



---

## Nature And Personification Aesthetics in Niyi Osundare's Green: Sighs of our Ailing Planet

<sup>1</sup>Olanike Olaleru, <sup>2</sup>Favour Adaramola

---

Department of English and Linguistics, Faculty of Arts, Kwara State, University, Malete, Nigeria, P.M.B. 1530, Ilorin

---

### Article Info

\*Corresponding author: (Olanike Olaleru)

Corresponding Author email

[Olanike.olaleru@kwasu.edu.ng](mailto:Olanike.olaleru@kwasu.edu.ng)

### Abstract

This study examines Niyi Osundare's deployment of personification as a poetic symbol to examine Nature in different ramifications as seen in his *Green: Sighs of Our Ailing Planet*. The poetry volume explores the poet's concerns about humankind's objectionable dealings with the environment not only in Africa but also across the earth. He particularly focuses on prevalent environmental concerns underscored by recent crises and disasters befalling communities in different parts of the world. The poetry volume, through different poems emphasizes humankind's complicit role in the devastating consequences of environmental abuse. Employing an Ecocritical approach, the paper investigated dominant themes such as neglect, insensitivity, misappropriation, exploitation among others, as well as the use of the poetic element of personification as a literary style to expose and criticize nature's present precarious state. The research results reveal that human activities such as environmental abuse, tree felling, and anthropocentrism, among others are constituting danger and subsequent destruction to nature, which also negatively affects human life on earth. Through the deployment of personification, in which the poet presents nature as having human characteristics and emotions, the poet advocated that responsible consideration, and care should be bestowed unto nature rather than engaging in activities that harm it. The analysis lays bare the poetry volume's explicit stand against the popular belief of humankind exclusively owning the universe without necessarily being its being its guardians and protectors. The research findings show that *Green: Sighs of Our Ailing Planet* presents a clear insight into realities of the symbiotic relationship existing between humankind and the environment. The study contributes significant knowledge into an understanding of the existential co-dependence between nature and humankind

### Keywords:

Nature,  
Environment,  
Personification,  
Humankind,  
Ecocriticism

### Introduction

Many studies have examined how poets while in pensive moods decry the dangers posed to humankind by neglectful behaviour towards their environment and the dastardly consequences that this attitude portends for the earth dwellers. A number of the studies however, having discussed the dangers, consequences, of mankind's negative contributions to this problem, quite a few seems to have taken into account how nature itself feels about the plague of bad treatments as it were. Nature, as if it were human, bleeds because of human exploitation and abuse; and it is only humankind that can also save it from imminent annihilation.

Thus, Osundare, a poet known for his passion for the earth (*The Eye of the Earth* 1986, "Hole in the Sky" 2017) has taken it upon himself to present nature in the volume aptly titled *Green: Sighs of our Ailing Planet* (*Green*) as a human with characteristic human feelings, expressing the unwholesome effects of its own experiences with humankind. In a number of poems, the poet also shows nature possibly fighting back also by means of retaliatory actions, resulting in floods, tsunamis, hurricanes, blizzards, wildfires, and other forms of environmental catastrophes happening in different parts of the world. Osundare personifies nature in *Green* so that its readers can feel what nature feels as it expresses its pains, worries, and agony through the multi-voiced characters created in the different poems, and the actions they take.

Osundare has expressed quite strong emotions through iconic poems in *Green* such as “Igi Da!” (The Tree has Fallen) (13), “Amazon Burning” (25), “Once Upon a Planet” (29), “Dying Lake” (33), “The desert Cometh” (34), “Cancer Alley” (43), “Eco-Snaps” (47), and “Warning” (75) to underscore his concerns that majority of earth dwellers are doing more harm than good to nature with their utilitarian attitude to nature’s resources and bounties. Personification, a major element of poetry, comes in handy as a literary device to describe and explore many aspects of the natural world that the poet talks about in this volume. Personification as a literary tool has been aptly used in a variety of genres including prose and drama, while it is no stranger to poetry at all. In this paper, personification is employed as a literary tool with which the work *Green* is analysed in its concerns for the environment and nature.

