

Luminescing Discourse of Poet-Prophetic Nation-Building: Soyinka's and Clark's 'Abiku' Narratology Exemplified

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Abstract

Poetry, believed to be an expressive vehicle for certain human experiences – be it political, social, economic, cultural, has been object of global scholarship in recent past. Extant studies have concentrated on the literariness of, predominantly, prosaic and dramatic forms with sparse considerations for worthwhile linguistic criticism of early poetic traditions. This study, therefore, explored Wole Soyinka's and J. P. Clark's 'Abiku' with a view to examining the technicality of their discursive and linguistic manipulations to convey their intended messages for nation-building purpose. With critical discourse-stylistic analysis, interactional sociolinguistics theory was used, providing groundwork for how words, structures and other language resources become prophetic tools. Title and thematic crafting, graphological and syntactic structural layout, lexical choices, intonational and narrative voicing and their discursive manipulation are comparatively surveyed to expose the poets' individual deep-seated ideologies and political agenda. Structurally, Soyinka's is composed of stanzas, resembling persuasive speech, while Clark's is a continuous free verse, reflecting the cyclical nature of Abiku's reincarnation. Lexical choices, Pronominal referencing, distinguishing die-hard pessimism from a more optimistic outlook, coalesced with cultural and biblical allusions to enrich the poems, reinforcing the poets' ideological critiques of the nation's constitution. Convergent and divergent views exist as the poets, through their professional penmanship, respond to the same social-political situation prevalent in the nation's constitution through their literary works, howbeit from different ideological perspectives. Soyinka and Clark, exemplifying first generation of Nigerian poets, with their artistry of Abiku narratology, craftily execute their social conscience business that qualify them as literary prophets.

Keywords: Poets as prophets, Nation-building, Early poetic traditions, Discourse Analysis, Abiku narratology, ideologies and political agenda

Introduction

The dynamics of our universe are clearly demonstrated through the recurring events in various parts of the world, particularly in the socio-political context of Black Africa, which stands out in its complexities compared to other global regions. This reality underscores the relevance of Wole Soyinka's *Abiku* (1965), which metaphorically represents harsh societal conditions that remain applicable to contemporary times. Since 1965, the socio-political climate in Nigeria has intensified, further complicating the country's issues, thus cementing poets like Soyinka and J.P. Clark as prophetic voices of significant insight. Their works, particularly regarding the Nigerian nation's struggles and its constitution, demand an analytical approach to better understand how these poets use literature to address societal challenges.

Literature, in all its forms - poetry, drama, and prose - reflects society. Literary artists often encode their socio-political and cultural experiences into their works, whether through poetry or drama, portraying ongoing events or forecasting future ones. Every artistic piece thus serves as a re-enactment or prediction of societal realities.

The poet, regarded as a literary seer, uses imagination and powerful language to perceive deeper truths about the world. Much like a prophet, a poet's creative vision transcends ordinary perceptions, earning them the status of "literary prophets." These poets, through their vivid imagination and unique linguistic style, interpret and shape the world around them, taking on an exhortative role. This role of the literary prophet is not supernatural but stems from the poet's ability to align with societal trends, making their work appear prophetic. Soyinka and Clark's poems titled *Abiku* are prime examples of this phenomenon. Exploring the similarities and differences between these works, as well as how both poets have become prophetic figures in their respective contexts, is crucial to understanding their contributions to society.

As previously stated, literature mirrors the society from which it originates, and much effort has been devoted to exploring the intricate relationship between human experiences, realities, and cultural contexts. Various forms of literature, particularly poetry from the Romantic period in the West, have been studied for their prophetic qualities. Poets like William Wordsworth, William Blake, and Andrew Marvell, for instance, are recognized for their visionary works. Likewise, Nigerian poets like Niyi Osundare, Odia Ofeimuna, Ben Okri, Christopher Okigbo, Wole Soyinka, and J.P. Clark have been praised for using their 'prophetic' voices to shape societal change and contribute to nation-building. Therefore, focusing on Soyinka's and Clark's *Abiku* through the lens of discourse analysis is vital to understanding how their creative language and imagination contribute to the building of the Nigerian nation.

