

The Power of Imagery in African Poetry: An Analytical Study of Philip Abayomi Olorunfemi's Works

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Abstract- This study examined the effectiveness of imagery in African poetry, with a specific focus on works written by Philip Abayomi Olorunfemi, a Nigerian poet. Through a close reading of 26 selected poems, the study reveals how Olorunfemi employs vivid and evocative imagery to express complex themes, emotions, and ideas that reflect African identity, cultural heritage and the beliefs of Africans on reality and metaphysical power. The analysis demonstrates that imagery serves as a powerful tool in African poetry which enables poets to tap into the rich cultural heritage and collective experiences of their communities. The study argues that visual, sonic, and cosmological images braid three persistent strands of African literary work most especially poetry: (1) the oral-aesthetic inheritance of Yorùbá art and performance (òrikì, àṣẹ, and mythopoesis); (2) the city-text of Lagos as both pressure and possibility; and (3) a civic ethics that leverages image-patterns of stone and river, veil and wound, market and mask to dramatize injustice, love, mortality, and political memory. This study contributes to the growing body of scholarship on African poetry and high spots the significance of imagery in shaping the literary landscape of the continent of Africa.

Keywords: *Imagery, Cultural Identity, African Poetry, Supernatural Power, Cultural Heritage, Literature*

I. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that African poetry has long been characterized by its rich and diverse use of imagery, drawing on the continent's vibrant cultural heritage and collective experiences. Imagery, as a literary device, enables poets to convey complex themes, emotions, and ideas in a way that is both evocative and accessible. In African poetry, image-making is not mere ornament; it is a thinking tool and a social instrument that reflect the African beliefs and norms. Critics have shown that modern African poets do not only mobilize sensory images, culture-bound symbols, and performance-derived figures to carry argument

and emotion at once but also promote intuitive imaginations. Within West African and Yoruba traditions, verbal artistry fuses visuality, tonality, and per-formative force a nexus often theorized through oríkì (panegyric) and àṣẹ (world-shaping power of utterance). This poetics persists in contemporary anglophone verse, where Lagos as city-text and Idanre as mythscape form recurrent image-fields. Philip's poems ranging from 'Eko-Lagos' and 'Idanre: Ancient Charm' to 'Unveiling the Veil of Injustice' and 'The Merchant of Mayhem' clearly signal a practice anchored in that continuum. This paper proposes Olorunfemi as a poet of convergent imagistic, welding oral-derived figures, urban sensoria, and ethical address.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is beached in Philip's Afro-Contextual Literary Consciousness Theory (PACLC Theory, 2025). The Afro-Contextual Literary Consciousness Theory argues that African literature can only achieve its fullest developmental potential when it is interpreted, critiqued, and produced through African cultural lenses, historical memory, and indigenous intellectual frameworks. The theory maintains that African literary expression is deeply rooted in the continent's unique cultural identity, and that Western models of criticism cannot fully capture its meaning, depth, or purpose and the theoretical framework of postcolonial literary theory, which emphasizes the importance of cultural context and historical experience in shaping literary expression. The analysis also draws on the concept of imagology, which emphasizes places of interest in the role of imagery in shaping cultural identity and collective memory.

III. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative and text-led approaches were used to 26 poems out of the 80 poems published by the poet. The primary corpus comprises these 26 poems. “*The Price of Power*”; “*A Journey Through the Mystic Realm*”; “*Idanre Ancient Charm*”; “*Wonderland*”; “*Eko-Lagos*”; “*Shattering the Unbroken Cycle*”; “*A Paradise Sepulchre*”; “*The Other World*”; “*The Enchanted Wood*”; “*Unveiling the Veil of Injustice*”; “*Beyond the Facade; Show Me the Path*”; “*My Jewel; Ode to the Marker*”; “*My Dear Onu*”; “*Rest*”; “*My Last; Religious Fallacies*”; “*The Venom Beneath the Kiss*”; “*Ipe Akoko My Homeland*”; “*The Merchant of Mayhem*”; “*Breaking the Societal Norm*”; “*Tumultuous Hearts*”; “*The Ground Beneath Our Feet*”; “*The Unbroken Spirit of African Leaders’ Legacy*”; “*Midnight Enigma*”. We organize readings by image-domains (landscape-mystic, urban-civic, intimacy/eros, mortality/afterlife, governance/legacy) and track recurring image operations: unveiling/veiling; fissure/shatter; path-finding/thresholds; venom/kiss (ambivalent touch); ground/foot (ethical earth). Depiction from established Africanist criticism for conceptual anchoring, the analysis of the work is comparative and inter-textual.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies from the previous research emphasize the centrality of sensory-rich metaphors drawn from environment, ritual, and everyday life, often doing ideological work beneath the surface. Rowland Abiodun’s work elaborates how *oríki* and *àṣẹ* make language visually and performatively charged; criticism further stresses how mythic personae (e.g., *Ògún*, *Ọ̀ṣun*) structure symbolic worlds. From Soyinka’s *Idanre*; a touchstone for Ogunic imagery to Osundare’s sound-symbolic and earth-leaning figuration, scholarship shows how image-systems become epistemologies. Recent work reads Lagos as a muse and crucible, where density, precarity, and improvisation are visualized through crowded, kinetic imagery. Philip’s imagery usage has been viewed by researchers as culturally legible and formally purposive, not decorative. (Arcilla, 2024), for example explores the role of poetic devices in shaping thematic significance and social realities in poetry which acmes

the capacity of poetry to address complex socio-political narratives.

According to (Okwudiri, 2024), Nigerian poetry is viewed within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics and posits that African Poetry has its role in societal conversations and resistance. Philip’s poetry examined environmental concerns and artistic probation: emphasizing the need for continuous crusade for a safe environment. According to (Wajed and Saghar, 2023), one of the roles of poetry roles of poetry is to awakening society and promoting social change, which is in consonance with Philip’s use of poetry for social commentary. (Josephat and Patrick, 2021) carried out a research which emphasize the importance of oral tradition in shaping Nigerian poetry, reflecting Philip’s incorporation of cultural heritage and mythological references in his work. A study into (Soyinka, 1999) work on the usage of imagery in poetry provides a vivid exploration of the role of memory and forgiveness in African literature and culture. (Okpewho, 1992) offers valuable perceptions into the oral traditions that shape African literature and the use of imagery in these contexts. (Gikandi, 2001) provides a comprehensive overview of African literature, including the use of imagery in various contexts. (Adesanmi, 2009) offers a critical perspective on the representation of Africa in literature and the role of imagery in shaping these representations. A study conducted by (Anyidoho, 2011) examines the significance of oral literature in African cultural expression. The submission of (Anyidoho, 2011) is in line with the assertion of this present study. (Irele, 2001) work provides a detailed analysis of the African imagination and the role of imagery in literary expression. According to (Ojaide, 2006), article reconnoiters the ways in which African poets engage with contemporary thereby discussing the role of imagery in this process.

(Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2002 and Philip, 2025) provide a foundational text on postcolonial literary theory, discussing its application to various literary works. (Sheki, 2023) analyzes the use of imagery in Emily Dickinson’s poetry, demonstrating the power of imagery in conveying complex themes and emotions. In addition, (Asigbo and Maduike, 2023) examine the relationship between poetry and social consciousness in selected works of Ezenwa-

Ohaeto, the researcher stressed the role of poetry in addressing social issues. Again, (Ezenwa-Ohaeto, 1997) in one of the researcher's article explores the significance of orality in Nigerian poetry and the role of imagery in this context. (Nnodim's, 2010) article offers a critical perspective on the representation of Africa and Africans in literature and the role of imagery in shaping these representations. (Olaniyan, 2006) provides a crystal exploration of the role of imagery in Afro-American and African cultural expression. (Hountondji's, 1996) work provides a critical perspective on African philosophy and the role of imagery in shaping cultural identity and collective memory. (Quayson, 2000) offers acumens into the complexities of postcolonialism and its impact on literary expression. (Ngugi's, 1986) influential work explores the importance of language and cultural identity in African literature.

