A Critical Discourse Review of Resistance Consciousness in The Language and Ideology of Social Change Project in Wole Soyinka's Political Discourse

A. Lekan Oyeleye[1] & Henry J. Hunjo[2]

[1] Department of English, University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Ibadan, Nigeria

[2] Department of English, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos State, Nigeria

Correspondence: A. Lekan Oyeleye, Department of English, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Tel: 234-803-473-0041. E-mail: oyeleye1@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper discusses resistance consciousness in the language and ideology of social change project in Wole Soyinka's political discourse. The discussion is aimed at examining Wole Soyinka's text production strategies in his non-fictional writings. These writings weave a web of resistance ideologies that are enacted to instantiate social change on the political sphere of postcolonial states. This means that Soyinka produces texts aimed at instigating resistance consciousness in text consumers. The paper identifies the text production process for engaging the mind of the text consumer as semioticisation. The objective of Wole Soyinka's non-fictional writings, therefore, is to arouse consciousness for social change through deliberate acts of resistance against the anti-democratic dispositions, especially among Nigerian politicians. In this paper, the critical discourse review of the resistance consciousness draws upon the theory and methodology of critical discourse analysis (CDA) propounded by Teun van Dijk (2002) and Norman Fairclough (1992) These theoretical approaches were complemented by Jacob Mey's (2001) critical pragmatic theory and Michael A. K. Halliday's (1985) systemic functional theory. The blend of the theories and methodologies gives the study an interdisciplinary outlook that facilitates the understanding of Wole Soyinka's deployment of linguistic devices such as metaphor, lexicalisation, passivisation and intertextuality to produce political discourse (text) that arouses resistance consciousness for enacting social change.

Keywords: text production, resistance, social change, linguistic devices, semioticisation

1. Introduction

Turning a searchlight on the critical discourse review of resistance consciousness in Wole Soyinka's language use in text production is a daunting task. Soyinka's instantiation of resistance as an ideology in his texts goes through a text production process that is usually targeted at influencing social change. The major problem the writer has concerned himself with is decolonisation and institution of democracy in the former European colonies in Africa. Nigeria was one of the British colonies and, since its independence in 1960, the country has been grappling with the task of installing a virile democratic system. The works of Wole Soyinka, especially his fictional writings, have exposed the reality that unless colonial cognitive influence on political thought is subverted, it would be difficult to institute decolonised democratic order. However, the voice against existing political structures that still have strands of their umbilical cords connected to the colonial masters' political thought patterns in Nigeria is more strident in the writer's non-fictional texts. The texts contain political discourses that foreground resistance as a dominant ideology. The resistance is a product of Wole Soyinka's text production process. The process deploys language deliberately to create social context that takes into consideration sociopolitical text consumption needs. It is at the level of text consumption that the writer's social project is located.

The writings of Soyinka have always been identified with revolt against existing political systems (Adeniran, 1994, p. 50). Available literature on his works shows that linguists and literary scholars of differing analytical and theoretical persuasions have had to engage the writer in order to demystify his language (Osakwe, 1992; Adejare, 1992; Adeniran, 1994; Ogunsiji, 2001). What is common to many of the works on Soyinka is the

comment on the 'masculinity' of his linguistic structures and the deployment of uncommon imagery to represent thoughts on matters of political import in search of social change. Therefore, many have concluded that the writer's language does not belong to the linguistic repertoire of the common person. Soyinka's competence in the use of English has never been in contention but his struggles and revolts are constant thematic issues requiring the attention of text analysts (Ogunsiji, 2001).

Soyinka's writings depict him as a politician. His political belief, activity, and struggle are not like the popular ones that we see in daily affairs of our polity. He believes in humanism and promotes the pursuit of human dignity from that perspective. To him, politics should be about improving the lot of humankind. Enhanced lives, happiness, provisions of social amenities, peace of mind and sound health are some of the benefits of governance he advocates. His writings could, therefore, be seen as implying that the improvement of the human condition is the only goal of true democracy. How this composite feature of democracy is represented in his text is the major problem this paper intends to solve. This exercise requires seeing a text as a site for social interaction where participants engage in activities that are intertwined at various social levels. Resistance is at the centre of the activities on one hand and, on the other, the objective is social change.

One level could be seen as 'macro' and the other could be 'micro'. This dichotomous view of levels is one problem we attend to. Lepper (2000, p. 56) shows the distinction between the two levels by suggesting that we simply need to seek the meaning of 'how' at the level of interaction and build answers to the question 'why', so as to discover the interdependence of the two levels. She hints further that:

> from the perspective of interaction, if we are truly engaged in activities which we call 'culture'—whether they be 'macro' level activities, such as the law, medicine, education, the 'news', the 'market', on the one hand; or 'micro' level phenomena such as celebrations, feasts, trading, cooking, child-rearing and so on, on the other—then *how* it is demonstrably relevant becomes the analytic task.

Text analysis here is one that revolves around seeing writing as a cultural activity in which the writer is a member of the interaction he creates in his writing. Lepper's reference to culture in the quotation above is something we shall return to soon. When writers write, they exhibit the dichotomies of levels of conjecturing given societies and readers perceive these dichotomies with the knowledge they share with the writer on the issues raised by the writer. This suggests a form of ongoing interaction where writers believe in the existence of readers and the readers follow the notion that the piece of writing has a message for them. The whole activity dwells on the distinction between macro and micro levels of interaction. The act of writing is a micro activity, just as feasting or a church sermon is one. Reading is also a micro activity here. However, questioning what is written in order to identify what is 'said', that is the message of the writer, not the investigation of the writing techniques – linguistic or non-linguistic – takes place at the macro level of interaction. It is within this level of interaction that we find the *unsaid said* in written texts. This is another challenge to our analysing Soyinka's political discourse within the context of discovering resistance at text production level to satisfy the culturally defined text consumer.