*Green* (2022) is Niyi Osundare’s latest poetry volume wholly dedicated to the environment and issues related to climate change. It is not a new trend that writers make use of figurative language to evoke the emotional, imaginative and intellectual ability of readers to have a clearer image and understanding of any literary work and these devices are distinct in their own ways and they vary in its functions as well. This study examines the adverse effect and devastating consequences of earth being abused and mishandled and understanding the meaning of literary personification. Various research has been conducted on climate change and the call for man to adapt with environment but few works touch areas peculiar to certain regions. This study investigates how Niyi Osundare personifies nature as a living being in his *Green: Sighs of Our Ailing Planet* and as a concept.

### Literature Review

A large portion of poems in various poetry volumes by Niyi Osundare deal directly with his concerns about the way and manner in which mankind relates with their physical environment, which serves as both abode – temporal and eternal as well as provider or benefactor. Of Yoruba stock from Southwest Nigeria, Osundare is a son of a farmer father and cloth-weaver mother. A background heritage that affords him an intimate knowledge of the earth’s benevolence as a place that provides shelter, and a natural resource from which mankind gets their food. The poet is not unfamiliar with his people’s reverence for the earth, and this no doubt fuels his sensitivity to the earth’s feelings, particularly when it appears it is not being respected or appreciated. In Yoruba culture, the earth is referred to as “iya” (Mother), an appellation of reverence and affection, but more a symbolism for affection, nurture and life. Where the earth dwellers see Nature in this light, they are not likely to treat it shabbily or mindlessly in such a way that the earth fights back with violent eruptions such as earthquakes, erosions, fires, desertification, and other natural disasters that have been proven to be partly caused by human activities. All through a number of Osundare’s works, this mindfulness of the earth is often a recurrent theme.

In his *The Eye of the Earth*, Osundare evoked a mood of romantic nostalgia and introspection for the earth. Thus, we see him talking about bliss, peace and tranquility. The good and beauty of nature is also seen through nature’s responses to the pleasant environment. Thus, when it rains there is joy and peace because the earth will send forth its fruits. When there is drought, there is pain and suffering. For example, in “First Rain” the poet, talks about a “tingling tang” that awakes the nose when the first rain showers show up. He contrasts this in a sharp tone saying that this blessed shower has “clipped the wing of the haughty dust.” This is a note of triumph for the rain. But it also earns it a commendation, as it is seen bringing “cooling warmth” which “embraces our searching soles” (29). As if it had been in captivity during the drought, the poet talks about heartily about “liberated pores” through which “our earth breathes again” when the rain comes (29).

### Personification as a Concept

Personification being the practice of endowing human characteristics such as emotions, behaviours and even idiosyncrasies on non-human entities, with the aim of making them behave, talk or respond as humans, it is an effective device in the hands of a prolific poet like Niyi Osundare. With this poetic device, the poet has successfully enlivened the non-human atmosphere of the tree and animal world giving these creatures life-like characteristics through which they respond to their environment. In this way, Osundare has deftly used personification to help create a connection between his readers and the otherwise inanimate world of fauna and flora which he addresses in the poems in the volume under discussion.

### Theoretical Framework

The paper employs eco-criticism as its theoretical analytical tool. This choice is apt as it adequately provides universally recognised eco concepts which were also deployed in Osundare’s *Green* being analysed in this paper. The eco concepts often feature in climate-related literary works and have been observed not only in *Green*, but also in Osundare’s first volume, the award-winning and internationally recognised volume *The Eye of the Earth* (1986). Eco-related concepts also feature prominently in Osundare’s *City without People* (2011), a poetry volume that addressed climate change and its effects on the city of New Orleans leading to the devastating cyclone, Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Ecocriticism became a useful tool for literary studies and analysis having been first broached by the American literary critic Cheryl Glotfelty. In the introduction to her 1996 work, *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmark Essays* (1996), Glotfelty defined ecocriticism as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (xix). In this introduction, Glotfelty outlined the scope of ecocriticism and its significance in examining the relationship between literature and humankind’s environment. It is useful to mention that Glotfelty did not merely mention the literary-environment symbiotic relationship as an abstract theory but relates it to both physical environment as well as the human-nature relationship. Her views have over time evolved and gained significant attention as a useful approach in literary studies and criticism. Other theorists have further clarified and added their voices to ecocritical studies in relation to literary works, describing concepts and ideas within which eco-literary analysis could take place.