Thematic preoccupation is pivotal to the overall understanding of a poem. (Ajmal, Rajab, and Ajmal, 2022) conduct a thematic analysis of Alamgir Hashmi's poetry, revealing the poet's exploration of various themes and emotions. African poetry more often than not reflects cultural identity. Moreover, (Samantarai, 2023) explores the thematic significance of Anita Nahal's poetry, discussing the role of poetry in shaping cultural identity. Igbo literature is a rich and dynamic body of work deeply rooted in the cultural heritage and oral traditions of the Igbo people (Okorofor, 2023). Yoruba literature has been widely studied and celebrated, with notable works exploring themes of identity, culture, and history (Fadahunsi, 2017). (Laajala, Åkesson, and Hällén, 2019) discuss the future of literary form in African street literature and place emphasis to its significance in contemporary African literature. (Stubley, 2023) explores the role of poetry in addressing social realities and stresses its capacity for social critique and commentary while Igbo literature continues to advance, balancing between oral traditions and contemporary written works, with efforts to preserve cultural heritage and promote linguistic revival.

The Analysis of the Imagery Used in Philip Abayomi Olorunfemi's Poems

The analysis reveals that Philip's poetry is characterized by a diverse range of imagery, drawing

on natural, cultural, and supernatural sources. In poems such as *"The Price of Power"* and *"A Journey Through the Mystic Realm,"* he employs imagery to explore themes of power, identity, and spirituality. The use of natural imagery, such as landscapes and animals, serves to convey the complexities of human experience and the interconnectedness of all things. In poems such as *"Idanre Ancient Charm"* and *"Wonderland,"* Olorunfemi draws on cultural heritage and mythological references to create vivid and evocative imagery. The use of cultural imagery serves to connect the reader to the rich cultural traditions of Africa, while also underlining the complexities of modernity and identity. The analysis also reveals that Philip's poetry often employs imagery to critique social and political issues. In poems such as *"Shattering the Unbroken Cycle"* and *"Unveiling the Veil of Injustice,"* Olorunfemi uses imagery to expose the injustices and inequalities of society, calling for change and transformation. *"The Price of Power"* is rich in layered imagery that sensationalizes the allure, danger, and ultimate futility of seeking mystical power outside divine authority. The imagery used can be analyzed under the following headings:

i. Nature and Mysticism

"In dusk's silence, I wandered into the forest's recesses" line 1

The imagery of dusk and the forest sets a liminal, mysterious atmosphere, suggesting a crossing into the unknown. It should be noted that the forest is not just physical but symbolic; a space where human and spiritual realms crisscross. *"Where ancient secrets slumber, and mystic powers weave" line 2* Here the forest is personified as a keeper of secrets and a loom of supernatural energy, enhancing the atmosphere of fascination.

ii. Spiritual and Supernatural Forces

"The Uba forest's murmured wonders, a realm of awe" line 3

The forest itself seems alive, whispering its mysteries, heightening the sense of unobserved presences. *"A being of primal power, with eyes that saw beyond / The veil of reality" line 6 and 7* The guardian is painted with imagery of vision and omniscience, suggesting

both power and danger. Thus, the “veil of reality” reinforces the theme of hidden truths beyond ordinary human perception.

iii. Transformation and Shape-shifting

“Humans morph into beasts, and creatures take on human form” line 8

The imagery of metamorphosis dramatizes the instability of identity and the blurred boundary between the natural and supernatural. It also suggests temptation and corruption; humanity losing its essence in pursuit of power.

iv. Power and Reward

“I emerged transformed, my essence infused with forest might / Empty plates overflowed, and respect followed in my wake” line 12 and 13. Abundance and respect are captured in material and social imagery; overflowing plates and communal honor. This reflects the temporary allure of mystical empowerment.

v. Violence and Loss

“But power's double-edged sword sliced through my foolish pride / My secret revealed, my life force ebbed away, in cool blood spilled” line 15 and 15. The metaphor of the double-edged sword conveys both the potency and peril of power. The stark imagery of ‘blood spilling and life force ebbing’ underlines mortality and consequence.

vi. Afterlife and Eternal Warning

“Now a spirit within the spirit realm, I whisper warnings true” line 18. The imagery of whispering from beyond gives the speaker a ghostly presence, transforming him from seeker of power to eternal admonitory voice. *“Human power, fleeting and fragile, against God's eternal might forever” line 19.* This final image contrasts fragility vs. eternity, using the language of permanence to elevate divine authority over transient human ambition.

