

Between *Madmen and Specialists* and *The Beatification of Area Boy*: A Comparison of Style

by

Omolara Kikelomo Owoeye

araxowo@yahoo.co.uk

Professor, Department of English and Literary Studies
Ekiti State University in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

&

Omolade Bamigboye

douglas_e4@yahoo.com

Professor, Department of English and Literary Studies
Ekiti State University in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Abstract

Madmen and Specialists is one of Wole Soyinka's earlier plays where his angst against an oppressive ruling cabal is bared for all to see. He does same in his *The Beatification of Area Boy* albeit in a different manner. This paper examines the playwright's varying approaches in the two plays which were written within three decades from each other. An evaluation of the playwright's approach in terms of linguistic presentation, thematic preoccupation and structural concerns reveals the vagaries of his creative pen within a socio-political environment that changes with time.

Introduction

In many of the plays that make up what can be aptly described as Soyinka's dramatic canon, one issue that he has tackled with dogged consistency and ferocious wit is the aberrant leadership situation prevalent in his native Nigeria and many other African nation States. The advent of Soyinka's literary creativity is synchronous with the attainment of independence and the consequent leap into the postcolonial era by Nigeria and most other African nations. Characteristically, the postcolonial age is bedeviled with the problems of corruption, sit-tight leaders, exploitation and the abhorred incursion of military into politics and this has become an issue for writers both in Nigeria and other African nations.

Soyinka has for over four decades fought military dictatorship and tyranny in Nigeria, forging on with his creative pen even when it appeared most dangerous and even unprofitable to do so. In plays such as *A Dance of the Forests*, *Kongi's Harvest*, *Madmen and Specialists* and *Opera Wonyosi*, Soyinka uses his satiric pen to carve indelible marks on the faces of despots and dictators in Nigeria. Even in lighter satires such as *Jero's Metamorphosis*, Soyinka still finds opportunity to pass comments on the army and decry their excessive practices in form of mass promotion within the Nigerian Army of the time, headed by Yakubu Gowon. A continental view of the crisis is projected in *A Play of Giants*, thereby confirming that despotism is a predicament that is more African than Nigerian.

Of more interest here is the fact that in 1995, more than three decades after the premiere/publication of his first play, *The Swamp Dwellers* in 1958, Soyinka published *The Beatification of Area Boy*, yet another treatise on military in politics. Between the 1960s and 1995 when *The Beatification of Area Boy* was published, political activities in the country had changed variously with the military relinquishing power to civilians twice and coming back only shortly thereafter. These changes, certainly, have had several effects on the political climate under which Soyinka writes. What is uncertain is the effect these changes have had on the playwright and his dramatic outputs in terms of linguistic pattern, thematic engagement, and other idiosyncratic elements of his dramaturgy which make up his style.

The vagaries of the Nigerian political climate are not the only factors capable of inflicting change on an author like Soyinka. His linguistic choice has been widely criticized as obscure and incapable of reaching the general populace especially those outside the circle of the intelligentsia. Gordimer once admonishes Soyinka and other obscurantist writers to be accessible to the average reader saying, "a literary culture cannot be created by writers without readers" (7). Soyinka has responded to some of his critics through various media and sometimes expressed his plans to maintain his linguistic and literary style. The aim of this paper therefore, is to critically examine the possible noticeable changes in Soyinka's dramatic works over time with a view to determining whether the swerving on the Nigerian political environment and critical responses have actually caused a shift in the laureate's style.

The focus here will be on two of his plays: *Madmen and Specialists* (which we shall call *Madmen* hereafter) written in a period which can be described as the apotheosis of his creative career and *The Beatification of Area Boy* (called *The Beatification* henceforth) written exactly twenty-five years after the former. Critical works abound on both plays, no doubt. Oluwole Adejare's interpretive work on *Madmen and Specialists* for instance remains a masterpiece on the play owing to the detailed manner in which he approaches his analysis of language and theme. However, Adejare's treatment of *Madmen* treats the play in isolation and is therefore different from the comparative and composite approach which this paper intends to take. Besides, Soyinka had not written *The Beatification of Area Boy* as at the time Adejare published the work in which *Madmen and Specialists* is featured hence it would be impossible for him to do a juxtaposition of the old and the new which is the preoccupation of this paper.