Ecocriticism has thus developed around a variety of exploratory themes that encompass the relationship between literature, culture, and the environment. Ecocritical literary studies often intersect around thematic emphases such as nature and human interaction, where analysis revolves around how humans relate to the natural world, with a view to examining human stewardship, exploitation, and acts of harmony with nature. Environmental crisis, referred to as ecological disasters come under the purview of ecocritical literary discus where ecological issues such as climate change, deforestation, bush burning, pollution and biodiversity and wetland losses are examined. Other areas of ecocritical interest include anthropocentrism where not only human, but even all other forms of life are considered in ecocritical studies, with a view to presenting ethical positions. Anthropomorphism directly addresses all forms of human-centric attitudes and behaviours in relating to the environment. In doing this, literary works expose how human-centric values which cause human dominance over nature, end up harming humans more than it favours them, in terms of disastrous reactions of nature.

Moreover, ethical implications are also brought to the fore. Postcolonial ecocriticism broadly investigates the interactions between environmental issues and postcolonial identities in literary works, focusing on how colonialism has impacted landscapes and local cultures. Sustainability and environmental justice highlights and addresses themes of sustainability, emphasising ecological balance and social balance in relation to world governments’ environmental policies and multinational companies’ practices. Over all, in the above-mentioned aspects of eco-critical literary interests and others not mentioned, ecocriticism helps in probing the interface between literature and the environment. Eco critics examine how literature engages with environmental concerns, helping to create ecological consciousness, and thereby contributing to our understanding of the relationship between humans and the natural world. Particularly regarding Niyi Osundare’s *Green* being examined in this paper, the ecocriticism area of anthropomorphism, as described above is the focus of the paper. The paper will also examine some of the ethical issues related to human dominance and abuse of their environment.

### Methodology

The study took a close reading and analytic approach, exploring a wide range of poems with a concentration of personification characteristics in them such as: Igi Da!” (The Tree has Fallen) (13), “Amazon Burning” (25), “Once Upon a Planet” (29), “Climate of Fear” (30), “Dying Lake” (33), “The desert Cometh” (34), “Cancer Alley” (43), “Eco-Snaps” (47), and “Warning” (75) The analysis focused on the way the poet has deployed personification as a literary tool to raise issues and concerns about humankind’s relations with their environment and the consequences therefrom. The analysis also considers how the element of personification interacts with other textual features and how this affects the overall meaning of the particular poems being discussed.

### Niyi Osundare’s *Green: Sighs of our Ailing Planet*

Niyi Osundare’s *Green: Sighs of Our Ailing Planet* is a work borne out of the author’s worries about the sustainability of the earth if only humans will respect the laws of nature. In the volume, he raises sharp alertness over earth dwellers’ carefree approach to the earth’s resources which continues to jeopardise its health. The author points out devastating consequences of not paying heed to inherent warnings of looming dangers such as climate change, natural and ecological disasters, including tsunamis, hurricanes, desertification, ocean surges, wild fires, and other human-induced environmental crises. Focusing issues concerning the Amazon wildfires to the desert encroachment in North Africa to the shrinking of the Lake Chad basin in his home country Nigeria, Osundare jolts his readers to soberly think about the endangered beauty of nature.

