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The development of revolutionary aesthetics and youth culture in Nigerian novels

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Abstract

This study examines the development and the aesthetics of revolutionist novels in Africa with a critical study of the resultant products of the two novels written by writers of African descent, Chinua Achebe's A man of the People and John Ola Mafo's Wazobian Revolution. However, this paper focuses on the aesthetics of creating revolutionist themes in the African/Nigerian prose. Every literary work thrives on the effective juxtaposition and combination of various artistic forms and elements that come together to create the final piece of work. This lays the foundation in this study for the examination of the beauty inherent in the artistic creation and discuss of youthful revolutionist ideas and governance in Africa. The way and manner in which the writers managed to create their thematic concerns and messages, around youth, is the concern of this paper. The creative nerve of writers in birthing their themes and plays is the focus of this study. The reason for choosing the selected primary data is because they have both contrasting and comparing grounds in the creation of the revolutionist characters. This paper tries to show that, no matter the content and intent of a literary piece, the technique, style, way, and manner in which it is constructed is essential to its functionality.

Keywords: Revolution, Youth Culture, Development, Aesthetics, Governance, Politics, Rebellion.

Introduction

Literature can be defined as an expression of human feelings, thoughts, and ideas whose medium is language, oral and written. Literature is not only about human ideas, thoughts, and feelings but also about experiences of the authors. Literature can be medium for human to communicate what they feel, think, experience to the readers. There are many ways to define the term 'literature' based on different point of views such as literature is art, literature is language, literature is aesthetic, literature is fictional, literature is expressive, and literature is affective. Literature is everything in print. It means any writing can be categorized as literature. Another way of defining literature is to limit it to

'great books' which are 'notable for literary form or expression'. Literature can also be defined as the verbal expression of human imagination and one of the major means by which a culture transmits itself. Based on thus definitions, literature contains universal ideas, human imagination, and human interest that written in any writings and use language as medium to express human's ideas and feelings.

In conjunction with literature as art form, it is broken down into imaginative literature and non-imaginative literature. Imaginative literature and non-imaginative literature are distinguished based on the particular use made of language in literature. Language of imaginative literature is highly 'connotative' and language of non-imaginative literature is purely 'denotative'. The connotative meaning means words that used in literary works have feeling and shades of meaning that words to tend to evoke while denotative meaning means that the words refer to meaning in dictionary.

The language that is used by literature differ from ordinary spoken or written language. Literature uses special words, structures, and characteristics. Primarily the language of literature differs from ordinary language in three ways: (1) language is concentrated and meaningful, (2) its purpose is not simply to explain, argue, or make a point but rather to give a sense of pleasure in the discovery of a new experience, and (3) it demands intense concentration from the readers. It indicates that the language of literature has originality, quality, creativity, and pleasure.

In this case, to differentiate between the literary texts and non-literary texts (imaginative and non-imaginative), Joel Adedeji (1976:8)[1] states that literature can be differentiate based on the kind of meanings that exist in a text. Literary text consists of textual meaning and referential meaning and non-literary text only consists of referential meaning. The textual meaning is the meaning that is produced by the relationship of text itself. While referential meaning is meaning that is produced by the relationship between internal text and external text (world beyond the text). From the use of language and the existence of meaning in literary works, it can be concluded that poetry, prose and drama are put in literary works article, journalism, news, bibliography, memoir, and so on can be categorized as non-literary works.

The life of man which is one of the major focuses of literature has been well represented and it is continually represented in literature, through the way various writers talk about the culture of various people in a particular geographical location and in a particular period of time. Defining literature, Oripeloye (2007: p. 1) submits:

[1] Adedeji, Joel. (1976). The Genesis of African Folkloric Literature."" In Yale French Studies. No. 53, *Traditional and Contemporary African Literature*. Pp. 5-18. Published by Yale University Press.

> Literature is an imaginary but plausible narrative which dramatizes changes in human relationship…literature is referred to as "imitation of life". The major concern of literature is the condition of man in the society and how to represent it with symbols in a way that this condition becomes meaningful.[2]

Literature has been a reflection of time and space, that is, it has been able to present for discussion, issues that affect people in various phases of history and stages of life in different spaces like Africa, America, Asia, Caribbean etc. In the Nigerian space, Nigerian writers have been able to portray the historical realities of the society through a canon of literature called the Nigerian Literature.

