



Beyond the Borders of Esotericism: A Socio-stylistic Analysis of Gabriel Bamgbose's *Something Happened After the Rain*

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Abstract

*The deployment of language by a writer creates a distinct style through which he/she reaches out to the audience. Hence, a socio-stylistic study of Gabriel Bamgbose's *Something Happened After the Rain* is undertaken in order to reveal how the poet makes use of language. To achieve this, lexico-syntactic choices, graphological devices, and morphological choices of the poet are analysed. At the end of the study, it is discovered that Bamgbose employs the use of Pidgin English, figurative expressions like metaphor, personification, euphemism, repetition, pun, refrain and foregrounding in order to make his ideas and messages relatable to his readers. In this regard, he has succeeded in deploying sarcasm even in the most serious and sensitive issues like death, child labour and delivery as in "Song of a child" and "If I die". It has also been found out that Bamgbose presents the poems in the studied text in five sections and each section has a distinctive title. Each title captures the general image, mood and tone of the poems in each section. "Sing" expresses celebration and joy of birth, childhood and maidenhood; "Speak" expresses a break away from repression and silence; "Die" captures dying and death itself; "Dream" expresses hallucination and how loneliness or frustration makes one's mind, unguardedly, stroll into wild imaginations; then*

“Rain” carries the burden of sorrow and pains accruable after the disasters of the rain. It can therefore be concluded that Bamgbose’s language style underscores the Yoruba assertion that tragic matters often deserve smileful reactions.

Keyword: Language, Style, Poetry, Socio-stylistics, Gabriel Bamgbose

0. Introduction

Language is both a cultural and social construct. Hence, society or individual is capable of determining the direction of language in terms of choices. Language as a tool of human communication is subjected to various usages depending on different societies or individuals. This diverse use of language is traceable to the notion that variety is part of life. In fact, as one of the 18th century English poets, William Cowper (1785) puts it; variety is the very spice of life. Oloruntoba-Oju (1999) supports this claim by stating that style is almost synonymous with variety. That man (or life) thrives in the inconstancy of the way things are done (or should/not be done) has paved ways for individuals or societies to create their own style of doing things. In this sense, style can be said to be an expression of self against other selves. This peculiarity in the expression of self has given man the freedom to use language in a way that expresses his personality as a writer or a speaker or whatever.

Style, generally speaking, can be understood to mean the way an individual or groups of people distinctly do things or perform some actions. According to Leech (1969), style is “the way in which an act is spoken, written or performed (p. 61)”. Ordinarily, style can be said to mean how an individual does things in a way that stands him out from others. This may include his/her peculiar way of using word, sentence construction and the use of figures of speech (Jimoh and Odetade, 2016). Stylistics on the other hand, is the study of style with a base in language use. Widdowson (1975:116) recognises stylistics as a linking bridge between linguistics and literary criticism and that one is at the service of the other. He further emphasises that stylistics is a significant link between linguistics and literary criticism and its service to the two cannot be overemphasised. Simpson (2004) lends credence to this view by

asserting that “to do stylistics is to explore language, and, more specifically, to explore creativity in language use (p. 22)”

Sociostylistics is another dimension to the exploration of language (linguistics). It deals with the assessment of language use in relation to social factors, such as social stratification (status), role, age, sex, ethnicity and the recent realities of globalisation as depicted in a literary work. While looking at the levels of language use such as graphology, phonology, syntax and lexico-semantics, one intends to pay particular attention to these social factors as explored and expressed by the language of literary texts. According to Simpson (2004)

Much of our everyday experience is shaped and defined by actions and events, thoughts and perceptions, and it is an important function of the system of language that it is able to account for these various ‘goings on’ in the world. This means encoding into the grammar of the clause a mechanism for capturing what we say, think and do...When language is used to represent the goings on of the physical or abstract world in this way, to represent patterns of experience in spoken and written texts, it fulfils the *experiential* function (p. 45)

On the whole, Stylistics is the study of style used in literary and non-literary texts and the effect a writer or speaker wishes to communicate to the reader or hearer. To appreciate a literary work, it is important to see how the language and style used by a writer affects the interpretation of his work. Stylistics focuses on texts and gives much attention to the devices and style. It, therefore, discusses theoretical matters alongside whatever practical analysis they provide. Stylistic analysis besides helping one to acquire an explicit basis for deciding between interpretations also helps one to become more consciously aware of the processes of interpretation which are used in order to get to grips with the text one has read.

