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Reformation and Social Change in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's Poetry

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Abstract

This paper examines reformation and social change in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's poetry. In the light of the social crises in Nigeria, Adimora-Ezeigbo's poetry serves as both a condemnation of current realities and a prophetic call for collective change. Using the Postcolonial Utopianism theoretical model, the research examines how her poems, which are chosen from *Heart Songs* (2009), *Waiting for Dawn* (2009), and *Mixed Legacies* (2019) employ imagery, metaphor, and personification to unveil the ordeals of Nigerian migrants, challenge dominant discourses of migration, and invoke value reorientation and social responsibility. Through close textual analysis of selected poems, the paper shows how Adimora-Ezeigbo's poetry not only brings to the fore the affective and social costs of migration but also articulates hope and models of ethical living, making a case for poetry as a force of social transformation and communal healing in postcolonial Nigeria.

Keywords: Adimora-Ezeigbo, Postcolonial Utopianism, social reform, hope, migration

Introduction

Nigeria is faced with serious social challenges like mass migration, moral decadence, and national disillusionment. "Japa" syndrome is on the rise, as over 1.7 million Nigerians were residing overseas as at 2020 (UNDESA). This leads to brain drain and dereliction of national duty, as argued by Adesola Akinyemi (4). Nigerian poetry has become a platform for social criticism and renaissance. Adeola James notes that the quest for greener pastures leads to disillusionment and loss for both individuals and nation (112). Adimora-Ezeigbo's poems stimulate moral awakening, honesty, and responsibility, in concordance with Olufemi Vaughan's vision of civic values (56). Since over 40% of Nigerians live in poverty and social trust is eroding (World Bank), her role as a poetic moral guide is critical. The study analyzes eight of her poems from *Heart Songs, Waiting for Dawn,* and *Mixed Legacies*, using qualitative textual analysis to show how Adimora-Ezeigbo

deploys imagery, metaphor, and personification to critique Nigeria's social malaises and envision value transformation.

Theoretical Background

This study employs Postcolonial Utopianism as its theoretical framework. As a critical theory, Postcolonial Utopianism is interested in idealistic and constructive visions of possible futures beyond colonialism (Ashcroft 15). Unlike the dominant postcolonial movement whose interest is criticism and deconstruction of the colonial powers, this theoretical perspective espouses change, remaking, and emancipation. It also draws attention to the role of literature—in the former colonial countries—a place in which utopian dreams can be conceived and expressed, offering imaginative templates for cultural renewal and society transformation.

The term *utopianism* is derived from Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), where it was used to describe an ideal society. Postcolonial theory has itself over time reevaluated the use of the term to refer to how erstwhile colonized people imagine alternative futures to colonial legacy. At the center of this reframing is Fredric Jameson, who views utopianism as a literary form through which subalterns imagine radically different futures that exclude current conditions. According to him, postcolonial utopianism is "a mode of critique that exposes the limits of present conditions by imagining radically different futures" (41). Building on this, Ato Quayson roots postcolonial utopianism in the concrete lives of postcolonial being. Rather than abstract or detached idealism, he sees it as a constructive engagement with social environments that will usher in healing and the remaking of broken identities (47). For Quayson, imagining good futures is an act of response to colonial trauma and today's neocolonial issues.

One of the main assumptions of Postcolonial Utopianism is the reordering of values. It involves the breakdown of colonial ideologies and the reassertion of local and communal values. Elaine Savory emphasizes this reclaiming as the key to postcolonial rebirth, instilling cohesion and resisting the cultural splintering wrought by colonialism (82). Social awakening and collective action are other tenants of Postcolonial Utopianism. Gurminder K. Bhambra identifies the importance of the voice of marginalized groups—specifically, women and ethnic minorities—demanding inclusion and actively crafting equitable societies (98).

Postcolonial utopianism has been criticized as naive, because critics argue that it can be mobilized to further exclusionary nationalist agendas and is imperceptive to intricate oppressions on the basis of gender, class, and ethnicity. Despite such reservations, its strength is that it is a vision of transformation—one that is future-optimistic in critiquing colonial legacy and providing space for imagining inclusive, socially just futures grounded in indigenous epistemologies and collective mobilization (Quayson 49; Ndodana-Breen 115; Bhambra 99). The study adopts an amalgam of the theories of Ashcroft and Quayson, defining Postcolonial Utopianism as a critical framework that moves beyond resistance to colonialism in order to imagine and articulate constructive, inclusive, and hopeful futures rooted in indigenous values and collective transformation. Thus literature becomes a space for envisioning ethical renewal and social reordering in response to colonial and neocolonial crises (Ashcroft 15; Quayson 47). This definition guides the analysis of Adimora-Ezeigbo's poetry as a site of both critique and imaginative reconstruction.