Nigerian literature, like other forms of popular culture, is not merely a form of entertainment but a medium for commenting on contemporary social and political events. It can also be a significant agent of change capable of storing the people's historical experiences. Nigerian literature, according to Taye Awoyemi (2013: p. 29)

> …would essentially be any Nigerian literary work of imagination which is written by Nigerians for Nigerian—it discusses issues that are Nigerian and shares the same sensibilities, consciousness, world-view and other aspects of Nigerian cultural experience.[3]

This implies that the Nigerian literature is the representation of the people's socio-political, socio-cultural and socio-economic worldviews. The literature spans from oral tradition (spoken literature) which deals with the belief and ritual system of the people (stories, songs, rituals, festivals, ceremonies etc.), to the modern period (written literature) which deals with the realities of colonialism and independence in the Nigerian society (Awoyemi 2013: p. 30).[4]

Culture is the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another. Culture, in this sense, is a system of collectively held values. People with little understanding of cross-cultural competency tend to use the term interchangeably with race and ethnicity. However, culture is believed to be the approach a group of people involve in in putting an end to a problem, where these processes or approaches, if imbibed overtime, become a systematic way of life. Therefore, we are all born into a culture and we learn all the basic tenets or otherwise known as traditions and we act based on these learnt behaviours. All these learnt recurrent

[2]Oripeloye, H (2007). *Reading Literature: An Introduction*. Lagos: Black Accents Publishing Ltd.
[3]Awoyemi, T. (2013) "Nigerian Literature in English: The Journey So Far?". International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention. Vol. 2(2): 29-36. Retrieved from www.ijhssi.org.
[4] Ibid, 30.

patterns, overtime, tell in our use of language, which invariably shape our literatures.

According to Roohul-Amini (1989: p. 15)[5] "Culture has multifarious meanings. Culture meant farming". It is used everywhere as rural culture, urban culture, American culture and so on. Today, in every field, in humanities, every research requires a general view of culture. It is used in archaeology, linguistics, history, psychology, sociology etc. It is even said that man is an animal with culture. That is to say, the factor, which differentiates a human being's behaviour from the behaviour of animal, is culture (Mesbahe Yazdi 2005: p. 22).[6]

There are about two or three hundred and even more definitions for culture. With respect to the definition of culture, Edward Sapir in *Language* (1921: p. 32)[7] says that culture is a system of behaviours and modes that depend on unconsciousness. Rocher (1972: p. 142),[8] an anthropologist, believes that "Culture is a connection of ideas and feelings accepted by the majority of people in a society". The According to the American Heritage Science Dictionary (2005), culture is learned and shared within social groups and is conveyed by non-genetic ways.

Taylor (1974: p. 57),[9] an anthropologist, says in his *Primitive Culture* that culture in a complex definition includes beliefs, arts, skills, moralities, laws, traditions and behaviours that an individual, as a member of a society, gets from his own society. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952: p. 5),[10] consider civilization and culture the same and they believe the two terms have been used synonymously. For them, they both indicate different levels of the same subject. Civilization indicates the great development of a civilized society; culture indicates the same subject too. Each society has its own special culture, either simple or complex. If culture is taken seriously, it seems that people require not only sufficient food but also well-cooked food. Ward Good enough (1996: p. 22)[11] claims that culture is a systematic association of people that have a certain way of life. Therefore, culture is the only distinction between human and animals. Of course, animals live in association but it is a special kind. There are, indeed, a lot of sharing characteristics between human beings and animals such as associative life, responsibility toward children and so on, but culture is for men, only.

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[5]Roohul-Amini, M. (1989) Outline of Culture. Tehran: Atar Press.
[6]Mesbahe Yazdi, Mohammad T. (2005) Cultural Offense. Tehran: Imam Khomeini Educational and Research Institute Press.
[7]Sapir, E. (1921). Language. New York: Harcourt Brace.
[8]Rocher, G. (1972). A General Introduction to Sociology: A theoretical perspective. Translated from French by Peta Sheriff. New York: St. Martin's Press.
[9]Taylor, E. (1974). Primitive Culture: researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, art, and custom. New York: Gordon Press
[10]Kroeber, A. and Kluckhohn C. (1952). Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions. Cambridge, MA: Peabody
[11]Good enough, W. (1996) Culture. In Levinson 8 Ember (Eds.) Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology vol. 1. New York: Henry Holt and co

T. S. Eliot (1961: p. 13)[12] considers culture as a capital and means for developing all cultures and knowledge in order to terminate all human sharing problems, for helping economic stabilization and political security. Spencer (1986: p. 8)[13] calls culture the milieu of super organic and highlights the separation of culture from physical and natural factors. He believes that the super organic factor is only for man, whereas; the other two factors are the same for man and animal.