However, rather than seeming to be yelling at readers, he lets the earth, through a deliberate projection of its beauty, speak for itself. Thus, we see in poem and after poem, a deliberate projection of the persona speaking for themselves. In a poem like, “Amazon Burning” (17) the poet has structured the poem with different acts and scenes as a dramatic piece featuring different characters, such as “wailing leaves” (l.7), “the forest” (l.8), “Trees of the Amazon” (Act two, l.1), “Earth and Sky” (l.2), etc. These characters, the different trees, who engage in speaking out their fears and concerns about how the humans are treating them, help to humanise the reality of their pain. In other

words, just as humans would feel pain when cut or bruised, so also these trees feel pain of human mishandling, and they speak out about it.

A poignant opening aspect of Act Two is the title “We the Trees” (18). It is significant to note that the poet keeps using the collective pronoun “we the trees” or “we are the tree” interchangeably throughout the poem as an indication of the aliveness or a kind of ‘humanity’ of the natural ecosystem (ll. 1, 3, 4). He shows his readers, how the planet is ailing—cutting through all the bad activities of the powerful while profiting callously from the resources of land. Through this direct address and the personification of the environment, the poet motivates his reader to consider how they also might help protect Earth from those who are killing it. *Green: Sighs of Our Ailing Planet* is thus a plea to save our planet and thereby save our own lives.

In the poem, “Once upon a Planet” (29), the poet points out to the dastardly consequences of industrialisation on the flora and fauna, and the release of chemical toxins into the air from oil refineries and allied industries; which poison the atmosphere and pollute the climate condition of the planet. Some of the resultant effects include harmful raindrops and toxic environment. “Climate of Fear” (30) speaks to the poet’s fear of fluctuating weather conditions which delay the rains (ll.1-2), directly causing inflation and “furious famine” (l.5). Other terrible consequences pointed out by the Osundare include formerly wonderful and well-regulated weather now giving way to erratic, destructive and devastating weather conditions. His conclusion in this particular poem is that these things are bringing the planet closer to extinction; and mankind will be the ultimate loser.

### Analysis

#### “Once upon a Planet”

This poem opens with the speaker recognising the fact that the sky which is seen as an umbrella which is to shield us from impurities is now in a compromised state. The sky is personified as an object that has lost its worth and purpose and is in need of amendment. He has rightly personified the sky from the first stanza:

*The sky above our head is*

*A ragged umbrella in need of a needle*

He personified “A ragged umbrella” to be represented as a kind of protection that is worn out or inadequate. In poetry or literature, such metaphor could symbolize something or someone who once offered shelter, safety or comfort but has become weakened or damaged over time, no longer fully capable of providing the same level of protection. The “ragged” aspect emphasises the deterioration or fragility, possibly reflecting themes of vulnerability, decay or the passage of time. A “ragged umbrella in need of a needle” can be personified to represent something or someone who is in need of repair or healing. The umbrella, traditionally a symbol of protection, becomes a metaphor for a protective force or entity that has been worn down and is now vulnerable. The need for a “needle” suggests that restoration or mending is possible, but action must be taken to restore it to its full strength. This personification could reflect themes of resilience, renewal, or the importance of care and maintenance in sustaining what protects us.

Expanding on the personification of a “ragged umbrella in need of a needle,” this image can embody several deeper meanings: first is worn-out protection. The ragged umbrella symbolises a protective force such as a relationship, institution, or even one’s mental state that has deteriorated over time. It’s no longer fully functional and is exposed to the elements, indicating vulnerability and the need for renewal. Second is neglect and the passage of time. The umbrella’s raggedness can represent the consequences of neglect or the wear and tear that comes with time. The third is hope for restoration. The mention of a “needle” introduces the possibility of repair. The needle could be a metaphor for intervention, effort, or care needed to restore the umbrella to its former state. And lastly, in an eco-critical context, the ragged umbrella might symbolise the environment itself—once robust and protective, now in disrepair due to human actions. The needle could then represent the urgent need for conservation efforts or sustainable practices to repair the damage done.

