**Presentation paper work**

**Poem Assigned:** Our Earth Will Not Die BY Niyi Osundare

**Course Title:** English Literature II

**Course Code:** Els 122

**College:** Law

**Level:** 100L

**Lecturer:** Dr. Solomon Edebor

PROJECT DETAILS: LITERARY APPRECIATION, THEMES, BACKGROUND OF THE POET, THE POET USE OF LANGUAGE AND STYLE AND STORYLINE AND IDEA BEHIND OUR VIDEO PRESENTATION.

**BACKGROUND OF POET**

**Niyi Osundare** is a prolific [Nigerian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigerians) poet, dramatist and literary critic. A champion of free speech, his art and criticism is associated with activism. His work is taught in Nigerian schools and recipient to many Nigerian and International prizes

He gained degrees at the [University of Ibadan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Ibadan) (BA), the [University of Leeds](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Leeds) (MA) and [York University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/York_University), Canada (PhD, 1979). Previously professor (from 1989) and Head of English (1993–97) at the University of Ibadan, he became professor of English at the [University of New Orleans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_New_Orleans) in 1997. Osundare has a wife, Kemi, and three children, two girls and a son who still lives in Nigeria. His deaf daughter is the reason Niyi settled in the United States. She could not go to school in Nigeria so they found a school in the U.S. for her, and moved so as to be closer to her. He has been used in many schools as an example of a poet.

He has always been a vehement champion of the right to [free speech](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_speech) and is a strong believer in the power of words, saying, "to utter is to alter". Osundare is renowned for his commitment to socially relevant art and artistic activism and has written several open letters to the former President of Nigeria ([Olusegun Obasanjo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olusegun_Obasanjo" \o "Olusegun Obasanjo)), whom Osundare has often publicly criticised. Osundare believes that there is no choice for an [African](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Africa) poet but to be political. Osundare is a holder of numerous awards for his poetry, as well as the Fonlon/Nichols award for "excellence in literary creativity combined with significant contributions to Human Rights in Africa".His 60th birthday literary fete took place at venues in [Ikere-Ekiti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ikere-Ekiti" \o "Ikere-Ekiti), [Ibadan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibadan) and [Lagos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lagos) state of Nigeria in March 2007.

In December 2014, Osundare was awarded the [Nigerian National Merit Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigerian_National_Merit_Award) for academic excellence.

**BACKGROUND OF THE POEM**

The poem poem Our Earth will Not Die is written by Nigerian poet **Niyi Osundare** explores an emergence of tht environmental crisis for the sustainable environment. To put it simply, it is meditation on an environment-our Earth. The poem Our Earth will Not Die is written by Nigerian poet **Niyi Osundare.** This poem evokes earth’s well being in the future through his optimistic voice which does not believe that the earth will end. This poem talks about human activities which are directly affecting the environment and creating crisis all around the planet. Even the destructive activities are done the poet keeps hope for the earth’s long life. It creates a picturesque description of humans’ activity towards the environment. The poet has a strong belief that the earth will not die because very soon people will understand its importance in their life. The poet has created a picture of the massive destruction of the environment through his powerful words. **Osundare** has brought the environmental issue in his poem with the hope of making people aware of their activities.

**ANALYSIS OF THE POEM ‘’Our Earth will Not Die’’**

### Our Earth Will Never Die"

Lynched the lakes  
Slaughtered the seas  
Mauled the mountains  
But our Earth will never die  
Here there everywhere,  
a lake is killed by the arsenic urine  
from the bladder of profit factories, a poisoned stream  
staggers down the hills  
coughing chaos the sickly sea  
the wailing whale,belly up like a frying fish,  
crests the chilling swansong of parting waters.  
  
But our Earth will not die  
  
Who lynched the lakes.Who?  
Who slaughtered the seas.Who?  
Whoever mauled the mountains.Whoever?  
  
Our Earth will not die  
  
And the rain  
the rain falls, acid, in balding forests  
their branches amputated by the septic daggers  
of tainted clouds  
  
Weeping willows drip mercury tears in the eye of sobbing terrains  
a nuclear sun like a funeral ball  
reducing man and meadow to dust and dirt.  
  
