

## **Analysis of Stylistic Devices in Umar Abubakar Sidi's *The Poet of Dust***

Abdullahi Umar Evuti & Ebenezer Oluseun Ogungbe

### **Abstract**

This paper is an analysis of stylistic devices in Umar Abubakar Sidi's poetry collection, *The Poet of Dust*, with the aim of unraveling its intricate layers and exploring its contributions to contemporary Nigerian poetry. The objectives of the study include to examine the lexico-semantic stylistic choices employed by the poet, in order to shed light on their roles in constructing the enigmatic themes and evoking a range of poignant reader emotions; to explore the syntactic stylistic structures utilised by Sidi so as to uncover how his nuanced syntax amplifies the collection's mystic allure and creates a distinctive and engaging poetic experience; and to investigate the use of various rhetorical stylistic devices with the goal of elucidating their significant roles in reinforcing the collection's core mystical motifs and enriching the overall artistic vision. By employing a qualitative research design, the study undertakes meticulous text analysis, drawing upon Schema Theory and Leech and Short's Stylistic Analysis Framework as the theoretical base for examining the complex interplay of stylistic elements within the poetry collection. The study found that the poet employs a diverse range of stylistic features to convey mystical experiences and spiritual insights delving into the transient nature of life and the enigmatic essence of existence. Through an intricate interplay of lexico-semantic stylistic devices such as metaphor, simile, and alliteration; syntactic stylistic devices including enjambment and parallelism; and rhetorical stylistic techniques such as hyperbole, allusion, anaphora, and zeugma, the poet crafts a captivating narrative that leads readers towards profound encounters with the mystical dimensions of human existence, creating a bridge between the earthly and divine realms, and also enhancing persuasion and emotional resonance within the text. The study concludes that the effective utilisation of lexico-semantic stylistic devices, syntactic stylistic elements, and rhetorical stylistic devices within the poetry illuminates its mystic essence, inviting readers to contemplate the profound insights embedded within the transient nature of human existence, underscoring the poet's ability to intertwine figurative language with thematic depth, thus emphasising the transformative power of poetic expression.

*Keywords:* analysis, stylistic devices, poet of dust, lexico-semantic, Nigerian poetry

## **1. Introduction and Statement of the Problem**

The study of literary texts, with their unique language properties, has long been a focus of scholarly attention, leading to an ongoing exploration of their artistic and linguistic precepts. Situated within the broader Formalism theory, Stylistics serves as a critical junction where scholars delve into the interaction between language and meaning, drawing from the foundational contributions of renowned figures like Charles Bally, Ferdinand de Saussure, Roman Jakobson, and Geoffrey Leech. Wales (2001, p.372) has emphasised Stylistics' enduring dedication to analysing the language and structure of texts, thereby providing a thorough understanding and appreciation of various texts, whether literary or non-literary, across extensive time periods. The essence of Stylistics lies in its careful scrutiny of the language elements within a text, enhancing its interpretation and critical examination. This research delves into the intricate realm of stylistics, emphasizing its evolution from ancient rhetorical traditions to contemporary literary analysis. Scholars like Wales and Toolan (2013) have established stylistics as a comprehensive study of linguistic and textual characteristics, aiming to interpret and appreciate both literary and non-literary texts over extended periods. Toolan underscores the importance of understanding the anatomy and functions of language, positing that stylistics encompasses the examination of language within texts, emphasizing excellence in craft across various fields beyond literature, such as advertising and political discourse.

Burke (2014, p. 1) provides a historical context, revealing that stylistics, or 'literary linguistics', involves analyzing and interpreting texts, particularly literary ones, with origins dating back to ancient Greek and Roman rhetorical traditions. Crystal views stylistics as a subfield of linguistics dedicated to investigating language use in various situations and developing theories to explain specific language preferences of individuals and social groups. The diverse linguistic choices influenced by factors such as formality, social setting, and audience underscore the significance of stylistics in unveiling the underlying principles that govern language use in different contexts.

Amidst the historical origins rooted in ancient rhetoric, Stylistics, also referred to as 'literary linguistics', has evolved into a specialised field, examining the characteristics of language use across various contexts. Crystal (2008, p. 460) emphasizes Stylistics' exploration of language variations influenced by factors such as formality, social setting, purpose of communication, and audience, leading to the identification and analysis of distinct linguistic features. This meticulous analysis engages the underlying principles shaping individuals' and social groups' linguistic preferences and choices, providing a valuable lens for

understanding the intricacies of communicative situations and their linguistic underpinnings.

