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## Imagining Society in Remi Raji's *Gather my Blood Rivers of Song*

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### Abstract:

Contemporary African poets have engaged in the vivid reflection of their society through the weaponry of their poetry. Poets, at one point or the other, show inseparable relationship between literature and society. Remi Raji's poetry has been examined with emphasis on its political consciousness; however, this paper investigates the image of society in Raji's *Gather my Blood Rivers of Song*. The paper aims at exploring the link between Raji's milieu and poetry as exemplified in the selected collection. Raji has, indubitably pictured socio-political realities within his social context. The images of society revealed in *Gather my Blood Rivers of Song* include leadership failure, misgovernance, act of betrayal, moral decadence, religious bigotry, incessant loss of lives and socio-political turbulence which have lately ravaged the polity. As a mouthpiece of the oppressed masses, Raji uses his poetry to comment on multifarious social ills with a view to correcting them.

**Key words:** Image of society, socio-political realities, *Gather my Blood Rivers of Song*, Remi Raji.

### Introduction

Modern African poetry has since its christening been committed to the socio-political incidents in the polity. This goes in line with the atavistic definition of literature as the mirror of the society; thus, literature is ontologically, in service of the human society as it portrays all forms of happenings. James Tar Tsaaior (2005) opines that an authentic African poetry is, essentially, that which draws its afflation; sensibility and vision as well as themes, imagery, tropes and entire worldview from the quotidian realities and chequered experiences of Africa's historical continuum. African poetry cannot be detached from the African social realities.

Modern African poetry has been serving the humanity since its birth. In other words, modern African poetry is responsible and responsive to the needs of the people for whom it has been produced. Theodora Akachi Ezeigbo (2008) states that through the creation of the illusion of reality, writers are able to expose, on one hand, the evils in their societies with a view to correcting them and redirecting their people and on the other hand, highlight the positive aspects in order to encourage their people to emulate them and perpetuate them for posterity. Thus, social experiences provide afflatus for African writers. It is through the poets' depiction of socio-political occurrences that their social commitment, which aims towards the betterment of humanity, is demonstrated. African literature has historically and socially captured the phenomenal challenges of the people. That the history of post-colonial Africa is fraught with amalgam of imbalances, upheaval and crush of hope cannot be refuted. The African writer, therefore, cannot afford to vividly narrate the experience of his people for whom he serves as the mouthpiece. This is in line with Ezekiel Mphahlele's (1972:187) position that every writer is

committed to something beyond his art, to a statement of value not purely aesthetic, to a “criticism of life”.

Frank Uche Mowah (2005:99) defines modern African as “...a product of conflict, social political schisms and experiences which have characterised the African world since the coming of the Europeans in the century.” Modern African poetry bears the various burdens the black race is encumbered with. African literature has been variously labelled literature of commitment. Thus, writers are committed to certain sociologically germane issues. In the same vein, to a large extent, African literature serves as a social documentary and commentary.

Moreover, modern African poetry has been faithful in its factual, down-to-earth re-presentation of social realities. This qualifies Remi Raji’s poetry to be described as a social documentary due to its tendency to achieve accuracy. Inaugurating his professorship, Aderemi Raji-Oyelade (2013:36) declares:

I belong to a generation of poets whose writings became noticeable in the late 1980s and the early 1990 in Nigeria. Known as “third generation” authors, this is the group which bears the African genius of survival, perseverance and brilliance, against all odds.

The major vision of contemporary writers seems to be a literature of praxis, a concrete, activist literature with a clamorous statement about the social situation (Niyi Osundare 2007). The quintessential role of writers in Third World nations, where colonialism, imperialism, capitalism and neo-colonialism have shattered the nationalists’ glorious dreams, cannot be overemphasised. The role of the writer in (re)educating his people is vividly captured by Chinua Achebe (1975:45) thus:

The writer cannot expect to be excused from the task of re-education and regeneration that must be done. In fact he should march right in front. For he is after all...the sensitive point of his community.

Literary writers, therefore, cannot but embrace passivity and nonchalance to the predicament of their cultural milieu. Writers do not only explain the world, but also change it.