1. A cursory Look at the Language of African Poetry

Of all the genres of (written) Literature, poetry appears to be the most sophisticated and esoteric in terms of depth (message) and language. This sophistication has made the business of poetry to be the exclusive preserve of the highly gifted wordsmiths who know how to load the word with burdens of their past, present and future endeavours. The language of poetry in Africa (as well as that of the other genres) has undergone a sort of radicalisation wherein African writers make bold attempt to hijack the English language in order to make it bear the peculiar experiences of the African people. Achebe states:

The African writer should aim to use English that brings out his message without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. He should aim at fashioning out an English, which is at once unusual and able to carry his peculiar experience (p. 61).

From the foregoing, it is obvious that Achebe is clamouring for hybridised English; a sort of English that is made to have the colouring and flavour of the African indigenous languages since this language has forced itself on us due to the crisis over African diverse indigenous languages and the attendant problem of adopting a singular language for the rendition of the African literature. Since the clamour for the decolonisation of African literature as postulated by the likes of Obi Wali (1963) and Ngugi Wa Thiong'O (1986:24) appears to have failed, the domestication of the English language cannot but be said to be a better choice in order to at least arrest the immediate need of providing a unifying language which can bear the nerves and souls of African writers' worldviews and experiences. Therefore, the business of domesticating the English language lies in the hands of the African writers from their respective countries and regions.

Another move by the African writers to radicalise the language of African poetry is informed by the notion that African literature serves a utilitarian purpose - given their community-based kind of existence. In this regard, the message in their literature (poetry) should be passed in such a way that everybody would be carried along and no one would be excluded from understanding it. Thus, such language should be exoteric rather than esoteric. Nwoga (1978) describes esoteric poetry as obscure, turgid and abstract while giving his perceptions on Soyinka's poetry. Similarly, Jeyifo, while introducing Osundare's *Songs of the Marketplace*, writes glowingly of his poetic revolution undertaken to 'demystify' the language of poetry. He asserts:

For a while the older poets generally deployed a diction and a metaphoric, highly allusive universe calculated to exclude all but a small coterie of specialists, the new poets have taken the language of poetry, the diction of figurative expression, to the market-place - to the popular daily press even. This "revolution" in the attitude to received poetic diction assumes the character of the informing aesthetic, the defining poetics of Osundare's writings (1983, p.ix)

Then, in Nigeria, demystifying and decolonising the language of the Nigeria postcolonial poetry began with the second generation poets of post-civil war. They clamoured for the alterNative tradition of the Nigerian poetry which in respect to their critical engagement bears a decolonising verve. Niyi Osundare, Tanure Ojaide and Odia Ofeimun appear to be in the leading line of this generation. Their works have been acclaimed to be a radical shift away from the first generation Nigerian poets whose works are critically engaged to put an end to the torturous tenure of colonisation in Nigeria.

The works of the second generation poets firmly pose to radically re-establish the idea of poetry and redefine its language. This set of poets seem to have an enduring influence on the latter generations of poets in Nigeria because many of them are still alive and still write and because the latter generations appear to be equally drawn to the same issues that bother their older counterparts. This overlapping of commitment and critical responsibility pose a huge threat to the defining of the beginning

and the end of the subsequent generations in Nigerian poetry. Hence mapping the third and the fourth generations of poets in Nigeria has been very cumbersome.

However, this paper does not set out to dwell essentially on the task of defining the generation that Bamgbose's poetry belongs to but its nitty-gritty will focus on revealing how his work has helped to echo the hallowed principle of decolonising the language of African literature and by extension African poetry cum Nigerian poetry. This paper will also focus on his idea of poetry and poetic language as well as how his work plays around the idea, and most importantly, how his work simplifies the language of poetry by employing a socio-stylistic perspective for its analysis. As earlier pointed out, stylistics lends itself to the distinctive and typical use of language. Ohanedozi (2013) lends credence to this by asserting that the study of stylistics involves the study of how linguistic features are used to achieve different meanings and purposes, especially in the line of creativity. In other words, stylistics is applied at all levels of language analysis: phonology, graphology, grammar and semantics. All these levels of stylistic analysis are very important to the study of Bamgbose's "Something Happened After the Rain".