The Nexus Between Literature and Society

Literature can be described as any form of creativity, which is visually captivating and portrays several ideas, beliefs and thoughts. Literature is a product of man's imaginative constructions and the creation and modification of striking works, which tend to express their innermost perceptions. Literature has various purposes and performs different functions. These purposes and functions include communication, entertainment, inspiration, information, bringing to light what has been conceived in the heart of man. It is, furthermore, a tool for expression of concepts, which words will not capture sufficiently. Literature carries brevity; it says much with little.

Literature is a tool for reflecting the society and exploring several salient issues in the society. This is a well-known assertion, as literature has played a vital role in influencing decisions and exposing societal ills and inhumane conditions meted out on people of the society. Literature is also a kind of writing which is highly valued. It means that a work of art becomes the property of the public as soon as the writer publishes the work and the society attaches whatever meaning it feels to it not devoid of the socio-economic, cultural, political and physical milieu. Every work of art by an artist is backed up by certain ideologies which become the major thematic preoccupation in the work. Now ideologies that make up the work may come from the immediate environment of the author or a universally accepted concept. These ideologies, often times, appeal to a certain group of people who bear a particular reference with that ideology which they deconstruct and construct to make that ideology acceptable to them.

George Gordon is quoted by Terry Eagleton in *Literary Theory* (2003:20),[14] has it that literature performs triple functions, which could be, to delight, to instruct in order to save our souls and heal the state. This explains further the whole essence of literature which would rehearse the masses in the habits of pluralistic thought and feelings, persuading them to acknowledge that more than one viewpoint than theirs existed – namely, that of their masters.

In the light of Osundare's position, it is safe to argue that, literature captures how man influences his society and how society, in turn, affects and conditions

[12]Eliot, T. S. (1961) Notes toward the Definition of Culture, London: Faber and Faber.
[13]Spencer, H. (1986). The Study of Sociology. London: C. Kegan Paul.
[14]Eagleton, T. (2003). Literary Theory. Berkeley: California UP.

man. Osundare (1983, p. 115) further examines literature and how it captures the nature and situation of the society, he argues that:

> Literature is part of the structure of the society; it may simply record the kind of society the writer knows – its values, problems, structure, events, etc. or it may attack this very society and its present evils.[15]

For Osundare, literature is highly sensitive to society such that it reflects events and happenings that occur in the society in the same way a mirror would reflect objects within its view. However, this does not rule out the possibilities of manipulations as narratives can be constructed from different vantage points to propagate specific purposes or agendas.

All over the world and throughout history, writers have used their literary works to speak to different issues (both personal and general) whilst placing the culture they represent into literary space and history. Writers are generally considered to be chroniclers and purveyors of the experiences of their people, this perhaps is particularly true in the case of African writers. It might be worth noting that every literature in the world today, has, what is best referred to as a crude base, and while such literature would ultimately evolve from its base, the literature in focus and its products might never be rid of the circumstances that birth it and its pervading influences.

Literature, in its long history, has always given creative minds the perfect platform to express their vision and inhibitions, and has served as an outlet for creative and critical minds to say what they feel or think about a subject. A literary work speaks to the audience in varying ways, owing to the many different perceptions of the work in view but what the work reflects to the audience is primarily a product of the society that produced it, and the circumstances surrounding the work. Hence, the reflective nature of literature is couched in the fact that its primary function is to reflect the happening in the society/world that gives birth to it. This lends credence to the ambiguous and problematic aged saying, supported by Josan Ranjjith in his article, *Literature Mirror Of Society* that literature is the reflection of the society (2019: p. 1) This is a fact that has been widely acknowledged. It is indeed true that literature reflects the attitude and perception of the society.

The African writer has a promise to the society and the individuals to utilize the writing he/she creates to educate and pass on specific messages. While the African author might not have caused the current crisis, he/she can't separate from his/her specialty from this endless artistic milieu.

[15]Osundare, N. (1983ye). Songs of the Marketplace. Ibadan. Heinemann Educ. Books Ltd.

Youth Culture

According to an online article, published in *The Psychology of Adolescence* byLerner & Steinberg, (2009, p.1):

> The first use of the word adolescence appeared in the 15th century and came from the Latin word, "adolescere" — which means to grow up, or to grow into maturity. But surely, people must have noticed this characteristic phase way before that? Well, more than 1,500 years before the term adolescence was coined, both Plato and Aristotle had proposed similar stages of life that are not dissimilar to contemporary models of youth development.[16]

Youth culture has young minded individuals as members. In order to better understand the participation of young people in youth cultures, this paper analyses the factors of globalisation, social structure (ethnicity, class, and gender), and life transitions. It begins with a discussion on the semiotics of cultural transmissions to understand how cultures are globally spread and received. The impact of three theoretical approaches on social structure will then be investigated: the ecological, the structural, and the post-structural. Male and female genders are then placed under the sociological microscope, before concluding with youth transitions. We argue that globalisation transmits cultures, which are then changed by a structure (which can be interpreted through many paradigms), as young people progress through their own life transition.