The enduring academic interest and critical acclaim garnered by Sidi's collection highlight the need for an in-depth stylistic analysis, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities embedded within the poet's unique language style. The study seeks to fill the existing gap in critical appraisal by unraveling the stylistic intricacies that underpin the thematic preoccupations of Sidi's work. The absence of comprehensive stylistic analyses within the existing academic discourse emphasizes the timeliness and significance of this proposed study, which aims to offer fresh perspectives and enrich the existing body of knowledge.

Building on this foundation, this paper aims to conduct a stylistic analysis of Umar Abubakar Sidi's *The Poet of Dust*, in order to explore its unique language style and aesthetic ingenuity. Despite existing analyses focused on thematic exploration, a comprehensive stylistic appraisal of Sidi's work is notably absent. The research intends to bridge this gap by shedding light on stylistic features overlooked in previous analyses, highlighting the use of the title, *The Poet of Dust*, as an intriguing motif suggestive of spiritual essence and cultural context. The study seeks to explore Sidi's poetic influences rooted in Sufism and Surrealism, proposing the integration of Schema Theory and Leech and Short's Stylistic Analysis Framework to examine the impact of these influences on the linguistic choices made by Sidi and their implications in the text. This integrated approach allows for a nuanced exploration of reader cognition and the linguistic intricacies employed by Sidi, unveiling the interplay between readers' preexisting knowledge and the linguistic elements shaping the poetry collection's interpretation and aesthetic appeal. The integration of Sidi's poetic influences of Sufism and Surrealism within the context of the Schema Theory and Leech and Short's Stylistic Analysis Framework serves as a lens through which to explore the linguistic choices and their implications in his poetry.

The proposed study aims to unravel the linguistic features that define Sidi's poetic style, thereby providing an understanding of the interplay between his thematic expressions and the underlying linguistic devices at play. *The Poet of Dust*, authored by Umar Abubakar Sidi, represents a striking departure from conventional poetic norms, as it ventures into the uncharted territories of meta-poetry and iconoclasm, seeking to dismantle the constraints of imaginative canonisation. Sidi's work is deeply influenced by Sufism and Surrealism, two ideological underpinnings that advocate for unrestricted creative expression, challenging the shackles of censorship and literary dictatorship. Despite its bold linguistic trajectory and profound thematic exploration, the scholarly attention afforded to *The Poet of Dust* has not been much, with a dearth of comprehensive academic engagement analyzing its linguistic intricacies. The

current research endeavours to fill this void by undertaking a stylistic analysis of the text, aiming to unearth the subtle nuances embedded within Sidi's poetic language. This study aspires not only to shed light on the linguistic dimensions of the collection but also to ascertain how these linguistic properties contribute to the structure and thematic fabric of the text.

Furthermore, it seeks to identify potential gaps in the stylistic framework. By carrying out a stylistic study of *The Poet of Dust*, this research aims to provide a new understanding of Sidi's innovative poetic expression, situating his work within the broader context of contemporary literary discourse. It seeks to explore how Sidi's fusion of Sufi and Surrealist influences fosters a dynamic interplay between conscious and subconscious realms, facilitating a deeper contemplation of the essence of existence, poetry, and life itself. The study also seeks to highlight the significance of unbounded creative expression, particularly in the context of contemporary socio-cultural dynamics, where the exploration of diverse perspectives and voices is crucial for the enrichment of literary dialogue. Through stylistic analysis, this research aims to establish a solid foundation for engagement with *The Poet of Dust*, unlocking its potential as a pivotal contribution to the evolving landscape of poetic innovation and creative expression.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

1. To explore the lexico-semantic stylistic features in Umar Abubakar Sidi's *The Poet of Dust*.
2. To evaluate the syntactic stylistic devices in Umar Abubakar Sidi's *The Poet of Dust*.
3. To examine the rhetorical stylistic devices in Umar Abubakar Sidi's *The Poet of Dust*

### **Theoretical Underpinning**

This paper incorporates two essential theoretical frameworks: Schema Theory and Leech and Short's Stylistic Analysis Framework. Schema Theory, rooted in cognitive psychology, emphasizes readers' mental structures and their impact on text interpretation. Frederic Bartlett's pioneering work highlighted the active role of memory, proposing the idea of "schemas" as cognitive frameworks for organizing and interpreting new information. Jean Piaget further developed the concept, emphasizing how individuals construct and modify schemas to accommodate new knowledge. Schema theory has since been applied to various fields, including education, linguistics, and artificial intelligence, to understand how prior knowledge shapes perception and understanding.