Commenting on Raji’s poetry, Sule E. Egya (2011:18) posits that Raji’s poetry transcends “any private agenda, carries a vision anchored in a past plundered and wasted, in present burdened with frustration and anguish and in a future envisaged with surpassing optimism.” One cannot deny the fact Raji’s poetic tone is usually political through his poetic-criticism of misgovernance and oppression of the poor masses to whom the poet is the mouthpiece.

Postcolonial theory is preoccupied with the concept of resistance, of resistance as subversion, or opposition, or mimicry - but with the haunting problem that resistance always inscribes the resisted into the texture of the resisting: it is a two-edged sword. As well, the concept of resistance carries with it or can carry with it ideas about human freedom, liberty, identity and individuality, which ideas may not have been held, or held in the same way, in the colonized culture’s view of humankind (Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. and Tiffin, H. 1989). Contemporary poets of Remi Raji’s calibre cannot afford to be committed to resisting some destructive and anti-human forces in their cultural milieu due to their “...common rage against things not done

right” (Aderemi Raji-Oyelade 2013:36). It is against this background that postcolonial theory is adopted for the study with emphasis on resistance as common to postcolonial-oriented texts.

## IMAGINING SOCIETY IN RAJI’S POETRY

Published in 2009, *Gather my Blood Rivers of Song* is the fifth collection of poetry by Remi Raji. Others are *A Harvest of Laughters* (1997), *Webs of Remembrance* (2001), *Shuttlesongs America: A Poetic Guided Tour* (2003), *Lovesong for my wasteland* (2005) and *Sea of my Mind* (2013). This supports the claim that Raji has accomplished maturity as displayed by his literary prowess.

*Gather my Blood Rivers of Song* is divided into seven parts. Each part captures the persona’s lament and that of the nation on the edge of collapse. The poet is able to relate the past with the present.

Raji launches his socio-political campaign right from the poetilogue of his fifth collection. Raji bares his mind on different images that a poet represents:

I am the million selves speaking silently to the strong minds  
My country of urgent memoirs... (16)

A poet means different things to different people. Thus, Raji says he is “the million selves” addressing his political domain. One of the quintessential responsibilities of a socially committed poet-writer is to demonstrate his love for his nation no matter the level of cadential decadence. The “sclerosis of violent syllables” (16) of his poetics should serve as a “redemptive rope” for “the drowning man”. More so, Raji declares: “I sing about the sins of the flock and the cleric’s scars” (16). In other words, he is not unaware of the leadership-followership crisis criss-crossing the milieu. As a conscience of the troubled masses, the poet chronicles

...the piecemeal deaths you see on the streets  
The many meager debts wrapped as knots in your daily meal (16)

Contemporary human society is peopled with those who die gradually day-by-day on the nation’s highways. As the poet concludes the prologue, he does not hesitate to mention political “competent” “hypocrisy of guile” which has left many with “the bruise and the blood from this stone of a country” (16). The prologue, therefore, introduces readers to Raji’s socio-political campaign for justice, equity and equality in his cultural milieu. Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson (2007:101) opine that

If the only literary and critical tradition one is familiar with is the African, one could be forgiven for thinking that writers and critics of African literature invented the idea that literature has a function, and that that function is to serve society.

Although all writers and critics may not subscribe to the idea of “art for life’s sake” on the same degree, all do agree that society and literature share a symbiotic relationship.

In “Not a word”, Raji thematises the politics of injustice, inequality and wanton marginalization which have become the *modus operandi* in the nation’s political landscape:

talk to me  
not about  
the peace  
that will soon expire in the hands of inequity,  
and inequality. (21)

The socio-political context of this text is currently bedevilled with socio-political and religious contests and insecurity. The poet-persona in “Not a word” rejects any discussion or talk on “the peace” without equity and equality. The implication of this is that anywhere inequity and inequality are allowed to flourish peace would be flushed out of such a place.

The poet goes ahead to abnegate any attempt to achieve national unity amidst injustice:

don’t preach to me about  
unity in the fog of injustice  
i hear the cry too, of men and women  
through the years, and of children lost  
or drowned in their own bleats...(21)

The rate of criminality in the world today is very alarming as the cry of the people gets to the poet who though represents a gown, can feel the pain of the town. Nobody is exempted from the religious and socio-political violence that has ravaged the land. Men and women cry, while children bleat like sheep or goat as a result of incessant scenarios of kidnapping and or *adult-napping*. The poet thus writes about the “starving days” where “Death Returned to our familiar places...” The streets are littered with lifeless bodies of innocent victims since there is no justice in the polity. Like Wole Soyinka (1988) maintains that the artist has always functioned in African setting as the record of the mores and experience of his society and as the voice of vision in his own time, Raji has been able to vividly present the picture of his society with all its woes. The poet’s argument here is that “Not a word” would restore unity, peace and normalcy unless injustice, inequity and inequality are gotten rid of. For life to be liveable, therefore, people should talk less and act more.

