

# Critical Stylistic Analysis of Political Consciousness in *Morountodun*

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**Abstract:-** Critical use of language in literary texts can manifest the expression of political consciousness through the styles deployed by individual literary authors. Previous studies have phenomenologically looked at these from angles of pragmatics, discourse analysis and stylistics but have not significantly examined the manifestation of political consciousness in Nigerian literary texts within the framings of Critical Stylistics. Thus, this study investigates a critical stylistic analysis of political consciousness in Osofisan's *Morountodun* to know the stylistic dictations of meaning in the text. With the deployment of Lesley Jeffries's Critical Stylistic Theory (CS) as the theoretical framework, 14 excerpts from the text were put to analysis. While excerpts 1,2,3,4 and 5 were analysed with the CS tool of 'Naming and Describing' through labelling, 6,7,8,9,10 and 11 underwent 'Representing Actions/Events/States' with its principles of transitivity processes and 12, 13 and 14 deployed the tool of 'Speech and Thought Representation' using direct speech essentially. The study reveals the use of these CS tools for the expression of rebellion, labelling and direct condemnation of political corruption and imposition, all of which are ideologically loaded. The study, thus, concludes that in the expression of political consciousness in *Morountodun*, Osofisan manifests more of 'Naming and Describing' and 'Representing' tool than the 'Speech and Thought Representation to strategically express and label socio-political situations of rebellion against the government, direct attack by the masses against corrupt leadership and condemnation of political imposition. Tools of Critical Stylistics aid representation and labelling of words and thoughts by the author to exert ideologies to construct meaning(s) within socio-political consciousness.

**Keywords:-** Political Consciousness, Critical Stylistics, *Morountodun*, Literary Discourse.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The understanding and proper consideration for human rights and submission to constitutional dictations in the realm of politics is often regarded as political consciousness. As opposed to the negative conception often attributed to politics, political consciousness is a way of seeing, caring about and acting in the world. It is guided by a commitment to human rights and justice and an understanding of power and inequity in social, political and economic systems, relations and values' (Miller, 2002, p.2). This humanistic way of behaving entails caring for people's right and abhorring

any system that propagates injustice and distorting challenge to human rights. In this regard, it should be noted that the recognition of these humanistic preoccupations is often, in an analytical sense, deployed through an ideological use of language. This is why critical stylistics was built on the premise that writers and speakers make within their texts an embodiment of their social-culturally triggered ideologies. On this certitude, notice should be made to the fact that political consciousness being manifested in the language use of writers and speakers requires a critical engagement with the cultural beliefs and idiosyncrasies of the language user. This is supported by the words of Miller (2002) that having grounded in critical thinking and values of solidarity and human rights, political consciousness is a lifelong exploration of who we are, how we have been shaped, and how our values, world view, and actions can contribute to a better world for all. It is a journey filled with conflict and growth that can be both liberating and painful. He added that political consciousness as a tool motivates the critical analysis of power dynamics on many levels. Thus, such understanding is grounded on the premise that with literary texts, and Nigerian literary texts in particular, authors tackle and textualise the fight against injustice and corruption in Nigeria as a depiction of their political consciousness. Also, their representation of this through texts shows an explicit representation of their ideology built by their social-cultural beliefs. It is based on this that this study is thematically preoccupied with the critical stylistic appraisal of political consciousness as manifested in Osofisan's *Morountodun*.

### 1.1 Synopsis of *Morountodun*

*Morountodun* is one of the plays written by Femi Osofisan to investigate the social and political expressions of Nigerian society. The play reflects the uprising of poor peasants who revolt against the oppressive government. Socially, the play evaluates the contributions of women in nation-building and peacekeeping. *Morountodun*, an award-winning play by Femi Osofisan, is one of such modern African works which rely heavily on material from the African oral literature for its making.

In the process of disrupting a theatre company's stage re-enactment of the historical Agbekoya Farmers' Revolt, Titubi the spoilt daughter of the rich and influential Alhaja Kabirat suddenly decided to help the Government and her upper bourgeois class to infiltrate the camp of the warring farmers. Her target is to capture the elusive leader of the farmers' uprising named Marshal as a means of bringing the armed revolt to a stop. She is taken to a prison cell by Deputy Superintendent of Police, Salami, who earlier ironically

cajoled her into taking up the role. There, she is taken through a process of coaching by the same Police Superintendent on her course of action in the camp of the revolting peasants so that the peasant warriors will not understand her true identity as a state agent. Meanwhile, the plan is for her to remain in the prison cell and be released alongside imprisoned farmers whom the police have gathered will be released through a planned invasion of the prison by the peasant warriors.