Leech and Short's Stylistic Analysis Framework, employed in the dissertation, provides a systematic method for studying linguistic elements in a text. It categorizes analysis into lexical, grammatical, cohesion and context, and figures of speech categories. The lexical level scrutinises vocabulary choices and their semantic effects, while the grammatical level examines sentence structures and syntactic patterns. Figures of speech analysis delves into the use of metaphors, similes, and other rhetorical devices, while the context and cohesion level considers the text's broader context and its organizational coherence. While Leech and Short's framework has contributed significantly to the field of stylistics, critics have cautioned against potential limitations, such as a possible overemphasis on linguistic analysis at the expense of emotional and aesthetic aspects. Moreover, they have acknowledged the need to select specific elements for analysis, recognizing the essential interplay between literary criticism and linguistic criteria. By combining these two aspects, the framework identifies style markers within a text, aiding in a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between linguistic choices and literary content.

The incorporation of both Schema Theory and Leech and Short's Stylistic Analysis Framework in the dissertation promises a comprehensive exploration of how readers' preconceived notions and linguistic devices employed by the author influence the text's interpretation and stylistic qualities. The application of these frameworks opens up new avenues for uncovering the intricate relationship between cognitive structures, linguistic choices, and the overall meaning and impact of literary texts.

### **Justification of the Study**

The study's primary objective is to provide a fresh perspective to the understanding of Umar Abubakar Sidi's poetry collection, *The Poet of Dust*, through a stylistic analysis. By incorporating the Schema Theory and Leech and Short's Stylistic Analysis Framework, this research project aims to justify its significance within the realm of scholarship. The current academic landscape has not had much appraisal of Sidi's work, despite its bold departure from conventional literary norms. The research's intention to bridge this gap through a stylistic analysis signifies its potential contribution to the broader discourse on contemporary poetic innovation and creative expression. By filling this gap in the existing scholarly research, the study seeks to establish *The Poet of Dust* as a significant contribution to the evolution of contemporary literary discourse, drawing attention to the rich interplay between linguistic innovation, thematic exploration, and readers' cognitive engagement.

### **Methodology**

This study utilises a qualitative content analysis design, which is recognised for

its objectivity in capturing events and processes in their natural contexts, to conduct a stylistic analysis of Umar Abubakar Sidi's *The Poet of Dust*. The primary data are gotten from people selected from the text under study. However, the research makes use of other secondary sources of data collection.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Several researchers, through their diverse experiences and research requirements, have conducted studies that intersect various domains of applied linguistics, particularly stylistics, in the realm of poetry. These investigations have yielded the following outcomes:

Bamigboye (2020) in his study entitled, "Text and Terror: How Boko-Haram Terrifies Nigerians Using 'Ordinary' Words" used the Schema theory in analyzing the dynamics of how Boko Haram employ words to incite fear and terror in the minds of the people. Bamigboye argued that the readers of Boko Haram statements "interpret same with the residual knowledge they have of the world" implying that the readers' previous conceptions of fear and terrors foster a deeper degree of interpretation and connection to the Boko Haram statements that they read. According to Bamigboye, the study found that "the source of a text goes a long way in determining how it is digested by readers. Also, readers make sense of texts based not just on what is read, but the surrounding information they mentally impose on it." He concluded by asserting that a reader's level of comprehension is contingent on his or her level of education and world exposure. Just like the present study, Bamigboye used schema theory to explore the relationship between the chosen stylistic elements and how they are informed by or fit into the reader's reception. Limiting the essay to stylistic analysis overlooks other important factors that influence language use and meaning, such as sociolinguistic and cultural contexts. By focusing solely on stylistic analysis, the research misses out on valuable insights that a critical discourse analysis (CDA) or sociolinguistics study could provide, such as how social power dynamics or cultural norms shape language choices and meanings. It is important to consider a multidimensional approach that incorporates various perspectives to fully understand the complexities of language use by the terrorists and its social implications.

Ibraheem (2014) performed "A Stylistic Analysis of Selected Poems in Segun Adekoya's 'Here And There.'" The study set out to investigate the "stylistic analysis of selected poems of Segun Adekoya's 'Here and There'". The author used the theoretical framework of "M.A.K Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, with particular reference to his concepts of form, substance and context, on which Leech and Shorts (1981) have based their four levels of language description, such as syntax, semantics, phonology and graphology."