Soyinka and Clark are well-established figures in the literary world, and their works - particularly their poems *Abiku* - have been widely studied and critiqued. Various scholars, such as Faniran and Adetuyi (2017), who conducted textual analysis of Soyinka's *Abiku*, Brendal A, who compared *Abiku* with Soyinka's other poem *Post Mortem*, McCabe (2002), who explored the poem within the context of Yoruba oral traditions, and Nduibisi (2017), who approached Clark's *Abiku* from an anthropo-semiotic perspective, have all contributed significantly to the body of knowledge on these poets. However, none of these studies have examined Soyinka and Clark's works from the perspective of discourse analysis, specifically focusing on how their literary voices function as prophetic forces within their socio-political contexts.

This study aims to fill that gap by using an Interactional Sociolinguistic approach to analyze the convergences and divergences in their narratives, investigating how their works may be considered prophetic and how they contribute to nation-building in Nigeria.

The goal of this study is to investigate how Soyinka and Clark have used their poetry to lend their prophetic voices to the process of nation-building. To achieve this, the study will focus on the following objectives (i) identifying the linguistic resources that highlight the points of convergence and divergence in the two poems, in terms of discourse; (ii) describing the prophetic voices in the poems and their contributions to nation-building, using discourse analysis; and (iii) examining the ideological connections and socio-political contexts of the poems through a discursive convex.

In addressing these objectives, the primary focus of the analysis will be to provide a comprehensive understanding of how discursive and linguistic elements in these works reflect the poets' social commentaries, offering a prognostic vision aimed at contributing to nation-building. Both Soyinka and Clark, as contemporaries with shared cultural and social backgrounds, meticulously engage with the socio-political challenges of their time and beyond, responding to pressing issues in their poetry.

Scholars have explored the vital role of poets in nation-building, highlighting how their works contribute to shaping society in ways similar to more prosaic professions. A significant focus has been on how poets use their language as social conscience and prophetic voices in their literary endeavors. This study draws on the Judeo-Christian concept of prophecy to examine poets as literary prophets.

A poet, according to common definitions, is one who creates poetry, often performing their art for an audience. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a prophet as someone who utters divinely inspired revelations or possesses exceptional spiritual and moral insight, particularly an inspired poet. Watson (2009) asserts that the role of the prophet has existed since biblical times, with prophets tasked to guide humanity. Similarly, literary writers, including poets, function as prophets, critiquing society and offering guidance through their works.

Bulmer (2008) elaborates that a literary prophet brings about a revolution of thought, challenging cultural norms to envision a better world. These poets may not know the exact shape of future events but understand their essence, helping shape the future. Balfour (2002) emphasizes that prophetic poets create meanings beyond the literal, offering a vision that transcends time.

Adebayo (2019) argues that literature, including poetry, is essential for nation-building. Literary writers, through their unique use of language, play a pivotal role in shaping nations. Chinweizu (2014) describes nation-building as a creative process, similar to rebuilding a city according to a new design. Fatokun (1992) also underscores that literature critiques societal issues, using tools like satire and symbolism to propose solutions. Poets, by revisiting a nation's history and offering new perspectives, contribute significantly to national identity and transformation.

Asade (2000) asserts that literary artists bring past knowledge into the present, guiding society toward humanistic, socio-political, and economic progress. Soyinka and Clark, as poets, embody this role, offering prophetic insights that influence nation-building.

Methodology

Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis, a method of studying language as it is used in real-life contexts, is deployed. Ibileye (2017) defines discourse as a product of human interaction, reflecting identity and actions through language. Brown and Yule (1983) emphasize that discourse analysis focuses on the functions of language in human affairs. Schiffrin (1994) further explains that discourse analysis looks at how language conveys social identities, attitudes, and relationships, and is central to interpreting texts. With the foregoing at the background, we deploy discourse analysis to examine how the poetic persona use language patterns specifically within the Nigerian social and political contexts. This confirms Ayodele's (1999) and McCarthy et al.'s (2010) assertions that context is essential in understanding language in use. Oduola (2020) highlights discourse analysis as an applied linguistic field that explores meaning-making strategies in different contexts. In this study, the Nigerian socio-political context is

central to analyzing the poetic statements in Soyinka's and Clark's *Abiku*. The political and ideological aspects of this study give the discourse a nalytical enterprise its critical nature.