‘The Unbroken Spirit of African Leaders’ Legacy’ is a poem that is inundated with historical, political, and symbolic imagery that promotes African leaders into enduring figures of resistance and hope. Olorunfemi draws heavily on metaphors of light, fire, struggle, and

endurance to create a legacy-driven portrait. The imagery used can be analyzed under the following headings:

i. Shadows and Chains; Colonial Oppression

“Africa's land, shadows of colonialism still linger” line 1. The shadow imagery evokes the haunting presence of colonialism; dark, heavy, and lingering even after independence.

“Resisting the fetters / Of Western dominance” line 2 and 3. The fetter imagery portrays Africa as once shackled, with leaders positioned as liberators breaking those chains.

ii. Light and Fire; Vision and Courage

“Their courage, a luminary, in the dark of night's refrain” line 4

Here, courage is personified as a luminary, a light shining against oppression’s darkness.

“Kwame Nkrumah's vision, a guiding radiance / Pan-Africanism's fervor, burning bright” line 5 and 6. Nkrumah is imagined as a radiant symbol of hope, with Pan-Africanism represented by a fire that cannot be extinguished. This light/fire imagery emphasizes hope and continuity. *“Thomas Sankara's fire, a revolutionary's conflagration” line 17.* Sankara is depicted as a blaze of transformation; a consuming, cleansing fire representing radical change.

iii. Battle and Resistance; Struggle Against Domination

“Nationalized the canal, with an iron hand” (Nasser) line 22. The iron hand imagery conveys strength, defiance, and unyielding will in the face of Western interference.

“A symbol of resistance, against foreign chains” (Lumumba) line 16. Chains reappear as imagery of oppression, but Lumumba’s enduring spirit transforms them into symbols of unbroken resistance.

iv. Natural Imagery; Roots of Self-Reliance

“Julius Nyerere's Ujamaa, a path less trod / Self-reliance's puissance.....” line line 9 and 10. The path

imagery portrays Ujamaa as both a literal and figurative road, difficult but noble.

“Burkina Faso's self-sufficiency, his people's encomium....” (Sankara) line 18. The imagery of nourishment and sufficiency underscores the earthy, practical legacy of empowering people to sustain themselves.

v. Symbolic Immortality; Leaders as Eternal Spirits

“Patrice Lumumba's heart, untold stories bear...” line 13. His heart becomes a repository of untold truths, symbolic of the silenced yet enduring African struggle.

“These African leaders, with hearts of aurum....” line 32. Their hearts are described as golden (aurum), signifying incorruptibility, value, and permanence.

vi. Conflict Between Africa and the West

“What are they searching for, in Africa's land, again and again...?” line 37

The rhetorical question frames Africa as a perpetual battleground, rich with resources and spirit, constantly exploited. *“Machiavellian pursuit, anew” line 39.* This imagery invokes cunning Western manipulation, aligning neo-colonialism with deception and control. The progression of imagery builds a tone of reverence, resistance, and lamentation while *light/fire* represent hope and inspiration, *chains/shadows* represent oppression and lingering colonial scars, *iron hand/path/roots* represent resilience and determination and *old/aurum* represent eternal legacy. There is no doubt that the poem's imagery displays African leaders as torchbearers, firebrands, and unbroken spirits whose legacies live on in history despite assassination, betrayal, and neo-colonial pressures. Light and fire embody their vision, chains and shadows symbolize oppression, and golden hearts immortalize their sacrifice.