The Question of Style

Every writer of literature has, either consciously or unintentionally followed a particular pattern in their linguistic and thematic presentation of creative thoughts and this forms the style of writing of individual authors. To this end, the meaning of style as a characteristic feature of creative writings/writers becomes necessary. Style is the shell surrounding a pre-existing core of thought, so said Enkvist. The core of thought basically refers to the motif, idea, message, plan, suggestion the artist, poet, writer or the average language user has in his mind to say or share with the world. The way he expresses the idea or thought is what is called style. Style denotatively refers to the particular way in which something is done. In linguistics studies therefore, style refers to the way a writer writes. It means “the management of language in the expression of thought”, Kolawole (7). By this we mean to say the application of the resources language has to offer in suiting the art of writing. It is the inclusion of personality and identity in language use. By studying the stylistic properties of a literary work or corpus of works, one can penetrate the mind of its author. More often than not, style epitomises individual distinction in literary art. It shapes and marks out individual traits in world literature. Some writers go as far as subverting grammatical mechanics all in a bid to individuate a particular writing pattern that would be exceptionally theirs.

Stylistics, being the linguistic study of style became popular in the 1960's and scholars like Hockett, Freeman, Leech, Fowler, Ohmann and Enkvist blazed the trail in this regard. They were interested in what constituted style, a departure from the neo-classical study of rhetoric. What informs the assertion that a particular writer has his own style of writing, or that one writer's style is obviously different from that of another was their motivation. A school of thought asserts that the observation that every writer possessed the natural, linguistic and peculiar way of expressing ideas led to the identification of style with man and his thought. Simpson describes stylistics as a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to language. Stockwell talks about the psychological and socially motivated choices writers make in their works. He also avers that style may mean the characteristic patterns of choices associated with a writer's or projected character's utterances.

Style is an artistic identity. It reflects authorial experience, his views of the world and his general personal perceptions. As a writer grows or develops therefore, his worldview perhaps may change and this could reflect in every aspect of him, especially his art. So, his choice of words may reflect the changes or his new orientation pertaining to any subject. Achebe's style in his first published novel *Things Fall Apart* is easier than his *Anthills of the Savannah* for example. Although some scholars argue that the style of any literary piece depends on the target audience of the endeavour which means context determines linguistic choice. This may be true in particular instances where the social, linguistic, or cultural context determines the choice of diction to employ in communication.

The way a writer composes an academic article may be different from the way the same writer will use language for a children Sunday School class. That is why style is often referred to as the dress of thought. The aesthetic employment for the transmission of this 'thought' makes a good writer. Subsequently, writers attach much importance to the choices of words they use to convey their thoughts.

Whether writers deliberately break grammatical and lexico-semantic rules to 'stand out' or to be unique is another interesting perspective to the question of style. To some, the conscious flouting of linguistic patterns is the basis for carving out a style. This view sees style as deviation from the norm that is, the conscious effort to be different in the way one chooses to use language. Although controversy surrounds what should be categorized as the 'norm' to be broken, there is evidence of deviant behavior in the art of some writers. They are unconventional in their language use. They intentionally break writing rules which in turn makes their works unique. At all the linguistic levels of language description – phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic– some writers break away from conventions and standards. For example, the poet E. E. Cummings is noted for his aversion to the use of capital letters and other punctuation marks. Turner comments on the theory of stylistics as the part of linguistics that focuses on variation in the use of language.

At the graphological level, certain rules may be broken. Lawal lists these to include the rule that states the personal pronoun 'I' must be in capital irrespective of what where it occurs in a text or that all words must be spelt in accordance with either the British or American conventions. An example of such spelling variation is the coinage 'executhieves' in Osundare's *Eye of the Earth* cited in (Lawal *ibid*). The 'thieves' morpheme is a play on the 'tives' present in the word 'executives'. So, the authorial violations of linguistic conventions catch the attention of readers especially if such aberrations are stylistically foregrounded. Foregrounding is the general name for the phenomenon of linguistic highlighting, whereby some linguistic features stand out in some way. The letters or words that stand out arouse curiosity in the minds of the reader some way and create more interest, as Riffaterre rightly said that "predictability may result in superficial reading whereas unpredictability will compel attention" (158). In other words, the intensity of reception of any work will correspond to the intensity of the message inherent in it.

Style could also be seen as statistics. This relates to the occurrence of certain pattern or trend noticeable in the bulk of any piece of writing. The frequency with which a particular set of variables appears in comparison to others may indicate to the reader the intention of the writer in favouring one over others. According to Dare, no writer with the genuine awareness of the subject of style employs a significant linguistic item constantly without a purpose. So by constantly projecting and using a similar or particular pattern we can deduce a 'style' is at work or is being used. The reasoning here could be based upon the prominence factor. Although Leech and Short caution that "nothing can be adduced from, or proved by statistics alone" (41), since all other variables must be taken into account before a claim can be made of a particular style belonging to a particular writer.

