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## Wole Soyinka—An African Balzac?<sup>1,2</sup>

Ali Jimale Ahmed

“Even in the slightest manifestation of any intellectual activity whatever, in ‘language’, there is contained a specific conception of the world.”

— Antonio Gramsci

Wole Soyinka’s works offer one a fascinating task to weigh and scrutinize, not with the intention of muck racking, mind you, but to fathom how much of it can, to use Baconian terms, dissolve into our digestive tract to nourish the mind. His works reveal the ‘tormented self’ of the African intellectual, a la Hermann Hess, you might say. And Soyinka, the author is also a paragon, if not the epitome, of contradiction. Ambivalence, one might argue, is a state of mind and one is entitled to groping in the dark until one finds oneself. What is not permissible, however, is to project one’s pretended ambivalence as if it were a fact of life. Such a faulty premise cannot but breed a negative adumbration of the future by depicting a continent in perpetual limbo. In Soyinka’s case, this reasoning shows itself in his total lack of respect for the African toiling masses which he views as “cowed,” “defenseless” and docile. He can not ‘stand’ their resignation for he does not understand that “Fatalism in the guise of docility is the fruit of an historical and sociological situation, not an essential character of a people’s behavior.”<sup>3</sup> Soyinka, for reasons best known to him, makes himself forget that these cowed and defenseless masses, yesterday’s Fridays and Calibans, are the same ones who twenty-five years ago fought for political independence in the continent. Rhetoric aside, is there any shred of evidence that they would not eventually extricate themselves from the yoke of the nefarious criminals who are now minding the ‘store’ for neo-colonialism. But before we go into specifics, let us try to clarify certain “terms” that will reoccur in this short analysis of the man and his writings.

Ideology no longer means what de Tracy, the French philosopher who coined the word in the 18th century, defined as “the science of ideas.” Ideas are particular insights which denote relativity, while ideology implies “ideas crystallized into universal

systems,”<sup>4</sup> as if they were absolute. Throughout this paper, I use ideology as “a relatively formal and articulated system of meanings, values and beliefs, of a kind that can be abstracted as a ‘world view’ or class outlook.”<sup>5</sup> It is clear that ideology is how we perceive our world. That perception is, more often than not, a reflection of the dominant way of seeing the world. Here, I do not mean to imply that ideology is simply a reflection of a ruling class’ ideas. Far from it, for ideology involves “a complex phenomenon” which contains “conflicting, even contradictory views of the world.”<sup>6</sup> There is nothing abstruse about this because contradictions consist of the unity and struggle of opposites. But such a contradiction does not necessarily mean or imply antagonism. It only implies that the dominant superstructure accommodates “different views” which do not jeopardize the essence of the existing system; these different views are merely safety valves to contain dissent. It is a tactic rather than a strategy.

The question of art and mimesis is a perennial one which takes us back to the classical debate between the base and superstructure. Art is indeed part of the superstructure, i.e., part of the ideology of any given society. But this does not mean, as some Marxists contend, that there is a direct, one-to-one mimetic relationship of art and the reality of the social world. To subscribe to such a view means to apply to art only as reflection. But this is an irrational theory, for what do we need art for if it is a carbon-copy of life itself. No mode, however accurate it pretends to be, is as authentic as the “thing” it imitates. The fallacy of such a theory (absolute reflection) is revealed when we think of such artistic creations as music and architecture. If this is all Marxism could tell us about art, Marxism would crumble to pieces. Or, it would evaporate into thin air when we consider Greek art, which existed in a relatively underdeveloped economic system; or even our appreciation for such an art which is relatively underdeveloped for most of our present-day socio-economic systems. It is fairly conspicuous that their brandishing of the Communist Manifesto or even Marx’s explanation of a “childhood nostalgia”<sup>7</sup> did not help these Marxists. Roland Barthes has a valid point here when he writes:

We know how sterile orthodox Marxism has proved to be in criticism, proposing a purely mechanical explanation of works or promulgating slogans rather than criteria of values.<sup>8</sup>