But our Earth will never die.  
Fishes have died in the waters.Fishes  
Birds have died in the trees.Birds  
rabbits have died in their burrows. Rabbits.  
Our Earth will see again  
eyes washed by a new rain  
the westering sun will again shine like a new coin.  
The wind,unwound,will play its tune  
trees twittering, grasses dancing  
hillsides will rock with blooming harvests  
the plains batting their eyes of grass and grace.  
The sea will drink its heart's content  
when jubilant thunder flings open the skygate and a new rain  
tumbles down  
In drums of joy,  
Our Earth will see again  
This Earth, OUR EARTH

The poem **Our Earth will Not Die** is written by Nigerian poet **Niyi Osundare.** This poem evokes earth’s well being in the future through his optimistic voice which does not believe that the earth will end. This poem talks about human activities which are directly affecting the environment and creating crisis all around the planet. Even the destructive activities are done the poet keeps hope for the earth’s long life. It creates a picturesque description of humans’ activity towards the environment. The poet has a strong belief that the earth will not die because very soon people will understand its importance in their life. The poet has created a picture of the massive destruction of the environment through his powerful words. **Osundare** has brought the environmental issue in his poem with the hope of making people aware of their activities. When literature brings environmental issues there emerges eco-criticism. Therefore, this poem brings people’s exploiting activity in a literary form; it has a hope that people will understand the real importance of nature in their lives and accept the responsibility to bring the nature back in its past form. So, the title itself brings optimistic tone as Our Earth will Not Die. Eco-critical analysis of the poem Our Earth Will Not Die by Niyi Osundare is concerned with nature, environmental crisis our earth and human poem.

Osundare’s use of personification is phenomenal. He writes, “a lake is killed by the arsenic urine / from the bladder of profit factories” . He personifies the factory as a person with some sort of bladder infection. This “person” release violent toxic urine every time they decide to relieve themselves into the river. This is interesting because it shows how helpless nature is. Nature cannot stop the toxic waste being dumped into its life. Osundare also gives the sea human characteristics. He writes, “coughing chaos in the sickly sea”. The sea is sick and coughing up this nastiness is polluted in its waters. But again, Osundare doesn’t neglect to tell us that the earth will live on.

Just when I thought Osundare’s reassurance of the earth’s life was pointless, the tone of the poem completely changes. He writes that this sad song’s music turns into an upbeat, festive sound. During the other parts of the poem, he continues to reassure that the earth will live on but the sadness and language of the poem is still sad, until the very last part of the poem. The language grows into something more optimistic. He writes, “Our earth will see again / eyes washed by a new rain / the westering sun will rise again / resplendent like a new coin”. Here we see that Osundare is accomplishing this reassurance with the reader. He ends the poem, “Our earth will see again / this earth, OUR EARTH”. So the earth was blinded by the terror and disrespect of the people, but thanks to the new rain, the unpleasantness of the earth will be washed away and the earth will prosper and be all it can be. Osundare wrote this poem, to me, to make the reader really take a second look at the way the earth is treated. He showed a different side of nature. He showcased the darkness and cries of the natural world that we cannot see or hear. Osundare was the vocal cry of nature to its people.

Detailed Explanation of the Poem

*a lake is killed by the arsenic urinefrom the bladder of profit factoriesa poisoned stream staggers down the hillscoughing chaos in the sickly seathe wailing whale, belly up like frying fish,crests the chilling swansong of parting waters.But our earth will not die.*

Here, the poet brings an image where the lake has lost its originality because of human’s capitalistic perspective. The use of arsenic urine is badly affecting sea life and to the creatures of the sea. The poet is trying to picture how people are being really inhuman to the other creatures of the earth. Earth is kept in the center and as the theme of this poem. Therefore, eco-criticism takes an earth-centered approach to literature and an ecological approach to literary criticism.

And the rainthe rain falls, acid, on balding foreststheir branches amputated by the septic daggersof tainted cloudsWeeping willows drip mercury tearsin the eye of sobbing terrainsa nuclear sun rises like a funeral ballreducing man and meadow to dust and dirt.But our earth will not die .

This stanza shows how the forest is being affected by nuclear bombs and produced gas. Rain is affected and caused acid rainfall. The problem of environmental crisis is heightened by poisonous gas produced by nuclear experiments. So, by showing these effects of acid rainfall the poet is trying to create consciousness among the readers.

Fishes have died in the waters.  Fishes.  
Birds have died in the trees.  Birds.  
Rabbits have died in their burrows.  Rabbits.  
But our earth will not die.

Here, the death of the birds, fishes, and rabbits contain the meaning of world’s end. Nature is marginalized, silenced and pushed backward. Human beings are responsible for their death and their exploitation so, humans must be responsible for their duties towards nature and its safety. The poet still keeps faith in nature’s life. Even the fishes are dying we can decrease the number of death and reproduce fish friendly environment. Therefore, the poet suggests people in a hopeful tone to bring back nature in its previous form.