Although we can integrate ourselves into our adopted culture to some extent, our own culture stays with us perennially, follows us like our own shadow, wherever we go. Consequently, each one of us is an ambassador of our own culture. Our cultural identity peeps through our personal as well as interpersonal behaviours, both verbal and non-verbal.

As Patil (2002: p. 105)[17] says, culture, like a banana flower or onion, exists in layers. We can only understand it if we peel it layer by layer, cover by cover. However, it is easier said than done. The outer layer is easy to perceive as it comprises concrete and tangible manifestations like art, monuments, food, language, etc. The middle layer consists of norms and values, and hence it takes us some time to unfold it. The inner layer is rather difficult to penetrate because it subsumes assumptions about birth, life, death, happiness, unhappiness, and so on.

Youth Culture is a very complex phenomenon. Furthermore, youth culture is a contested phenomenon which is understood to mean different things by

[16]Lerner R. and Steinberg, L. (2009). The Scientific Study of Adolescent Development: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives.
[17]Patil, Z. N. (2002) 'India and Vietnam', in Vietnamese Studies, No 2, pp 101-108.

different groups. It is the integrated pattern of human knowledge, beliefs, and behaviour, exhibited by youths, as we see in *The Famished Road*. These cultures embody language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, and works of art and so on, especially in an African milieu. Culture, on the other hand, consists of shared values, beliefs, knowledge, skills, and practices that underpin behaviour by members of a social group at a particular point in time. It is creative expression, skills, traditional knowledge, and resources. These include craft and design, oral and written history and literature, music, drama, dance, visual arts, celebrations, indigenous knowledge of botanical properties and medicinal applications, architectural forms, historic sites, and traditional technologies, traditional healing method, traditional natural resource management, and patterns of social interaction that contribute to group and individual welfare and identity. It is generally accepted that culture embodies the way humans live with and treat others and how they develop or react to changes in their environments.

The fact is that the activities of young people in local and informal politics are often neglected. While it is agreed that young people hardly participate in national-level politics, it is expedient to note that youths make available spaces for political self-expression at lower levels or even outside of formal settings. Furthermore, the degree at which political involvement occurs, and the strategies and available resources for that engagement, is variable among young people. Studies show that significant youth activism occurs at community level, this means that young people are more likely to engage in community meetings than to get involved in campaign rallies or protests (Lekalake and Gyimah-Boadi, 2016).[18]

Loader, Vromen, and Xenos (2014) argue that young people, unconcerned with conventional political institutions such as political parties, would rather be politically involved through networks that they themselves create, using media that is more familiar to them.

Essentially, collective action may create more freedom to young people outside of the constraints of political parties and of the state, and can certainly influence targeted actors, but it may have a restricted ability to bring about a real transformation in political institutions or in policies. One reason is that youth-led collective action must be sustained in order to have impact but it has most times proven difficult to maintain the momentum of collective action.

First, the fast and pluralist information flow that the Internet provides and that allows young people to come together across dispersed and diverse constituencies can also be detrimental to collective action, as it can lead to

[18]Lekalake, R., & Gyimah-Boadi, E. (2016) Does less engaged mean leass empowered: political participation lags among African youth, especially women. Afrobarometer Policy Paper 34. Available at www.afrobarometer.org.

information overload (Bimber, 2001; Morozov, 2009; Gyampo, 2017).[19] It may also result in dispersal and to repetitive sequences of quick mobilisation around an issue followed by an equally quick decline of interest as a novel issue gains attention (Garrett, 2006)[20]. Second, sustaining collective action needs material and political capital, of which the usual opponents of these actions—such as the state, politicians, corporations and lobbyist—tend to not be willing to supply.

Another reason why collective actions of the kind favoured by some youth may not see the desired result is that real change usually requires joint efforts—with governmental and non-governmental actors—and a series of methods of engagement. Indeed, while often an expression of dissatisfaction with the capacity of formal political institutions to create change, collective action movements build on the work of these same structures in the area of mobilisation and capacity-building (Tandon & David Brown, 2013, p. 784). [21]

Chester A. Crocker (2019: p. 1) in an article entitled '*African Governance: Challenges and their Implications*' explores the problem of governance in Africa. This article explores the emergence of the African state system historically. The article posits that,

> In Africa, as in every region, it is the quality and characteristics of governance that shape the level of peace and stability and the prospects for economic development. There is no more critical variable than governance, for it is governance that determines whether there are durable links between the state and the society it purports to govern. The nature of governance is central because it determines whether the exercise of authority is viewed as legitimate.[22]