In order to make his political philosophy influence social change, Soyinka finds resistance as a weapon of revolt against existing political systems. The objective of Soyinka's resistance is to ensure social change. His non-fictional writings, in recent times, demonstrate the writer's use of language to expose the possibilities of resistance against colonial structures and postcolonial democracy in Nigeria. Soyinka's belief is that for Nigeria to enjoy democracy, politicians must be relieved of their mental constructs that perpetually make them serve the needs of the imperial government despite independence in 1960. His non-fictional writings in texts, such as *You Must Set Forth At Dawn* and *Interventions (I—VI)*, speak plainly on the need for social change. To achieve this social change, the need for resistance should be acknowledged. These texts contain resistance ideologies that reveal Wole Soyinka's social change project that could usher in a new Nigeria as a decolonised state. The focus of this paper then is to present a critical discourse review of the ideologies in Wole Soyinka's political discourse. Attention is given to constitutional abuse as a domain of discourse practice where social constructs of hegemonic dominance are crumbled to allow the emergence of a new dawn.

1.1 Resistance as Ideology

Resistance as ideology is not easy to define, on account of the complexity in providing a common definition of the concept. Moreover, resistance could stand on its own as a discrete concept without our perceiving it as ideology. Therefore, thinking of this concept as ideology makes it subsumed under the meaning of ideology that goes with our text analysis attempt. We have stated earlier that resistance is usually instantiated in the writings of Soyinka. In this case, we see resistance as ideology and our use of the term in this paper is purely within the frame of technical definition of ideology advanced in critical discourse analysis. Before we expand the idea

further, it is necessary to examine the description of resistance as a term. Here, it is understood that for resistance to exist, there must be denial of access to concession in interaction vis-à-vis participants' clamour for space and consent on issues of common interest. The context within which we examine resistance in Soyinka's non-fictional political discourse presents denial of concession to mental beliefs that designate democracy as a part of the continuation of imperial rule in an independent and sovereign state. The denial is set up to avoid conceding to the power established by the colonial government machinery to give Nigeria her independence in 1960. Resisting the mental spatial construct that has been designed to provide governance with the guise of self-rule, but which covertly attends to the needs of the imperial interest, remains a project of social change found in Soyinka's works. No doubt, there must be a force strong enough to ensure that existing political structures change to allow for the instantiation of a genuine independent state. That force is the resistance force which Conflict Resolution experts often refer to as the 'force that deters concession making' (Yarn, 1999). Accepting the state of things within the polity amounts to conceding to the subsisting hegemony. The nature of resistance here is well understood when it is located in the realm belief. That is where ideology finds space in the whole discussion.

Ideology is a term that has been given attention by several scholars dealing with the sociolinguistics and social science disciplines. In CDA, the concept has a very strong influence on the goals of text analysis. Thinking from the perspective of political philosophy,
Shklar (1997, p. 5) talks of ideology as a 'word of opprobrium encompassing all political dreams, whatever their nature'. Its use in CDA relates with ideas formed to show political slants in maintaining different kinds of stances. Using it side-by-side hegemony to show power alignment in discourse, Fairclough (1995, p. 76) explains that ideology is "a conception of the world that is implicitly manifest in art, law, in economic activity, and in the manifestations of individual and collective life." Although this view is rooted in Gramscian philosophy, we can infer how intricately related it is with Shklar's view above but with a breakdown of categories to reflect aspects of society that connect with language to project an understanding of some discourse practices. The notion, however, does not exclude how group members hold common views in order to engender reasons for co-existence and collaboration. Gouldner (1994) opines that, like religion, ideology 'shapes human behaviour', although he outlines four benefits of ideology to show how important the concept is to our task of CDA.

In everyday interactions, human beings use language to represent several ideas. Eagleton (1994, p. 15) draws our attention to the theory of ideology as 'attempts to explain why it is that men and women come to hold certain views; and to this extent they examine the relation between thought and social reality'. This idea of Eagleton helps us to conjecture the inclusion of ideology in the works of CDA as an enterprise which requires not only a structural description of discourse but also deliberately conscious efforts at discovering hidden facts exposed in text that are implicit. The analysis in this paper dips into the writer's subconscious in order to detect his use of language to exhibit the fight against oppressive hegemony in a society such as Nigeria. Resistance ideology, therefore, is the sociocultural beliefs shared by participants in an ongoing social interaction to exert such force, as it will deter concession to established social systems and enforce their change to match the aspirations of the majority.

One of the practices in contemporary approaches to the study of how text producers engage in complex processes of text production is to trace meaning to the desired influence the sociocultural world of text producers has on the representation of reality. Fairclough (1995, p. 138) points at Giddens' (1991, p. 31) thought on reflexivity as a way of discovering the inner core of the thought patterns of individuals' use of language in relation to the sociocultural awareness that influences the way language is crafted to make specific meaning. Our study of the life and works of Soyinka revolves around this insight. This insight does not preclude the problems of identity found at the centre of the postcolonial reading of texts on political agitations of a people under unfavourable hegemonies (Ahluwalia, 2001, p. 67). Soyinka's role in setting up resistance machinery, the *Third Force* (Jeyifo, 2004, p. 7), is in response to the desire to confront counter democratic policies of the Nigerian political class. One would expect Soyinka, as an academic, to limit his radicalism to the classroom but he is constantly confronted with the responsibility of leading protests and raising the consciousness of his audience to the need to direct intellectual prowess to the maintenance of social order and the accomplishment of total emancipation of the oppressed in society. This observation fittingly places him in the frame of Gramsci's suggestion for hegemonic deconstruction via intellectualism (Ritzer, 1996, p. 283). The analysis of Soyinka's written works of the political ideological bent is premised on the assumption that the growth process of the writer from childhood to the age of responsibility must have some pointers to suggest the kind of messages inferred or discovered from the texts selected for analysis. One of the ways to understand a text producer's production strategy is to investigate his sociocultural background. It is important to investigate how that leads to

self-description and self-identity. Reflexivity from this perspective helps us see the reasons behind the writer's choice of genre, register, topic of discourse (field), medium of communication (mode) and other relevant factors (Fairclough, 1995, p. 138; Gee, 1999, p. 40; van Dijk, 2002, p. 112).