Our earth will see again  
eyes washed by a new rain  
the westering sun will rise again resplendent like a new coin.  
The wind unwound, will play its tune  
trees twittering, grasses dancing;  
hillsides will rock with blooming harvests  
the plains batting their eyes of grass and grace.  
The sea will drink its heart’s content  
when a jubilant thunder flings open the skygate and a new rain  
tumbles down  
in drums of joy.  
Our earth will see again  
this earth, OUR EARTH.

Human’s faithfulness has the power to create a new healthy, environmentally friendly world. These lines are full of hope which imagines the world without abuse of humans towards nature. Nature’s freedom is projected with full of hope. Every creature of the earth is treated equally because they all have equal importance in their existence. Therefore, these lines convey the message that every creature in the universe should have their own dignity of the existence and have the freedom to live like other human beings.

A culture we are developing in the name of being modern and more civilized is supporting lots in the environmental crisis. Culture plays a crucial role to shape the form and meaning of nature in a whole. Nature is imaged in the texts through the language and portrayed as what is and how people have converted it in destructive form. So, a kind of culture people are developing in a new form has a crucial impact on the environment.  Barry Commoner says “everything is connected to everything else”. So, culture leaves impacts on nature and nature influences human culture too. The materialistic concept people are developing has become the contributory factor to destroy nature and the environment.

**THE SETTING OF THE POEM.**

The predominant setting of the poem ‘’Our Earth will Not Die’’  by Nigerian poet **Niyi Osundare the forest. Nature in this context or collection constitutes the flora and fauna and events or phenomena such as rainfall and mountains. Here the poet persona reflects or nature and earths exploitation of nature. The poem is basically a fight against exploitation of nature.**

**THE FORM AND STRUCTURE OF THE POEM**

The Poem Our Earth will Not Die is written by Nigerian poet **Niyi Osundare is a 49 line poem divided into stanzas. The poem is basically in two movements. In the first part, the mood shown by the poet is that of solemn. This is because the portrait he paints is of a dying earth so abused that our response can only be subdued to such a pitiful and sorrowful extent. But the sadness of the poet is mixed with anger and hope as he is certain that earth will survive these attacks. But in the second movement, the tone of the poem completely changes to that of hope. Hope for a brighter and better future.**

**THE THEMES OF THE POEM.**

1. Theme of Earth Exploitation: This poem Our Earth will Not Die is written by Nigerian poet **Niyi Osundare evokes earths well-being in the future through his optimistic voice which does not believe that the earth will end. The poem talks about human activities which are directly affecting the environment and creating crisis on the planet. Even the destructive activities are done the poet keeps hope for the earths long life. It portraits a descriptive perspective of humans activity towards the environment. The poet has a strong strive for hope that the earth will not die because soon people will understand its advantage and importance to human life. The poet strikes a picture of massive destruction of the environment through his sophisticated words. Niyi Osundare has brought to light the environmental issue in his poem with the hope of making people aware of their activities.**

**This poem brings people exploiting activity in a literary form, it has a hope that people will understand the real importance of nature to human lives and accept the responsibility to bring the nature back in its past form.**

The poem Our Earth will Not Die is written by Nigerian poet **Niyi Osundare is concerned with nature , environmental crisis our earth and human poem.**

1. Theme of impacts of global capitalism: The poem Our Earth will Not Die is written by Nigerian poet **Niyi Osundare envisions hope for the masses as well as advances the dialectics of biotic wholesomeness. Osundare lachrymose revelation here from the preface to the eye of the earth anneals his penchant for wholesomeness as wells as socio-economic well being of individuals: Waters very dirty forests falling.**

**Osundare in all his artistic ways and means protraits hope and light at the end of the journey. In this poem he reassures that: our earth will see again eyes washed by a new rain the westerinng sun. His depiction of the environment in his poem explains to us that global capitalism affects ones environment. And his glimpse of hope will forever be intact that the environment will change and be better.** With hitherto unimaginable increase in production and productivity, extending the new order dynamically to all parts of the globe and all areas of human exsistence, capitalism dissolved the old world , destroyed direct relationships between producer and consumer and flung all products to other buyers and sellers.

1. **Theme of Envisioning A better society: From the perspective of envisioning and self hope for the environmentand respect for nature in Nigeria. If global capitalism is resisted though a commitement to changing socio economic relations and commodification of nature.** This will make a possible change. Environmental renewal and environmentally friendly. Osundare portraits hope and leadership is interrogated through environmental aesthetics decreases capitalist project and schemes: now the present century, no end sight to Africa in its entirety are grave.. but a proper understanding of history will put the 21st century in clearer or more bearable perspective. It is only hope that can empower our spirit. Hope in this poem is very sacred.