The fact that Africa has a problem with governance is common knowledge. Several literatures have been written in regards to this topic. African literature is generally protest bound. This accounts for why its analysis cannot be effectively done under art for art's sake philosophy. African writers are mostly social activists. They use their literary works to express their concern over bad governance in their various societies. In Africa, literature is a major agent of change. It has been observed that: 'nowadays, drama, apart from being didactic

[19]Bimber, B. (2001). "Information and Political Engagement in America, New York: Vintage Books.
[20]Garrett, R. K. (2006). 'Protest in an Information Society: A Review of Literature on Social Movements and New ICTs'. Information, Communication & Society 9:2: 202-224.
[21]Tandon, R., & Brown, L. D. ((2013) 'Civil Societies at Crossroads: Lessons and Implications.' Development in Practice 23, 5:06: 784-796. doi:10.1080/09614524.2013.800843.
[22]Bob-Milliar, G. M. (2014). "Party Youth Activists and Low-Intensity Electoral Violence in Ghana: A Qualitative Study of Party Foot Soldiers' Activism." African Studies Quarterly 15:1: 125-152.

has now become a tool for social advocate' (Odion, 2009:56).[23] Social novelists like Ayi kwei Armah, Festus Iyayi, Elechi Amadi, Alex La Guma, Nuruddin Farah, among others use their works to educate and create awareness among the people. They use their works of art to portray corruption, exploitation, and a deprived African society.

REVOLUTIONARY ANALYSIS OF *WAZOBIAN REVOLUTION*

An analysis of John Ola Mafo's *Wazobian Revolution*establishes a critical situation where people are denied of the freedom of movement in their homeland. A typical situation where pressure and threat to life dominate. This depicts a situation where the owners of the land (citizens) are not allowed to rule and enjoy the goodies of the land because they are being oppressed, cheated and humiliated by the few rich elders despite being in the majority. The major actors in the story who are the trio of Bayo, Emeka and Mohammed just returned back to the country from their studies abroad and the ugly situation in the country is presented by the author when he says that:

> The three returning Wazobians had watched the development with keen interest. The uproar and side comments confirmed their fears. They timed their movement to the front of the queue. As the last person with the panel moved out and the man in white caftan attempted to move in with his companion, they were blocked by the youths. The officials were enraged, while the people on the queue and on lookers were puzzled. (p. 9).[24]

This is an atmosphere where a serious battle is about to start between the old leaders who are corrupt, exploitative, draconian and callous and the new, fresh, modern, unstained young minds who are set to change the societal condition to a better one led by the trio, the new returnees. These three youths just completed their studies in Gold City and hope, on their return back home, to change the narrative on the way the Wazobia nation is governed. The novel is all about the trio of Mohammed, Bayo and Emeka, who are on a revolutionary mission to revive their fainting nation. Their first baptism is their encounter with the immigration officers and this encounter actually marks the beginning of the revolution in the country.

> Gradually, reality set in, the unexpected had happened: three young 'aliens' had suddenly grown wings and had the temerity to challenge the almighty Wazobian Immigration officials! Some of their colleagues and on-lookers applauded

[23]Odion, M. A. (2009). "The Input of the Social Dramatist in Realizing Nigeria's Vision 2020". Kogi Journal of General Studies 2 :1: 56-60.
[24] Ola John, Mafo: *Wazobian Revolution*, Akure: M. O.J. Investments Limited; 2016.

> their outrage; others pitied them, thinking they were putting their interest in jeopardy. (9)[25]

In any revolutionary campaign, there must be a channel, a medium for championing the revolutionary messages. Without a veritable channel, the revolution might be an effort in futility. In this situation presented in the novel, the media is the answer. The media is a very worthwhile tool engaged in this book, as this is the major way through which most of the deeds of the main protagonists are exhumed and revealed. The press is given a statue as the only viable source of information in the text. The dailies are a great source of getting information and knowledge about certain political and societal issues and this strategy is graciously engaged in the novel, as the protagonists use it as a way to channel some certain salient points to the people.

> The Lagoon City Press Centre was filled to the brim. The occasion was given a very wide publicity by the combined efforts of the WLC, NUWS, ASUW and the Wazobian Union of Journalists (WUJ). It was, therefore, a mixed crowd of workers, students, academics, journalists and interested members of the public, all waiting to have a closer view of the new national heroes, as portrayed in the press. (31)[26]

> He informed the council members about the news the Sultan relayed, which his senior wife has also sent the chief messenger to pass to him. He went for his daily supply of newspaper, which he had not yet torched before the commencement of the council meeting of the day… (67) [27]

The three young men set their mission on motion while making consultations with both the masses and the politicians and community leaders. Some established political parties make moves to woo these trio to themselves. The state governor is not left out in the bid to gain the favour of the youths through the trio as captured in the quote below.