All these levels of language analysis represent the convenient bits of language activities that succinctly provide a good background against which the study of this poetry collection can be carried out. Before embarking on this analysis, however, it is necessary at this point, to situate Bamgbose's poetry within the corpus of Nigerian poetry

2. Situating Bamgbose's Poetry Within the Corpus of the Nigerian Poetry

Discussing modern Nigerian poetry may not be complete without properly acknowledging the all-important contributions of Niyi Osundare who is adjudged the most prolific and most radical especially when the issue of second generation Nigerian poets comes to mind (Aiyejina 1998, Abdu 2003, Alu 2005). His influence is far-reaching and enormous as many upcoming poets by virtue of reading his works and identifying with his commitment retain the verve that characterises his poetry. These artists in Osundare's school are engaged in the pursuit of social transformation by which their works challenge corruption and

dictatorships, whether military or civilian among other social vices (Alu, 2005, p. 62).

If there is anything that has enticed many younger literary artists about Osundare's poetry, it is the simplified but in-depth language of his poetry which serves as a smooth ride into the understanding of his message and absorbing his spirit of social commitment. At the same time, this language, deeply rooted in Yoruba oral traditions, is made to carry the burden of culture and history familiar to his readers. Abdu Saleh supports this idea of indigenising this use of English by asserting that '...language and language use lie in the essence of poetry, African poetry can only gain its distinctive voice quality by the degree to which its language – African or borrowed – is shaped and reflected in local African experience (p. 16)'.

This idea is further resonated by Osundare's belief that the language of poetry should neither be a hard nut to crack nor be too easy to penetrate, if not for anything but for the Afrocentric belief that literature should serve a utilitarian purpose. In his attempt to take poetry away from 'the esoteric whispers of an excluding tongue,' he says "Poetry is/No oracles kernel/For sole Philosopher's stone/Poetry is/Man meaning to Man" (1986, p. 2). Osundare believes that the language in which African poetry is rendered should not hinder its readers from fully grasping its meaning. They should not be deterred from partaking in their own affairs. To him, poetry bears the un/realities of the African people. Therefore, the language should bring them face-to-face with such un/realities; not 'exclude' them from it.

From this standpoint, Gabriel Bamgbose with his debut poetry collection, *Something Happened After the Rain* establishes and shapes his interest in not just writing poetry in common language but packaging the language with beautiful images in such a way that understanding the message of his poems will be a rigorously alluring venture. He reveals in an interview with Kristin Maffei while speaking about his poetry

I want my poems to speak the language of the marketplace...the language of the common man, language that is accessible to everyone. I want my language to be as common as possible. But while

that is common, I want the images to speak to so many things. I want the language to be imbued with beautiful images. There is poetry for everything. Poems, songs are everywhere... (Late Night Library, 2015)

With his education in Ijebu-Ode and Ibadan coupled with his deep root in Yoruba culture, one could say that Bamgbose's language must have been influenced by actual and textual experiences in his life encounters. He draws his writing motif from the same Yoruba cosmology just like Osundare. In the light of the above revelation about Bamgbose's kind of poetry, it is obvious that his poetry is anchored on the principle of indigenising the language of African poetry as championed by the second generation Nigerian poets. His works may not have been directly influenced by Osundare, Ojaide and Ofeimun, but it sure bears the nativist mentality which is emblematic of the second generation Nigerian poetry.

Moreso, it is appropriate to note that postmodernism and recent realities of globalisation have, to a certain extent, equally influenced the poetry of the younger generation of Nigerian poetry in which Bamgbose and his contemporaries fall. These developments have reordered the writing of the newest generation of Nigerian writers in such a way that it appears they have taken their works beyond the pedantry of the pre/modern age. Thus, even when the younger Nigerian poetry exudes the social commitment and the language concern of the older generation, it does so not without bearing the realities of the 21st century.