Orthodox Marxists missed the fact that in the process of creation, the artist is a mediator between what he creates and the social world. This means that a “transformative labor”<sup>9</sup> goes into what is being created, and art, as Mexican Marxist Vazquez points out, becomes “a reality put into form—a human form by a creative act.”<sup>10</sup> In other words, art “deflects,”<sup>11</sup> deforms,<sup>12</sup> and defamiliarizes<sup>13</sup> reality so that it can bring about an “alienating effect”<sup>14</sup> upon us. It is a progressive “alienation effect” which leads us to constantly question ourselves and in the process evaluate our relationship to our surroundings – social reality. Such an art that induces us to think about our social reality can never be apolitical. Thus, non-partisanship in art is a contradiction in terms. Art is a social product in the form of a non-mechanical reflection on the concrete social reality involving differences of material ownership. From here, it is clear that the question “why write?” can never be answered by asserting “for the sake of writing.” There is something that a writer, any writer, wants to communicate, and this “something” is most of the times sparked off by a necessity outside oneself. “In other words, a pretext for writing is rarely acknowledged as being an imaginary product. One writes in response to a certain necessity outside oneself.”<sup>15</sup> Wole Soyinka succinctly shows this: “They said unto him, be still/ While the winds of terror tore out shutters/ Of his neighbour’s home.”<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, it is not only the African situation which warrants a writer to comment on his surroundings. Herbert Read gives us an insight into the kind of English society which existed before World War II, when he writes:

No one in his sense can contemplate the existing contrasts with complacency. None can measure the disparity between poverty and riches, between chaos and order, between ugliness and beauty, between all the sin and savagery of the existing system and any decent code of social existence — no one can measure these disparities and remain indifferent.<sup>17</sup>

It is clear that both writers preach against cold and callous indifference, but that is the end of the analogy. In Read’s words, the kind of partisanship involved is class-related (poverty and riches, the savagery of the existing system, i.e., Capitalism), while Soyinka’s

is not class-based. If we assume that the “him” in the first line of the poem refers to the poet, i.e., Soyinka, (and there is ample reason to believe that since the poem is one of his prison poems), then, we can not conclude the poet’s neighbor’s ultimate interest is at loggerheads with that of the then military government of Nigeria, represented in the poem, as most of the poems in “Shuttle in the Crypt,” by the “they”; also in the first line. (Soyinka’s “Live Burial,”<sup>18</sup> for example, also employed “they” to mean the military regime: “They hold, Seige against humanity/And Truth.”) Now there is non-antagonistic contradiction between the military, the poet, and his neighbor. They all have something at stake in the status quo. This is not to deny that Soyinka writes about the plight and misery of his “people.” On the contrary, what one finds absurd is the way he portrays class conflicts in Africa: a case in point is his simplistic analysis of the internecine war in Nigeria as ethnic hatred without really scrutinizing the underlying cause of that war, which was a struggle between elites over state control and ownership of the resources of the country – thus the class nature of the civil war. “In the final analysis,” Mao said in a 1963 speech, “national struggle is a matter of class struggle.”<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the civil war was instigated by both military and civilian elites of the major ethnic group nationalities of Nigeria as J.P. Clark in his poems, “Casualties”, sums it up:

The (the elites) are the emissaries of rift,  
So smug in smoke-rooms they haunt abroad,

...

They are the wandering minstrels who, beating on  
The drums of the human hearts, draw the world  
Into a dance with rites it does not know.<sup>20</sup>

Responding to similar charges that he does not show “solid class perspectives” in his works, Soyinka writes, “a play, a novel, a poem, a painting or any other creative composition is not a thesis on the ‘ultimate’ condition of man.”<sup>21</sup> Granted that none of the above is a thesis on the ‘ultimate’ condition of man, but is not a work of literature a good medium where antagonistic classes work out their contradictions? Can it not occasion a change in the fight for a total and genuine liberation (in the African context)? On this subject Lukacs explains:

. . . in class society, literary movements are the inevitable, if not automatic, outgrowth of class struggles, of conflicts among social and political directions . . . understandably, there is no less intensity in these struggles and no less vehemence in the antagonisms in literature than in politics itself.<sup>22</sup>

Soyinka too uses “directions” when he tells us that he is “definitely in agreement”: “Art can and should reflect . . . indeed magnify the decadent, rotted underbelly of a society that has lost its direction . . .”<sup>23</sup> What he does not tell us is what sort of a barometer he will use to measure the direction which a society takes.