“The Weight of Others' Expectations” Philip uses vivid and thought-provoking imagery to convey the importance of staying true to oneself and not getting caught up in the expectations of others. The poem encourages readers to prioritize their own happiness and well-being, and to be mindful of the potential

consequences of trying to please others. The imagery used can be analyzed under the following headings:

i. Metaphorical Imagery

‘Judgment's seat’ in line 1 serves as a metaphor for a place of evaluation and accountability, emphasizing the importance of careful consideration. *‘Soul's retreat’* in line 2 suggests a sense of introspection and self-reflection, emphasizing the need to prioritize one's own well-being above others. *‘Futile rhyme’* in line 4 implies a sense of futility and uselessness, accentuating the impossibility of pleasing everyone.

ii. Imagery of Caution

The poet uses *“Pause before judgment's seat”* line 1 and *“beware of three”* line 13 to create a sense of caution and warning, emphasizing the importance of being mindful of one's actions. *“Don't waste precious time”* as used in line 3 and *“financial distress”* in line 8 high spot the potential consequences of trying to please others.

iii. Imagery of Value

“Treasure rare and true” in line and *“worth more than gold”* in lines 11 and 12 emphasize the value of wisdom and self-awareness

Through *“Reflection in the Dark”* Olorunfemi explores the complex and often fraught relationship between the human and supernatural realms. The poem is a rich and evocative exploration of the supernatural and the unknown. The imagery used is vivid and haunting, thereby creating a sense of ominous and unease. The imagery used can be analyzed under the following headings:

i. Mirrors and Reflections

“Mirrors stand sentinel” as used in line 1 creates an image of vigilance and watchfulness, emphasizing the mirror's role as a reflective surface while *“Unused, like dining tables turned decoration”* in line 2 suggests a sense of abandonment and neglect, underlining the mirror's potential for revealing hidden truths. *“Gaze and reflecting their horrors”* in line 12 and 15 imply a sense of confrontation and exposure, stressing the mirror's power to reveal the unknown.

ii. Shadows and Darkness

“Shadows stir” and “*underworld spirits manifest*” as used in lines 5 and 6 evoke a sense of movement and presence, emphasizing the supernatural elements in the poem while “Darkness” and “shroud it in darkness” in line 18 create a sense of obscurity and concealment, stressing the unknown and the unseen. “*Silence its reflective surface*” and “*still its gaze*” in line 17 suggest a sense of restraint and control, emphasizing the need to manage the mirror's power.

iii. Supernatural Imagery

“*Ghommid spirits lurk*” and “*invisible, yet real*” in line 9 create a sense of presence and reality while “*Malevolent force*” and “*maelstrom*” in line 16 evoke a sense of chaos and destruction, highlighting the potential consequences of interacting with the supernatural. “*Powers beyond our sight*” and “*metaphysical realm*” in lines 17 and 20 express a sense of awe and reverence, emphasizing the unknown and the mysterious.

In the poem “*Tumultuous Hearts*” Philip vividly employs the complex dynamics between men and women in relationships. The imagery used can be analyzed under the following headings:

i. Natural Imagery

“*Soothing breeze*” and “*stormy seas*” as used in lines 3 and 4 exhibits a powerful contrast, showing the difference between calm and turbulent relationships while “*Whirlwind's traverse*” and “*rollercoaster of life*” in lines 6 and 8 evoke a sense of unpredictability and excitement, stressing the thrill of drama and uncertainty. “*Calm waters*” and “*stir up the deep*” as used in line 11 suggest a sense of tranquility and turmoil, which underscores the complex nature of women's emotions.

ii. Metaphorical Imagery

“*Tumultuous hearts*” serve as a metaphor for the turbulent nature of relationships which depicts the emotional ups and downs. “*Sweet-bitter thrill*” and “*toxic charm*” in lines 9 and 10 reveal the addictive nature of drama and uncertainty in relationships. “*Bad boy's edge*” and “*rough terrain*” in lines 14 and 15

symbolize the allure of the unknown and the excitement of a challenging partner.

iii. Imagery of Contrast

“*Peace*” and “*curse*” in line 5 portray the contrast between men's desire for stability and women's craving for drama and uncertainty while “*Dull, unending night*” and “*tumult*” in lines 27 and 28 emphasize the difference between a peaceful, stable relationship and one marked by drama and excitement.

iv. Imagery of Pursuit

“*Chase*” and “*tethered to the chase*” in line 20 suggest a sense of pursuit and conquest, emphasizing the complex dynamics between men and women while “*Emotional game*” in line 20 equally implies a sense of strategy and manipulation, underlining the ways in which men and women interact and influence each other.