*The rain which leaks through the rupture*

*Is a cocktail of contending toxins*

“Cocktail of contending toxins” can be personified to represent a complex and chaotic situation where multiple harmful elements are interacting or conflicting. In this metaphor, the “cocktail” implies a mixture of various elements, while “contending toxins” suggests that these elements are not only harmful but are also in conflict or competition with each other. This personification can convey several ideas. First is complexity of issues. The phrase illustrates a situation where multiple problems or dangers are present simultaneously, each with its own detrimental effects. This complexity can make the overall scenario difficult to manage or resolve.

The second is conflict and struggle. The idea of “contending” toxins emphasises that these harmful elements are actively interacting or fighting against each other, adding to the chaos and intensity of the situation. The third is danger and harm. The term “toxins” inherently suggests danger and harm, personifying the situation as a toxic



environment or condition where various harmful forces are at play. And lastly is internal or external strife. This personification can also represent internal psychological conflicts or external social and environmental issues where multiple negative factors are contributing to the overall difficulty.

*The cloud up there is a wet blanket*

*Dripping like a dirge upon a feverish earth*

From the lines above, the poet personifies the cloud as a source of oppressive and mournful influence. The cloud is compared to a “wet blanket,” which traditionally symbolises something that dampens enthusiasm or enjoyment. Personifying the cloud as such suggests it is smothering or stifling, casting a pall over the environment. Also, “dripping Like a Dirge” portrays the act of dripping is likened to a “dirge,” which is a mournful song or lament. This personifies the cloud’s dripping as a continuous expression of grief or sorrow, implying that each drop carries an emotional weight akin to mourning. The “feverish earth” represents a world in distress or agitation. The cloud’s dripping is personified as contributing to this turmoil, amplifying the earth’s discomfort and suffering. Overall, this personification creates an image of the cloud as a sombre, oppressive force that exacerbates the earth’s distress. It conveys a sense of ongoing, melancholic influence that both smothers and intensifies the suffering of the environment.

*The birds fled several season ago*

*Without leaving forwarding address*

In the lines above, the personification of the birds and their departure can be perceived as one, birds as deliberate actors. Describing the birds as having “fled” suggests they made a deliberate and conscious decision to leave. This personifies the birds as having intent in their departure, implying that they actively chose to leave rather than simply migrating or moving. Two, the phrase “without leaving a forwarding address” personifies the departure by suggesting that the birds should have provided a means of contact or return, as if they were responsible for maintaining connections. This adds a layer of human-like responsibility and intentionality to their departure.

**“Climate of Fear”**

In the first stanza, of this poem, the poet uses personification to create a better understanding of actually what the weather stands as. He personifies the rain to be person that has the will of its own and would come and go as it chooses if it doesn’t get what it wants as this shows how the poet alludes to the climate that it carries its own feeling and emotion and is attached to one thing before it can be what it should be.

*The rains come*

*too late these days*

*and leave before their time*

*withering fields foretell*

*the coming of furious famines*

In the lines above, the poet expatiates on the issue of global warming and the signs of a dying earth. The type of personification used in the first two lines is often used in poetry to highlight the unpredictability or change in natural patterns, potentially reflecting broader themes such as climate change, environmental disruption, or the emotional impact of these changes on human life. In the “withering fields foretell the coming of furious famines”, it attributes human-like qualities to the fields, as if they have the ability to predict or “foretell” future events. In this case, the withering fields are depicted as beings that can foresee the arrival of devastating famines. This personification emphasises the interconnectedness of nature and human survival, suggesting that the condition of the fields is a warning or omen of worse things to come. The use of “foretell” gives the fields a prophetic quality, implying that nature itself is aware of and responsive to the broader environmental or social issues, such as the onset of famine. This can heighten the sense of impending doom and reinforce the idea that the natural world is a powerful, communicative force that signals warnings to humanity.