From the foregoing, Soyinka's life must have been moulded to reflect certain ideological beliefs. The next question in need of an answer is on the sources of the mould techniques and the consequences in the life of the subject. We pay attention to Soyinka's home training, schools attended and the sociocultural patterns that influence the character formation methods of the schools and how he, in turn, has responded to the trainings in question. A study of his autobiographies, works done on him by other scholars, feature articles written on his activities as a Nigerian citizen, professional, social critic, activist and political leader reveals facts about the identity of the writer. From these studies, we garner information on reasons for the sort of topics he chooses to write upon (Osundare, 2007, p. 6) and how that has some relevance to the development of some social, cultural, and political ideologies that are meant to expose, correct and, perhaps, in most cases, lampoon the inhuman treatment of humans against humanity.

The journey of Soyinka's life as a social engineer and an unstoppable fighter in causes he direly believes in started from Ake, Abeokuta, and his birthplace in the southwest of Nigeria. He was born in that ancient town on July 13, 1934. His father was the headmaster of St. Peter's Primary School, Ake when he was born while his mother was a trader. He attended St. Peter's Primary School and then had a short stint with secondary school at Abeokuta Grammar School where his Uncle, Reverend I.O. Ransome-Kuti, was principal. He left Abeokuta Grammar School for the colonial Government College, Ibadan, (GCI) (Soyinka, 1981). After his secondary school education at GCI, he secured admission into the University College, Ibadan. After two years of post-secondary school learning at Ibadan, he travelled to England to complete his university education at the University of Leeds, UK (Soyinka, 2006. cf. Adeniran, 1994, p. 12). The short history of the journey of this great man has a lot of relevance to the critical text analysis we want to do in this work. Understanding the background of the writer's environment of growth and the tutoring he received from childhood to early adulthood illumine our path to the discovery of his literary ingenuity and linguistic craftsmanship that result in the way he brings social reality to bear in his text.

Undoubtedly, Soyinka's sociocultural consciousness is something he grew up with. He was an eyewitness to the revolt of the Egba women against the imposition of tax on women by the colonial administration of the Egba District. His own account of such a protest that led to the deposition of the then Alake of Egbaland is usually with reference to the lessons he learned from protest against oppression. In *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* (pp. 39-40), Soyinka talks about the impact of the protest on his 'early intimations' with the desire to resist oppression. He says it all 'began in the late nineteen-thirties' when the women, led by 'my aunt, the formidable Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, rose against unjust taxes and chased the feudal lord, the Alake of Abeokuta, from his throne.' That incident happened when he was just about four years old. But, as he grew up, he got indoctrinated the more through reading of accounts of oppressions in other lands and struggles against them in places like South Africa and Kenya in the belief of fighting against oppressive institutions: social, political, religious and ideological. It must be noted that all of these formative experiences took place when Nigeria was under colonial rule.

Soyinka's undauntedness in the fight against oppressive institutions has led him into writing literary works, poetry, play, and prose, to chart a course for the total emancipation of humanity. Adeniran (1994, p. 50) records that:

> From Soyinka's background and his revolt against "the system", the figures from the past, present and future that one would expect, the images and so on, would be less mythical than what would be expected of some recluse. Some of the writings on him have in fact clearly demonstrated that his life is "inseparable from his work, much of which arises from a passionate, almost desperate, concern for society.

Indeed, the entire life and works of Soyinka have been dedicated to the fight against totalitarianism or dictatorship. At over seventy years of age, he is still bothered by the misapplication of democratic ethos in Nigeria and other parts of Africa. His articles in Nigerian newspapers are written with clear purposes of informing both the government and the governed on the dangers of violating the principles of the rule of law in a true democratic sense (*The Guardian*, Sunday, March 18, 2007, p. 3). The writings of Wole Soyinka, therefore, are crucial to our critical discourse analysis of written texts that discuss themes of political, social, and cultural realities of Nigeria. He picks on issues such as decay in constitutionality, democratic disorderliness, economic injustice, electoral malpractices, profligacy and many others. These realities border on the project of decolonisation of Nigeria that constantly features as part of the *unsaid said* set as goals of his writings.

A unique experience of Soyinka that connects him with the differing Nigerian governments since independence is incarceration, on the one hand, and self-exile, on the other. However, what has attracted our attention here is his doggedness in the face of impediments to achieving his desired aims. It is not impossible that this unique natural endowment is responsible for his mysterious instances of escape from the dragnets of the late maximum military ruler, Sani Abacha. A parallel could be drawn with a childhood experience recorded in *Ake* and that of adulthood in *You Must Set Forth at Dawn*. Soyinka's desire to attend school was created by his growth in the school compound of St. Peter's Primary School, Ake. He observed that one day all the children with whom he played would wake up in the morning and leave for school. He was always left at home alone and he soon began to feel something was amiss and wanted to change the situation. Moreover, since he lived in the school compound, he noted the differences between his own status and that of his playmates. He also observed the activities of the other children and felt he should join them. He declared his desire one day to go to school but he was told to "'wait till you are as old as your sister.'"

1.2 Political Discourse Analysis in Nigeria

Political discourse has been the focus of the works of critical discourse analysts in recent times, especially in the European political culture (Fairclough, 1995; Chilton, 2004 & 2005) and the North American political experience (Gastil, 1992). The attention of discourse analysts in Africa on political discourse has also been observed to be emerging (Oha, 1994; Jeyifo, 2004). However, the difference observed between African and non-African discourse analysts' thematic preoccupation can be traced to sociocultural problems discrete to both environments. Social problems that have engaged the minds of critical discourse analysts of European and American societies relate to ideological problems arising from racism, immigration, capitalism and socioeconomic crises in the face of social and economic depression (Fairclough, 1989, 1995; van Dijk 2002; Chilton, 2004). Chilton (2004), essentially, devotes attention to the political discourse of war in the far Eastern European countries and the American-Gulf war crisis, arising from the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in New York and Pentagon in Washington. Examples of these critical discourse analyses point to the main social problems that engage the minds of the scholars.

The choice of sources of data by analysts in Nigeria is also influenced by the enormity and relevance of the social problems of the environment of the analyst. While some efforts have been made by Nigerian discourse analysts to examine language and politics, little has been done to study the phenomena from the point of view of clear social theoretical perspective. This is largely because of less interdisciplinary attempts at studying texts in subjects like sociolinguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, and stylistics (Oyeleye, 1985; Adejare, 1992). For about two decades, Nigerian linguists have been busy with the study of the Nigerian English and its many other aspects (Banjo, 1996; Osakwe, 2005). Political problems discussed by scholars in Nigeria in connection with the English language is often associated with sociolinguistic description of language and social variables such as age, sex, social class and economy (Banjo, 1996; Bamgbose, 2001). Examining problems of governance and the way power indices lead to the enactment of ideologies that could be relied upon to generate arguments for social change, is yet to be adequately pursued.