Review of Related Scholarship and Justification of Study

Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's poetry has garnered some critical attention, though not as much as her prose. For instance, Clement Eloghosa Odia analyzes insurgency in her poetry through the lens of trauma theory. He argues that "Adimora-Ezeigbo lays bare the physical devastations wrought by insurgents. Using the riddle as a literary device, the poet highlights the issue of terrorism and is portrayed as a voice of national consciousness" (252). Odia also discusses her suggested solutions to terrorism, explaining that "technology gives the people advantage and puts them 'one step ahead' of the Islamist terrorists," and that once fully established, it will "'heal the suffering' of many people and give 'hope' to many children" (254). While Odia is right, this work goes further to investigate other social ills: mass emigration and societal decadence, as well as the poet's emphasis on rehabilitation.

Bello Idaevbor and Samson O. Eguavoen, maintain that "the poetess celebrates women who have either impressed her or have, in their own right, contributed to the development of their societies and in the advancement of knowledge and women bonding." They also state that "Adimora-Ezeigbo engages women from diverse social backgrounds and from different climes and makes manifest that, as stakeholders in their respective societies, they have not allowed their gender to interfere in their world outlook and in contributing to societal advancement" (16). While the current study agrees with their observation, it does not focus on her feminism.

Elsewhere, Niyi Akingbe reviews *Heart Songs* and notes as follows: "the poetess assumes the guise of social commentator and crusader through the medium of orature, to decry the devaluation of cultural and societal norms" (149). This study agrees with him, recognizing her double role as town crier and militant, but with the qualification that she also glorifies role models and is optimistic about Nigeria—matters Akingbe does not mention.

Christian Chukwulo Chukueloka considers "words as bullets" in *Heart Songs* and *Waiting for Dawn*, noting that "Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's collections of poems will always be remembered for their vociferous criticism and contribution as well as the quest to make our country a more befitting society and productive environment" (358). This argument is in alignment with this current study. While this aligns with the current study's recognition of the poet's commitment to national transformation, it does not fully explore the hopeful, future-oriented dimension of her work. Unlike Chukueloka's analysis which centers on poetic militancy and critique, this paper employs the framework of Postcolonial Utopianism to foreground how Adimora-Ezeigbo not only diagnoses social malaise but also constructs poetic visions of ethical rebirth and collective healing. In this way, the study expands the interpretive frame from resistance to reimagination—showing how her poetry offers models of moral clarity, civic responsibility, and national renewal. This nuanced approach sets it apart and makes a significant contribution to both Adimora-Ezeigbo scholarship and postcolonial poetic studies.

Dumbiri Frank Eboh, in his review of *Heart Songs*, asserts:

> The collection is akin to a musical instrument with several strings that tug at sensitive issues that strike a chord in our heart. A case in point is the first section of the collection which you can safely entitle 'Victims upon Victims' although it is really entitled Satirical Tunes. This is in light of the grotesque images and melancholic sentiments which the poems making up the collection evoke in the reader. (1)

Eboh also points out that the poems "are a collective sad commentary on our socio-political realities, not just as a nation but as a rapidly globalizing village of different races," and concludes that "victims of these short-comings are common men and women who fall as unfortunate prey" (1–2). These observations reflect the poetess' compassion for the vulnerable in society.

Lastly, Kola Eke and Edafe Mukoro discuss her use of Pidgin and assert that "Adimora-Ezeigbo takes a front-row seat among her female contemporaries in the writing of pidgin poetry. Although she is better known in the prose genre, yet her incursion into the poetry mainstream has been quite revolutionary" (258). They point out that "the use of pidgin in Adimora-Ezeigbo's poems is not ornamental; rather there seems to be a firmly held conviction in her that pidgin language is efficacious enough a vehicle to convey her thoughts." They conclude that "the lyricism and grace of her language use reflects the richness of the linguistic tool. The level of expression provides a sharper understanding of such matters and brings to the fore the fusion of figurative bite and imagery embedded in pidgin poetry" (258). This study agrees with their observations, emphasizing her creative ability to employ Pidgin to foster both aesthetic appeal and political transformation.

