat ... forwards and backwards ... with not one moment for sighing ... relentlessly ... in open-souled amazement ... constant motion ... the buoyant waves". It is clear from all the cited lexico-syntactic resources above, that the state of the society is definitely far from one which will inspire the writer to call his dream society.

## Conclusion

From the foregoing analysis and explanations, it sufficient to affirm that language is a socio-cultural artifact and, a contextually shaped tool for communication as an instrument of thought and consciousness as affirmed by Onyema and Oyema (2015:249). It is seen that language is an enduring and effective infrastructure for documenting our individual and collective human experiences as noted by Oripeloye (2017:11-12) . Given the outcome of the present analysis, it is imperative that one concludes that literature, as a veritable field of language use, is not just a mere distant or remote reflection of the type and/or nature of the host society in the mere symbolic sense, but also, its contents and intents are actually valid communicative representations of the realities of the society's goings-on. This is to say that literature has to draw its raw materials for contents and intents directly from the collective pool of consciousness and awareness of the society so that its message will be communicative, rational, instructive and impactful to the target society. Otherwise, literature will not have been more valuable than a mere collection of linguistic expressions and an art for art' sake.

Ideologically, language as an instrument of thoughts and expressions, is definitely not divorceable from the convictions, values and worldviews of its users, literary writers, most especially poets, cannot but have theirs permeated through the lines of their literary outputs. On the one side, it is obvious in poem under review that the writer unrepentantly maintain a fence-sitting position throughout simply because the goings-on in the world

around him are never in conformity with his values and worldviews. On another, we see the society in which the poet finds himself roundly engaged in doing what they know how to do with unbroken trend without remorse and reservation. This is can only be so because the societal norms and predominant sentiments are not unfamiliar to the common practice (Abor 2007:6-7). In conclusion, one can only affirm from the foregoing that, for the language and messages of literature to be decipherable to the target audience in any socio-political clime, it necessarily must be the product of norms of such society.

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