Nigerian critical discourse analysts have worked largely to examine political issues in media discourse in order to explain in clear ideological terms what political ideas dominate the minds of Nigerian leaders. Like many other African nations trying to democratise, Nigeria is yet to fathom the right method of ensuring liberal democracy (Adejumobi, 2004). Nigerian critical discourse analysts (Oha, 2004, Taiwo, 2004 and Chiluwa, 2005) are interested in these and many other issues of statehood in their study of language as a social practice and a means of configuring reality to represent sociocultural understanding of existence (van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough, 1995). Our thinking about Nigeria for the purpose of CDA is premised on the notion that political structures of a state do not exist without the linguistic structure – discursive patterns – so that the existence of a state and the organisation of such depends on the order of discourse in politics. Therefore, it is important we arrange ideas found in the essays on Nigeria into micro and macro political dichotomies for easy analysis. Micro politics deals with the way people organise themselves in a society in order to struggle for power while macro politics concerns matters of politics found in the negotiation of power involving discussion and persuasion (Chilton, 2004, p. 4). Parliamentary discourse, for instance, is replete with some of these macro political problems in question. This type of discourse is also found in Nigeria and it is usually based on the ideological differences of geopolitical zones that are represented at the Senate.

Nigerian sociopolitical essays and memoirs of notable Nigerian citizens have shown how citizens have wrestled with micro political problems of identity and class in order to ensure equitable representation and sharing of national resources to cater for some basic needs of life. These needs are many. Nigerians still clamour for needs such as clean water, regular electricity, food, good health care delivery, security, good governance, equality of

race and tribes, good transportation system and reliable labour force compensation. The degree of social and food insecurity in Nigeria has enjoyed critical appraisals in national dailies with emphasis on the inability of the government to fashion out a way of tackling the problems from the point of view of leadership principles in the face of the quest for visionary governance. Reuben Abati of *The Guardian* writes on the problem in the following words:

> African leaders and policy workers, in analysing the coming hunger tsunami hide under the excuse that it is nothing to worry about because it is a global crisis induced by global hyperinflation. They claim that there is a food crisis in the United States and in Europe as well. … In Nigeria, the problem should be located at the doorstep of the failure of the governance, and the absence of a political will to do anything constructive about food security. Pharaoh had a dream. Nigerian leaders don't know how to dream. They talk. They react to situations. They do not plan ahead. Pharaoh listened to advice (*The Guardian,* Sunday, April 27 2008, p. 86).

The issues raised in the article draws attention to the arguments that underlie political scientists' description of the features characterising failed states in the postcolonial state condition. Discussing the nature of postcolonial states, Jackson (1998) refers to failed states as 'states which cannot or will not safeguard the minimal civil conditions'. By civil conditions, he meant peace, security, and order within the realm of domestic protection of citizens' dignity and sovereignty. The Nigerian state has a history that is worth daily studying to unravel many reasons for the civil tensions ordinary citizens have had to contend with in order to enjoy succour from the provisions of social amenities by the ruling class. Epistemological questions on governance and provisions of life-enhancing amenities for citizens of a state challenge us in our political discourse study of Soyinka's text on Nigerian political experiences. These questions surround the fact that leaders are expected to rule with a sense of responsibility. Responsibility here connotes the qualities of answerability and accountability in governance.

The sketches of ideas outlined so far point to the fact that Nigeria, since independence, has had to contend with political systems. The postcolonial life of Nigeria is not without its crises. Soyinka's works, whether literary or not, demonstrate consistent resistance against the oligarchic liberal democracy that has emerged soon after the declaration of self-rule. The oligarchy was maintained with impunity by the military participation in governance for not less than 30 years out of 50 years of Nigeria's independence. Problems of governance associated with the phenomenon that constantly leads to the recycling of people of the same political bloc call for re-examining the nature of Nigeria's democracy in the light of what ought to be the moral ideals of democratisation.

2. Theory and Methodology

The theoretical framework of this study was composed of critical discourse theories of Teun van Dijk (2002) and Norman Fairclough (1992). These were complemented by Jacob Mey's (2001) critical pragmatic theory and M.A.K Halliday's (1985) systemic functional theory. *You Must Set Forth At Dawn* and *Interventions* were purposively selected for they are more recent and richer in the representation of Soyinka's political activities and philosophy. Portions of the texts that relate to resistance consciousness in the domain of constitutionalism were sampled and subjected to content analysis.

The taken-for-granted task in the arguments of this paper is that Soyinka's texts project resistance consciousness on the mind of the text consumer and this reality forms a part of the text production process. A critical discourse review of resistance consciousness must incorporate social theory, linguistic theory as well as cognitive and pragmatic theories into its operation. Therefore, the study is an interdisciplinary one. The process of political text production that leads to resistance consciousness in the political discourse of Soyinka on Nigeria stems from political semioticisation. Political semioticisation occurs if a text has been deliberately constructed to reflect political themes and contexts. The core point of semioticisation is in the use of freewill to choose from available options linguistic, social and cognitive 'textual' materials with the knowledge of the 'affective' values of the materials to create a text made up of discourses that can stir a text consumer into taking actions intended for him or her. Analysing Soyinka's political discourse, then, means understanding the type of political semioticisation that creates the resistance consciousness his political discourse raises at the level of consumption. The interdisciplinary theoretical framework described above provides the tools for analysing our data as presented in section 3 below.