The poems titled “Animus I” and “Animus II” decry display of animalistic tendencies in man. According to the poet-persona:

I see now we embrace bitterness  
like the spill  
We spit  
and spite  
We greet  
and gripe about  
We smile in malice  
the new lovely things. (22)

The situation painted above is ironical and quite unfortunate; everyone seems to be embittered and so, becomes bitter with one another. “The new lovely things” embraced are bitterness and malicious smile. This signifies a loveless relationship, although people do not show it in their faces. The poet cannot afford to hide his emotion as he cries, screams, prances and pounds:

Against this pestle, this pestilence  
of violence and doom...(22)

It is against this apocalyptic and hellish reality that Raji is enraged. He is, no doubt, “concerned with the predicament of man in a hostile environment and with the sickness that we all see in highly developed societies” (Mphahlele 1972:186).

Ironically, the “sacred” houses of God have lost their sense of purpose and responsibility as “...I hear beastly noises in the houses of God” (22). The fact that houses of God have turned to houses of gold where all forms of devilish and *anti-God* acts are perpetrated cannot be denied. The poet is, therefore, confused since he cannot differentiate:

between the sweetness of hatred and the  
staleness of loving  
knowing not when and where/to declare my faith (22-23).

The afore-mentioned is an indication of disillusionment because the source of hope for the people – religious leaders, has been reduced to hopelessness. Out of confusion, psychological trauma and hopelessness, the people whom the poet refers to as “civilized heathens” are “mouthing mantras of war...” That is, since leaders who are supposed to be the mouthpiece of the oppressed people have lost their sense and conscience; they only prey on the people who in turn pray i.e. “mouthing mantras”, for war.

“Animus II” is an exploration of the irrational justification for violence and massacre with which the nation is characterised:

they say this is how great nations are born  
on the animal blood  
of dissenting brothers  
we must first go up  
or go down in flames  
like the phoenix  
that’s how real nations rise they say (24)

Nigeria and some other parts of the world are lately engulfed in multi-faceted social violence which has claimed the life of many innocent ones. This calumnious and abysmal tendency is what the human race has come to face in recent times. However, there is no reasonable explanation for the annihilation of citizens all because “that’s how real nations rise”. When a nation has lost its people, who then would embrace, uphold and celebrate its greatness? There is no basis for bones to be broken and empires to vanish as a prerequisite for the rising of a nation. Breyten Breytenbach’s (2007:166) postulation which states that a writer is “the questioner and



the implacable critic of the mores and attitudes and myths of his society...also the exponent of the aspirations of his people” has been experimented in Raji’s societally focused oeuvre.

Meanwhile, the problem in the world today is that “Truth” has been imprisoned as Raji articulates:

Sometimes I imagine Truth imprisons  
Who then is free from the crooks of Unreason? (25)

As long as the knowledge of “Truth” is caged, sanity may not be restored to humanity. In the same vein, absence of “Truth” and “Reason” offers license to “the crooks of Unreason” to manoeuvre people. The only antidote to correcting and ameliorating all forms of maladies that have haunted the human race is never to keep silence:

For all who keep silence  
shall inhale the rot, and the rage. (25)

Silence only fuels social injustice. It is, therefore, a social responsibility of a poet to creatively present the image and rage of the society through his poetics. Thus, for a writer not to be accused of being a party to increased national problems, such a poet should write to right the wrongs in his milieu.

The major challenge confronting most of the developing countries of the world such as Nigeria is leadership failure. Raji pictures the image of leadership incompetency in “Monotones” where he describes the nation as “the headless ram” (26). The poet’s cultural milieu has been under political palpitations and economic stagnancy due to the absence of good governance. Although the nation state is not static, there has not been a meaningful development and growth in virtually every sector. The country is depicted as:

A nation of gangrenous patriots  
A foolscap of clowns, a milliard maggoty mouth speaking all at once (26).