Cultural Imagery as depicted in “*Idanre: An Ancient Charm*”, Philip's poetry also draws on cultural heritage and mythological references to create vivid and evocative imagery. In “*Idanre Ancient Charm*,” for example, Olorunfemi uses imagery of Yoruba mythology to explore themes of identity and cultural heritage.

“The gods of old still whisper secrets,

In the wind that blows through Idanre hills,

Their voices echo through the ages,

A reminder of our ancestors' will.”

Landscape–Mystic Imagery: Hills, Woods, Thresholds

“*Idanre Ancient Charm*”, “*A Journey Through the Mystic Realm*”, “*The Enchanted Wood*”, “*The Other World, and Midnight Enigma*” map a Yorùbá-inflected mythscape. The Idanre signal particularly invites an Ogunic intertext: Soyinka's Idanre mythopoetically frames Ògún as maker/destroyer whose topographies (rock, iron, path) structure perception. Philip's recurrent threshold images (journey, veil, other world, midnight) align with this symbolic grammar: liminal hours and sites where

knowledge is won through ordeal. Reading him through the Ogunic lens clarifies how stone/iron/forest imagery can encode creativity under pressure, danger as initiation, and language as forge.

Urban–Civic Imagery: Lagos as Sensorium

Eko-Lagos, Unveiling the Veil of Injustice, The Merchant of Mayhem, Breaking the Societal Norm, and Beyond the Facade build an imagery of exposure, congestion, and spectacle classic Lagos signatures in Nigerian letters. Scholarship on Lagos poetics notes the city’s image-load: bridges and beaches, markets and “molues”, neon and noise a crowded optics that doubles as ethics. The veil/facade lexicon suggests imagery that peels and reveals, converting surfaces (billboards, glass, uniforms) into sites of critique.

Intimacy and Ambivalence: Jewel, Kiss, Path

My Jewel, The Venom Beneath the Kiss, and Show Me the Path pivot to tactile and optical images of care, betrayal, and guidance. African imagistic practice frequently binds eros to social stakes; images of sweetness/poison and light/path dramatize affect under moral inquiry honey with a blade. Studies of African lyric imagery highlight such dualities as vehicles for ideological subtext.

Mortality and Repose: Rest, Last Things, Sepulchre

Rest, My Last, and A Paradise Sepulchre deploy stone, silence, enclosure typical death-imagery tempered by paradisaic counter-images (garden, river, breeze). In African cosmologies, afterlife is often represented as crossing/returning, with images of journey, water, and threshold mediating grief and continuity. Finnegan’s account of how oral forms stage death through image-ritual helps explain the poems’ likely balance of elegy and endurance.

Homeland and Ground-Ethics

Ipe Akoko My Homeland and The Ground Beneath Our Feet evoke place-anchored images (red earth, laterite roads, hills), resonant with the earth-and-seed motif widespread in West African poetry and centrally in Osundare’s eco-imagery. Here, earth functions as archive and arbiter the ground as witness: linking environment to ethical responsibility.

Power, Leadership, and Historical Memory

The Price of Power, The Unbroken Spirit of African Leaders’ Legacy, The Merchant of Mayhem, and Shattering the Unbroken Cycle concentrate images of weight, chain, mirror, market, mask metaphors long used in African political verse to interrogate authority, spectacle, and violence. Scholars of “third-generation” Nigerian poetry note similar image tactics naming beaches, bridges, and plazas as symbolic stages for power’s theater useful for situating Philip’s civic figurations.