3. Data Samples and Analysis

In this section, we discuss Soyinka's resistance consciousness creation as found in the data samples drawn from *You Must Set Forth At Dawn* (SFD) and *Interventions* (ITV). The samples are based on the theme of constitutionalism in liberal democracy. A major component of liberal democracy is the constitution. Every democratic state is governed with a constitution. The constitution is a compendium of guidelines that a nation

follows for political administration. Constitutionalism, however, is the body of principles that specify the processes of evolving constitution. Adejumobi (2004, p. 17) connects constitutionalism with the survival of liberal democracy. He defines constitutionalism as the 'the process of institutionalising a constitution'. The operating word in the definition is *institutionalising*, which is a key liberal democratic social practice of ensuring the longevity of an institutional mechanism for political administration. In this context, the institutionalising of documents such as constitution would require processing elements that shall be all encompassing and foolproof. Adejumobi (2004) adds that constitutionalism has components that make its function of making a constitution "a living document" reliable. Relying on Ihonvbere (2005, p. 15), Adejumobi (2004, p. 17) lists components of constitutionalism:

> The first is the process of making a constitution, and the extent to which it is popular and democratic. The second component is the available openings, institutions, and processes of making the constitution a living document by taking it to the people so that they can access it easily, claim ownership of it and deploy it to defend their individual and collective rights.

The quotation serves as a revelation to the analysis of the political discourse of Soyinka on the subject of constitutionalism as found in our data. Soyinka's commentaries on the processes of constitutional creation in Nigeria since independence reveal that all the constitutions used to administer the nation are devoid of true democratic input. The discourse also shows the imprints of the colonial government's forceful joining of peoples of diverse sociocultural history and 'members' resources' together to form a nation.

The discourse on constitutionalism in Soyinka's political discourse presents the shaping of Nigeria's democracy as a political system founded on non-democratic ethos of liberalism and representative principles. Our data samples on the themes of constitutionalism show the situations surrounding the design of Nigeria's postcolonial constitutions as extensions of the sociocognitive property of the imperial power's foisting of political guidelines on the newly independent state. Constitutionalism, as we have explained above, takes care of the principles that guide the processes of ensuring that a nation's constitution must possess qualities of standing the test of time. Apart from its ability to exist as a living document, the constitution should be at the service of the people for whom it has been designed. Our concern under this section is to probe Soyinka's text production to unearth the extent to which this philosophy of constitutionalism has influenced the process of text production to arouse the text consumer's consciousness to detect anti-democratic practices in the constitutional reforms of the country from independence to date.

For the benefit of situationality and its influence, not only on the process of text production, but also on text interpretation and explanation, Nigeria's postcolonial constitutional reforms have had to suffer from the non-democratic processes of constitutional drafting experiences. The 1960 independence, for example, came on the platter of the imperialist's constitutional creation. The 1963 constitution that brought about the nation's republicanism was a product of the politicians trained by the colonial masters whose knowledge of the core or fundamental principles of liberal democracy are alienated from the realities of establishing a true democratic state where the voice of the people matters. The goal of Soyinka's political discourse is to arouse the consciousness of his text consumers to discover the danger in the existing colonial vestiges in the so-called democratic practices of postcolonial politics in Nigeria. The focus on constitutionalism in our data analysis amounts to an attempt at discovering how Soyinka shares with his text consumer his sociocognitive knowledge of the process of constitution design, which involves the deliberate consideration of the collective desire of all the peoples that constitute a state. Nigeria's constitution design experiences, political scientists have always observed (Adejumobi, 2004, p. 17), very unfortunately, have never had any chance of enjoying the influence of true democratic minds. In the examination of the data samples that follow, we place the constitutionalism years in the discourse under lexical and metaphorical representation prisms to see the hidden implications of undemocratic processes in the march to democratisation within the postcolonial scheme of decolonisation. The question calling for an answer here relates to the status of the genuineness of Nigeria's democracy. The question also concerns the way language has been used to construct ideologies around the facts and the functions of the inferences generated from the text analysis. The discourse on constitutionalism locates the foundation of Nigeria's constitution in the political activities of some political actors from independence through the military participations up to date. We examine the text production processes and the ideologies inherent in the deliberate choice of language for enacting discourse structure, and how the discourse affects the shape of language in exposing realities of constitutional acts as democratisation ingredient.

3.1 Representation of Constitutional Awareness

The necessity for constitutional awareness is one of the core points in Soyinka's resistance against colonisation

and anti-democratic moves in Nigeria since independence. Participants in political activities are expected to exhibit constitutional awareness in their dealings on the political sphere. The foundation of constitutional activities in the country is placed on warped principles and applications. As we discovered earlier in the discussion on tyranny, the colonial government in all ways prepared the ground for constitutional failure at independence and ensured that subsequent attempts at constitutional activities suffer pitfalls. This fact constantly features in the discourse of Soyinka on political activities since independence. Apart from the uneven yoking of the diverse ethnic groups that made up the nation, the 1951 constitution that guided the election of pre-independent politicians set the stage for the 1960 self-rule. Sample I below describes the constitutional uncertainty surrounding the take-off self-rule in 1960:

Sample I:

> The nation space known as Nigeria had come of age, a federation made up of three semi-autonomous regions – the Eastern, the Western, and the Northern Regions – the last occupying a landmass larger in size than other two combined. Each had its own legislature in its own regional capital, while a Federal house sat in Lagos, the nation's capital. Those regional legislatures – or Houses of Assembly – had been in place since 1952, and functioning. However, the results from the preparatory federal elections of 1959 that decided who held power at the centre concluded by the departing British officials, had been most bitterly disputed, and it was already a divided nation that ritually lowered the British Union Jack that October, folded it away, and hoisted the green-white-green of Nigeria – surely the most uninspiring national flag on the surface of the earth! The white was said to symbolise peace, green stood for agriculture; combined they misrepresented the sum of a nation's imagination (SFD).

The data sample reveals the description of the first constitutionally instituted governance in the country. In the description, we find expressions chosen by the text producer to represent the democratic ruse owing to the insincerity in applicability of the constitution, on account of the political upheaval being already noticeable in the country before the 1959 election.