The plan works and Titubi is released alongside the prisoners and she follows the warriors to their camp in the bush where she acts as a nurse for the wounded soldiers and men, to get all the information needed to capture Marshal. Persuaded, however, by a first-hand experience of the farmers' suffering and the raw inhuman conditions under which they live, she gives up her secret service for the government and state and identifies with the oppressed peasants.

In what seems like a fulfilment in her mission, Titubi brings Marshal to the Police Superintendent in the presence of her mother who has come to enquire of her progress and welfare. But to the amazement of the officer and her mother, Titubi returns to the bush with the captured Marshal and continues her duty for the peasant warriors having identified totally with their cause. Only then is Marshal convinced of her true sympathy for the peasant masses. As a reward to her, Marshal marries Titubi and changes her name to "Moruntodun", which means, "I have found a sweet thing". But Marshal does not stay either to consummate his marriage or to answer the government's call for peaceful negotiation, but plunges back into the front and continues the struggle. However, we are told that peace returned through negotiation "after each side had burned itself out."

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The issues of political consciousness on the one hand and critical stylistics on the other hand have enjoyed a rich academic audience over the years. For the former, studies have been on how media outlets contribute to students' political consciousness (Ali, Sohail and Hassan, 2013), while others have looked into it within the framings of pragmatics, stylistics and even pragma-stylistics (Osisanwo and Adekunle, 2017). For the latter, critical stylistic analysis of texts in general and literary texts, in particular, has been made to construction and portrayal of minority groups in Nigerian print media (Olaluwoye, 2015), and also has been made to the investigation of the phenomenological deliverance of social themes of order and chaos to young adult in young adult science fictions (Mustafa and Khalil, 2019). However, to the best of our knowledge, very low interest has been paid to how critical stylistic understanding of literary discourse can be used to express political consciousness in Nigerian literary texts. Thus, this study is a critical stylistic enquiry into the expression of political consciousness in Osofisan's *Moruntodun*.

## III. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Within the broad field of applied linguistics, several pieces of research have been conducted on literary discourse and critical stylistics. Olaluwoye (2015) did a critical stylistic study of identity and minority groups in the Nigerian literary print media. Investigating *The Nation* and *The Guardian*, the study revealed that the CS tool of enumerating and exemplifying, assuming and implying, presenting other's speech and thoughts, and presenting processes and states contribute to meaning-making and linguistically construct minority groups in Nigeria. Also, Osisanwo and Adekunle (2017) investigated the representation of political consciousness, pragma-stylistically, in the two Nigerian literary texts: Soyinka's *Alapata Apata* and Osofisan's *Moruntodun*. The study based its analysis on the contextual representation of political consciousness in the texts using Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Act Theory and the stylistic representation using Jeffries's Critical Stylistics. It revealed that the contextualisation of the two texts within the standpoint of pragma-stylistics sees the contexts within which the authors write as triggers of the styles of their writings. Mustafa and Khalil (2019) too did a critical stylistic analysis of order and chaos in Young Adult Science Fiction. The study employed the critical stylistic tool of negation in the analysis of the two texts – *The Maze Runner* and *Ready Player One* – and presented the tool as a dutiful linguistic tool that steers the texts flexibly in portraying people's general world.

These studies above have both theoretical and conceptual interconnectedness with the current study which necessitated that this study will draw heavily from them.

## IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For a proper textual analysis of political consciousness (presupposed by ideology) in *Moruntodun*, the Critical Stylistics Theory (CS) of Lesley Jeffries is adopted. Jeffries has her model of critical stylistics with her claim that the producer of any oral or written text is pressured to choose from the existing terms and that the choice of the terms is ideologically loaded (Jeffries, 2014). Historically, CS developed in reaction to the rise of critical discourse analysis as an increasingly influential approach to ideology in language. Indeed, the development of specifically ideological or 'critical' stylistics has led to the conclusion that the tools of analysis that we need to perform all kinds of text analysis are the same. In other words, texts make meaning in fundamentally the same way, whether they are poems, novels, newspapers or political manifestoes (ibid.). Though claimed that it drew heavily from critical discourse analysis, but, for Jeffries, critical stylistics differs from critical discourse analysis in having a framework to guide its practice which draws together insights from several models, but is unified at the broadest level of metafunctions. For her, at the heart of critical stylistics is the idea that there is a level of meaning which sits somewhere between the systematic (coded) meaning of what Saussure called the '*langue*' and the contextual and relatively variable meaning of language in use, which Saussure called '*parole*' (ibid.).