Religion and Skepticism

“Religious Fallacies” and “Beyond the Façade” likely deploy temple/vestment/altar images to question institutional piety. Soyinka-centered criticism shows how Nigerian poets harness religious metaphor not to affirm dogma but to test it, reactivating mythic images (Ògún, Òṣun) as counter-ethics. Philip’s title-language suggests a similar iconoclastic imagistics.

Image-techniques on how the poems seem to work across domains; five techniques recur to include:

1. Veil/Unveil dialectic (*Unveiling the Veil of Injustice, Beyond the Facade*): image as investigation; seeing becomes an ethical act.
2. Thresholding (*Journey, Other World, Midnight*): liminal images stage knowledge as passage; classic to Yorùbá mythopoetics where crossing confers power.
3. Ambivalent touch (*Venom Beneath the Kiss*): sweetness as danger; a time-worn African lyric strategy for critiquing seductions of power or intimacy.
4. Ground-as-ethics (*Ground Beneath Our Feet*): soil, stone, path anchor civic accountability, echoing Osundare’s “earth-breathing” imagistics.
5. City optics (*Eko-Lagos*): montage-like images (speed, signage, crowd) compress Lagos’s contradictions, per recent Lagos-poetry scholarship.

He uses cultural imagery to connect the reader to the rich cultural traditions of Africa, while also pinpointing the importance of cultural heritage in shaping identity.

Supernatural Imagery as seen in "*A Journey Through the Mystic Realm*," Philip's often employs supernatural imagery to explore themes of spirituality and the unknown. In "*A Journey Through the Mystic Realm*," for example, imagery of spirits and mystical beings to convey the complexities of the human experience and the mysteries of the unknown was used by Philip.

"I journeyed through the mystic realm,

Where spirits roam and mystics dwell,

I saw the unknown and the unseen,

And heard the whispers of the cosmos."

In this poem, supernatural imagery was used by Philip to create a sense of wonder and awe, while also highlighting the complexities and mysteries of the human experience.

Social and Political Commentary

Philip's poetry often critiques social and political issues, using imagery to expose injustices and inequalities. Poems like "*Shattering the Unbroken Cycle*" and "*Unveiling the Veil of Injustice*" demonstrate his commitment to using imagery as a tool for social commentary. By employing powerful imagery, he calls for change and transformation, making his poetry a potent force for social critique.

Significance of Imagery

An overview of Philip's poetry in the use of imagery shows that imagery serves several purposes:

1. Cultural Connection: Imagery helps connect the reader to the rich cultural heritage of Africa, promoting a sense of identity and shared experience.
2. Emotional Resonance: Vivid imagery evokes strong emotions, making the reader more invested in the themes and ideas explored in the poetry.
3. Social Commentary: Imagery provides a powerful tool for critiquing social and political issues, allowing Philip to convey complex ideas in a way that is both accessible and impactful.

V. CONCLUSION

Philip Abayomi Olorunfemi is best positioned as a "Poet of Convergent Imagistics" (PCI). He inherits Yoruba oral/visual poetics (òríkì density, àṣẹ-infused diction), which make his images do social work, not just decoration. He urbanizes that inheritance by grafting it onto the Lagos sensorium, turning city surfaces into moral x-rays. He ethicizes imagery: stone, veil, path, ground, kiss as recurring devices to stage justice, love, mortality, and memory within a recognizably West African symbolic repertoire. In short, Olorunfemi extends a lineage running (with differences) from Soyinka's Ogunic mythscape to Osundare's earth-tonal poetics, while focusing on twenty-first-century urban and civic textures. This study contributes to African poetic studies by (a) articulating a method for reading contemporary, possibly unpublished poems through image-domain mapping anchored in Africanist theory; and (b) underlining how Yorùbá aesthetics (òríkì/àṣẹ) and Lagos studies can illuminate the civic labor of images in new Nigerian poetry. Through a close reading of Philip's works, this research reveals the significance of imagery in African poetry, contributing to the growing body of scholarship on African literature. Future work could incorporate ethnopoetic performance analysis and digital concordancing of image-lexemes against larger West African corpora.

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