Beyond Nigeria, broader postcolonial criticism provides useful parallels. Carolyne Muthoni Njoroge, a Kenyan-American scholar, argues that African women poets "mobilize metaphoric strategies to not only criticize state failures but also offer culturally grounded visions of hope" (78). Though not focused on Adimora-Ezeigbo, Njoroge's perspective aligns with this study's emphasis on poetry as both critique and cultural repair.

Tanure Ojaide, a Nigerian poet and scholar based in the United States, insists that "poetry in Africa must be seen as a social force—one that speaks truth to power while nurturing new visions of civic responsibility" (102). Similarly, Brenda Cooper, a Canadian literary theorist, argues that powerful African literature "does not rest on despair but imagines freedom and wholeness through cultural memory and the poetic imagination" (64). The insights of both Ojaide and Cooper strengthen this paper's focus on Adimora-Ezeigbo's hopeful and reconstructive poetics.

Taken together, these scholarly voices form the backdrop against which this study carves its own niche. While earlier researchers have emphasized insurgency, feminism, and poetic critique, researchers have not examined Adimora-Ezeigbo's sustained poetic engagement with resettlement, moral degeneration, national healing, and value reorientation through a future-oriented, postcolonial utopian lens. Adimora-Ezeigbo's poetry, through the devices of imagery, metaphor, and personification, critiques Nigeria's social crises of migration, moral decay, and disillusionment, while advocating hope, ethical living, and collective responsibility as pathways to national healing and transformation.

Social Awakening and Discouragement of Migration

In a bid to improve Nigeria, Adimora-Ezeigbo engages in social awakening and discouragement of emigration. She seeks to open the eyes of misguided Nigerians to social realities, encouraging them to retrace their steps and avoid unnecessary migration. For example, in "Death Dey for Corner" (69), the persona alerts readers to the universal presence of death and urges them to live consciously to avoid becoming victims. Ultimately, the poetess hopes this awareness will

contribute to making society a safer place. She begins by condemning the nonchalance of those who live as if death does not exist:

> Today-today, plenty person dem
> *shakara*, like Death don die
> na only fool make nyanga
> for Death im face. (*Dancing Masks* 69)

Death is personified in the poem. It is said to have been accorded great respect by the forefathers, which contributed to their long lives. However, today the opposite is true; it is now rare to see people live up to a hundred years, whereas many ancestors lived well beyond that age. The troubling reality is that Death is everywhere, ruling the entire universe. Unfortunately, many remain unaware of this fact, living as if there is no tomorrow. This ignorance contributes to the deepening corruption among politicians and the rising crime rate. Many have forgotten that Death lurks nearby, ready to claim anyone who falters. Thus she says:

> Death sidden for every corner
> de whole world be im territory
> for dis corner, i dey
> for dat corner, i dey
> mercy no dey im heart
> im heart strong kakaraka, like iron
> na kill, kill, kill him sabi
> kill and go! (*Dancing Masks* 96)

Through personification, the poet presents death as a tyrant with a heart as strong as "iron." The only language he (Death) understands is "kill." The only thing that gives him joy is the death of humans, man or woman, rich or poor; beautiful or ugly, tall or short. This is enough to scare mischief makers to repentance.

Ultimately, Adimora-Ezeigbo suggests that life attains true meaning through ethical living and the pursuit of social harmony. In a tone both admonitory and hopeful, the poet emphasizes the value of integrity and communal well-being:

> *Nyanga* no dey pay
> make person just dey do good work
> dey live better life
> give im neighbor peace
> give am joy. (*Dancing Masks* 97)

Through this verse, the poet advocates for a life rooted in hard work, peace, and mutual joy, implying that such virtues are foundational for societal transformation. Her message posits that when individuals commit to doing good and fostering harmony, the broader society stands a better chance of moral and structural reformation.

"The Ism of Race" x-rays the possible racial discrimination in Western countries. It brings to light the inhuman treatment foreigners are likely to be subjected to when abroad. This is contrary to the belief of many Nigerians whose ultimate desire is to travel out of the country. Written in the first person, the persona recalls her experience in a foreign country. She says:

I travelled
to a country
that was not
my own
I was
a stranger
in town;
like a chicken
in a strange place
I stood
on one leg. (*Heart Songs* 20)

Probably because of what the persona has heard, she, like the proverbial hen, stands on one leg, fearing she might be despised. Standing on one leg here symbolizes caution, as she takes time to carefully observe people and situations. Psychologically, she feels unwanted and therefore keeps her distance. Aware that she is not in her father's land, the persona chooses to tread carefully to avoid mistreatment.