From the discussion so far, it is hoped that a foundation for the importance of style in the appreciation of texts, especially literary texts has been laid. We shall now proceed to comparing the styles of two of Soyinka's works to show if indeed the passage of time and/or change in authorial perception and worldview has had any stylistic effect(s) on his literary output. We shall also be able to determine if the subject matter or target audience of these two works is actually responsible for their different linguistic executions.

Classical Soyinka in *Madmen and Specialists*

Soyinka's most powerful satiric pieces on military dictatorship in Nigeria – *Kongi's Harvest* and *A Dance of the Forests* had already come out by the time he wrote *Madmen and Specialists* at the end of the Nigerian Civil War in 1970. In all these three earlier plays, the case is with a dictator and a group cooperating or forced to cooperate with him though they are under subtle oppression themselves. This trend is repeated in *Madmen* where Bero imprisons and oppresses his father using a group of mendicants as his collaborators in the domestic oppression regime that he creates. *Madmen* came with its own inimitable features when compared with other plays of Soyinka though the style employed to satirise military oppressive regimes in the play is most covert; the dictator therein is a medical specialist turned cannibal through a stint he did with the military at the war front.

Madmen is written from the author's experience in prison between 1967-1970, the period of Civil War in Nigeria and the play has been described variously by critics as pessimistic, absurdist and obscure in diction. (Irele, Jeyifo, Lindfors). Earlier critical reactions to the play have repeatedly adduced and confirmed that Soyinka wrote *Madmen* from his prison experience. Oyin Ogunba's comments on the play forms one of the first and most popular reactions to the play. In his words, "writing in this manner he (Soyinka) experiences a release from the pent-up anger consequent on his detention and that it is a way of hitting back at those who punished him." (227-228). Banham also confirms that *Madmen* is a "deeply personal comment upon Soyinka's suffering in the specific circumstances of the Nigerian tragedy of the last few years" (125). The focus of the author in *Madmen* goes beyond the emission of personal emotion to being an excoriation of the decadence of man and his recidivist tendencies although the author's experience acts as a vent through which his view of man's incorrigibly wicked propensities is given the proper shape.

The seething reaction to personal experience of tyranny in *Madmen* is rather visible and made more so by the linguistic coinages of Old Man, the satiric character in the play whose bombastic outbursts set the pace for the author's linguistic approach in the play. The various claims of pessimism, absurdity and obscurity in the play are focally detectable through the author's irregular use of language. Biodun Jeyifo states the essence of language in the making and understanding of *Madmen* while discussing the uniqueness of the play among all others in Soyinka's dramatic list. In his words:

Madmen and Specialists occupies a special place in the evolution of Soyinka's dramaturgy, not because the ferocious wit and bitter social commentary which it deploys are without precedent in the plays of the 1950s and 1960s, but for the important fact that it took these elements to new directions by deploying them as mechanisms for extensive and deliberate de-formations of language, form and style. (89)

This clearly confirms the claim that language is at the centre of the author's mission in *Madmen*. The deconstructionist application of language in *Madmen* starts with the arrival of Bero towards the end of part I. Glimpses of unusual language use can be caught however from the beginning of the play prior to the arrival of Bero when Aafaa uses 'Rem Acu Tegisti' to mean rat and not the physical rat but rat in the idiomatic expression of smelling a rat. He later casually says one of them has 'Rem Acu Tegistied' something to mean that the matter has been turned into a secret albeit an official one. This irregular notion of conjugating a noun, one irregularly formed, earlier in the play slightly prepares the reader for what to expect in the rest of the play with reference to linguistic construct and coinages. As soon as Bero returns from the war front, the tempo of the play changes abruptly, and that includes the language. Before the end of the first part of the play, the reader is already introduced to the theory of 'As' which is given just a mention first towards the end of this part. The elongated discussions and proposition to be encountered in the second part of the play is initially seen at the end of Part One where the mendicants chant the song of As thus:

Now – As Ever Shall Be ...
Bi o ti wa
Ni yio se wa
Bi o ti wa
Ni yio se wa
Bi o ti wa l'atete kose ...
Even as it was
So shall it be
Even as it was
So shall it be
Even as it was at the beginning of the act ... (244)

This chant forms the beggars' theme song throughout the next part of the play and is one declaration that projects the author's pessimistic view of tyranny and is also a prediction of perpetuity of despotism which is one reason critics have adduced that the playwright's total view in the play is disparaging. The System of 'As' was in operation in the past, As is still the present style of ruling and in the future the system will still be run by As thus foretelling that there is no hope of liberation from the then present aberrant leadership situation in the country. This decidedly cynical view of leadership problem is due partly to the author's experiences during his period of incarceration by the military.