The methodology such as above necessarily grounds the study in the theoretical framework of interactional sociolinguistics, developed by John Gumperz and Ervin Goffman. It is to foreground the exploration of cultural and sociological perspectives relevant to the subject matter (Shiffrin 1994:97). This approach is chosen for its ability to address the anthropological, sociological, and linguistic aspects, allowing an analysis of the poets' concerns with culture, society, and language. The focus is on understanding the social and linguistic meanings created through poetic interactions, with attention to the grammatical structures of the English language.

Similarly, narratology, as outlined by Prince (1990) and Amerian and Lofi (2015:182), is found particularly useful for examining the cultural narrative embedded in the *Abiku* mystery. Narratology helps in the analysis of our selected *Abiku* literary texts to uncover the components within their structure, as proposed by Todorov (1978), who defines it as the study of narrative structures. Given that Soyinka's and Clark's *Abiku* are narrative texts, this study uses discourse narratology, as described by Jahn (2005), to analyze the stylistic choices that shape the forms and structures of the poems.

For the purpose of adequate observation, explication and analysis, this study adopts a methodology that facilitates descriptive qualitative design, made to with the chosen interactional linguistic theoretical groundwork. This, again, naturally fosters a comparative critical discourse analysis that marries the forms with functions.

To adequately achieve productive outcomes of such descriptive qualitative design, layout method of data presentation is also used to facilitate detailed description, accurate qualitative content analysis and interpretation of some of the literary and linguistic devices deployed in the two poems by the authors to pass their message across to their audience. Library resources are employed for the secondary data. 'Abiku', the title of the two poems is a Yoruba lexeme – literally meaning 'predestined to die'. It suggests a child who dies young and whose spirit returns to the same mother to be re-born multiple times. It is believed that the spirit does not ever want to stay to grow up.

Analysis and Discussion

This section presents a comparative discourse analysis of the two poems using interactional sociolinguistic theory. The analysis focuses on several key areas: structure, theme, graphology, lexical choice, tone, syntactic structure, and literary/poetic devices.

Abiku Myth: Text, Context, and Co-textuality

The uniqueness of the poems lies in their rich co-textual resources. It is important to note that both poems were written by Nigerian poets born in 1934, from the Ibadan literary tradition. They were founding editors of *The Horn* (a Student Poetry Magazine) and prominent members of the Mbari Cultural Club. Both poets had a theatre enterprise in Lagos, and the poems were written in the same year—1965. This suggests a shared reality, identity, and cultural experiences, which influences their exploration of themes like reincarnation and the spirit world, topics of profound significance in African culture.

Common Titling

The shared title "Abiku" signals a social discourse, implying that one poem responds to the other. The interaction is reflected in the introductory paragraphs, where both poets describe the journey and nature of Abiku:

"Coming and going these several seasons,
Do stay out on the baobab tree,

Follow where you please your kindred spirits
If indoors is not enough for you.
In vain your bangle cast
Charmed circles at my feet
I am Abiku, calling for the first
And the repeated time."

Graphology and Structural Layout

Despite common themes, the graphological presentation of the poems differs. Soyinka's *Abiku* is formatted in stanzas (eight quatrains, 32 lines), with a clear structure that resembles persuasive speech aimed at convincing the family. Clark's *Abiku*, on the other hand, is written as a single 26-line free verse, reflecting the cyclical nature of Abiku's reincarnations. The continuous flow of lines in Clark's poem mirrors the never-ending cycle of death and rebirth, which is central to the African belief system about life and death.

Emotional Amplification

Clark's poem employs emotional amplification, especially in lines 16 and 25 with the repetition of "step in and stay for good" and "step in, step in and stay." This use of imperative mood emphasizes the plea for Abiku to reconsider, appealing emotionally for a permanent stay.

Rhetorical Question

Soyinka uses rhetorical questions to emphasize Abiku's superior stance and to convey a sense of cosmic power. For instance, in lines 5 and 6: "*Must I weep for goats and cowries? For palm oil and the sprinkled ash?*" These questions highlight Abiku's strength as a palmist and spirit, adding to the poem's authoritarian tone and pointing to the need for national restructuring, as the country's ongoing crises demand change.