*Spring swallows summer*

*Summer stumbles into a sweltering fall*

*While winter joins the fray*

*With snowy deluge and blinding ice*

The personification in the phrase “spring swallows summer, summer stumbles into a sweltering fall” gives human-like actions and emotions to the seasons. Spring is depicted as an active, almost aggressive force that consumes or overtakes summer, as if the seasons are in conflict. The word “swallow” suggests dominance or erasure, where spring overpowers summer before it can fully arrive or develop. “Summer stumbles into a sweltering fall”; here, summer is personified as a figure that “stumbles,” implying clumsiness, weakness, or disorientation. This suggests that summer transitions awkwardly or unsteadily into fall, perhaps because the natural progression of the seasons is out of balance. The use of “sweltering” to describe fall adds to the sense of abnormality, as fall is typically associated with cooling temperatures, not heat. Together, these personifications create an image of a disrupted, chaotic natural order, where the seasons are no longer following their usual patterns. This might symbolise broader themes of

environmental instability or change, reflecting how climate disruptions can cause unexpected or uncomfortable shifts in the natural world.

*Unstoppable fires consume the skies*

*From Kangaroo Island to Paradise*

The poet makes reference to two different places, Kangaroo Island in Australia and potentially Paradise, California, which experienced significant events in recent history. Kangaroo Island, located off the coast of South Australia, is known for its unique wildlife and natural beauty. However, in late 2019 and early 2020, the island was severely impacted by the Australian bushfires. Over half of the island was burned, devastating wildlife populations and habitats. It was a significant ecological disaster, but efforts have been made to rehabilitate the land and support the recovery of native species. Paradise is a town in Northern California that was almost entirely destroyed by the Camp Fire in November 2018. The fire, which was one of the deadliest and most destructive in California's history, killed 85 people and destroyed thousands of homes. The fire spread rapidly due to high winds and dry conditions, leaving residents with little time to evacuate. Since then, Paradise has been slowly rebuilding, though the impact of the fire is still deeply felt in the community.

These events were both tragic, highlighting the destructive power of natural disasters and the ongoing challenges of recovery and rebuilding. The phrase "unstoppable fires consume the skies from Kangaroo Island to Paradise" is a vivid example of personification, where fire is given human-like qualities and behaviours. The fires are described as "unstoppable," suggesting that they possess a will or force that cannot be restrained, as though they have a mind of their own and are determined to continue their destructive path. The act of consuming in "consume the skies" is typically a human or animal behaviour associated with eating. Here, the fire is depicted as devouring or engulfing the skies, indicating its overwhelming and pervasive nature. The poet also suggests the fire is eating or devouring, actions typically associated with living beings, particularly animals or humans. Also, "from Kangaroo Island to Paradise", by linking these two geographically distant places with a single sweeping action, the fires are personified as an omnipresent, almost sentient force that transcends boundaries, uniting disparate locations in a shared catastrophe.

*A melting Arctic chokes the oceans*

*Which claim the coasts and bury the cities*

*Just one whittling whistle from the catacombs  
of coral reefs bleached and buffeted*

*By a plague of acid and plastic debris*

In the above stanza, Osundare calls out the attention of readers to the Arctic and the unprecedented change in the sea and ice level. The Arctic is experiencing significant changes due to climate change, with warming occurring at a rate roughly four times faster than the global average. This rapid warming leads to several critical impacts like sea ice loss, permafrost thawing, ecosystem disruption, rising sea levels, economic and geopolitical implications. These changes highlight the urgent need to local action to mitigate climate change and its impacts on the Arctic and beyond. The phrase "a melting Arctic chokes the oceans which claim the coasts and bury the cities" uses personification to give human-like qualities to natural elements.