3. Socio-stylistic Analysis of Gabriel Bamgbose's *Something Happened After the Rain*

The poetry collection is divided into five parts titled *Sing, Speak, Die, Dream* and *Rain*. Two poems will be examined from each of the parts for the sake of properly limiting the scope of this analysis. In addition, each of the parts contains a message independent of the other parts. However, all the messages synchronize to speak to readers in one voice. The first level of language that will be explained in this analysis is graphology. Therefore, the arrangement of lines and physical structure of some poems in this collection will be analysed. Two of the ten selected poems will be

explained in this regard. They are “Song of a child” and “BRIDGES IN MY MIND”

In ‘Song of a child’, the poet presents the birth of a new-born baby and the pain of its delivery and the celebration that follows the birth. The poet captures this birth and pain in symbolic lineation. That is, the arrangement of the lines of the poem presents the image of the flow of water and blood during delivery. All the lines in the poem are indented, and in essence, it is a major reason why the poet decides not to write the poem in stanzas. It is to achieve an unbreakable indentation of the line in the poem so as to concretize the symbolic effects that such arrangement of lines will contribute to the understanding of the pains and joy that come with child labour and delivery.

Moreover, the poet employs euphemism for vagina: “Through the narrow river/Edged with thick forest” to present the female genital responsible for child delivery. This is in a bid to avoid vulgarity of expression that may be unsuitable for some readers or offensive to the female gender.

As for “BRIDGES IN MY MIND”, the poet employs pun, alliteration and emphatically delivers the poem in capital letters all through. The words in the poem are bridges that convey the poet to many places he wants to be even while he is all alone in his room suffering from heat and unpleasant noise of his neighbour’s generator. The heat and the noise keep him awake for so long that he begins to think about many places he would like to be in the world such as KAKA TO KANO/KANO TO CONGO/CONGO TO CANADA and BORDER TO BORDER illustrate alliteration and pun that indicate the many places that the persona wants to be.

BRIDGES THAT CONNECT THE WIDE WORLD
INTO A SINGLE BALL
SMALL ENOUGH TO BE KICKED ALL AROUND
BUT HERE I AM IN MY AREA
LONESOME INMY DARK ROOM LIT BY A CANDLE

WARDING HEAT OFF MY BROAD HAIRY
CHEST

WITH AN EXERCISE BOOK

ENJOYING THE RHYTHM

OF MY NEIGHBOUR'S GENERATOR (p. 88)

Ironically, the heat and the noise are menace to the persona's peace and sleep in his room. However, this same menace facilitates his illusionary journey from one city to another and one country to another in order to traverse the world. The heat thus constitutes the BRIDGE while the rhythmic noise from the neighbour's generator represents each of the steps that convey the poet to his many unplanned destinations.

In *Sing*, another poem that serves as sequel to "Song of a child" earlier examined is "You'd soon be weaned". These are poems that speak to the agony and joy that attend the birth of a child as well as the gnashing effect of breastfeeding on a mother. According to the poem, the vagitus of a newborn baby ushers him into 'the true rhythm of life', that is, the ups and downs in the phases of growing up. One of such important phases is breastfeeding which 'you'd soon be weaned' captures. In this poem, a mother is presented berating her child for sucking and biting her breast and crying and laughing just to demonstrate his yearn and relish in her breast milk.

The poem also shows the spiteful satisfaction the child derives from sucking and biting his mother's breast through the following lines; "Cry now to keep my tit/ in the corner of your mouth/... bite and giggle for its pleasure/ checking my mood/ laugh and check my face/ just do what you will" (p. 17). Despite this biting and sucking effect, the mother is ready to endure till the child is weaned. "You'd soon be weaned" is a line that consoles the mother and assures her that the child's party would soon over. The line is a refrain to remind the child that his mother would soon have her maidenhood back. In essence, the mother appears to be bidding her time as the child cannot be sucking and biting her breast forever. It's a transient fun for the child. It's noteworthy to point out that the poet carefully picks his words in order to drive home his points. He opts for

pronouns 'you' and 'your' and repeats words such as "suck, bite, lick, laugh and weaned" in order to emphasise the subject (the child) doing the sucking and biting. In other words, the poet gives prominence to the actions (sucking and biting, licking, laughing and giggling) initiated by the subject (the child) in order to reveal the spiteful effect of the child's sucking and biting on his mother.