> The trio appreciated the Governor's goodwill and the reception. This, Emeka made clear in his response to their host's speech on behalf of himself and his friends. He noted that the trio, were flattered by the governor's kind words and open invitation for them to pitch their tent with his party. He confessed that it was tempting for him and his friends to join the ruling party for all the benefits attached and the available contacts like the Governor, being his father's bosom friend, the influence of Mohammed's father, a very powerful Emir in the country and other factors.

[25]Ibid,.
[26] Ola John, Mafo: *Wazobian Revolution*, Akure: M. O.J. Investments Limited; 2016
[27] Ibid., 67

> However, he made it clear that the trio might not go by the easy option, but through the hard way, based on the political situation on ground and the interest of the masses (108).[28]

Femi Osofisan makes reference to an important aspect in a revolution in his literary work, which is collective effort. Osofisan says in *Red is the Freedom Road*, when the major actor declares that "what is a single man in a revolution?"[29]To establish a major breakthrough in a revolution, all hands must be on the deck. Collective consciousness and determination are the prerequisites for political freedom.

This fact is in agreement with Wole Soyinka's assertion that "the man dies in all who keeps silence in the face of tyranny" (1972:13).[30]It is not enough to rehearse struggle if it does not lead to emancipation. We must note that achieving political freedom is not an individual battle but a collective one. And for popular justice to take its place as enshrined in *Wazobian Revolution*, there must be unified front of sameness of purpose, love and collectivism, foresight, togetherness and absolute will-power. It must be noted that revolution itself is a move by people always doing things together. But of course, somebody has to inspire it, and be its leading spirit (Osofisan 1989). This is clearly shown as the novel records that the trio challenge the people into action. The major reason of such action is but to usher in freedom from all dehumanizing conditions. This is reflected in the solidarity song they sing to ascertain their determination to be victorious at last and free their land from oppression and corruption. It must be noted that political freedom will not be achieved in the absence of the sacrifice that must be paid The author shows this very clearly with the themes of collectivism and determinism.

> We shall always fight for our rights
>
> We have decided to serve Wazobia
>
> No going back. No turning back
>
> We shall overcome o …
>
> We shall overcome, some day (p.5)[31]

[28]Ibid., 108
[29] Femi Osofisan, (1985) *Red is the Freedom Road*. Ibadan: Sam Bookman Educational and Communication Services
[30] Wole, Soyinka, *The man Died*. London: Longman Publisher.
[31] Ola John, Mafo: *Wazobian Revolution*, Akure: M. O.J. Investments Limited; 2016

The issue of collective consciousness is not limited to the strong males alone, but the determined-female genders, though weaker vessels, are equally carried along as established in the novel. Notable female characters also contributed to the revolution in the society. In several occasions, Nkem and Fatimah are able to reiterate their opinions about how women can also be a major force in the revolution and that revolution is not meant for the menfolk alone, as women equally have roles to play in the transformation of the society.

In the fight or struggle for freedom, not everyone will be willing to made costly sacrifices for the course, but this is not the case of these young men who are determined even at gun point, to bring positive changes to the community. This is narrated in their second encounter with the law enforcement agents. "The second incident occurred just before the bridge linking Abasa and Onichada. After a long wait leading to the police check point, the policeman directly controlling traffic had waved the two vehicles on. Suddenly, a police sergeant jumped in front of the pathfinder jeep, pointing his gun… (101)"[32] This is a picture of the people who are supposed to be law keepers but have turned to law breakers who see themselves as gods in the society and are ready to be brutal with anyone who dares them. It takes the determination of the trio and that of the few faithful and decent ones in the community that brings the tensed atmosphere under a perfect control.The young trio demands an apology from the officers and refuse to move an inch until their points are made. Through these acts, John Mafo presents another stand in the political agitation. In their further discussions, they realize that neither is war the only means of dialogue, nor peace is won and achieved by warriors. Wars breed famine, death, diseases, rape, looting, and destruction of property, and to crown it up, bitterness.