The persona lives in perpetual fear. She feels timid because the land is not her home; she dares not look anyone in the eye for fear they may "frown" at her. She perceives herself as an unwanted visitor, an intruder who, with or without provocation, will be sneered at and despised for no reason. Through the workings of her mind, the persona reveals the possible dangers of traveling abroad in search of greener pastures. Her admonition is clear: one should shift focus away from Europe and other foreign countries with alluring promises, because in reality, the grass is not always greener there. This is the social reality. Africa is a good place, and we should learn to cherish it. It is high time Nigerians began to think about building their own country rather than wandering from place to place in search of opportunities that may not exist. The grass is greener only when one waters it.

In a similar poem, "Suffer Head Immigrant" (50), the persona delivers a stark revelation of the conditions immigrants face in foreign lands. She exposes how those who seek greener pastures in the white man's land are often maltreated, contradicting the belief held by many Nigerians. She writes:

Countryman, my eye see *alu*
De time I visit my uncle pikin
For oyimbo country

I come see plenty immigrant
Dem flood de place like water
Dem full de place like locust

Migrant workers dem be

Even self, I dey hungry
Make me tanda dere begin work
Sote I see as dem suffer
For oyimbo man hand. (*Heart Songs* 50)

The persona considers what she has witnessed as "alu," an abomination. Two elements make up this abomination: mass migration and inhuman treatment. First, using simile, the persona compares the number of immigrants to "water," suggesting they are as countless as water. She then likens them to "locusts," emphasizing their overwhelming numbers. One clear point emerges from this narrative: mass migration harms the immigrants' home country. Able-bodied men and women—who should be nation builders—abandon their country to flock to the white man's land, only to be used in building that foreign nation. Secondly, the inhuman treatment they endure is also an "alu." It is abhorrent for someone to be treated as subhuman simply because he or she is an immigrant. This is the harsh reality the poetess wants her readers to understand. Rather than believing life is better abroad, she urges Nigerians to recognize the deplorable living conditions in the white man's land, using this awareness to discourage emigration and promote nation building.

Furthermore, the persona laments the ironic plight of these immigrants. Despite being well-educated and possessing "big qualifications," they have little money and face hazardous working conditions. Meanwhile, the "Son-of-the-soil"—the native citizens of their host countries—are given advantages and preferential treatment over the immigrants. It is a regrettable fact that university graduates are forced to do work below their qualifications and are paid peanuts for their efforts. The immigrants live in deplorable conditions and do not enjoy the full benefits of life in the host country. They are excluded from the advantages of the economy and face systemic marginalization:

Black man and woman de plenty
Some get big certificate, big degree:
Masters, doctor, professor self
Plenty get employment far below
Dem skill level. My mouth open like cave. (*Heart Songs* 51)

Regrettably, these doctors and professors have no other option as long as they remain in that country. Imagine an accountant working as a cleaner in a hospital, or a professor washing at a Tube Station. Beyond that, some are employed as waiters in restaurants or as security guards. By providing a graphic portrayal of immigrants' conditions, the persona highlights that a people who are overworked, underpaid, and even underemployed must reevaluate their situation and consider returning home. It also serves as a subtle condemnation of the authorities in their host countries.

Value Reorientation

Next, the poetess seeks to teach her readers new ways of life and inspire them to act differently. As a social reformer, she believes that merely highlighting the wrongs threatening society is insufficient; people must also be guided toward the right path. This is precisely what she does in

"Mentoring Future Generation of Professors" (73). In this poem, the persona advocates for uprightness, honesty, integrity, and discipline, viewing these qualities as the remedy for a troubled nation. She directs this message to university professors and other aspiring public figures, urging them to set good examples as role models and mentors. She begins by euphemistically reminding readers that all humans will die someday. From there, she proceeds to note the number of professors who died in 2017 and 2018:

> 'We will all go, one by one
> So, that is how it is—'
> This, from an egghead that passed away a year ago.
> Home truth uttered at the point of grieving for another
> The process cannot be altered
> For this is the way of all mortals
> Counting: in 2017, ten professors left the scene
> Still counting: in 2018, more have left
> The years will come and find more gone. (*Mixed Legacies* 73)