In *Speak*, the second part of the collection, 'How can I say this is home' and 'You push me' will be explained. 'How can I say this is home' captures the damaging effects of silence and repression. The poem, in interrogative lines, mentions instances of how he has been muffled by the powers that be: "How can I say this is home/When I can't talk like every other man/...When I can't swallow a morsel/...When I can't stay free of father's abuse/ ...When I can be killed by my own brother's bullet". Apart from being forced into silence the persona is also deprived of food (morsel), water to wash himself clean from dirt, from being abused and violated by his father above all, he is deprived life/ living by his own kith and kin.

In essence, the interrogative lines of the poem help to echo the desperation and the suffering of the persona. The arrangement of the lines and the choice of words in the poem evoke a feeling of pity and danger that already overwhelm the persona. The last stanza; "Tell me how can/ say this is home/When I can be killed tonight by my own brother's bullet" heightens one's pathetic feeling for someone announcing his imminent death with a sorrowful resignation to a brutal fate (the fate of being killed by one's own brother) and the traumatic lot of being violated by one's own father.

"You push me" reveals the endurance limits in which one's patience can reach in the face of oppression and injustice. This is an interesting poem presented in short stanzas rendered in pidgin English. This poem represents the desperation and the fight back of a common man against all his oppressors. The line, 'you push me' is repeated twice in the first three stanza of the poem to underscore how much the persona has been maltreated and oppressed and to show that for having endured such maltreatment and oppression for so long, he can no longer allow himself to be pushed about unjustly. The oppressor chased the persona out of the house, the street and the bridge. He then decides to make the gutter his

last resting place, yet, the oppressor still topples his peace desecrating his place gutter with urine then he reacts by biting off his prick (male genital). This poem sums up the frustration that the ordinary man gets from the ruling (powerful) men who oppress them with their wealth and power. The poem reminds these oppressive men that they should anticipate the reaction of the downtrodden which would be fatal and weightier than they can ever imagine.

“You see say

If I bite your prik comot

God no go vex” (p. 50)

Again, presenting this poem in pidgin English suggests that the poet sets out to identify with the common man and give them the power to speak against injustice and react in such a way that shows that the voice of the common man can be raised above all oppression.

The two poems that stand out for the sake of this analysis in *Die*, the third part of this collection are “If you want to die” and “If I die”. The two poems bear the monitive conditions for someone who has chosen the most violent of death and the pre-death warning about how to be buried for those that await death. “If you want to die” presents several conditions of death for someone who wants to commit suicide in a blatant disregard for the weight of agony and pain that come with such choices. The poet achieves this by using words that portray the actions of killing (dying) and the objects with which such actions can be carried out: “stab/dagger, club/cudgel, cut/knife, hang/rope and smash/blow” (p. 67)

The poem bears a sarcastic tone to downplay suicide and mock the foolish people who terminate their own lives by roaming and romping with vain people who do not and will never help them realize their hopes and aspirations. He says that committing suicide through any of the most violent means is not as potent as laying one’s dreams in the hand of a fool. To the poet, the worst way to die is “to die slowly, steadily with life vigorously kicking in you”. On the whole, the poem berates those that fail to build the right cycle of influence with people who will not only

motivate and inspire them to achieve success but also give them the right support to seamlessly ease them through the journey of life.