The Arctic is described as "choking" the oceans, attributing it with the human ability to restrict or suffocate. This personification emphasises the idea that the melting ice disrupts the ocean's natural balance, causing harm and disruption. Likewise, is "which claim the coasts". The oceans are described as "claiming" the coasts, as if they have intent or will to take over land. This suggests that rising sea levels caused by the melting Arctic are encroaching on coastal areas, almost as if the oceans are deliberately taking possession of them. Next is "and bury the cities". The phrase suggests that the oceans are actively "burying" cities, as if performing an intentional act of covering or destroying. This intensifies the imagery of coastal cities being submerged under rising sea levels. The personification in this line powerfully conveys the destructive impact of climate change, making the natural processes seem more aggressive and intentional, thus amplifying the urgency and severity of the situation.

The phrase "one whittling whistle from the catacombs of coral reefs bleached and buffered by a plague of acid and plastic debris" uses personification to evoke a vivid image of the deteriorating state of coral reefs. The coral reefs are described as having a "whittling whistle," attributing them with the human-like ability to produce sound. The "whittling" suggests something being gradually worn away or diminished, which reflects the slow degradation of the reefs. Referring to the reefs as "catacombs" personifies them as tombs or burial places, emphasising their dying state. The coral reefs are further personified as being "bleached and buffered," as if they are being physically and emotionally affected by the external forces of acid and plastic debris. The "plague" metaphorically personifies acidification and pollution as diseases attacking the reefs. Together, this personification paints a picture of coral reefs as once-living entities now reduced to hollow remnants, suffering under the dual forces of acidification (caused by

increased CO<sub>2</sub>) and pollution. The "whittling whistle" evokes the sound of something fading away, enhancing the sense of loss and decay.

*Once-in-a-century hurricanes*

*Proliferate into ten-in-a-years*

*While countless typhoons pummel the peace*

*Of once Pacific regions*

The phrase "Once-in-a-century hurricanes proliferate into ten-in-a-year while countless typhoons pummel the peace of once pacific regions" uses personification to vividly describe the increasing and intensifying storms. The word "proliferate" suggests that hurricanes are multiplying or spreading like living organisms. This personifies the hurricanes as if they have the ability to reproduce or increase in number, portraying them as forces that are growing out of control. The typhoons are described as "pummeling" the peace, as if they are intentionally attacking or disrupting tranquility. The word "pummel" gives the typhoons a violent, aggressive quality, as if they are actively targeting and destroying the calmness of the regions. Peace itself is personified as something tangible that can be physically assaulted, emphasizing the destructive impact of the storms on once-calm areas.

In "of once pacific regions", the word "pacific", meaning peaceful, is used both literally and figuratively, underscoring the irony that regions known for their tranquility are now being violently disrupted. The personification in this phrase creates a dramatic and alarming image of hurricanes and typhoons as powerful, almost sentient forces that are not just occurring more frequently but are also actively and aggressively disrupting previously peaceful regions. This heightens the sense of chaos and destruction brought about by climate change. This intensifies the sense of unnatural, chaotic change driven by climate factors.

*Birds are falling from the sky*

*Lizards roasting on their rocky perch*

In the lines "Birds are falling from the sky / Lizards roasting on their rocky perch," personification is used to emphasise the dramatic effects of extreme environmental conditions. The poet personifies the birds by suggesting that their falling from the sky is a significant, almost unnatural event. This imagery evokes a sense of crisis or catastrophe, as if the natural order is being disrupted in a way that forces birds to fall from the sky. Also, the term "roasting" is typically used to describe cooking food, suggesting that the lizards are being exposed to extreme heat in a way that is reminiscent of cooking. This personifies the lizards as if they are actively being "roasted" by the heat, highlighting the intensity of the conditions they are experiencing. Both lines use personification to convey the severity of environmental changes, such as extreme heat or other adverse conditions, making the impacts on wildlife more vivid and dramatic.

### Conclusion

The way in which personification is being used by Niyi Osundare in *Green: Sighs of Our Ailing Planet* gives substantial contributions to environmental discourse through this poetry piece, which is deeply intertwined with themes of environmental awareness, reflecting his profound concern for the degradation of the natural world and advocating for a more sustainable relationship between humanity and nature. In *Green: Sighs of Our Ailing Planet*, Osundare frequently personifies elements of nature, such as rivers, trees, and mountains, giving them a voice and agency in his poetry. This technique allows him to highlight the interconnectedness of all life forms and underscores the consequences of environmental harm. By giving nature a voice, he emphasizes its intrinsic value and the need to respect and protect it.