Nature in this context of the poem is a victim of human cultural agent. The cultural agent referred here is(global) capitalism in the wake of frontier global capitalism, a cultural agent that commodifies relations by sustaining the rhetoric of core- periphery paradigm. The shift from the preservation of nature to capitalism in the wake of frontier global capitalism fundamentally ensconced different mode of mans relation to earth. Envisioning a new and better society is in sight hoped on by Osundare to change our immediate environmemt for a better and prosperous future.

**POETIC DEVICES USED IN THE POEM**

1. The use of personification: The use of personification in this poem is phenomenal. In lines 11- 12. The use of personification is shown and identified as he personifies the factories as a person with some sort of bladder infection. This ‘’person’’ releases violent toxic urine every time they decide to relieve themselves into the river.

‘’ a lake is killed by arsenic urine

From the bladder of profit factories’’ (lines 11&12)

This also shows how helpless nature is as it cannot fight against such unforeseen circumstances which is to stop the toxic waste being dumped into its life. The poet also personifies the sea. He says:

‘’ coughing chaos in the sickly sea’’ (Line 14)

The sea is sick and coughing due to the toxic substances being released into the sea. That line further explains further that the sea is sick, polluted and contaminated due to its constant and unending pollution. But yet the poet persona still hopes that the earth will be better environment for individuals and shall live on.

1. The use of imagery:

The poem is successful because of the poets skilful use of language borne out of his careful study of the environment and knowledge of the industrial world. Osundare employs of imagery to paint vivid images of the abuse the environment suffers through human activities. This therefore affects the poems mood and tone are mournful in his first part. He succeeds in capturing a image of degeneration through his careful choice of verbs and adjectives. For example, the use of active verbs like Lynched , slaughtered, mauled, killed, staggers, coughing and the rest which all present in the first part of the poem, are negative visual and auditory images that illustrate the deep state of gloom that the environment is presently in. this contrast with the positive use of active verbs and adjectives in the second part of the poem, verbs that show excitement and hope such as ‘’ rise’, twitterinhg, dancing , rock , drinks and tables indicate visual and auditory imagery are sugesstive of regeneration and ties in smoothly with the poets defiant cry of refrain’’ Our Earth Will Not Die”.

3.)Mood and tone: The poem begins with a more solemn tone, ‘’almost elegiac’’. At the beginning of the poem, the poet does not cease to hide his pain due to the suffering of the earth. He writes in the first stanza he writes:

‘’Lynched

The lakes

Slaughtered

The seas

Mauled

The mountains

But our earth will not die’’. (lines 1-7)

From the above lines it is obvious that the poet is a nature-lover. The way he goes step by step analysising and describe the way the earth is treated is not just to waste but emphasized how important the earth is, how the earth deserves a better treatment. But in the last stanza from line 35 down to 49, the end of the poem, there is a complete change in tone of the poem. The language grows into something more optimistic. He writes:

‘’Our Earth will see again

Eyes washed by a new rain

The weltering sun will rise again

Resplendent like a new coin’’ (lines 35-38)

Here, the poet persona is accomplishing this reassurance with the readers.

He ends the poem

‘’Our Earth will see again

This earth, our earth’’

This lines means that the unpleasant of the earth will be washed away and the earth will prosper and be all it can be.

1. The use of Hyperbole: Hyperbole is the deliberate use of exaggeration/ overstatement for the purpose of emphasis. The poet, perhaps exaggerates the reach& extent of the selfish exploitation of the earth by suggesting that the abuse can be found wherever one looks:

‘’Here

There

Everywhere

A lake is killed by the arsenic urine

From the bladder of profit factories’’ (Lines 8-12)

**Conclusion of the poem**

The poem **Our Earth will Not Die** from the eco-critical point of view where the poet criticizes human exploitation over nature. He shows the hidden faith in human behavior which believes that someday people will understand and bring back nature in its previous form. This poem describes disturbed ecology and its impact on human civilization and vice versa. The poet brings human and non-human realms together to show that all creatures of nature is as equal as human. Humans themselves alone cannot make an existence on the earth. Eco-criticism itself is an earth-centered approach to study the nature and environment. So, the poet brings earth as a center to the environment where every creature of the earth has equal importance; the belief that if the earth is alive then humans are also alive. By bringing the destructed form of nature, the poet has tried to imply the meaning of interconnectedness of humans with nature. Therefore, this poem is optimistic towards earth’s life and the power of nature in front of human beings. Eco-critical analysis of the poem Our Earth Will Not Die by Niyi Osundare is concerned with nature, environmental crisis our earth and human poem.

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