As a contemporary and modern approach to the study of style, critical stylistics entails a careful, carping interpretation of texts largely with the sole aim of bringing into alfresco some ideologies (of the writer or speaker) within which the text has come to be textualised. This approach to stylistics believes that there lies within the text to be interpreted some ideologies which are products of the society, gender, religion, class, among other features of the writer or speaker. And it is the principal task of a critical stylistician to critically undergo, through his critical stylistics tools, an appraisal of such text to bring out those ideologies into the interpretation. As she (2014, p.417) puts it, ‘critical stylistics is a new field of stylistics, related to critical discourse analysis as well as to stylistics itself. It has the aim of bringing the rigour and textual focus of stylistics to the analysis of non-literary texts to identify the ideological underpinnings of such texts.’ Largely, the theory uses several tools or strategies in the construal of writers’ or speakers’ ideology within the text. Some of these tools of CS, as they often are called, include: Naming and Describing, Representing Actions/Events/States, Equating and Contrasting, Exemplifying and Enumerating, Prioritising, Implying and Assuming, Hypothesising, Presenting Others’ Speech and Thoughts, Representing Time, Space and Society, and Negating.

## V. METHODOLOGY

As this study is descriptive, it adopts a qualitative research design as it best provides the textual analysis of the text under analysis. With the aid of a purposive data sampling procedure, 14 excerpts with the manifestation of characters’ expression of political consciousness triggered by the respective idiosyncrasies are selected for analysis from the primary text – *Moronutodun*. In all the excerpts selected, 1,2,3,4 and 5 were analysed with the CS tool of ‘Naming and Describing,’ 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 with ‘Representing Actions/Events/States,’ and 12, 13 and 14 deployed the tool of ‘Speech and Thought Representation.’ The use of the purposive data sampling procedure was triggered by the fact in the whole of the play, there are other instantiations of other language use. But, as this study only focuses on the expression of political consciousness, the excerpts which instantiate the phenomenon in question – the expression of political consciousness – need to be purposively selected.

## VI. ANALYSIS

### 6.1 Critical Stylistic Tools of Political Consciousness in *Morountodun*

#### 6.1.1 Naming and describing strategy

##### EXCERPT 1

MARSHAL: City people have no compassion. *The well-fed dog has no thought for those who are hungry.*

In this excerpt, the character of the people who live in the city is labelled as having no “compassion.” This social situation painted through this discourse of name-calling strategically describes the kind of social configuration that causes disparity, hatred and inequality in the society. MARSHAL, to label the situation appropriately, calls the city

people “the well-fed dog” who has no “compassion” “for those who are hungry”. This noun phrase—“the well-fed dog”—is stylistically post-modified by “for those who are hungry”. The definite article “the” aptly and describes those selfish beings, but the target words are the adjective “well-fed” and the headword, noun “dog”. The adjective “well-fed” is deployed to pre-modify the noun “dog” to accurately describe the nature and the degree of avarice by the leaders (just like a dog that still eats avariciously even though it is already well-fed) and the impartial distribution of resources between the local and the city. Therefore, the adjective “well-fed” is purely descriptive and the noun “dog” is appropriately reflective of Nigerian political leadership traits.

##### EXCERPT 2

TITUBI: Go on, what are you waiting for? Snap them on. (*Laughs, strutting.*) How many markets do you know in this town, you who call yourself Salami. Ehn, or are you busy salaaming to look around you? This town is one long chain of marketers, *a roaring world of tough, fearless women.* And do you know whose name, all alone, rules over all these women?... Hurry up and snap your handcuffs.

The naming strategy in this excerpt proclaims the ability of women in political control. TITUBI, while challenging SUPRINTENDENT’s ability to arrest her, describes the power women, especially her mother, wields through the labelling of “a roaring world of tough, fearless women”. The structure of this noun phrase is the combination of some descriptive adjectives that label women as “roaring”, “tough”, and “fearless” women. These adjectives pre-modify the headword “women” with the cluster of indefinite article “a” and preposition, “of”. The ‘women’ are proclaimed by TITUBI to have superior power over the police authority because the police are already under the corrupt influence of political manipulations in the society. Thus, the roaring, tough and fearless power of these women ruled by ALHAJA can tear the police authority apart. The police, in any society, are known for the arrest and investigatory role to specifically bring order to the society, but when they are challenged in such a role based on the influence some politicians have on them, they become are a toothless body that can be threatened by “a roaring world of tough, fearless women”. This kind of challenge places a big question on the socio-political stability of any society like Nigeria. The adjectives used to label this situation give an evaluative assessment of the interplay between a set of influential persons in the society and some regulatory bodies of the government. In a socio-political situation where unnecessary and extortive taxes are imposed and most, if not all, constituted authorities are bribed, Osofisan posited that the only feasible solution is revolt.