> In conclusion, the young Wazobians realised that only the strong, determined, selfless and united leaders from various ethnic groups could work together and build the necessary bridges that would produce the required unity in diversity for the beloved nation. They resolved to dedicate themselves to this struggle and to work with other Wazobians who shared these lofty objectives. (29)[33]

Moving on, consolidation and consultation are employed by the trio and this is a way through which the people fight their way to freedom. This is achieved through massive action and what is rudely done initially in the text is now fixed, starting with Fatimah and her Uncle, who are humiliated at the immigration office:

> At about 12.30pm, that Saturday, the Wazobian trio, as the press sometimes refereed to Emeka, Bayo and Mohammed

[32]Ola John, Mafo: *Wazobian Revolution*, Akure: M. O.J. Investments Limited; 2016
[33]Ola John, Mafo: *Wazobian Revolution*, Akure: M. O.J. Investments Limited; 2016

> reviewed the plan to see Fatimah's uncle. The idea had first come from Emeka reasoning that since Fatimah had become close to the trio and had been reconciled with them on the incident at the immigration office, it would be proper to meet her uncle and also set the record straight. (p. 52)[34]

Another major area of revolution engaged by John Mafo as proposed by the trio is to create an ideology different from other political parties. Emeka suggests that the Wazobian Labour Party should have an entirely different manifesto and ideology distinct from the old one which will be the alpha of the revolution for the party. He makes them to realized that having success in an election does not rest solely on changing the name of the political party to a fascinating one that captures the wishes of the masses and the labour force, but a different manifesto and distinct ideology will do the magic of political success.

> Emeka observed that the constitution and manifestoes of the WLP were similar to those of the other existing parties… as he puts it, the differences were merely in the terms of quantities, semantics, styles and presentation. (84)[35]

Hence, the lad believes that the best way to win the revolution is to make a few changes to the principles in the constitution, so it would accommodate a lot of new improvements and developments.

John Mafo evaluates the lackadaisical dispositions of Africans towards the ever-declining situations in the continent. Africans are either afraid to speak up in agitation for their rights or are bribed to remain silent. Those who occupy the lowest social and economic strata, which are the poor and common Africans, are not just reluctant to advocate for their rights and entitlements, but have been compelled by so many political strategies to accept economic failure and hardship as a normal way of life.

> Why was it that most things were not working in Wazobia? While in Lagos City, they had to cope with epileptic power supply, whereas, the Gold Coast, a year before they left that country, had celebrated fifteen years of uninterrupted power supply! (99)[36]

Also, the belief is that religion and violence are somewhat related and these are the causes of many crimes being[37] perpetrated in the society. However, John Mafo,, through some characters, denies this by saying that religion and culture should have nothing to do with crimes and violence. Religion does not preach crimes and violent acts and tendencies are buried in the hearts of

[34] Ibid., 52
[35] Ibid., 84
[36] Ola John, Mafo: *Wazobian Revolution*, Akure: M. O.J. Investments Limited; 2016

individuals. He proposes love as the antidote to societal crimes as established through the marriages of Nkem to Mohammed, Bayo to Fatimah and Funke to Emeka, all from different cultural backgrounds.

YOUTH CULTURE IN ACHEBE'S *A MAN OF THE PEOPLE*

It must be established that Achebe's story, is one that examines a people who had certain expectations after gaining their independence from colonial forces. The polity and the process of its execution and manipulation is brought to light in a realistic and accurate style. Previous works over the years in Africa have helped not just the revolutionist, but also over the last three decades, it has changed the notion of the "revolutionary". However, this aspect focuses on the aesthetics of creating revolutionary themes in this novel knowing that every prosaic work thrives on the effective juxtaposition and combination of various artistic forms and elements that come together to create the final piece of prosaic work.

One Problem, Different Vantage Points

Having considered the perspective of the youths as regards politics and political leaders within the text, one must wonder if the aforementioned sects follow up on their convictions and if they do, what inspires their action or non-action as the case may be.

> Chief Nanga had been terribly scared himself, witness his ill-tempered, loud-mouthed panic at the telephone. And I don't think his fear had been for Chief Koko's safety either. I suspect he felt personally threatened. Our people have a saying that when one slave sees another cast into a shallow grave, he should know that when the time come, she will go the same way....
>
> While the event did almost nothing to taint Chief Nanga's image in Odili's eyes, the effect on his subconscious cannot be swept aside. Chief Nanga's shameless flirtation with Jean: Here you have John speaking high monologue to me while his wife seems ready, judging by the look in her eyes, to drag Chief Nanga off to bed in broad daylight. (p. 30)[38]

This event is swiftly followed by another confident display of flirtation where Agnes Akilo, a young legal practitioner who had just arrived Bori, becomes the target on a night when Chief Nanga's wife had travelled.

> I told myself, Chief Nanga who was barely literate was probably going to sleep with her that night. "Look, Agnes, why don't you use my wife's bedroom instead of wasting

[38]Achebe, C. (1985). *A man of the People*. Ibadan: Heinemann Publishers

> money," said Chief Nanga getting back to his seat. "She travelled home today." His phonetics had already moved up two rungs to get closer to hers. It would have been pathetic if you didn't know that he was having fun. (p. 47)[39]

Odili's reaction is captured in the following dialogue.