“If I die” is a pre-death appeal to one’s son not to make so much noise about one’s death or make his corpse more distress after a huge discomfort he had experienced while living. Like “If you want to die”, the poem downplays dying and death itself as if to confront death and tell him he doesn’t give a damn about him. Again he says death and the aftermath activities put together by the families of the deceased are not worth the spectacle and the stress. So the persona makes a special request about how he would want to be buried. He says he doesn’t want his corpse to be burnt by the sun in the name of lying in state; he doesn’t want his body cremated and he doesn’t want anyone to keep his wake because he will never wake again. He sees all these burial rites as too much of a burden for the dead who had already witnessed a great deal of suffering in life before he died. In essence, he apparently appears to be discrediting the Christian rites of burial. In the same vein, it criticizes the needless culture of buying expensive caskets for burial, parading the corpse for lying in state and the wicked act of burning the corpse “for public spectacles”. He believes that dying should come with ease and the rite of passage to the other world should come with so much rest. After all, a dead body is always said to have gone to rest. Then, why doubling the stress of the person you claim has gone to rest? The persona rather proposes a stress-free and peaceful burial by “laying his corpse in a ditch, wrapping him in a shroud and just planting him beneath the earth” (p. 73). Though the two poems employ sarcasm to pass a message about death and dying, “If I die bears a more serious tone and is more critical of death than “If you want to die”

Dream features poems that portray the silent workings of the mind. In this part of the collection, there are also poems that present the dangers inherent in darkness. In all the poems in this section, the poet employs the recurring motif of darkness. In “She said I walked away”, poet persona talks about a fight with his woman over his inability to “discharge his masculine duties”. Having become so frustrated by the nagging of his woman, he decided that the only way to remedy the situation as a man is by running away from home. And the perfect time to do that is at night. The poem appears to justify the Yoruba assertion that the night is always the most suitable time to perpetrate evils and that if

such evils are done during the day, the doer will not go scot-free. Again, in this same poem, the woman in question could not bear losing her man. That is why “she held him tight/in that cold and dew/in that sepulchral dark/ holding him back from walking away from his dreams”. In the paraphrased lines, it is revealed that the man got frustrated by his woman’s nagging and he took to the extreme by considering, perhaps, suicide or just simply walking away from the relationship. In the same vein, *Dream* is portrayed as a symbolic depiction of the inner workings of the mind. And because the mind is located in the most hidden part of the body, *Dream* represents all the things we think in our hearts that are invisible to other people unless we reveal them. In addition, because darkness is often used as a shield or a veil of some sort, the poet taps into its power of concealment in all the poems in this section.

Another poem that predicates darkness is “Forms in the Dark”. The poem projects darkness as a means of hallucination. Darkness in the two poems under analysis here signifies lonesomeness, brooding/depression that can facilitate sinking frustration or deep thought that can bring about progressive aspirations. In “Forms in the Dark”, the poet reveals some of the various wild imaginations that the mind can be cast into, especially when one is all alone in darkness. These wild imaginations are induced by fear. In such fear, the poet persona gets goose bumps and begins to hallucinate with his mind running wild with scary imaginations. He then begins to see ordinary things in supernatural ways.

Once again, in his wild imaginations, he becomes his own source of fear even while in actual fact, there is nothing in the dark at that moment to constitute fear. But because fear and danger are inherent in darkness, individuals begin to see fear in their own mind’s eyes; fear becomes visualised in their own thinking. The poet captures this moment talking about things that his mind helps him to visualise in darkness. Hence, in his wild imaginations, he thinks of

the banana tree in his backyard as a wretched woman who causes his head to swell. And the sugarcanes look like serpents crawling through his spine, and the baobab tree in front of his house has many heads equipped with several eyes,

holding cudgel in his hands and with many legs
walking towards him (p. 82).

In the paraphrased lines, one can see, in vivid terms, a scary phantom depicted by the baobab tree with many eyes and legs holding a cudgel. The banana tree represents a witch which, according to the Yoruba belief, must have just concluded their occultistic meeting at the coven (the banana plantation). The poet concludes that these forms remain what they naturally are when the light comes. That is, the banana tree that he visualises as a witch and the baobab tree that he renders as a killer phantom are just trees. It then occurs to him that he had only allowed darkness make him run wild in his imaginations. There is actually nothing to fear about the banana tree and the baobab tree. He has been his own source of fear.