The representation of insincerity starts with the opening sentence of the sample where Nigeria as a country is described as **nation space.** The idea of nation space invokes a meaning of incoherence in the composition of the nation. Describing the nation as a space shows that it does not connect with the sensibilities of the peoples that make it up. The most striking show of insincerity is in the account of the process of handover of power to the newly independent state. Handover ceremony included the lowering of the flag and hoisting of the Nigerian one. The sample features the fact that the 1959 election was disputed; yet the colonial masters went ahead to ensure that it determined the political actors that took power. Soyinka refers to Nigeria as **a divided nation that ritually lowered the British Union Jack… folded it away.** In this account, the lowering of the Union was a ritual and this constructs the idea of insincerity. Rituals are often taken-for-granted social practice whose significance may not form a part of the ritual performers' belief in the process. As a matter of political act, representing the lowering and hoisting of flags to symbolise change in power as a ritual reveals the fact that the act was a mere theatrical one that did not have any serious intention of true liberation. The British supervised the 'rituals' of election that produced the first generation politicians. They supervised the design of the Nigerian flag described as **the most uninspiring national flag on the surface of the earth.** These expressions depict the lack of constitutional awareness that preceded the attainment of independence in 1960.

Our data reveal the fact that Nigeria's constitutionalism is a product of the British imperial political school created to distract the intellectual power of the politicians of the freshly independent nations. The reason is for these countries to attain independence on the surface level, but indeed remain attached to the political apron string of the imperial power. Soyinka's choice of language to describe the situation in sample I, for instance, is not meant to entertain his readers but to touch the mind of his text consumer to discover the impropriety in the machineries of constitutionalism upon which the nation's constitution is founded. As a result, decolonisation plans would miss the target of ensuring reliable sociopolitical change. In the next section, we shall see the force of ideological power inserted into the expressions deployed to refer to the weakened foundation for constitutionalism. Now we trace some other lexical items that refer to the skewed constitutional formation processes in the political history of Nigeria. Our analysis of the foundation of Nigeria's constitutionalism serves as a guide to the traces of the discourse construction crafted to promote the exclusion of the people from the design of Nigeria's constitution from time to time in the political development process of Nigeria. It is obvious from this point on that constitutional awareness for political practice in Nigeria is rooted in the political consciousness designed and installed in the sociopolitical cognition of Nigeria's politicians by the imperial power.

The struggle for decolonisation through proper initiation of democratisation has brought the need to attend to constitutional matters involved in postcolonial re-orientation of democratic governance that is development sensitive. Soyinka's political discourse reveals that there has not been serious-mindedness based on adequate knowledge of liberal democratic principles of constitutionalism in the (constitutional) designs of the country after the artificial grant of independence to the country in 1960. This political ignorance has been exposed in many instances in the discourse; but for the purpose of this research we examine data samples that not only feature lexical representation of the ignorance but also its consequences on the social welfare of the state and the political maladministration.

3.1.1 Lexical Representation of Non-Democratic Constitutionalism

Any constitutional design process that does not have as a part of its activities the incorporation of the voice of the people it is meant to serve is non-democratic constitutionalism. Apart from the colonial artisanship that ushered in pioneer Nigerian constitutions as an instance of non-democratic constitutionalism, all other Nigerian attempts at drafting constitutions for democratic governance between 1966 and 1999 are products of the military. The use of lexical items of constitutionalism to describe the guidelines for democracy by the military has been seen as abnormal. Sample II below shows such abnormality in lexical use applied to constitutional design:

> The first hole that the nation's legal luminary, Chief Rotimi Williams, picked in the present purported constitution of the nation, the bequest of the departing military regime, was its very appropriation of the familiar preamble to a constitution: 'We the people…'

> I believe that the facts speak for themselves. The people were absent in the process of the formulation of that document, and thus, the preamble was a fraud. Other voices, from different parts of the country, including non-lawyers, were not slow to voice the same objection. The makers should have been sufficiently honest as to open their bequest with 'We, men of violence.', 'We, the despots', 'We, the Terrors', 'We, the studded boots on the corpse of Human Rights…'and other variations (ITVii, p. 37-8).

The sample shows the misapplication of the word, 'we', conventionally used in the opening of any constitution as the pronominal reference to the collective will of the people in the constitution. 'We', conventionally, should mean 'the people of XYZ country' and that meaning would have the force of legitimacy to open a constitution if the process of formulating such document conforms to democratic principles'. In the sample above, the use of 'we' has been framed to have arbitrary sense that could mean **men of violence**, **the despots**, **the Terrors**, and **the studded boots on the corpse of Human Rights**. These substitutable suggested meanings of the lexical item, 'we', connect with the involvement of the military in the formulation of constitutions in manners that exclude the input of the people.

The inference that is derived from the data sample under scrutiny suggests that the military, like the colonial masters, do not bother to consider the sensibilities of the people before drafting constitutions by which these people would be governed. The question that needs answering is not about the meaning of the pronoun 'we', as a denotative material, but the difference in meaning it has attracted within the context of constitutionalism. Using the word with its equivalence, the People, in appositive construct, connotes that the producers and the consumers of the text of the constitution share the same beliefs and have reached agreements on the usability of the principles of governance in the constitution. The stance taken by the text producer in the data sample exposes differences in the meaning of the expression because of the identity and the roles of the producers of the constitution text in the production process. The production process in itself excludes the people. Soyinka, however, exposes a suggested sense in which 'the People' could be placed in proper semantic form to provide a homophoric reference to the 'collectivity' of the members of the military institution who, as a matter of necessity, could be seen as 'we'. The idea is that the constitution of the nation that has been produced with the instrumentality of the military is not meant for the people, *demos,* in actual democracy. What is, however, illuminating is that all the democratic epochs of the nation has had to initiate constitutional reforms with the aim of installing true democratic order but none of these instances involved the people. The 1979 Constitution that brought the Shagari regime was the product of the military constitutionalism. Twenty years after that, the 1999 constitution also brought an ex-military ruler, Olusegun Obasanjo, into power through military constitutionalism. Constitutionalism in Nigeria has not enjoyed the benefit of evolving through democratically elected government machinery.

3.1.2 Critical Lexico-Pragmatic Representation of Bad Constitutionalism

The previous section opens our mind to Soyinka's construction of the military as the producers of Nigeria's constitutions that installed democracy. In this section, we examine the critical pragmatic meaning of some of the lexical constructions which project bad constitution. The chief cognitive information on the context of

constitutionalism is the distortion of the sense of democracy from the point of view of the military playing the role of democrats. The context is not the ideal for democratisation as a political practice and, therefore, it is sociocognitively inferable to conclude that bad constitutionalism is the product of the military initiative for democracy. A critical lexico-pragmatic lesson that comes from the analysis in the previous section draws a difference between the ideal meaning of 'We, the People' and the contextually designed meaning that Soyinka provides in his discourse. 'We' means the same thing as 'the People'. The meaning is not unconnected with the membership of individuals in the same community bound together by shared culture. That means, as a people, Nigerians belong to the same community where they share the same beliefs, aspirations, vision, religion, knowledge of the world, myths, legends and many other elements of culture that define, in clear perspective, the essence of the communality that should operate in a society founded on ideal constitutionalism. The ethnic diversity of the nation negates the relevance of this fact in building a constitutional state that accommodates the communality projected by an ideal democracy.