The absurd discussions on the issue of As gets more elaborate as Aafaa launches straight into a description of the components of As from A – Z. Adejare offers a detailed interpretation and their relationship with the general meaning of the play concluding that As is “... a polysemy, an item whose multiple meanings are intended in the context of occurrence. The various letters of the alphabet are used to convey each of the multiple meanings.” (131-132)

The introduction of the theory of as changes the rhythm of the play leading to rising action and unusual and irregularly assembled linguistic expressions. The tempo and temper of Old Man’s description of the concept of as rises gradually and with it, the complexity of his speeches. He first starts as he replies Aafaa that:

Because ... we are together in As. [*He rises slowly.*] As Is, and the System is its mainstay though it wear a hundred and a thousand outward forms. And because you are within the System that irritates, the foul gurgle of the cistern, the expiring function of a faulty cistern, and are part of the material for re-formulating the mind of a man into the necessity of the moment’s political As, the moment’s scientific As, metaphysic As, sociologic As, economic , recreative , ethical As, you-cannot-es-cape! (271)

In this reply he captions the involvement of everyone in the political system and how those employed to enforce the policies of the system for a pay all end up as being part of the rotten system just as Aafaa and his colleagues are together with both Old Man and Bero even though they are hired by Bero to keep Old Man incarcerated and oppressed. Old man thus criticises the system and general degeneration of humanity in such seemingly nebulous language and Aafaa, as if taking a cue from that, also launches into a similar charade after a brief session of verbal exchange between Old Man and the mendicants. Aafaa attempts a description of the history of the corruption of the political system and toes Old Man’s linguistic line for the first distinct time in the play:

In the beginning was the Priesthood, and the Priesthood was one. Then came schism after schism by a parcel of schismatic ticks in the One Body of Priesthood, the political priesthood went right the spiritual priesthood went left or vice versa the political priesthood went back the spiritual priesthood went fore and vice versa the political priesthood went down the spiritual priesthood went up or vice versa the loyalty of homo-sapiens was never divided for two parts of a division make a whole and there was no hole in the monolithic solidarity of the priesthood...(272)

Aafaa still rattles on about the subject of political and spiritual priesthood and deliberately refuses to be able to recognise the difference between them and, consequentially, declining to exonerate spiritual leadership from the corruption that pervades the entire system, the system of As. The use and comprehension of this type of speaking is restricted to only Old Man and Aafaa who appear to be the most vocal of all the characters in the play. At the end of the play, Old Man, speaking in a theatrical design that makes him talk to no one in particular, finally erupts and the full version of the expression he has been emitting at installments in earlier speeches is now given in what turns out to be one of the most complex expressions from the play:

... you cyst, you cyst, splint in the arrow of arrogance, the dog in dogma, the tick of a heretic, the tick in politics, the mock of democracy, the mar of marxism the tic of a fanatic, the boo in buddhism, the ham in Mohammed, the dash in the criss-cross of Christ, a dot in the I of ego an ass in the mass, the ash in ashram, a boot in kibbutz, the pee of priesthood, the peepee of perfect priesthood, oh how dare you raise your hindquarters you dog of dogma and cast the scent of your existence on the lamp-post of destiny you HOLE IN THE ZERO of NOTHING! (275)

The essence of this linguistic charade has been questioned by critics and some like Bernth Lindfors, believe it is an exercise in linguistic frivolity and a dangerous tendency in Soyinka's works. A. O. Ashaolu puts it in the right perspective when he explains that:

Carefully considered in the light of Soyinka's impression of the "throw-ups" who assumed power by default in Nigeria, this passage makes too much sense to be dismissed as "meaningless frivolity." Soyinka has recommended in *The Man Died* that "the first step towards the dethronement of terror is the deflation of hypocritical self-righteousness" (15-16). This is precisely what the passage does (29).

Ashaolu's claim, quite contrarily to Lindfors' is that Soyinka, in making Old Man address Bero thus, is reducing the relevance of Bero and reckoning him to have only the significance of the "tick" in politics which is first insignificant and also dangerous being comparable to a tick, which does no good to its victims. From whichever angle one decides to look at it, the tick in politics is of no importance. Even the parasitic tick is spineless and therefore of no lasting impact. Apart from matter of insignificance as seen from the "tick" in politics, other parts of that expression also express some negativity which Bero and indeed all dictators presage. Such is the case with the "mar" in marxism which implies that the dictators being overtly addressed here are the ruin of good systems such as Marxism and democracy.