Lexical Choices and Ideological Construction

The poets' lexical choices reflect their cultural ideologies. Clark uses terms like *baobab tree*, *kindred spirits*, *thatch*, *floods*, *bats*, and *owls*, which depict a riverine, rural setting, highlighting the connection between nature and Abiku's spirit. Soyinka, conversely, uses words such as *bangles*, *charmed circles*, *goats*, *cowries*, *palm oil*, *amulets*, and *snail shells*, drawing on Yoruba traditions to express his critique of Nigeria's socio-political realities.

While Clark is optimistic about Nigeria's future, Soyinka's language presents a bleak view of the nation, suggesting that without restructuring, Nigeria's problems will remain unsolved, as represented by the repeated cycles of Abiku's rebirth.

Pronominal Referencing and Ideological Meaning Construction

Pronominal references in both poems play a key role in expressing solidarity, defiance, and ideological positions. Soyinka's poem is rich with personal pronouns, especially the nominative *I*, to express Abiku's defiance and the author's critique of Nigeria's failure to acknowledge its multicultural reality. Soyinka's use of *you* and *your* in the accusative form further emphasizes his critique of Nigeria's leadership.

In contrast, Clark's use of pronouns such as *we* (in lines like "*We know the knife scars*") reflects a collective, familial appeal, suggesting that change can be achieved through solidarity. The sparse use of *you* and *your* in Clark's poem contrasts with Soyinka's more confrontational tone, indicating Clark's belief in the potential for positive change in Nigeria.

Allusive Referencing and Ideological Expressions

Evidence abounds in the texts that identify the text producers as avid readers of the Christian book of holy writ. Abiku, through Soyinka's pen, for instance, gives rational reflections on what is perceived as application of excessive but needless religiosity to matters of simple logic and rationality. Thus, the

first and only interrogative construction in the second stanza, is strategically deployed to establish *dialogic rhetoric* with conversational interactants, and then, query the logic behind the sacrifices of *cowries, palm oil, sprinkled ash and yams in the amulet* in the bid to finding solution to an otherwise simple matter of social re-engineering. The same instrument of *querying the given* is sustained through to stanzas three and five ...*and when you pour libations, each finger points me near the way I came, where.*

Biblical allusions

The points of interest in the foregoing explications is that, as analysts, it is possible to locate what is generally referred to as Biblical allusions as the presentations so far obviously have some semantic parallelism with the following biblical references in content, thoughts and injunctions:

To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice [Proverbs 21:3]

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?...and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats [Isaiah 1: 11]

For I desire mercy and not sacrifice; and knowledge of God more than burnt offerings [Hosea 6: 6]

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil... [Micah 6: 7]

Similarly, using the same strategy of *dialogic rhetoric*, Clark, in the attempt to engage Abiku productively makes reference to the Serrating marks of indignity, a very important aspect of ritualist efforts made often ‘*to earth abiku’s limbs*’:

And both your ears, notched as a bondsman to this house, Are all relics of your first comings

Such reference is made to circumnavigate and box abiku into a corner by this appeal to pity, alluding to **Exodus 21: 5, 6**:

If the servant shall plainly say, I love my master...I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him to the Judges; he shall also bring him...unto the doorpost: and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever [KJV]

Cultural allusions

There are other instances of allusion made through powerful imageries and symbolism in cultural terms in the two poems as language is peculiarly deployed to achieve more than cosmetic results

Although, the imagery used by the two poets depicts different things, they employ their images from the same source: cultural biota, that is, respective “flora and fauna”. Clark, for example, makes such cultural allusions as:

Line 6 - *When floods brim the banks*, (imagery of the riverine scenery)

Line 11 – *That dries the fresh fish up on the rack*. (imagery of the riverine occupation)

Line 14 - *Who reach to the sun* (Metaphor of success in solar astrophysics term)

In the same vein, Soyinka’s poem features a number of imagistic metaphors derived from his cultural setting as exemplified in the following:

bangles cast, Charmed circles at my feet; the squirrel teeth,... Evening befriends the spider, trapping..., ...Mothers! I’ll be the Suppliant snake coiled on the doorstep. Night, and Abiku sucks the oil From lamps., The ripest fruit was saddest.

All are strong images of death, creating the pictures of defiance and horror which Abiku seems to relish.