Interestingly enough, he forgets that besides explanation and prediction, “direction” is one of the functions of ideology, unless Soyinka, as most African bourgeois intellectuals do, thinks of ideology to mean only Marxist. But Soyinka does not, like the rest of these bourgeois intellectuals, run slipshod over Marxist ideology – at least not like Bolarin-Williams who writes, “Marx for all his epic innovations to the human thought, remained very much a nineteenth century thinker, bound with the problematic of his time.”<sup>24</sup> It is indeed clear from the above that Bolarin-Williams uses “problematic” as a world-view when in fact it is not. Problematic, as defined in Althusser’s *Reading Capital*, states that “a concept cannot be considered in isolation; it only exists in the theoretical or ideological framework in which it is used: its problematic.”<sup>25</sup>

But Soyinka is different from Bolarin-Williams, for he is not against Marxism per se. What he is against is to “be bracketed with those pseudo-stalinists, leninists and maoists, who are totally unproductive and merely protect themselves behind a whole barrage of terminologies which bear no relation to the immediate needs of society.”<sup>26</sup> It is important to note that Soyinka is only against men who put their feet into shoes that are too big for them, not the real men (Stalin, Lenin, and Mao), but the pseudo-men (stalinists, leninists, and maoists). In fact he is for Mao, as his quote “I think Mao’s thoughts are African”<sup>27</sup> testifies. But Mao’s ideas emanate from a particular way of seeing the world. His ideas are not non-partisan. Mao was a Marxist who believed in the existence of a bitter struggle between the peasant and the landlord; between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; and between imperialism and the oppressed of the world. Soyinka’s “Mao’s thoughts

are African”, then unconsciously reveals the existence of a class struggle in Africa. Yet the conscious Soyinka absolves himself of any guilt by association. He is basically a “humanist” who writes about “the crimes committed by a power-drunk soldiery against a cowed and defenseless people . . . these are the hard realities that hit every man, woman, and child, irrespective of class . . .”<sup>28</sup> Cowed and defenseless people? As opposed to a strong and coercive class? If that is the implication one finds in the preceding quote, as I do, then Soyinka is alluding to the existence of classes in Nigeria. Brecht, deciphering a similar riddle had this to say:

The word people (volk) implies a certain unity and certain common interests; it should therefore be used only when we are speaking of a number of peoples, for then alone is anything like community of interests conceivable. The population of a given territory may have a good many different and even opposed interests – and this is a truth that is being suppressed.

What is more, the use of the term ‘people’ notoriously encompasses some of the qualities of Barthes’s “mythic sign.” According to Barthes, writes a group of Essex University teachers, “the mythic sign imposes a factitious imaginary unit which bridges and possibly obscures ideological and material contradictions, it is at once imposing, vague, and apparently complete in its meaning.”<sup>29</sup>

Cowed and defenseless. Note the arrogance of the intellectual whose view of the masses is nothing more than a hunk of meat perched on a tree and surrounded by a flock of vultures. The logical outcome of such chicanery is the need of the cowed for a spokesman, a humanist par excellence. But the notion of a sole voice defending a mute multitude is nothing but bourgeois in essence. It not only attempts to deny the creative role of the masses, as Ngugi complains of Soyinka: “The ordinary people, workers and peasants, in his plays remain passive watchers on the shore or pitiful comedians on the road;”<sup>30</sup> but it also fosters and creates “a mythical guise for the professional politician (and writer), that of the ‘man of the people’—at once of the ‘people’ but separate from them, able by virtue of a particular linguistic command to represent their interests in places which they remain outside, both symbolically and actually.”<sup>31</sup> It is important to note here, as P.D. Tripathi writes that “Soyinka’s *Kongi Harvest*

and Achebe's *A Man of the People* may be open to the kind of criticism that Ata Aidoo and Achebe himself level against *The Beautiful Ones* by Armah."<sup>32</sup> Put in another form, the myth of 'Man of the People,' whether it is personified by the character of a chief Nanga, Odili, 'The Man' or Teacher represent "one ego ideal of bourgeois culture, significant both in its gender limitation and in the way it gives an ideological identity for professional politicians and writers alike."<sup>33</sup>

To Soyinka, "our man of the people" then, society is divided into two groups: power hungry men in uniforms (no difference between the rank and file and the generals) and defenseless people (again no difference between the "haves" in the corridors of power and the vast number of "have-nots" and downtrodden in the slums of Lagos city). It is not surprising of him then to wonder "What does the class conflict have to say . . . about the epidemic of ritual murder for the magical attainment of wealth?"<sup>34</sup> Apart from the obvious contradiction in this statement it is astonishing that he doesn't ask who murders whom for wealth. Despite the fact that some people might argue that "class differences (in Africa) is at a very early stage,"<sup>35</sup> there surely must be a difference between a street person who picks pockets to survive and the oil tycoon embodied in the Cartel which identifies "itself with the new power from the barrel"<sup>36</sup> and which fattens itself at the expense of the poor people.