Whereas the verbal eruption may appear meaningless to an undiscerning reader, it is not devised to be a meaningless outburst but to signify the worthlessness and inconsequentiality of the personalities and anomalous attitudes of leaders in political, social and spiritual spheres and practices as represented by the System of As. Ashaolu's conclusion is that the passage "not only deflates the hypocrisy of a tyrant, but also reduces him to nothingness" (29)

Linguistic coinages in *Madmen* fall into two categories; there is the use of existing words in an unfamiliar way such as in the Case of 'As' above which is a word taken from the English Lexicon but used to indicate a concept which is not included in its literal composition. There is another kind of usage in this play in which words that do not exist anywhere are coined and given meaning by the context of usage. Such is the case with 'Rem Acu Tegisti' which has been mentioned earlier. This style is more flamboyantly displayed in the two songs written for the mendicants by Old Man. The first is titled "Visit of the First Lady to the Home for the de-balled" which goes thus:

He came smelling of wine and roses
On his arm his wife was gushpillating, gushpillating ... gushpillating (259)

Later on they declare that the title of the song is "Ballad of the State Visit to the Home of the De-Balled" and add more lines but maintain the refrain "on his arm his wife was gushpillating". The playwright has used the words 'de-balled' here in place of 'disabled' and 'gushpillating' instead of palpitating. Rather than being ordinary word play, 'de-balled' is used in place of 'disabled' to indicate that the men are more than physically disabled, they have been rendered impotent albeit figuratively as their impotence may be political, economic or otherwise and this will be the handiwork of the system of 'As' and its various manifestations as political, economic or sociological. The second song sounds more meaningless yet is not less effective in passing the author's message on a particular issue:

Cripple: I prefer the second one.
Goyi: Which one?
Cripple: Pro patria mourir
Mendicants: ... mourir mourir mourir ...
Cripple: Dulce et decorum ...
Mendicants: quorum quorum quorum ...
Old Man: Corum, stupes, quorum. ... (261)

The song goes on as the mendicants chant the same words. After the song Blindman passes a cursory remark that "In Ancient Athens they didn't just have a quorum. Everybody was there! That, children, was democracy" (261). In the context of that seemingly unserious rendition, Soyinka already flaws the democratic government practiced in the country prior to the military takeover.

Apart from the madmen and Old Man, other characters in the play also speak in a manner that may not be readily understood by merely grasping the literal meanings of the words used. Iya Mate and Iya Agba speak in a coded language and the semantic implication of their utterances may easily elude the uninitiated:

IYA ABGA: I hope it's a good seed. That was two lives we poured into her hands. Two long lives spent pouring pecking at secrets grain by grain.

IYA MATE: More than two. What she took from us began with others we no longer call by name.

...

IYA ABGA: It's my life that's gone into his. I haven't burrowed so deep to cast good earth on worthless seeds.

IYA MATE: Nor she. Tramping through all those bushes, finding the desolate spots only we can remember. (235)

The women are not merely discussing about seeds, planting and earth as in agriculture. This discourse really centers on Si Bero's acceptance by the old women and her initiation into their cult. The significance of their part in the play is in revealing that there is ethereal power that is stronger than the political power and that can overturn despots and dictatorial structures in human societies.

The uniqueness of this play rests indubitably in the fusion of the central theme of war and its ravaging effects on man's mental, physical and psychological composition with the irregular and transcendent language spoken by some principal characters in the play. The complexity of the play is a function of the language of conveyance and the author's use of coinages and abstractions that are rather unusual in everyday conversation. The playwright, no doubt, has employed the best arsenals in his artistic armoury in launching this invective against the system that unjustly held him confined for close to two years.

Style Shift in *The Beatification of Area Boy*

Other plays were written by Soyinka within the twenty-five years gap between *Madmen* and *The Beatification*. In most of these, despotic military regimes from different parts of the continent of Africa are at the receiving ends of the author's satiric outbursts. Expectedly therefore, Soyinka still tackles the recurrent plague of the Nigerian nation - military dictatorship - in *The Beatification*, written at the peak of an oppressive military administration in Nigeria. The thematic thrust of the play is thus consistent with those of his earlier satirical plays particularly the political ones though in the initial part of this latter satire, he only refers to the military either directly or through reminiscing characters such as Mama Put and Sanda.

The play, cursorily read, may appear to be about ordinary people going about their everyday business in the frontage of a luxurious shopping mall; only a closer examination would reveal that the play is also an excoriation of the Nigerian military rulers and their excesses. Wole Soyinka, in this play, lays bare the multifaceted weaknesses paraded by the military personnel ranging from sheer brutality to intellectual deficiency.