The study discovered that Segun Adekoya uses Systemic Functional Linguistics concept to “stylistically project messages such as the ridiculously sluggish pace of growth in Africa, the terribly ugly conditions of living in Nigeria, the proud cultural heritage of the poet, the agonies of misgovernment, the saddening reverberations of the Nigerian civil war, and the disillusioning truths about the much-hyped, technologically advanced United States of America.” This work, also an analysis of stylistic features provides different perspectives on stylistic analysis which further confirms the claim of the current research that stylistics is a wide field. Both studies aim to analyze the stylistic features of literary works. However, this study does not fully capture the complexity and diversity of stylistic choices in language because of the theory used. The theory's focus on grammar and function did not encompass all the aspects of style, such as rhetoric or literary devices.

Nweze (2012) in his “Stylistic Study Of Ngugi Wa Thiong’o’s *Wizard Of The Crow* And Ben Okri’s *The Famished Road*”, sets out to “analyse the stylistic peculiarities of the texts with the crucial aim of bringing to the forecourt of the readers mind the intended messages of Okri and Ngugi through their unique individual styles.” He performed a comparative analysis that highlighted the stylistic choices of the authors and how these approaches enhance readers’ perception of their representations of society, especially in the context of postcolonial realities. Nweze observed that in both Ngugi’s *Wizard of the Crow* and Okri’s *The Famished Road*, there is a shared feature of “grand, mixed and low styles” in their “stylistic mannerisms and methods.” He also discovered that both authors’ works “reveal a universal human condition through the characteristic style of their language”, which is apparent throughout the texts. He concluded that by performing a stylistic analysis of the texts, it is easy to deduce and “to show their functional significance for the interpretation of the texts in order to relate literary effects to their linguistic causes.” The study clearly focuses on the stylistic peculiarities of the texts and the aim of bringing forth the intended messages of the authors through their unique styles. The comparative analysis approach used by Nweze enhances the understanding of how the authors' stylistic choices contribute to the portrayal of society in a postcolonial context. At best, there is a tangential nexus between the study and this dissertation. While both involve the analysis of stylistic choices in literary texts, they differ significantly in terms of focus, genre, and subject matter. This study primarily discusses a comparative analysis of two novels in a postcolonial context, while this dissertation centers around a mystical poetry collection. But, they are both stylistic explorations.

Nzeakor (2020) undertook “A Stylistic-Accommodationist Analysis of Adichie’s Language Use in *Half of A Yellow Sun*” in which she analyzed Adichie’s “stylistic virtuosity from the general use of language to specific

character's language use." She set out to understudy the stylistic choices employed by Adichie to communicate the undercurrents of the Nigerian civil war and to contextualize the language of the text. Nzeakor came to the following conclusion on the stylistic choice of the text thus, she observed that "Adichie's language use or style is simple and her simplicity in language use made her accommodate numerous readers." She further opined that this stylistic choice is responsible for Adichie's acclaimed fame as a literary giant of her generation. She also posited that Adichie's "accommodative stand took both downward and upward convergence and divergence respectively", implying that her stylistic choice enabled the accommodation of divergent readers' interests. At the core of Nzeakor's analysis is accessibility to a text's representation which enabled by a simple language choice as she observed in her recommendations. She posited that "writers or communicators should always make their language as simple as possible for their readers or listeners, so as to pass their messages across, in order to get the desired results." She further recommends that writers should take into account the interests of readers by considering more accessible language choice in their works. The study does not strike a balance between convergence and divergence. But, this Accommodation Theory employed in the study also lacks scientific rigor and the absence of a more comprehensive theory of stylistic analysis. By focusing solely on accommodation, the study overlooks other significant factors that influence language use, such as sociolinguistic variation, genre analysis, or discourse analysis.

Oseni and Odebiyi (2021, p.43-54) similarly conducted "A Critical Stylistic Analysis of Naming and Describing in Nigeria Budget Speeches", to examine the language used in Nigeria's budget speeches and enhance understanding of its social and linguistic significance, the researchers utilized a combination of primary and secondary information. Their analysis was conducted through the application of Jeffries' critical stylistic method. They came up with the following findings: their analysis uncovered that "each of the budget speeches included in the study was titled or designated in various ways such as budget of restoration, budget of transformation, budget of rescue, and so on." They also found that "positive naming was extensively used to bring about positive attitude towards the situations in the country." Their conclusion suggested that the governors employed different semantic devices to convey political ideologies through slogans when naming and describing financial statements in their respective states. Additionally, they noted that "critical stylistics proved instrumental in providing valuable insights into the political dynamics of budget speech delivery." This paper and the ongoing research involve a stylistic analysis of written texts, albeit in different genres. Additionally, both studies aim to unravel deeper meanings and themes within texts. The study is limited by its narrow focus on budget speeches of selected governors in



Nigeria, limiting the generalizability of the findings, and the subjective nature of the analysis, which may be influenced by biases and preconceptions.