The above vividly captures the picture of the kind of leaders that paddle the political ship of the country. They are morally decayed patriots, clownish humans with “maggoty mouth”, *sinful* senators and *thieving* representatives. Out of disappointment, the poet asks:

What will it bring  
This dialogue of diseased goitres? (26)

As far as Raji is concerned, every discussion and debate of these “gangrenous patriots” is mere cacophonous monotone that would not bring lasting solution(s) to the nation’s multifarious challenges.

“I confided in the parrot” thematises lack of trust and act of betrayal which have become the hallmarks among human beings. The poet-persona narrates his traumatic disappointment in a friend whom he initially confides in before the former proves to be a fiend:

I confided in the parrot  
 He carried my tale to the market of songs  
 I confided in the peacock  
 She blew my secrets in the air of pride (29).

We live in a world where the much hidden secret is let loose on the roof for all to hear; as a result of this moral lapse, the poet-persona resorts to putting his confidence in no one but in himself: “I shall confide only in the parrot of my soul” (29). In other words, when there is no one to trust, one should only trust oneself. Leaders cannot be trusted, followers are found wanting, there is no trust among members of the same family/household.

“I know the secrets of open roads” is preoccupied with incessant road accidents and plane crashes which have become almost insuperable. The roads are “open” due to several potholes that make them non-motorable and eventually lead to loss of innocent lives:

I know the secrets of open roads  
 the pulse of urchins of the blood  
 the gash and the gripe of highway paths  
 and potholes, I know the secrets of open roads,  
 where death hawks her passion per penury (33).

From the foregoing, Nigeria’s highways are fictionalised as death zones where lives are claimed; this is because “Death hawks” and usually sells on these roads which are in a state of mess. Raji declares that “There’s the death in the streets” as “the road bleeds and the bleeding is unending...” (33). “The road bleeds” since they are not properly maintained by those saddled with the responsibility, and even when the road maintenance agency makes an attempt to (re)construct the roads, they are shabbily done. The harrowing pains road accidents cause remain “unending” to the people who lose relations to bad roads and the nation at large. Moreover, “the secrets” of current accidents on highways lie in the fact that:

There are also cracks in the cabinet of roads  
 Bedbugs and soldier-ants fill the house of hunger. (33)

This shows that the right finger is not being used to pick the nose. Leaders are compared to “bedbugs and soldier-ants” to show how detrimentally parasitic they are to the followers as a result of havocs they bring through the kind of bad and myopic leadership they have chosen to embrace. The metaphoric use of animal images in this poem emphasises the prey-predator relationship that exists between the leaders and followers within Raji’s socio-political milieu. Leadership, therefore, is fictionalised as “house of hunger” in order to illustrate that leaders are mere hungry people who seek every opportunity to prey on the innocent masses.

Another image of the society, which Raji pictures is that of religious bigotry especially among students of the higher institutions of learning. Many of such religious students commit blasphemy as they misrepresent their God. This, the poet-persona says:



They say you're a relentless gatherer  
of stale sins  
and fresh penances (67)

Raji's choice of "Revelation" as the title of this poem is very significant; it is synchronous with the apocalypse which the last book of the Bible (Revelation) presents. The poet-persona poses some questions to God to authenticate the veracity of the identity of the religious bigots:

Are these your children  
who seek soft paths  
and mellow meadows  
to calvary & paradise? (67)

Gone are the days when people followed due process without seeking non-existing shortcuts – "soft paths". The bigots pictured in "Revelation" are not ready to carry their cross, they wish to bypass the cross and enjoy the crown. Raji reveals the rate of moral decadence among Nigerian university students whereby they advertise their nudity:

Are these your children  
angels of heaven  
come to earth  
in holy hot  
pants, bra-  
less tops  
and frugal dress  
hanging  
by the cliffs  
of provo-  
cative  
curves? (67-68)

The emblematic conceit-figure used in the quoted lines above symbolises the descendancy and degeneration of the children of this generation, in morality and godliness. Without mincing words, "these children" misrepresent their "father" by their wayward and immoral dressing. One cannot deny the fact that provocative dressing has led to increase in sexual immorality in the contemporary society. Young ladies and men alike engage in anti-social practices; these are definitely the rewards of civilisation and (post)modernism:

in weird hairdos  
and donts  
of the world? (68)

The "dons of the world" have become the dos in the present day human society; conventions have given way for personal convictions that are often anti-social. Many of those who engage in such unwholesome practices believe that their physique does not affect their relationship with the God whom they profess to be serving:

But they say your light shine  
invisible  
in the closet caves  
of their minds (68).