It becomes very obvious in *The Beatification* that memories of the Nigerian Civil war still linger on in Soyinka's life though twenty-five good years had passed away. While it is true that *The Beatification* follows the trend of other plays in being a critique of military regimes, it is equally obvious that the author adjusts his posture on many other issues in this play. Such issues include class structure which is clearly dichotomized, gender imaging which appears a bit more attended to than in some plays and, of course, linguistic composition which will be our major focus here.

The Beatification contrasts sharply with *Madmen* in terms of the linguistic medium though we might safely classify both plays as post war and anti-military. The reader flows with ease through the text of the not clearly partitioned play and is caught at the end in the enthralling dramatic expertise of the wedding scene where the title of the play is clearly enacted. This turn-around in the playwright's language of presentation has not gone unnoticed by readers and critics who have commented that Soyinka has simply responded to critical voices. Mosobalaje opines that the language of Soyinka's plays have passed through some phases and are in the third. To him, the first set of comedies such as *The Lion and the Jewel* and *The Trials of Brother Jero* are written in a manner still comprehensible to the different classes of the reading audience. It was after these that he wrote the canonized plays where he switched to the highly intellectual idiom that cuts away parts of his audience. The playwright now makes a return in latter satires such as *The Beatification* and others in its category. According to Mosobalaje,

Soyinka comes back to the popular language typical of the early satirical plays that are mostly performed both at home and abroad. The argument is that Soyinka has rewritten his "bourgeois-situated literature" in a popular and people's lingo. The phase of rewriting comprises of political plays such as *Opera Wonyosi*, *A Play of Giants*, *To Zia with Love*, *Beatification of Area Boy* and *King Baabu*. These plays are now well read, performed both within the country and outside. (176)

To confirm Mosobalaje's words above, prosaic everyday language is the order of the day in *The Beatification* and this signifies a marked shift from what obtains in *Madmen*. The language of the central satiric character in the play, Sanda, contrasts sharply with that of his equivalent in *Madmen*, Old Man. Although Sanda did not complete his University education, he is nonetheless an intelligent character whose intellect apparently ranks higher than that of the average school drop-out. The point being made here is that the playwright can afford to make Sanda speak in a sublime manner if he chooses to. It is therefore by the design of the playwright that characters in *The Beatification* communicate simply and effectively without any obstruction.

The author goes a step further in the linguistic turn-around in the play by inculcating the use of Nigerian Pidgin English through one of the low class characters and this development signifies the author's conscious effort to be realistic and down to earth in this particular play. The use of Nigerian Pidgin English is commonplace in *The Beatification*. Indeed, the various dialogues are replete with characters communicating in Pidgin to reflect the typical market scene in cosmopolitan Lagos. Trader's discourse with Cyclist as quoted below replicates this:

CYCLIST: Ajegunle new settlement. And na tie I wan buy, that's all. But e be say dat one done become commotion. Who get this stall? E wan' sell tie abi 'e no dey sell?

TRADER: (*rushing back behind his stall*). Ah, sorry, sorry. I sorry too much. No vex, my friend. Na de ting wey bring you come cause the all the wonderment. Wetin you wan' buy? Take your time, I beg. Everyting na reduced price, specially for you. You see, I go give you special reduction. (*His attention still partially on the bicycle*). You say you like the tie? How much you wan' pay? Ah, but this is wonderful. The last time I see bicycle for this Lagos na before the oil boom. Enh? You mean to say somebody still dey, wey no troway in bicycle inside Lagoon? (*Rakes down a whole row of ties and hands them over*). Make you look am proper. Choose the one wey fit gentleman like yourself. (*Sneaks back to the bicycle. Spins the pedals.*) No vex for me o, I just wan ... (*Rings the bell. Rings it again, delightedly.*) Na original oga. Na genuine pedal locomotion, the kin my great, great granpa dem call iron horse when oyinbo missionary first ride one for Lagos last century. (*Looks wistfully at CYCLIST.*) You no mind, my friend? I just wan' see if I still fit balance.

CYCLIST: (gives up). Do anything wey you want. Make you no wreck am, thas all. Because na borrow I borrow am. (26-27).

The discussion in this Pidginised English continues unpunctuated for pages in the play. In fact whenever any of the area boys like Trader, Boyko, Barber, Area Two-Four and others in the same circle like Mama Put and Minstrel want to talk, they use Pidgin. It is like the Lingua Franca of the low class characters throughout the play. The Nigerian Pidgin English is a daily reality of communication among certain segments of Nigerian people. Even the average Nigerian's rendition of the sound /ə/ as /t/ is revealed. The average Nigerian audience is quite familiar with these Pidginised expressions and so will most likely make sense of *The Beatification* unlike *Madmen*.