But the absence of a Marxist ideology in Soyinka's work does not mean his works are devoid of ideology. Writing in his *Myth, Literature and the African World*, believed by many to be his theoretical groundwork, he says:

Asked recently whether or not I accept the necessity for a literary ideology, I found myself predictably examining the problem from the inside, that is from within the consciousness of the artist in the process of creating. It is a familiar question, one which always appears in multiple guises. My response was – a social vision, yes, but not a literary ideology.<sup>37</sup>

Two points are important to note here. The first is the fact that his phrase "a literary ideology" is a deceptive one which has no meaning in and of itself. Second point: "social vision" in its logical conclusion is ideology. Result: there is no Marxist ideology in his

brand of literature but there certainly is a bourgeois ideology as is manifested in his protagonists. Their attempt to establish their individuality against an unsympathetic world bent on crushing their freedom is bourgeois in essence. Christopher Caudwell traces the origin of “the heroic middle-class protagonists in literature . . . [to] the tradition of laissez-faire individualism and progress . . . ”<sup>38</sup> Needless to say that Africa whose development had been ravaged by colonialism for many centuries is now passing through a socio-economic stage which is similar to the one which gave rise to the “heroic middle class protagonist.” The dream of the bourgeois, wrote Caudwell, is of “the one man alone producing the phenomena of the world. He is Faust, Hamlet, Robinson Crusoe, Satan and Prufrock.”<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, all of Soyinka’s protagonists are involved in a lone-man crusade against the powers that be. Lakunle in Soyinka’s play, *The Lion and the Jewel*, for example, incurs a humiliating defeat at the hands of Baroka, the village chief, in their contention for Sidi’s hand. Baroka wins, because he stands for traditions, while the young school teacher loses because of his uncompromising drive for modernization. A case in point is Lakunle’s refusal to pay the “brideprice”: “to pay the price would be/ to buy a heifer off the market stall/ you’d be my chattel, my mere property.”<sup>40</sup>

Eman in *The Strong Breed* is another lone fighter, who is confronted by a society which makes a group of people scapegoats and carriers of society’s sins. He later gets hanged for his beliefs. But the character of Eman means much more to Soyinka, for we are told that “he [Soyinka] seems to put his own messianic obsessions on the scale for weighing and evaluation. The result he gets is rather disappointing . . . In other words, Soyinka may be querying whether he truly belongs to the “strong breed” of which messiahs are made and whether his own kind of art can save society.”<sup>41</sup>

That Eman does not belong to the “strong breed” is shown by his naivete in taking refuge in being a “stranger” when he talks to Sunma, his lover:

Sunma: By yourself you can do nothing here. Have you noticed how tightly we shut out strangers? Even if you lived here for a life-time, you would remain a stranger.

Eman: Perhaps that is what I like. There is peace in being a stranger.<sup>42</sup>

One by one the protagonists in Soyinka's plays are defeated by die-hard traditionalists. The heroes resemble remotely-controlled marionettes who dance to foreign tunes. This makes us wonder, why can't the drive for modernization be led by rational people who do not take pride in obstinacy but who weigh and evaluate circumstances. It is possible that Soyinka unconsciously believes in the invincibility of decadent traditions. Especially when we take into account this: "a breakdown in moral order implies, in the African world view, a rupture in the body of nature just like the physical mal-functioning of one man."<sup>43</sup> That sounds like the African proverb (Somali in this case) which goes, "an abandoned custom, (i.e., break in the moral order), brings forth the wrath of God which manifests itself through famine, torrential rains, etc. (i.e., rupture in nature)." Such a world view is advocated by the ruling classes to perpetuate their oppression of the masses. And with that kind of ideology, they want to create a false consciousness in the people: that their fate is pre-ordained and hence if you try to change it great misfortune will befall you.