This implies that God dwells in the people's mind, and so to them, it does not matter how they dress and behave publicly.

The preponderant use of rhetorical questions in this poem suggests that the identity of the spirituality of the personality involved in the poem is questionable – “Are these your children?” The argument here, therefore, is that morality cannot be separated from spirituality.

“Duty” centres on the roles of poet (artist) in the society. Raji summarises the quintessential duties expected of a socially committed poet-artist:

A poet's first duty is to make love  
To language, to land, and liberty (86)

Language is the blood that runs in the vein of poetry, and literature in general. It is expedient for a poet to be adequately grounded in the knowledge and use of language in order to effectively communicate his thoughts to the readers. Egya (2011:23) maintains that “the poet's major preoccupation is with the language, the form and the structure of his poem, his art.” Also, a committed poet is a beacon of liberty to his troubled land. In other words, when a poet shilly-shallies to show his commitment for his milieu, he has successfully failed in his ontological responsibility. Writers are essentially the linchpin of national liberation movement as they direct their poetic works towards the oppressive tendencies.

In addition to the afore-mentioned:

A poet's second duty is to sew philosophies  
Into armpits of Time, to stammer by corn-ears of metaphors (86)

This has to do with the metaphoric-philosophical use of linguistic devices by literary artists. Poets are philosophers through their manipulation of communicative language to conjure figurative meaning. This is in line with what Samuel Johnson (quoted in George William 1967:7-8) says of poets that they usually engage in “a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike”. This means that through the estrangement of similar concepts or ideas, poets “sew philosophies”.

Another not-to-do-without duty of a poet is:

To conjure, confound and arrest Power  
To cause the conscience to cry (86)

The capitalisation of the word “Power” above lends credibility to the fact that it is domineeringly oppressive, exploitative and destructive. As the concerned conscience of the society, poets are expected to pierce oppressive power's “conscience to cry” – to see its wrongs. If a poet relents to challenge dictatorial authority, meaningful positive change may elude such a human society.

Osundare (2007:7) posits that a “real” writer has no alternative to being in constant conflict with oppression. A writer may be likened to the Old Testament prophet who is  
the guilty conscience of the king, his words the nagging,  
unremitting images in his mind, his words are an incitement to  
revolt, to disrupt the deathly equilibrium, the mendacious “peace  
and stability” of a truly violent system.

Moreover, poets are mind miners and harbingers of enlightenment:

A poet’s fourth duty is to mine the mind  
And make fires in bushels of ignorance...(86)

Some humans have had their minds hardened, through the art of poetry, such stony and adamant hearts become soft-hearted as they are being enlightened, sensitised and conscientised by poets’ work. Hence, poetic “fires” dispel darkness constituted by “ignorance”.

In Raji’s opinion, the ultimate duty of poets is to be above board in their modus and vivendi operandi: “The poet’s last duty is to live beyond mortal wishes” (86). Poets should not dodge afore-mentioned duties because they represent their quintessence within their cultural milieu.

The therapeutic effect of poetry is emphasised in “Words can heal”. The whole world can be seen as an amalgam of sick ones in dire need of medical attention, while literary artists are those holding a clinic. Words have both transgressive and curative values. However, it is the healing relevance that “Words can heal” relays:

The wound of a thousand years smoothens  
In the dye-wool of tender metaphors...  
Words can seal the pain of a lifetime  
Words can make love to bleeding hearts (99)

There are different types of sicknesses with which people battle; these range from physical, spiritual to psychological. Meanwhile, no matter the gravity of the “bleeding”, it can be healed through the weaponry and instrumentality of Word. Occult people manipulate their victims through the incantatory use of Word; so also, the mesmerised victims would need more meta-physical application of the same Word to nullify the effect. Hence, Word both wounds and heals.