Niyi Osundare has rightly used personification to create the imagery and feeling that every reader should have on these issues and to make people create global awareness to those who are in the dark as to what is really going on in the world concerning climate condition. The poem openly says that the world is now out of balance, and everything is moving in and out of rhythm as the planet is acting wailing and crying out for help but is being ignored. As they say, "you do not know the value of what you have until you lose it".

### References

- Abdu, S. (2003). *Poet of the people's republic: Reading the poetry of Niyi Osundare*. Kano, Nigeria: Benchmark Publishers Ltd.
- Abdu, S. (2021). *Green: sighs of our ailing planet*. Black Widow Press.
- Abdu, S. *Earth charter in action*. (2012). Web. Endangered species act. 16 U.S.C. 1531-1544.
- Ahmad, J., Ullah, K., & Nawab, H. U. (2024). Unveiling femininity: Exploring women's representation in selected Khovar language proverbs from District Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. *Jahan-e-Tahqeeq*, 7(2), 401–416. <https://jahan-e-tahqeeq.com/index.php/jahan-e-tahqeeq/article/view/1398/1282>

- Ahmad, R., Ullah, K., & Nawab, H. U. (2024). Cultural reflections: Exploring themes of grief and resilience in the selected Khowar folk poetry. *International Journal of Social Science Archives*, 7(3), 973–980. <https://doi.org/10.55737/qjssh.767391422>
- Bhagwati, J. (2000). “On thinking clearly about the linkage between trade and the environment.” *Environment and development economics*. 5 (4): 483-529. Doi:10.1017/S1355770X0220287.
- Ehrenfeld, D. (2003). “Globalisation: Effects on biodiversity environment and society.” *Conservation and Society*. 1(1): 99-111. Jan-Mar 2003.
- Gill, M. A., & Lee G. M. (2020). The bushfires of Kangaroo Island: Impacts and recovery. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 250, 109-123.
- Glotfelty, C. (1996). *The ecocriticism reader: Landmarks in literary ecology*. University of Georgia Press.
- Jamil, S., Ullah, K., & Nawab, H. U. (2024). Language, politics, and power: Unveiling Putin's annexation narrative through Fairclough's model. *International Journal of Social Science Archives (IJSSA)*, 7(2), 24–33. <https://ijssa.com/index.php/ijssa/article/view/257/191>
- Lemenger, S. et al. (2011). *Environmental criticism for the twenty-first century*. New York: Routledge. Print.
- Limson, J. (2016). “Indigenous plants to the rescue: environment remediation in Nigeria's oil regions.” Web.
- Monton, T. (2010). *The ecological thought*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Print.
- nature, and the future of the planet*. University of California Press Books.
- Osundare, N. (1986). *The eye of the earth*. Heinemann Educational Books.
- Patel, R. & Moore, J. (2018). *A history of the world in seven cheap things: A guide to capitalism*,
- Robinson, J. (2013). “The rise of global capitalism in an era of environmental turmoil: Democracy under Influence”. Language Education. Web.
- Schweizer, E. (2000). “Environmental justice: An interview with Robert Bullard” *ejnet.org*. 22, January. 2000. Web. 20 June. 2014. <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/bullard.htm>
- Thomas, D. (2009). “What is Ecocriticism?” *ASLE*, 5 Feb. 2012. Web.
- US Fish & Wildlife Service Endangered Species Programme*. (2002). “Values and Principles for a Sustainable World.” Web.
- Stephen Gill (ed.) (2000). *I wandered lonely as a cloud. William Wordsworth: The Major Works*. Oxford University Press.



@ 2024 by the author. Licensee University of Chitral, Journal of Linguistics & Literature, Pakistan. This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).