Oyedeji and Idoko (2021, p.48-54) conducted “A stylistic study of selected poems in Jide Balogun’s ‘The Desert in the River’”. The study set out to x-ray the thematic nuances as discussed in Jide Balogun’s ‘The Desert in the River’ using stylistic tools.” The study found that “the theme of corruption and bad leadership pervades the texts and the duo stood as the hydra-headed monster to the growth and development of the nation. Also, the theme of power and unity is evident in the text.” The study concludes by saying that for meaningful industrialization to be achieved, corruption and bad leadership must be addressed holistically. They also proposed the creation of an avenue for unity and effective dissemination of power and justice. It is however unclear how that is to be achieved given the lack of commitment by the government to such matter. The study introduces the context of Nigeria's hindrances in its pursuit of growth and development, and sets the stage for the present study to explore the thematic issues impeding the development of the country. Although a stylistic study, it does not consider phonological level in its evaluation which is a weakness because the aesthetics of poetry is primarily fixated on sound.

### **Data Analysis and Discussion**

This part of the paper focuses on examining randomly selected data from the collection. This approach is in line with Sarfaz's (2022) argument, referencing Leech and Short's (2007) acknowledgment that analysing stylistic elements in a text involves choosing specific aspects while disregarding others. The following stylistic elements have been analysed:

#### **Lexico-semantic Stylistic Features in *The Poet of Dust***

The poet makes use of various lexico-semantic stylistic features in order to convey deeper meanings, evoke spiritual experiences, and explore the mystical dimensions of human existence. These devices have profound implications in the text as they shape the reader's understanding and create a transformative and immersive experience. Below are some of the lexico-semantic devices employed by the poet:

#### **Synonymy**

Synonymy is a lexico-semantic stylistic device that involves the use of different words or expressions with closely related meanings to convey a particular concept or idea. It allows for variation, nuance, and emphasis in language, enabling speakers and writers to choose the most appropriate synonym that aligns with their intended message or rhetorical effect. Examples from the text:

Bad poets see poetry as the giant fork  
Which rakes through the flesh of hearts

Bad poets perceive poetry as the blackness of black  
The invisible tube, the darkened cave of enlightened ghosts

Bad poets define poetry as the aesthetic amalgamation of words to  
evoke a waterfall of bliss ("Things Poets do", stanza 1-3)

In the excerpt above, the poet uses synonymy to convey a negative and distorted perception of poetry held by "bad poets." By employing various synonyms, the speaker emphasizes the misguided understanding of poetry by these individuals. In the first line, the persona exerts that "Bad poets see poetry as the giant fork." Here, poetry is replaced by the synonym "giant fork." This substitution creates a vivid and provocative image, suggesting that these poets view poetry as a tool that aggressively pierces and wounds the hearts of people. The choice of synonym implies a harsh and painful nature of their perception of poetry. In the statement "Which rakes through the flesh of hearts," he emphasises the negative connotation of their perception by using the synonym "rakes" to describe the destructive action of poetry. The use of this synonym intensifies the image of poetry inflicting harm or causing distress to the emotional well-being of individuals, according to bad poets. "Bad poets perceive poetry as the blackness of black." The use of synonymy here serves to evoke a sense of darkness and obscurity. By employing the phrase "blackness of black," the speaker emphasizes the extreme nature of their perception. The synonym "blackness" highlights the negative and despairing associations commonly linked to darkness and the absence of light. In the invisible tube, the darkened cave of enlightened ghosts," the poet replaces "poetry" with the synonymous phrases "invisible tube" and "darkened cave of enlightened ghosts." These synonyms evoke a sense of mystery and spiritual significance. The phrase "invisible tube" suggests a conduit or pathway through which enlightenment is sought, while "darkened cave of enlightened ghosts" implies a realm where ethereal beings reside. These synonyms portray the distorted perception of poetry as an esoteric and unearthly concept in the eyes of "bad poets." Furthering this line, "Bad poets define poetry as the aesthetic amalgamation of words to evoke a waterfall of bliss," he employs the synonymous phrase "aesthetic amalgamation of words" to describe how these poets perceive poetry. By using this synonym, the speaker implies that these poets define poetry solely in terms of its surface-level beauty and the pleasing arrangement of words. The phrase "waterfall of bliss" reinforces the idea that

their perception focuses primarily on the pleasurable emotions evoked by poetry, disregarding its deeper meaning or substance.