It is disturbing to know that one will die someday and "the process cannot be altered," but what is more disturbing is that some people, including professors, die and leave bad legacies behind. According to the persona, the legacy left behind determines the respect accorded to someone. This is why people must pay attention to the way they live their lives. Using the university as a microcosm, the persona admonishes leaders to strive to be disciplined in order to become true mentors:

> Your legacy remains, determines your final status
> To hail you or haunt you forever, even in afterlife
> You are either remembered with praises or curses
> The choice of what it shall be is yours to make
> Before the reaper strikes and the curtain falls. (*Mixed Legacies* 73)

This is a strong admonition to everyone. People should be mindful of their actions, as once carried out, they cannot be undone. It is therefore imperative that everyone behaves in ways that benefit mankind. The persona urges all to make choices grounded in integrity — and to do so before the "reaper strikes." Here, the reaper is a metaphor for death. Once death knocks, humans must answer. Thus, people should strive to live good lives so they are remembered "with praises" rather than "curses."

Similarly, in "Bird-watching in the Village Forest" (74), the persona romanticizes the life of birds and urges humans to emulate them. In her opinion, birds in the forest live better lives than humans — they are well organized, accommodating, bear one another's burdens, and believe in one another. These traits, she believes, can contribute to building a fantastic society. The discordant, selfish, and avaricious life led by humans can be replaced by the seemingly perfect life of birds. She also advocates that bird-watching, her forte, can be harnessed as a recreational activity.

She starts by relating how she started her bird-watching adventure back in the village when she was a youth:

> As a youth bird-watching was my forte
> I could stand and watch their antics all day
> Hidden among shrubs in the village forest aviary
> Father said it was better than fortune-telling. (*Mixed Legacies* 74)

At a young age, the persona acquires a worthwhile philosophy from observing birds. While her peers waste time and seek answers from fortune tellers, she turns to nature and discovers a fruitful model for human life. She notices that various types of birds congregate in a single forest, coexisting peacefully as "the forest bore their twitter," symbolic of unity in diversity (75). Inspired by this harmony in nature, she passionately hopes humans could learn to be like the birds—who fly in coordinated flocks together, never colliding with one another, and yielding to one another. Their strifeless, cooperative movement is in such sharp contrast to the violence and divisiveness that pervades humanity. She wonders how birds practice respect towards one another, in contrast to humans who are typically driven by selfishness, power struggles, and oppression. Deeply moved, the poet-persona mourns human society's failure to rise above hatred and violence, lamenting that the strong exploit the weak. Finally, she uses the birds as a metaphor to promote social change—urging people to embrace unity, peace, and collective progress as a way of elevating society.

In "Na so Life Be" (54), the persona admonishes people to appreciate what they have. She encourages living a life of gratitude and thankfulness to God, acknowledging that life could not have been better. Life, she believes, derives its beauty from its complexity and the diversity of challenges that shape it. Citing examples from different life situations, the persona reassures her audience that by observing, "Na so life be;" rather than wishing to be someone else or to be in another person's shoes, one should be content with one's own lot. She says:

> For we country
> Person different different
> De ting wey worry one person
> No be im worry another person
> But, I tink i better make person
> Take sense dey live im life
> As life no be same for everybody. (*Heart Songs* 54)

Life is always multidimensional: what worries one person may not trouble another. One individual may face serious financial challenges, while another may be burdened by chronic illness. Life is never completely fair; one must learn to live with "sense." Furthermore, she asks: "You wan go obodo oyinbo? / You tink life be sugar / For oyinbo dem country" (*Heart Songs*, 54)? The white man's land, which many crave, is not always better. Life there is not a bed of roses—people suffer there, too. So, why not turn around and be grateful? This is the poet's earnest entreaty to her readers. They must, with urgency, turn a new leaf and begin to appreciate God and nature for the blessings they enjoy here on earth. This, she believes, is a better way to live. She is confident they

can do better, which is why she offers this orientation. Even the naturally warm weather alone is reason enough to be thankful.

Suffice it to say that most of the things people complain of here in Nigeria are a blessing in disguise. Ordinary heat is a scarce commodity in the white man's land. Outside that, there are a number of natural hazards like earthquakes and volcano eruptions which do not occur here. The message, therefore, is that all should learn to be grateful.