Last, but not least, it is in the play *Kongi's Harvest* that Soyinka's true color is unveiled. The play is said to be "a critique of totalitarian ideology (i.e., socialist-oriented governments)."<sup>44</sup> Proof? The coming to power of a regime which tries to do away with tribalism; the formation of young brigades, the indoctrination of children—"We spread the creed of Kongism/ To every son and daughter;" the suppression of "dissent"—"And heads too slow to learn it [Kongism]/ will feel our mallet's weight;" and a familiar stereotyping of workers as 'stakhanovs'—"Our hands are like sandpaper/ Our fingernails are chipped/ Our lungs are filled with saw dust/ But our anthem still we sing"<sup>45</sup>—all point an accusing finger to an experience with socialism in Ghana, West Africa. Ogunba in his *The Movement of Transition*, writes "very many people—critics and observers—have identified Kongi as Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the late president of the Republic of Ghana. This association is not entirely unreasonable . . ." <sup>46</sup>

Responding to a similar charge against the late president, Achebe, Africa's foremost novelist, writes:

Nkrumah was one of the few leaders in Africa who understood what was going on in the world and tried to do something about it . . . [any attack on him] is a cold, uncommitted indictment . . . of the only serious political experiment that has ever been attempted in Ghana.<sup>47</sup>

It is not, therefore, unreasonable or by a mere coincidence that Soyinka is “sometimes severely criticized in Nigeria [and in Africa] as an ‘outsider’ who is viciously ridiculing sincere . . . efforts at the difficult task of nation-building.”<sup>48</sup>

All said, however, no one can dispute the fact that he is one of the most prolific writers in Africa. Nor can anyone deny the relevance of his works to the African context, as his depiction of events and characters reveal a bourgeoisie in confusion. And that is where his similarity to Balzac is most striking. The fact that Balzac depicted the crass stupidity and avarice of his class in 19th century France did not mean that he was anti status quo. On the contrary, he was a royalist and supporter of Catholicism (though not a religious person himself). What it does prove, however, is Marx’s belief “that great writers can have insights transcending their conscious convictions or attitudes . . .”<sup>49</sup> Naturally, no one could see more sharply than Balzac (a conservative), and Soyinka (a bourgeois intellectual) the rotten underbelly of their respective classes. Between the two of them, however, Balzac is less interested in hiding behind smoke-screens; he does not even spare writers of scathing, albeit valid, criticism. Their opportunism is evident in his *La Peau du Chargin*. Their problem emanates from their attempt to assert themselves as a separate entity, different from the bourgeoisie they come from and which gives them nourishment. Considering themselves to be “spectateurs du dieu mephistpheles,” they do not care if all hell is let loose on Paris as long as they can mockingly laugh at both “des rois et des peuples.”<sup>50</sup> In short, what Engels<sup>51</sup> said about Balzac is true about Soyinka: We learn more of the disarray and contradiction in elites at this juncture in African history through bourgeois protagonists in his works.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This is a revised version of a paper presented to Prof. K. Komar, Comparative and German Literature at UCLA, whose criticism was of immense value. I also wish to thank Prof. Maniquis, English Department, UCLA for his invaluable suggestions during the first draft of this paper.
- <sup>2</sup> This article was first published in *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* 14(3) (1985). Retrieved from: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0rh4c2hw>
- <sup>3</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), p. 48.
- <sup>4</sup> David Kaplan and Robert Manners, *Cultural Theory*. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 113.
- <sup>5</sup> Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 109.
- <sup>6</sup> Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 7.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12.
- <sup>8</sup> Roland Barthes, *Critical Essays*, Trans. Richard Howard (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), p. 255.
- <sup>9</sup> Eagleton, p. 51.
- <sup>10</sup> Adolfo S. Vazquez, "On Truth in the Arts," *Ufahamu* (UCLA), 12, no. 2 (1983) p. 12.
- <sup>11</sup> Leon Trotsky, "The Formalist School of Poetry and Marxism," in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, ed. Hazard Adams (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), p. 824.
- <sup>12</sup> Eagleton, p. 51. In fact, Eagleton paraphrases Pierre Macherey when he writes, "For Macherey, the effect of literature is essentially to deform rather than to imitate."
- <sup>13</sup> Tony Bennett, *Formalism and Marxism*. (London: Methuen, 1979) p. 8.
- <sup>14</sup> Eagleton, p. 64, trying to recapitulate the principal ideas in Brecht's "Epic Theatre."
- <sup>15</sup> John Lechte, "Fiction and Woman in 'La Nouvelle Heloise' and the Heritage of 1789," in *1789: Reading, Writing, Revolution*, ed. Francis Barker et al (Colchester, Essex: Hewitt Photo-Lith, 1982), p.47.
- <sup>16</sup> Wole Soyinka, *A Shuttle in the Crypt*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), p. 87. (cf) Brecht's: "Ah, what an age it is/When speaking of trees is almost crime/For it is a kind of silence about injustice!" Selected Poems, trans. H.R. Hays (New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1947) p. 173.
- <sup>17</sup> Herbert Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*. (London: Freedom Press, 1941), p.61.
- <sup>18</sup> *A Shuttle in the Crypt*. It is not true, in all cases, as Chinweizu et al say of Nigerian Poets, especially Soyinka, that "there is a failure of craft in Nigerian Poetry in English," simply because the poets in question "employ a plethora of imported imagery." "Toward the Decolonization of African Literature," *Transition*,