Symbolic Characterization

Both poets use Abiku as a symbolic representation of Nigeria's socio-political struggles. While Soyinka's Abiku embodies defiance and pessimism, symbolizing the failure of the Nigerian state, Clark's Abiku is portrayed with a sense of hope, suggesting that despite challenges, the country has the potential for renewal.

Ideological Perspective

Although both poems address Nigeria's political and cultural issues, they do so from different ideological perspectives. Soyinka presents Abiku as a representation of the nation's failed democracy, arguing that Nigeria's constant rebirths (like Abiku's reincarnations) prevent progress. He advocates for restructuring as the only solution. Clark, while acknowledging Nigeria's problems, is more optimistic, believing that the country can still progress and that its democracy can improve. His use of a continuous, unified structure in the poem reflects his hope for a cohesive, better future for the nation. In summary, while Soyinka's poem expresses pessimism about Nigeria's future without change, Clark maintains a more optimistic view, hoping for improvement despite the challenges. Both poets use powerful imagery, allusions, and pronouns to construct their ideological perspectives on Nigeria's socio-political situation.

Results and Reflections: A Deeper Insight

From the analysis, the following key reflections emerge, shedding light on how Soyinka and Clark's works engage with the socio-political landscape of Nigeria. Their poems go beyond mere artistic expression, transforming into potent social commentaries that resonate even today.

1. The concept of 'art for art's sake,' which advocates for art's autonomy from social, political, and moral obligations, is not applicable to Soyinka and Clark. Both poets employ their literary works as a means of engaging with the political and social realities of their time. Rather than create art for the sake of beauty or self-expression alone, their poetry serves as a medium for protest and reflection. Through their works, they confront the challenges of post-colonial Nigerian society, underlining the inescapable relationship between art and life. In their verses, the personal intersects with the political, and the poets use their craft to speak to larger social issues, making art not just an aesthetic pursuit but a call to action. In other word, this analysis points out **the rejection of 'art for art's sake'**
2. Both Soyinka and Clark clearly use their poetry as a platform for commenting on the socio-political situation in Nigeria, albeit in different tones and approaches. Soyinka, with his characteristic defiance and cynicism, channels his criticism through the voice of Abiku, condemning the state of the nation while demanding restructuring. Clark, though still critical, adopts a more hopeful and empathetic approach, addressing the Abiku figure as a parent appealing for change. Both poets, in their respective tones, articulate a deep dissatisfaction with the political system while urging for transformation. This indicates their shared understanding that literature should serve as a mirror to society, reflecting its ills while also suggesting pathways for healing. **Literature thus becomes an instrument of social and political commentary**
3. **Engagement through narrative voice** as one of the striking features of both poems is how Soyinka and Clark engage with one another through the narrative voice they adopt. Soyinka's decision to use the voice of Abiku (the spirit-child) allows him to assume a position of defiance, challenging societal structures and questioning the political paralysis that plagues Nigeria. On the other hand, Clark adopts the voice of a concerned parent, an advocate pleading with Abiku

(the spirit-child) to break the cycle of reincarnation and stay. The parent-child dynamic between the two poems emphasizes their contrasting approaches: Soyinka's aggressive demand for transformation versus Clark's more conciliatory tone of hope and appeal. Yet both poets see themselves as literary prophets—aware of the cyclical and stagnant nature of the nation's political condition and calling for a deeper societal change.

4. The temporal relevance of the poems, written in 1965, cannot be overstated. The situation Soyinka decries in his poem - an ineffective, unproductive democratic system - is still painfully relevant today. The call for restructuring, which forms a central theme of Soyinka's "Abiku," is as vital now as it was then. This suggests that the social and political issues Soyinka addressed in the 1960s have not been resolved but have persisted through the decades. The resonance of these issues underscores the poet's prophetic voice. Similarly, the frustrations of the people, captured in the 1965 poems, echo in the contemporary #EndSARS protests. The youth-led protests, which reflect dissatisfaction with the government's failure to address systemic problems, can be seen as a direct fulfillment of the discontent Soyinka expressed in his work. The recurring crisis in Nigeria reinforces the prophetic warnings articulated in these poems, where each new generation of Nigerians seems to echo the same demands for justice and restructuring, emphasizing the **timelessness of the poetic message**:
5. The character of Abiku in both Soyinka's and Clark's poems serves as a powerful allegory for Nigeria's struggles with political instability and ineffective governance. Soyinka's Abiku represents a nation caught in an endless cycle of rebirth, decay, and failure, unable to break free from its cyclical doom. This is mirrored in the political realities of Nigeria, where each new regime seems to repeat the same mistakes, leaving the country in a state of stagnation. Soyinka's pessimistic view reflects a deep dissatisfaction with the nation's inability to move forward, calling for a fundamental restructuring as the only hope for the future.