Articulation of Hope

Adimora-Ezeigbo articulates hope in her poetry. Amidst dark hours, she expresses optimism for a better future, urging readers to hold on tightly. While she acknowledges that things have gone awry, she emphasizes that behind every dark cloud lies a silver lining. The poetess conveys this uncommon hope in the poem "*Waiting for Dawn*" (84). She observes that no matter how dark the night appears, light will surely come — in other words, hard times are not permanent. She writes:

> If dark days linger
> We will perch on our loft
> To evade the invader of our turf
> *Waiting for Dawn*. (*Waiting for Dawn* 84)

The message here is that no matter how long the hard times endure, people must find ways to stay resilient and hopeful as they await the inevitable change that the future holds. This is because the poet-persona believes that within the hardness of the times lies hope

The poem is saturated with metaphors that reinforce the theme of hope. For example, "nightmares" symbolize the hardships the people endure in Nigeria. Through personification, the poet presents nightmares as a thief who steals, emphasizing that the pain and tears of the people are temporary—just like nightmares that invade one's sleep. These nightmares will eventually fade, allowing the sleeper to enjoy rest. Thus, "nightmares" are not eternal; similarly, the people's suffering is temporary. Another metaphor in the poem is "dawn," which represents a pain-free moment—a time when everything is renewed and old troubles fade away. The awaited dawn symbolizes the birth of a beautiful new era. The persona assures the reader that this time is near and, when it arrives, "it will usher in the sun / It comes with vitalizing rays / With powerful wings" (*Waiting for Dawn* 84).

Similarly, in "New Day" (84), the persona calls on dawn to dispel the darkness engulfing the land. She expresses the belief that, no matter how long it takes, darkness must give way to light. This aligns with the biblical assurance in Psalm 30: 5: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning." Consequently, the poet writes:

> Sooty night consorts with flaming Dawn
> A union of opposites
>
> No matter how long it takes, Oh Night
> You must disengage your clammy grip. (*Waiting for Dawn* 84)

The poet contrasts light and darkness, anthropomorphizing Night as having a "clammy grip" on the "pebble-smooth skin" of Dawn (*Waiting for Dawn* 86). This symbolizes darkness's stifling grip

on hope. Night is depicted as loathsome and stained with the blood of innocent victims, draining the people's lifeblood through political violence, bombings, and social strife. Despite this grim reality, the poet expresses unwavering conviction that Light—Dawn—will eventually conquer Night. This is not a lost hope but an affirmative declaration that there is a better future with laughter and joy to come. Nigeria might have bled much, but "joy comes in the morning," and the people need to keep nurturing their hope. The poem ends on a triumphant note, envisioning a successful coming of Dawn when humans will celebrate and shout, "Hurray for Dawn / Welcoming the end of dark times" (*Waiting for Dawn*, 86), attesting to the certainty of overcoming adversity.

Lastly, in "Light at the End of the Tunnel" (83), the persona envisions a renewal of hope and passion. No matter how bleak the present, there is light at the tunnel's end. She foresees a time when all the pains of Nigeria will be eradicated and expresses hope that the country will bloom again, ending all present hardships. The opening line of the poem declares this resolutely: "Our country will bloom again" (*Mixed Legacies*, 83). From there, she elaborates on the many blessings the country will experience when that time arrives. She says:

> We will gather blossoms to brighten
> Our days by the rivers of life
> Our blighted nation-state will thrive again
> Her darkened visage, forbidding and solemn
> Will sparkle as tomorrow brings hope. (*Mixed Legacies* 83)

The poet is certain that Nigeria will experience a glorious rebirth; it will recover its lost glory and cleanse its tainted image. Although currently repulsive and shunned, the country will return to its former glory. The youth will be strong and vibrant, and the elderly will be revived. Despite numerous challenges, the poet believes that relief is coming. She insists there is always light at the end of the tunnel. Her creative application of neologism on the third line emphasizes her inventive method of conveying hope.

Conclusion

Adimora-Ezeigbo's poetry engages the pain of Nigeria without succumbing to despair. Instead, she offers hope, declaring that suffering does not last, but that positive change will emerge. Through vivid imagery and emotive language, she encourages resilience and hope for a better tomorrow. Her use of "dawn" as a metaphor for new beginnings speaks to both personal endurance and national desire for healing and progress. Her poetry not only speaks of suffering, but also conjures images of a just, peaceful, and joyful society. Her vision challenges readers to be patient and steadfast as they wait for happier times.

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