48(1975), p. 29. On the contrary, the running of the Antigone Story behind the Nigerian scene in "Live Burial," for example, unites the Nigerian struggle with old political and family struggles.

<sup>19</sup> John Pepper Clark, *Casualties—Poems 1966-68*. (London: Longman, 1970), p. 37.

<sup>20</sup> Wole Soyinka, *Opera Wonyosi*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), Preface to the Production script.

<sup>21</sup> Georg Lukacs, *Writer and Critic*. Trans. D. Khan (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1971), p. 225.

<sup>22</sup> Preface to *Opera Wonyosi*.

<sup>23</sup> Adebayo Bolarin-Williams, "The Crises of Confidence in the Criticism of African Literature," *Ufahamu*, 11, no. 2, (1982), p. 81.

<sup>24</sup> Louis Althusser, *Reading Capital*. Trans. Ben Brewster (Thetford, Norfolk: Lowe and Brydone, 1979), p. 316.

<sup>25</sup> John Agetua, *When the Man Died*. (Benin, Nigeria: John Agetua, 1975), p. 41.

<sup>26</sup> Wole Soyinka, "The Choice and Use of Languages," *Cultural Events in Africa*, no. 78(1971), p.4.

<sup>27</sup> Bertolt Brecht, "Writing the Truth: Five Difficulties," Trans. Richard Winston, in *Galileo: A Play by Bertolt Brecht* (New York: Grove Press, 1966), p. 142.

<sup>28</sup> David Punter et al, "Strategies for Representing Revolution," in ed. Barker et al, op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>29</sup> Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Homecoming* (London: Heinmann, 1972), p. 65.

<sup>30</sup> Barker et al, op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>31</sup> P.D. Tripathi, "The Lion and the Jewel: A Comparative and Thematic Study" *Bashiru*, 11, no. 1, p.98.

<sup>32</sup> Punter et al, p.92F.

<sup>33</sup> Soyinka, Preface to *Opera Wonyosi*.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> James Booth, *Writers and Politics in Nigeria*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> Wole Soyinka, *Season of Anomy*. (London: Rex Collings, 1973), p. 86.

<sup>37</sup> Myth, Literature and the African World. (Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 61.

<sup>38</sup> George Bizstray, *Marxist Models of Literary Realism*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), p. 112-3. One could perhaps argue that while 'laissez-faire individualism' in nascent capitalism associated with Calvinistic Protestantism was a step forward (individual rights diminishing the traditional power of the aristocracy, etc.); the same could not be said of some of Soyinka's characters in his oeuvre who only try to assert their individuality.

<sup>39</sup> Christopher Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality*. (London: Macmillian, 1937), p. 58.

<sup>40</sup> Wole Soyinka, *The Lion and the Jewel*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 8.

<sup>41</sup> Oyin Ogunba, *The Movement of Transition*. (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1969), p. 91.

- <sup>42</sup> Wole Soyinka, *Three Short Plays*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 91.
- <sup>43</sup> Soyinka, *Myth*, p. 52.
- <sup>44</sup> Ogunba, p. 66.
- <sup>45</sup> Wole Soyinka, *Kongi's Harvest*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 65.
- <sup>46</sup> Ogunba, p. 199.
- <sup>47</sup> Chinua Achebe, "Literature and Commitment in South Africa," *Issue: A Quarterly Journal of the Africanist Opinion*. 6, no.1 (1976), p. 37.
- <sup>48</sup> Ogunba, p. 232.
- <sup>49</sup> S.S. Praver, *Karl Marx and World Literature*. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 318.
- <sup>50</sup> Balzac, *La Peau du Chargin*. (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1920), p. 49.
- <sup>51</sup> I have learned more (from Balzac) than from all the professional historians, economists and statisticians put together. Karl Marx & F. Engels, *Literature and Art Selections from their Writings* (New York, 1947), p. 43.