In contrast, Clark's portrayal of Abiku suggests an understanding of the nation's potential for growth despite its flaws. His use of the parental voice and the plea for Abiku to stay signals a belief that, despite Nigeria's crises, there is hope for recovery and improvement. Clark's Abiku represents a challenge to the political status quo, yet with a sense of optimism about the possibility of change and reform. This duality of perspectives, embodied in the two poets' different portrayals of Abiku, speaks to the broader national debate in Nigeria: whether the country should continue in its current form or undergo a drastic transformation to secure a better future.

6. **With this literary prophecy, and national awakening** in mind, both poets ultimately position themselves as visionaries or prophets, warning of the dangers of inaction and the need for national reformation. Their respective works point to the failure of the nation to live up to the promises of independence, and through the allegory of Abiku, they highlight the consequences of a stagnant, unyielding society. Soyinka's harsh criticism and call for a total overhaul contrast with Clark's more conciliatory yet still urgent plea for reform. Together, their works serve as a call to Nigerians to confront the systemic issues within their society and to actively engage in reshaping their collective future.

In the overall, Soyinka and Clark, through their respective poems, provide a critique of the Nigerian socio-political landscape. Both poets present themselves as engaged artists, using their works not only to reflect the reality of their time but also to challenge and offer solutions to the issues they see. Their differing tones - one pessimistic and the other hopeful - underscore the broader tensions within

Nigerian society about the potential for change and progress. The continuing relevance of their works, particularly in light of contemporary issues like the #EndSARS protests, highlights the enduring power of literature to shape, challenge, and inspire social and political movements.

Concluding Remarks

The analysis clearly demonstrates that poets do not create their works in isolation or merely for artistic expression. Instead, they are deeply influenced by the world around them, particularly the social, political, and cultural contexts they experience. Their poetry becomes a reflection of their consciousness, offering both critique and insight into the issues they observe. In this way, poets like Wole Soyinka and J.P. Clark transcend the role of mere artists; they act as the *social conscience* of their societies. Through their literary works, they serve as prophetic voices, urging change and reflection on the state of their nation. Thus, Soyinka and Clark can be seen as literary figures deeply engaged in nation-building, using their words to challenge and reimagine the socio-political landscape of Nigeria.

Recommendations

Given that this study focuses on the prophetic nature of Soyinka and Clark's poetry, specifically analyzing their works through a comparative discourse approach, it would be valuable to explore the following directions for further research:

1. A deeper stylistic analysis of the language, structure, and literary devices used by Soyinka and Clark would yield a richer understanding of how their individual poetic techniques contribute to their prophetic voices. Such an analysis could examine how their stylistic choices such as imagery, symbolism, and meter enhance their political and social messages.
2. A semiotic reading could uncover the underlying symbols, signs, and cultural codes present in both poems. By exploring how the poets use symbols like *Abiku* to represent larger national struggles, researchers can gain insights into the complex ways in which language and meaning function within their works.
3. Further studies could also explore the broader concept of "literary prophecy" in African literature, examining how poets and writers across different periods have engaged with social and political issues. This **expanding on the concept of literary prophecy** would create a more comprehensive understanding of the role of literature in nation-building and social activism.
4. Given that the themes explored in these poems remain highly relevant today, especially in the context of Nigeria's ongoing political struggles, it would be beneficial to study the impact of these works on contemporary Nigerian society. **With this contemporary relevance**, research could investigate how Soyinka and Clark's prophetic messages resonate with modern political movements, such as the #EndSARS protests, and whether their calls for national restructuring have found new urgency in the current context.

In conclusion, further investigations into the prophetic dimensions of these poets' works, through stylistic and semiotic analyses, could illuminate new layers of meaning and practical insights that are crucial for understanding how literature can continue to serve as a tool for social change and nation-building.

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