### **Polysemy**

Polysemy refers to the phenomenon where a word or phrase has multiple, related meanings or interpretations. Following are some instances of the use of polysemy in the text:

A poet is broken porcelain splintered

Upon the mountains of the sky

A poet is a disgusting worm

Lying around the spaghetti of life ("The Peninsula of Poets (II)", stanzas 8 and 10)

In the given lines from the poem "The Peninsula of Poets (II)", the use of polysemy adds depth and richness to the poetic imagery, allowing for multiple interpretations and layers of meaning. The initial line states, "A poet is broken porcelain splintered upon the mountains of the sky a poet is a disgusting worm lying around the spaghetti of life." Here, the poet employs polysemy to convey different aspects of the poet's existence and nature. The phrase "broken porcelain splintered" utilizes polysemy to evoke multiple images and ideas. On one hand, "broken" implies that the poet is fractured, damaged, or fragmented, suggesting a sense of vulnerability or brokenness in their emotional or creative state. On the other hand, "porcelain" conjures images of fragility, delicacy, and artistry, emphasizing the poet's sensitivity and the beauty that can arise from their brokenness. Thus, polysemy allows for both a metaphorical interpretation of the poet's state of being and a literal visual description. Similarly, the phrase "mountains of the sky" exhibits polysemy by combining concepts of height, grandeur, and elevation. This phrase can be interpreted both metaphorically and literally. Metaphorically, it presents the poet as someone who reaches extraordinary heights in their artistic pursuits and aspirations. Literally, it evokes the image of mountains reaching into the sky, emphasizing the poet's connection to the vastness and majesty of the universe. Polysemy allows for the simultaneous existence of these different interpretations, enriching the symbolism and impact of the description.

Moving on, the phrase "disgusting worm" also demonstrates polysemy. On one level, it suggests a negative or degrading view of the poet as something repulsive or unappealing. This interpretation may stem from societal perceptions of artists as unconventional or outside the norm. At the same time, the word "worm" can also symbolize the poet's humility and their rootedness in the earth, implying a deeper connection to nature and the cycles of life. By utilizing polysemy, the poet invites multiple perspectives on the poet's identity and role. The phrase "spaghetti of life" further exemplifies polysemy. On one

level, it metaphorically represents the chaotic and tangled aspects of human existence, suggesting a sense of disorder or complexity. However, it also implies a sense of interconnectedness and the potential for creative exploration within the twists and turns of life's experiences. Polysemy allows for both interpretations to coexist and contribute to the overall meaning of the line.

### **Syntactic Stylistic Devices in *The Poet of Dust***

Syntactic stylistic devices such as parallelism and enjambment were deployed by the poet so as to arrange and organise words, phrases, and sentences. This is with the view of consolidating the mystic atmosphere, and to also protrude meaning and impact of the poems.

#### **Parallelism**

One syntactic feature that stands out in *The Poet of Dust* is the use of parallelism. This is evident in the repetition of certain phrases and structures throughout the text, creating a rhythmic and lyrical effect. See the following examples:

Laikhur offers me a river of wine

I drink, I stagger, I stutter: (In "The Peninsula of Poets II")

Here, we can see the parallel structure of "I [verb]," repeated three times, emphasizing the poet's experience of drinking and its effects. In the Peninsula of Poets, parallel structure is used to emphasize certain ideas or to create a rhythmic effect. For instance, the repetition of the phrase Holy Holy Holy Holy and the repetition of the phrase Hukkuyyakkuhuhuhuk both employ parallelism, creating a sense of pattern and emphasis. Also in Peninsula of Poets the following parallel structure was found:

What is P?

When is P seen as P?

Who made P P?

Why is P considered to be P? (Stanza 8 line 4 - 7)

It exhibits parallel structure through the repetition of the question on "P" and the structure "is P seen as P," "made P P," and "considered to be P." This repetition creates a balanced and rhythmic effect, drawing attention to each question and emphasizing the importance of understanding "P". Thus, the parallel structure in this passage helps emphasise the clarity, coherence, and impact of the questions being posed. That is, what is "P"? In my opinion, the "p" as in the sense it is used by the poet refers to poetry. This means that the poet is curious to know what poetry is.

## **Enjambment**

Through enjambment, the poet is able to suspend thoughts or sentence over multiple lines, with the line break occurring in the middle of a phrase or clause so as to create a sense of flow, continuity, and fluidity. See some instances below:

MARTIN Espada welcomed me with a slap  
On my left cheek, he pulled my ear  
& tossed me into the 'Academy of Poetry' where Gogol  
An ancient ape, the Peninsula's poet laureate  
Sat me up and taught me:  
Hukkuyyakkuhuhuhuk  
The ABC of poetry & the 7 articles of a poet's faith ("Peninsula of Poets", stanza 1)

In the given excerpt, enjambment is used to create a sense of movement and continuity in the description of the speaker's experience. The lines "MARTIN Espada welcomed me with a slap" and "On my left cheek, he pulled my ear & tossed me into the 'Academy of Poetry'" flow seamlessly without a pause or punctuation at the end of each line. This enjambment allows the actions of Martin Espada to unfold rapidly and forcefully, conveying the abruptness and intensity of the encounter.