> "Where have you been, Odili?" he asked. "We-I-have been looking for you; I nearly phoned nine-nine-nine."
> "Please don't talk to me again," I said.
> "What . . .! Wonders will never end! What is wrong, Odili?"
> "I said don't talk to me again," I replied as coolly as possible.
> "Wonders will never end! Is it about the girl? But you told me you are not serious with her; I asked you because I don't like any misunderstanding. ... And I thought you were tired and had gone to sleep . . ."
> "Look here, Mr. Nanga, respect yourself. Don't provoke me any more unless you want our names to come out in the newspapers today." Even to myself I sounded strange. Chief Nanga was really taken aback, especially when I called him mister.
> "You have won today," I continued, "but watch it, I will have the last laugh. I never forget." (p. 89)[40]

Odili's move to join the CPC and contest for an elective position and equally trying to win the heart of Edna who happens to be the newly awaiting bride to Chief Nanga, are adequate evidence to annoy Chief Nanga. Odili even interrogates his thoughts when he says: "Having got that far in my self-analysis I had to ask myself one question. How important was my political activity in its own right? It was difficult to say; things seemed so mixed up; my revenge, my new political ambition and the girl. And perhaps it was just as well that my motives should entangle and reinforce one another".[41]

This new revenge mission would, however, be a twin mission for the hurt Odili. On his way to attend Jalio book launch with Odili and Elsie, Chief Nanga wasted no time to point out how his life is no longer his own as seen in the conversational excerpts below:

> Wetin be Minister? No be public football? So instead for me to sidon rest for house like other people I de go knack grammar for this hot afternoon. You done see this kind trouble before?
> "If somebody wan make you minister," said Chief Nanga, coming to my support, "make you no gree. No be good life.

[39]Achebe, C. (1985). *A man of the People*. Ibadan: Heinemann Publishers
[40]Ibid., 89
[41]Achebe, C. (1985). *A man of the People*. Ibadan: Heinemann Publishers

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> "Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown," said Elsie. "Na true, my sister," said the Chief. (p. 67)[42]

Within the pages of this perhaps prophetic text, Achebe explores "…a new way of reorganizing African cultures, particularly in the crucial juncture of transition from colonialism to national independence" (Gyampo: 2017, p.31).[43] Their disillusionment, epiphany, and their struggle(s) in dealing with their new reality.

Rebellion and revolution are two sides of a coin which examine the reaction of the youths in governance as established in Achebe's *A man of the People.* Odili's aim is to take revenge and bring down Chief Nanga at all cost. His statement is reflective of the position of people who were either benefitting from the incumbent administration, or have resigned to their fate and rationalised the corruption so that they remain unbothered.

Odili's desire to contend with chief reveals a rebellious look by virtue of the relationship between Odili and Chief Nanga prior to their disagreement. The political party, C.P.C (Common People's Convention) is born with the goal to challenge the current government and bring in fresh bloods into the government of the common people and for the common.

The main aim of his new found political aspiration bears no shadow of doubt regardless on the incumbent administration which has failed the people and needs to be overthrown. After all, if he wants to give his people a new voice and proper representation in government, he should do no wrong by taking the bull and trying to change the narrative himself or at least be a part of the process since most of the incumbent leaders had already overstepped their boundaries as Odili rightly puts it, "No, Nanga has taken more than the owner could ignore!". The need for a reaction, perhaps even, a revolution is ripped and he will be glad to lead it.

This is a revelation by Achebe on the important role youth culture can play in the betterment of the society if the youths are positively engaged in the governance of the state affairs and not to ride or cheat them. There is need for collaboration between the old and the youth as no nation can develop fully based on the efforts of the old generation alone and neither can a nation experience wholistic development based on the contributions of the young minds squarely. Everyone is needed in the development of the African society as preached by Achebe in his works.

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[42]Ibid., 67

[43]Gyampo, R. E. V. (2017). "Social Media, Traditional Media and Party Politics in Ghana." Africa Review 9:2: doi: 10.1080/09744053.2017.1329806. Taylor & Francis Group.

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Conclusion

This paper has been able to provide answers to the issues of youth involvement in governance and the need for revolution that will change the face if things in African society for better. The youths are formidable forces that can promote the structure of the society if given the chance. The revolutionary instincts in them can be developed if properly channeled by the leaders through the display of good leadership characters and traits. Achebe and Mafo have been able to prove the importance and contributions of the youths in the development of the society and that is why literature remains a major tool in the revolution and transformation of any society.