Warriors get tired and tend to lose hope in warfare, but they are encouraged by encomiums which their supporters shower on them. This is what Raji suggests when he writes:

In the presence of wondrous words...  
The weak in battle becomes invincible  
in a clout of guided utterance...(99)

Poetry renders hope to the hopeless and soothes the agonies of the psycho-emotional victims of socio-political problems in the nation. According to Raji-Oyelade (2013:37):

The poet, then, in the classical sense of the term, the creative artist, is the health of the nation, and the nation's literary culture, for want of a better analogy, is a crucial organ in the determination of the intelligence, the sophistication and the mental health of a people.

The curative and restorative significance of poetry cannot be over-emphasised. Raji-Oyelade's (2013) view is built on Osundare's (2007:9) earlier proposition that a poet is like a priest-healer, "the embodiment of the creative essence whose powers over social ills range from the preventive to the curative". And as healers, writers are "awakeners of a people who have slept for too long" (Ayi Kwei Armah 1979:83). Masses' ignorance of their right is a challenge that poets need to cure in order to prevent oppression and exploitation by the misruling leaders.

The above is further corroborated by Raji:

And when everything else fails  
We turn to the windy poetry of words (99)

Poetry is, therefore, the last hope of the forlornly hopeless masses.

"Let us remember the smell..." offers a graphic exploration of the scatological realities in the Nigerian political landscape. The nation is fraught with miasma of mess in various spheres. Note only the physical objects with which the environment is littered constitute the kind of "smell" Raji wishes his readers to remember. He brings to mind "the rough pout of the politician's promise/that rises and falls by the season" (127). Politicians, all over the world, are fond of making promises, sometimes unfulfillable ones, with a view to cajoling the unsuspecting electorate. The moment they mount the seat of leadership, they easily become oblivious of their obvious promises. Broken and unfulfilled "politician's promise" is, therefore, "the smell of the cities". It has become a seemingly insurmountable cankerworm bedeviling the current nation's political system.

Raji also calls attention to the many years of malnutrition caused by poverty, which in turn results to mendicancy:

And let us remember the many years of skeletons  
And the new gravity of our beggar's praisesong (127)

It is not a gainsaying that developing countries are beleaguered with living carcasses (corpses) with no specific source of livelihood. This disheartening circumstance has led many to resort to mendicancy or beggary which is being professionalised by "beggar's praisesong". As a matter of fact, "the smell" of the politician's broken manifestoes transmogrify to poverty-stricken lifestyle that many citizens of the world are exposed to.

"The smell" is also perceived on the aged ones - "The unseen rot in broken hairs..." (127). Here, "broken hairs" is both a metonymic and synecdochic imagery used to refer to the old people. While some of them may look radiant even in their old age, they are not without "unseen rot"

amidst their “broken hairs”. This then shows that no one, whether old or young, is exempted from experiencing the scatological and messy “smell” that characterises the socio-economic and political sectors of the nation. Some people take solace in laughter to pacify themselves of the physical-cum-psychological agonies unleashed on them by the failed leadership, Raji declares that this form of laughter is also a smell: “The laughter that comes with the agony is also a smell” (127).

Raji probably recounts his movement from the unwanted zero-level to the most desired hero-level in the poem titled “Before a hero...” In this poem, the poet-persona is of opinion that before someone could be declared a hero, such a person must have sustained injuries – physical or metaphorical:

Show me a hero  
And I will tell you a story of scars. (139)

This is indication that any narrative of a successful person if loaded with passages of pains which later snowball into gains after much perseverance because

behind ... limping laughter is a prostrate pain  
And before the laughter the cold sweats of labour” (139).

An academic like Raji cannot afford to “have dined with the devil of hunger” and “...battled Sleep into banishment...” (139) in order to reach the apex of his career. One would have to endure hunger and prevent sleep as a result of one’s aspiration which cannot be achieved without such painful self-discipline.

Show me the hero dressed in gold  
And I will show you a scene in the anointing of ash (139).

This reiterates the fact that success does not just come by without something to pay for it. A warrior who wishes to be decorated with laurels must have been determined to pass through some unpalatable situations.

### Conclusion

It has been established in this study that literature is indubitably a mirror through which society is crystal seen. No poet-artist may be clearly understood without practically linking his/her text with the context of its production since art draws literary ingredients from the society. As a concerned member of a troubled human society, Raji, through the poetic eyes, unequivocally pictures the punctures in his post-independence nation. Indeed, the poet has tried to contribute his own quota to the diagnosis of various maladies ravaging the polity in the clinic of his poetry.

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