Consequently, there is a stark contrast between the esoteric rigidity of *Madmen* and the penetrable accessibility of *The Beatification*. Soyinka's incorporation of lexical choices that reflect elements of everyday communication in the latter, which are almost absent in the former, attests to this.

The often controversial elevated or poetic use of language is restricted to only instantial usage in *The Beatification* as against its widespread usage in *Madmen*. Indeed, only the songs in *The Beatification* are poetic. Even then, rhythm and end rhymes are the major poetic devices noticeable in the songs and some of them are written in Pidgin English like 'I love this Lagos' by Minstrel.

The importation of indigenous words into characters' utterances also echoes the playwright's intention of grounding the dialogue in its cultural and linguistic contexts. Words like "bobo" for boyfriend (12), "Omolanke for "cart" (26), "Oga for "boss" (62), "konkere" for "beans pottage" and "alawada" for "comedian" (62) are some examples which showcase the typical lexical borrowing that dots the vocabulary of the average Nigerian. In a similar practice, we find expressions that are transliterated from Yoruba into English language such as; "male yams" (92), which is from the Yoruba expression "ako isu". Expressions otherwise known as Nigerian English are also a part of this play as can be seen below;

"The wise one always throws the water forwards" (94)

"Someone old enough to be your father is talking and you keep putting your mouth in his" (42)

"Na good quality evidence should in case the police follow the case" (46)

This deliberate act of identifying with the masses in their mode of communication is in harmony with the general attitude of the play where the author perceptibly takes sides with the masses right from the title to all the scenic performances and character attributes. It is thus only apposite and natural that he makes them speak in their language.

There are also other noticeable changes in *The Beatification* which we can attribute to 'style shift'. The playwright's design of making Miseyi abandon her potential ostentatious life to join the ideologue, Sanda in his revolutionary bid is one of such. The women in *Madmen* are witches, more or less and, somehow, they help foster the destruction of the dictator, Dr Bero. Bero himself has no regard for them and the relevance of his sister, Si Bero, is seen only when he is away. Women have always played undercover or supporting roles in Soyinka's drama and the playwright himself has not denied this. His very prominent and vocal characters such as Iyaloja in *Death and the King's Horseman* only serves patriarchal interest throughout though she is portrayed as a self-sacrificing custodian of ageless tradition. Here in *The Beatification*, Miseyi is the essence of the revolution as it is her initiative that leads to the realization and perfection of Sanda's dream. Now that is new, especially coming from the stables of Soyinka who sometime writes play with an all-male cast!

In spite of the many departures from *Madmen* evident in *The Beatification*, there is a unifying factor in the naming of characters in the two plays and in some other plays of Soyinka. Characters names in these two plays are designed to be representative rather than pinned down to particular individuals hence they often come in form of common nouns such as Boy, Trader, Mama Put, Old Man, Iya Agba, Cyclist, Blindman, Cripple, Barber, Iyaloja, Praise Singer, Minstrel and Foreigner and a lot of others.

This technique has the an implication for the author's intention in the work because they reveal that the playwright is deliberately depicting the condition of humanity at large in these plays and not just relaying an interest in peculiar individuals. A name such as Boy therefore reveals that the fate suffered by Boy in that play is the lot of many boys like him all over the country. By refusing to particularise these names, Soyinka has successfully generalised the problem and turned away attention from individuals to issues of common concern.

Conclusion

It is interesting to note that the Nigerian military government of the time proscribed *The Beatification of Area Boy* as soon as it was published in 1995 while *Madmen and Specialists* did not suffer the same fate when it first came out. This points undoubtedly to the fact that critics are not needed before the full message of *The Beatification* can be grasped by an average reader whereas a full understanding of *Madmen and Specialists* will require the assistance of specialists in the field of literary criticism. Interestingly enough the playwright is hopeful for the country at the end of *The Beatification* in that a revolution takes place inadvertently and it is headed by the ideologue Sanda with Miseyi, his accomplice. The political as is not overthrown after the whole display in *Madmen*; rather Old Man, the leading voice against the system, gets killed by his cannibalism promoting son, Bero.

Madmen and Specialists and *The Beatification of Area Boy* represent two categories of Soyinka's dramatic works in respect of the language of presentation. These two plays are assuredly tackling the same nutty issues in Nigerian political experience; the Civil War that the nation is pretending to have overcome and seasons of military involvement in political leadership yet the plays appear to be worlds apart. Consequently, one can circumspectly contend that some things in Soyinka's dramaturgy are fixed while some can be adjusted. Although it is quite obvious that the thematic focus of the playwright remains the same, his linguistic operation has been altered. The author is seeing and saying the same thing in the two plays, only differently and that perhaps because the bitterness engendered by his prison experience has been unavoidably affected by the passage of time. Parts of the change too are most likely positive response to some critical endeavors which have not only improved the quality of the works but have also widened the already large reading audience. A very good consequence of the change is discernible in the manner in which *The Beatification* is found comprehensible by members of the reading public while still emitting lethal wit on the target despots.