Similarly, the line "where Gogol An ancient ape, the Peninsula's poet laureate" continues the description of the location without a pause, emphasizing the significance and authority of Gogol as a revered poetic figure. The enjambment here creates a sense of anticipation and curiosity, urging the reader to keep reading to discover more about Gogol and his role in the speaker's poetic education.

## **Rhetorical Stylistic Devices in *The Poet of Dust***

Rhetorical stylistic devices were deployed in the text as techniques used enhancing the impact and persuasiveness of the personas. Specifically, allusion was deployed by the poet to give reference to person, event, or work of art from literature, history, mythology, or culture, in such a way that it draws upon the reader's existing knowledge.

### **Literary Allusion**

Literary allusion is the intentional reference to a specific work of literature, author, or character within a new text, allowing the reader to make connections and associations with the original source material. Following are instances of the use of literary allusion by the poet:

I forget Borges & the half written Borgesian story titled:

A Treatise on the Permissibility of Marriage Between

Mankind & Djinn (The Veiled Secret of the Kama Sutra or the Way a Certain Poet interprets the Surrealist Manifesto at Night, Stanza 3)

In this excerpt, allusion is made to the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges and his hypothetical half-written story titled *A Treatise on the Permissibility of Marriage Between Mankind & Djinn*. By alluding to Borges and his literary work, the poet employs an allusion to add depth and richness to the poem. Borges is widely regarded as a master of magical realism and is known for his intricate and imaginative stories that often blur the line between reality and fiction. In this context, the allusion to Borges and his hypothetical story serves to evoke a sense of mystical and fantastical possibilities. The concept of marriage between mankind and Djinn, supernatural beings from Arabian mythology, presents a union between different realms or dimensions. It symbolizes the merging or union of the human and divine, the tangible and the ethereal. The use of the allusion also suggests that the poet is drawing inspiration from Borges' literary style and sensibilities, utilizing his evocative language and the interplay of reality and imagination. It adds a layer of intellectual and literary reference to the poem, inviting readers familiar with Borges' work to delve deeper into the themes of mysticism and the exploration of otherworldly possibilities.

### **Mystical Allusion**

Mystical allusion is the deliberate referencing of religious texts, sacred symbols, or mystical traditions in poetry or literature, imbuing the work with spiritual depth and inviting readers to access deeper levels of meaning and transcendence. See following instances:

ADONIS handed me the key to The Peninsula's treasury.

He spoke through many voices:

The voice of Mihyar of Damascus

The voice of sand and salt

The voice of the blood of Adonis

The voice of the interrupting sky ("The Peninsula of Poets", stanza II)

The allusion to "ADONIS" refers to a figure from ancient Greek mythology, known for his beauty and connection to nature. Adonis is often associated with love, passion, and the cycles of life and death. By mentioning Adonis, the poet taps into the rich symbolism and archetypal significance associated with this mythical figure. The act of Adonis handing the poet "the key to The Peninsula's treasury" is a metaphorical gesture. The "treasury" symbolizes a hidden or



sacred knowledge, perhaps representing spiritual wisdom or enlightenment. The poet being given the key implies access to this deeper understanding. The reference to "many voices" underscores the mystical nature of the experience. By evoking different voices, such as "The voice of Mihyar of Damascus," the poet suggests a connection to various ancient cultures and wisdom traditions. Mihyar of Damascus, a famous poet from the 5th century, is known for his romantic and mystical poetry, further emphasizing the mystical nature of the experience.

The mention of "the voice of sand and salt" alludes to the harsh and elemental nature of the desert. Sand and salt symbolize the arid and harsh conditions of the environment, suggesting a connection to the land and the raw, primal forces of nature. The voice of the blood of Adonis" is a reference to the myth of Adonis, where his blood is said to have fertilized the earth, giving rise to life and new growth. This allusion reinforces the cycle of life and death and underscores the transformative power of Adonis. Finally, the mention of "the voice of the interrupting sky" further adds to the mysterious and transcendental quality of the experience. The sky, representing the vast and infinite, interrupts the earthly realm, suggesting a sacred or divine intervention, and further emphasizing the mystical nature of the encounter.