In the last section titled *Rain*, “It’s about to rain” and “Something Happened After the Rain” will be examined. The two poems capture the incidents and the conditions that rain leaves people before and after a heavy downpour. To portray the effects of the happenings that take place when it’s about to rain, the poet employs personification to describe the attitude of nature when it is about to rain. Expressions such as “festive face”, “soothing smile” and “harshness of the sinister sun” speak volume about the day changing its brightness through a gloomy sombre sky to usher in rains. The poem also goes further to talk about “heavy wind whistling” and “trees shaking off their bodies to dance to the rhythm of the wind”. All these foregrounded expressions help to capture the various reactions of nature (day, sun, wind and trees) to rains. Again the generous deployment of personification does not only show us the reactions of nature, it also helps us to understand what all these reactions mean.

More so, in the last stanza of the poem, the poet employs metaphor to achieve a robust description of the attitudes of Heaven when it is about to rain even as difficult as it may be to see or know what is going on in Heaven at the moment of rain. The following lines illustrate the attitudes of Heaven and how these attitudes are perceived by human beings

Now the face of Heaven

...is dark

And the voice of Heaven

...is furious

Now the bands of Heaven

...are hyper-active

And the parades of Heaven

...are marching (p. 96)

In the lines above, the face of Heaven represents the sky heavy with cloud; voice of heaven illustrates thunder while the bands of Heaven symbolise the sky, cloud, thunder, storm and lightening. All of them are actively engaged to bring about rains.

Then after the rain has fallen, man is left with either of the two reactions: to grin or to grimace. At the end of each rain, man gets to express his feelings in a mixed way. The rain offers joy and sorrow at the same time. It is these mixed feelings (that man expresses after the rain) that the poem, "Something Happened After the Rain" speaks about. However, the poem emphasises the sorrow that man experiences as a result of the disasters that rains bring forth. The poet employs metaphor to describe these disasters. Expressions such as "the brim of flood/...and blood/the insignia of our injury/...sparrow of sorrow/ravaged roof and flies of stigma" capture the weight of sorrow that man feels as a result of the damages done by the rain. Then the poet spells out each of these damages in the following lines:

just look at us and see

our homes are dams

our roads are only pliable

through canoes

and the flood draws

The poet evokes a deep sense of sympathy when he invites his readers to look at how the rain has turned their homes to dams and their roads to rivers; and how flood (an aftermath of the rain) snatched little children away from their parents. The poet heightens this deep sense of sympathy in readers by pinpointing the anguish and the pitiable conditions of the victims of flood after a heavy downpour. He describes the victims as homeless, marooned, wearied and waned.

4. Conclusion

The critical study undertaken, so far, offers a socio-stylistic analysis of Gabriel Bamgbose's *Something Happened After the Rain*. In the course of the study, definitions of style and stylistics were provided and some levels of language analysis that can be applied to the analysis of literary texts were examined. These levels of language analysis (Graphology, Lexico-Semantic features and Morphology) were defined and later applied to the analysis of the selected poems in the collection. The study also includes highlighting the various ways through which the poet communicates his message to the audience. Through his peculiar use of language, the poet, Gabriel Bamgbose, presents the poems in the studied text in five sections and each of these sections has distinctive title. Each title captures the general image, mood and tone of the poet in all the poems in each section. "Sing" expresses celebration and joy of birth, childhood and maidenhood; "Speak" expresses a break away from repression and silence; "Die" captures dying and death itself; "Dream" expresses hallucination and how loneliness or frustration makes one's mind unguardedly stroll into wild imaginations; then "Rain" carries the burden of sorrow and pains accruable after the disasters of the rain. In order to make these ideas and messages relatable to readers, the poet employs the use of pidgin English, figurative expressions like metaphor, personification, euphemism, repetition, refrain and foregrounding etc. Above all, it is important to note that Bamgbose, in this collection, has succeeded in deploying sarcasm even in the most serious and sensitive of issues like death, child labour and delivery as in "Song of a child", "You'd soon be weaned" and "If I die". Bamgbose ensures that the language of his poetry is rendered in such way that, even when his poems carry serious messages of repression, frustration and death, the audience

has reason not only to stay glued to reading the poems but also to catch fun and experience some degree of playfulness. His language style underscores the Yoruba assertion that tragic matters often deserve smileful reactions.

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