The complexity or seeming verbosity of language that characterizes the making of *Madmen* and other satires of the earlier period which *Madmen* represents has evidently been melted down in latter satires as evident in *The Beatification* where the use of language is inculcated and even expanded to accommodate the Nigerian Pidgin English, a stark reality of daily discourse among a particular class in Nigeria. The effect of the passage of time can also be perceived on the two plays as well.

While *Madmen* takes place in a makeshift prison cell, *The Beatification* is acted in front of an opulent shopping plaza in the cosmopolitan city of Lagos thus showing that, although Soyinka is still on the nagging issues of the military and the Nigerian Civil War plus other societal maladies, he has not remained stagnant nor backward. The language, background and content of his drama have been appropriately updated to align with the demands of our modernization.

Works Cited

- Achebe, C. *Things Fall Apart*. Oxford: Heinemann Educational Books, 1958.
- Achebe, C. *Anthills of the Savannah*, Oxford: Heinemann Educational Books, 1987.
- Adejare, Oluwole. *Language and Style in Soyinka: A Systemic Textlinguistic Study of A Literary Idiolect*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 1992.
- Ashaolu, A. O. "Wole Soyinka's Early Satirical Plays". *Review of English and Literary Studies RELS Monographs*. No 9, (1990) 1-67.
- Banham, Martin. "Darkness and Threat" *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. Vol 8, No 1 (July 1973) 124-126.
- Dare, S.A. "Some Approaches to the Study of Style" *Undergraduate Text in English Language and Literature*. Ed. Oyegoke, Ibadan: Yoori Books, (2008) 62-77.
- Fowler, Roger. *Essays on Style and Language; Linguistic and Critical Approaches to Literary Style*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1970.
- Freeman, D. *Essays in Modern Stylistics*. London: Routledge. 1981.
- Gordimer, N. "Turning the Page: African Writers on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century". *Transition* No 56, (1992) 4-10.
- Hockett, F. Charles. "Linguistic Elements and their Relations". *Language*. Vol 37(1961) 29-53.
- Lawal, A. "Aspects of a Stylistic Theory and the Implications for Practical Criticism". *Stylistics in Theory and Practice*. Ed. Lawal, A. Ilorin: Paragon Books, (2003) 25-47.

- Kolawole, G. The Application of Linguistics to Literary Criticism: Controversy and Prospects In Lawal, A. (Ed.) *Stylistics in theory and practice*, Ilorin: Paragon Books, (2003) 1-10.
- Enkvist, N.E. "On Defining Style: an Essay in Applied Linguistics". *Linguistics and Style*. Ed. Spencer, John London: Oxford University Press, (1964) 1-56.
- Jeyifo, Biodun. *Wole Soyinka*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Mosobalaje, Adebayo. Readers of Wole Soyinka's Political Drama and Theatre *The African Symposium: An Online Journal of the African Education Research Network*. Volume 11; No. (2011) 166-177.
- Ogunba, Oyin. *The Movement of Transition*. Ibadan: Ibadan UP, 1975.
- _____. "The Traditional Content of the Plays of Wole Soyinka" (Part II). *African Literature Today*, No. 5, (1971) 106-115.
- Ohmann, Richard. "Generative Grammar and the Concept of Literary Style". *Contemporary Essays on Style*, Ed. Glen A. Love and Michael Payne. Scott, Foresman and Company.
- Riffaterre, Michael. "Criteria for Style Analysis" *Word*, XV. (1959) 154-174.
- Stockwell, P. *Stylistics: Language and Literature*. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Soyinka, Wole. *Madmen and Specialists in Wole Soyinka: Collected Plays 2*. London: Oxford University Press (1974) 215-245.
- Soyinka, Wole. *A Play of Giants* Ibadan: Spectrums Books, 1984.
- Soyinka, Wole. *The Beatification of Area Boy* Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 1995
- _____. *A Dance of the Forests*. London: Oxford UP, 1963.
- _____. *Death and the King's Horseman*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 2010.
- _____. *Kongi's Harvest* London: Oxford UP, 1967.
- _____. *A Play of Giants*. London: Eyre Methuen, 1984.
- Turner, G.W., *Stylistics*, Middlesex: Penguin, 1993.