### **Vulgarism**

The poet also use vulgar, offensive or derogatory language to express certain ideas or concepts, more like poetic alchemy, with the aim of transforming base and profane elements into something transcendent and meaningful. An example of vulgar language used by the poet is as follows:

I love you like I love the goddess, secret heroine of this poem & the stupid bard who sat down in the 'Republic of Poets' to spit out a drunken poem about goddamn things & similes vomited by a motherfucking goddamn bard ("Poetry in the Republic of Love or A Goddamn Poem about Goddamn things & Similes Vomited by a Motherfucking Goddamn Bard," Stanza 22)

The line "to spit out a drunken poem about goddamn things & similes vomited by a motherfucking goddamn bard" contains explicit and vulgar language. The use of words like "goddamn," "spit," and "motherfucking" serves to convey a sense of frustration, intensity, and perhaps even disillusionment with traditional poetic conventions or the limitations of language itself. By incorporating vulgar language, the poet may be aiming to rupture the confines of polite language and engage with a more visceral and authentic expression of emotion or experience. This can, in turn, provide a stark contrast to the lofty and elevated language often associated with mystic poetry and challenge readers to confront the messy and less refined aspects of existence. The inclusion of

vulgar language in this context also serves to break down barriers and create a sense of immediacy and intimacy. By using language that can be considered profane or taboo, the poet may seek to bridge the gap between the divine and the mundane, highlighting the inherent connections and shared experiences between the sacred and the profane.

### **Discussion of Findings**

*The Poet of Dust* employs a variety of stylistic devices to convey its message, evoke spiritual experiences, and explore the mystical dimensions of human existence. The use of synonymy is notable in the text, as the poet utilises various synonyms to depict the distorted perception of poetry held by "bad poets." These synonyms create vivid and provocative images, emphasizing the negative and despairing associations commonly linked to their understanding of poetry. Moreover, the use of polysemy adds depth and richness to the poetic imagery, allowing for multiple interpretations and layers of meaning. By employing polysemy, the poet highlights the poet's state of being, their connection to nature, and their role in the chaotic aspects of human existence, inviting multiple perspectives on their identity and role. Syntactic stylistic devices such as parallelism and enjambment contribute to the creation of a rhythmic and immersive experience. Through parallelism, the poet emphasizes certain ideas and creates a sense of pattern and emphasis, while enjambment helps to create a sense of flow, continuity, and fluidity, thereby contributing to the immersive and transformative nature of the poems. Rhetorical stylistic devices, such as allusion, are employed to enhance the impact and persuasiveness of the personas. The use of literary allusion to figures like Borges and mystical allusion to figures like Adonis helps create a sense of depth and richness, drawing upon the reader's existing knowledge and inviting them to access deeper levels of meaning and transcendence within the text. Finally, the use of vulgarism serves as a form of poetic alchemy, transforming base and profane elements into something transcendent and meaningful. By incorporating explicit and vulgar language, the poet challenges traditional poetic conventions, aiming to create a sense of immediacy and intimacy, as well as bridge the gap between the divine and the mundane.

### **Conclusion**

Through the skillful deployment of various stylistic techniques, Sidi crafts a rich tapestry of imagery and meaning, inviting readers to delve into the complexities of human existence and the enigmatic realm of poetic expression. The vivid and provocative images created through synonymy and polysemy serve to highlight the poet's exploration of the mystical dimensions of life, inviting readers to contemplate the profound implications of their existence and perception of the world. Furthermore, the strategic use of syntactic stylistic

devices, including parallelism and enjambment, contributes to the immersive and transformative nature of the poems, creating a rhythmic and fluid experience for readers. These devices help to accentuate the thematic depth and emotional resonance embedded within the text, reinforcing the interconnectedness between language, perception, and spiritual experiences. Lastly, the deployment of rhetorical stylistic devices, such as allusion and vulgarism, serves to expand the thematic and emotional scope of the poems, challenging traditional norms and inviting readers to confront the intersection between the divine and the profane. Overall, "The Poet of Dust" stands as a testament to the profound impact of stylistic devices in conveying deeper meanings, evoking spiritual experiences, and exploring the enigmatic dimensions of human existence through the medium of poetry.

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#### **Writers' Brief Data**



Abdullahi Umar Evuti is affiliated to the Department of English, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Niger State, Nigeria. *Email:* [audukko@gmail.com](mailto:audukko@gmail.com)



Prof. Ebenezer Oluseun Ogunbe lectures at the Department of English, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Niger State, Nigeria.