Soyinka's discourse on constitutionalism in Nigeria is not in tandem with the ideal we enunciated in the preceding paragraph. For instance, the critical pragmatic meaning projected by 'We, the People' connects with the status of every Nigerian as a citizen. The idea is that a constitution provides information on matters of citizenship. The definition of citizenship that would be found in a constitution produced by the military contains, by the argument put forth in Soyinka's discourse, subtle tyrannical operative principles that undermine the basic components and objectives of governing and membership of a democratic state. The constitution from this angle functions to assign citizenship right to the people of a state.

Soyinka's act here is simple. He manipulates the mind of his text consumer not to see the deceptive voice of democracy in a constitution produced by the military. The connection between citizenship and the human need for rights to feeling a sense of belonging is tied to the functions of a constitution that has been produced through the collective agreement of the people. To hold the mind of the text consumer to effect a positive manipulation, Soyinka answers an epistemological question bordering on the benefit of constitution and the power it contains to guarantee a usefulness that promotes human dignity.   Sample III, a fragment of which is reproduced below, provides clues to the pragmatic meanings of two ingredients of constitutionalism that power representative democracy that the military intervention in the process demurs. These ingredients are 'choice' and 'dignity'.

Sample III (Fragment):

> Choice is an innate principle of democracy. However, since it must be exercised by many, who are equal in dignity, Choice may translate as consensus, made possible through conceded limitations on individual demands. We do not sacrifice our freedom by such limitations: on the contrary, Choice has already been exercised through the process that leads to agreement, as long as such agreement is made in complete freedom. The insertion of a provision for alterations in the constitution demonstrates clearly that the constitution is a living document, and that even succeeding generations also have their voices already built into the process even at the moment of its adoption. It is when the people, or their representatives, have had no say whatsoever in what constitutes those limitations that we relegate ourselves to the status of slaves, of mere puppets dancing to the will of a self-elect, a minority who have set the boundaries of choice. We are not diminished when we willingly subscribe to an instrument through which a portion of our territory of choice is surrendered (ITVii, p. 61).

The fragment contains several inferences that connect with the idea that constitutionalism does not belong to the territory of the military. For instance, the argument on the function of choice as '**an innate principle of democracy'** excludes the military from democratic process because it is not innate to the military to permit choice as a part of the operative tools of governance, whether in the military context of being an autonomous state institution (while being yet an appendage of the state), or in the political context often occasioned by a coup d'état**.**

The idea of innatism suggests that democratic principles are members of the cognitive composition of individuals who belong to a state. This is a view that connects with other qualities of democratic society guaranteed by constitution. These qualities have been brought into the discourse by the text consumer to reflect the influence of the long-term memory on the validation of the human propensity toward equality and freedom as ingredients of dignity that make existence a matter of soulful satisfaction. The ideal principles of democratisation are properties of the Long Term Memory (LTM) against which we criticise political processes in action with Short Term Memory (STM) as cognitive guide (van Dijk 2002, p. 208). Since political institutions are responsible for the provisions of the necessities of life – health, the environment, food and social security, habitat, housing, clothing, entertainment and recreation – it is mandatory that the dignity of humanity must be a major factor in the

production of the constitution for society or in the generation of rules by which a community is governed. The choice we make as a people in the design of a constitution determines the dignity that it provides to the people that owns it. The data sample provides information to show that, when constitutionalism excludes the role choice in constitution production and application to governance, the people loses their dignity and acquiesce to power of the political class to control them as '**puppets**'.

The critical lexico-pragmatic configuration of bad constitutionalism examined in this section provides more insight into the need to resist the foisting of military constitutionalism on Nigeria as a nation. The ideas drawn from the inferences in the discourse point to the reality that Nigeria is multi-ethnic in nature and the constitution that currently serves the nation needs re-writing to accommodate the views of the people, stating how they would want to be governed. This would make all come to agreement. This people-driven, people-oriented, constitutionalism has been avoided by the colonial masters and, since the Nigerian military is a relic of the colonial political institution, the place of Choice in postcolonial constitutionalism has been deleted such that what exists remains non-democratic constitution. By that, as Soyinka emphasises, the people are denied dignity. The absence of dignity means the absence of freedom, loss of social character, and the right to choose a leader (that is why tyranny subsists as a part of the political filths of Nigeria's democracy). We must note that the postcolonial rulers of Nigeria have allowed their long-term memory to be influenced by the epistemological facts of the ideal democratisation. That is why, in their political practice, they manifest short-term memory features that are traceable to the permanently installed colonial ideologies.

3.2 Metaphors of Undemocratic Constitutionalism

The matter needing diagnosis in this section is about the metaphors deployed by Soyinka to instantiate in his discourse on social actors, social actions and the social space that denote the presence of undemocratic constitutionalism in Nigeria's political cosmology. The metaphors help us see the effect of the meanings recovered from both the discourse on decolonisation and the anti-democratic resistance project Soyinka's political discourse promotes. There are no more doubts that the political situation of Nigeria is lacking in the epistemological forte that supports constitutional democracy. The effect of this on the dignity of Nigerian citizens is the concern of the subsequent sections, but for the purpose of examining choice of metaphors in text production of political discourse, we examine some of the metaphors and discover their significations.

Soyinka carefully and deliberately uses metaphors that emphasise not only the need to expose anti-democratic elements of the process of constitution production, but also promote issues that will make a constitution potent in the face of defending citizenship rights and the promotion of human dignity. The metaphors that we examine here are entextualised (Blommaert, 2005, p. 47) within the context of constitutionalism because of their potency to expose ideologies that are hidden in the discourse of democracy. Some of these expressions featured in previous sections where they supply different insights into the text production activity, but in this situation they provide a set of new ideas on the subject of constitutionalism and the need to create resistance processes that lead to decolonisation of Nigeria's democracy.

The first idea to be discussed is the use of metaphors to describe the social act of exclusion in constitutionalism. The arguments to support the claim that all Nigerian constitutions from the pre-independence epoch through the military-rule epoch up to the military-designed democracy of the present time are many and they are vivid. To show that the colonial masters excluded the people of the former colony from the constitutional matters that ushered in independence in 1960, Soyinka uses the following metaphors to represent exclusionist constitutionalism:

i.   … we were bombarded by utterances that identified only flamboyant replacements of the old colonial order (SFD III)

ii. ... disdain towards the people they were supposed to represent (SFD III)

iii. ... the artificial grafting of the British parliamentary system... (SFD III)

Fragments (i—iii) contain metaphorical representation of the consequences of abnormal constitutionalism at pre-colonial time. Fragment (i), for instance, shows the representation of the attitudes of the first generation politicians as a 'flamboyant replacement of the old colonial order'. Here Soyinka associates the behaviour of the politicians with those of the departing colonialists in order to project the idea that independence would not change the continuation of the colonial master's plan. These politicians were products of the colonially designed constitution that brought them to power. The metaphorical signal is in the word, 'replacement'. The idea of replacement suggests that the people were not given the right to choose who would represent them. That was an unconstitutional act supported by colonial constitution.

Since the people did not choose those who would represent them in a democratic order, as Fragment (ii) suggests, the politicians treated them with 'disdain'. The show of disdain metaphorises the lack of respect for the will of the people that characterised the application of the colonial constitution to bring independence to the nation. This 'disdain' is further expressed in the metaphor that reveals the artificiality of all the political structures of operation as reflected in Fragment (iii), which foregrounds the exclusion of the people from participating in the decisions of governance. The idea of grafting that is used to highlight the distance between the people and the content of the constitution is quite strong in the sense that a product of grafting naturally loses its originality as a matter that belongs neither here nor there. In the case of the constitution that set up the Nigerian parliament at independence, the politicians were aliens in the British society as their knowledge of the sociohistorical foundation of British politics had no space in their sociocognitive background; and at home, they had been blindfolded by the indoctrination to operate as members of the British parliament to solve non-British problems.

The second point of exclusion that features in the choice of metaphor is the use of the imagery of puppets to stand for the people in the context of military constitutionalism. The metaphor is captured in fragments of data sample III:

a. It is when the people, or their representatives, have had no say whatsoever in what constitutes those limitations that we relegate ourselves to the status of slaves, of mere puppets dancing to the will of a self-elect, a minority who have set the boundaries of choice.

b. 'We, the People' are easily robbed of human dignity. It is the easiest process in the world. All it takes is for our voices to be appropriated, and then we are presented as puppets in a ventriloquist show.

The imagery of puppet belongs to the world comic entertainment. The ventriloquist uses a puppet as a tool for his show business. It is a theatrical performance in which the puppet does not determine dance patterns but depends on the skilful manipulation of the strings that connect its fragmented body parts to produce humour-generating dances. Comparing the people of a state who have been denied the chance of participating in the process of constitutional production to that act is meant to stamp on the mind of the text consumer that the designers of non-democratic constitutions are ventriloquists of the political affairs and the people governed by the constitution are puppets!

The metaphors that reveal the actors on the political stage relate them to mere tools in the hands of a powerful political director whose voice dominates the thinking faculty of the postcolonial politicians. This claim is the inferential meaning of the analogical metaphor of the ventriloquist and the puppet. It is clear that Soyinka's text production process recognises the powerlessness of the mind of the political actors of Nigeria who, apart from being ventriloquists at another level, are puppets dancing to the manipulation of the colonial ventriloquist's theatrics. The pragmatic effect of the metaphor is not hidden. An independent state must invent a constitution of self-rule that should be sensitive to the needs of the people. As for Nigeria, as shown in Soyinka's political discourse, the people are members of diverse societies. Each independent society constitutes the nation, Nigeria, whose *constitutions* from time to time have not allowed the incorporation of the sensibilities of these diverse people to evolve a constitution of unity. The directors of the Nigerian state after independence fail in the country's constitutional reforms because they are puppets in the hands of imperial ventriloquists.

The consequences of the imperial puppetry show on the postcolonial constitutionalism are also not difficult to identify in the manner of political administration since independence. The Nigerian leaders are the independent political ventriloquists who have turned all the citizens into puppets. Fragment (b) in the data of Sample II above describes the process of silencing the people as involving the appropriation of the voices of the people. The voice of the people refers to the power of collective assent that follows the acceptance and belief in a cause that binds all as members of a unified society. Soyinka's political discourse reveals that Nigeria's democracy does not include the voice of the people and, for that, they in turn have lost their dignity and are mere puppets.

The metaphors in this section provide insight into Soyinka's text production strategies that rely on the deployment of the associative power of texts from the world of entertainment, especially circus theatre, to draw the pictures of the abnormality in the constitutionalism in Nigeria since independence to the present time. The fulcrum of the metaphorical and intertextual construction of the picture of bad constitutionalism is the knowledge of the political history of Nigeria and its consequences on the management of the affairs of the nation. The beneficiaries of the management activities of the political processes in the nation are the victims of maladministration from epoch to epoch. It is from these facts that the ventriloquist's metaphor could be seen as felicitous in etching the need for resistance against colonialism in the constitutional process that brings forth our constitutions.

4. Conclusion

From our analysis of data on constitutionalism, the democratisation process in Nigeria is yet to belong to the true frame of democracy. The discourse here suggests resistance from within by careful replacement of the colonial vestiges in the system of governance with local and cultural ideas that truly define the immature state of our independence. The selection of linguistic tools that operate in contexts familiar to the text consumer shows Wole Soyinka's insertion of resistance consciousness in the text production process. This study has demonstrated that resistance consciousness is meant to stir a text consumer into acquiring the needed epistemological impetus for enacting social change. The example of the discourse on Nigeria's constitution simply shows that Nigerians ought to call for constitutional review that shall avoid colonial ingredients and militarism.

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