##### EXCERPT 3

TITUBI: Dare it, you *smelling pig. You offspring of some teak-laden litter at the back of a latrine!*

This excerpt is a continuation of a similar situation described above. The naming strategy in “smelling pig” is deployed to vilify the police authority as a microcosm of government whose dignity is already messed with corruption. “Smelling” is a descriptive adjective that labels such an authority imbecile, redundant and socially deformed. Its pre-

modification function renders the naming of the political authority dysfunctional. Ordinarily, the headword “pig” is a specific label for a socially outbound animal. Thus, the choice of words ostensibly reflects the style Osofisan prefers in naming and describing the roles of some regulatory authorities in the society, especially those that are aberrant in their constitutional and social functions. Similarly, TITUBI continues in her naming and describing a strategy to cow the integrity of the police authority by saying “offspring of some teak-laden litter at the back of a latrine.” The headword is “offspring”, while the post-modifier is “of some teak-laden litter at the back of a latrine”. In this naming, the leaders, from the description of SUPERINTENDENT, are constructed as useless, irresponsible and redundant as “some teak-laden at the back of a latrine” is. Any “offspring”, i.e. a product from such description, cannot be any relevant to social orderliness. They rather contribute to the pollution and instability already ingrained in society. The adjective “teak-laden” and the noun “latrine” foregrounded an unhealthy condition to construct social imbalance. The headword “offspring” labels that a similar contribution would spring from such an unhealthy society.

#### EXCERPT 4

MARSHAL: ...We know the stream of blood along whose banks your family spreads its seeds. We have seen you in our midst, different from how you came. And we have grown to cherish you, and that is enough. Now, I call on this earth I am standing on. [*Takes gourd from KOKONDI and pours libation. BOGUNDE softly chants an incantation, beating a rhythm on this weapon.*] I call on you trees and animals which people our forests and are our kinsmen. I summon the seeing eyes of our ancestors. And you, my very dear friends, standing in this charged embrace of sunlight and wind, bear witness...Her battlefield among the wounded and stricken. Therefore I pluck her name like this, all ripe and golden, not from the laden shelf of our violent heroes, but the storehouse of beauty and tenderness. I name here—Morountodun!

Excerpt (4) labels a vindication of TITUBI sudden sense of right to turn back to her mother’s misrule in the society and maltreatment of common peasants. MARSHAL’s description of TITUBI is reflective of a typical encomium a true heroine deserves. TITUBI represents a distinguished member of the upper class that identifies with ordinary people on the streets for socio-political liberation. The common people seem to take solace in self-courage and praise as this is identified in the construction of “standing in this charged embrace of sunlight and wind”. The naming strategy is descriptive of ever courageous firmness of the peasants in the pursuit of social justice. Their courage is egged on by TITUBI’s support. Thus, the evaluative adjectives “ripe and golden” are deployed to celebrate TITUBI’s tender and beautiful approach to confront government ‘total war’ on the peasants. The headwords “beauty and tenderness” appropriately describe TITUBI as the discovery of peace/sweetness—Morountodun—to their pursuit of justice. Thus, TITUBI is labelled “Morountodun”.

#### EXCERPT 5

BURAIMOH: You’ll always be a worm, lawyer. Go on, abase yourself before these pigs.

An excerpt (5), the subjective assessment in labelling ISAAC “worm” is dependent on Osofisan to label a leader whose action causes betrayal and “pigs” is used to categorise the peasants whose threat instigates the betrayal. This naming strategy is constructed through BURAIMOH’s discourse that describes ISAAC, lawyer, as a ‘worm’ and the peasants who compelled him to begin to betray their course as ‘pigs’. In this discourse, the obvious judgment is that the society is seen as worthless of any consideration, so the peasants who are illiterates and the working class should not be regarded. Their existence is likened to that of ‘pigs’ that could be kept in the dirt with little or no regard. This is a cause that is often pursued by the leaders, to defraud society and abase the populace. When the lawyer, who represents the judicial hope of the country, begins to give up and reconcile with the populace, BURAIMOH describes him as ‘a worm’. This word is stylistically chosen to portray the typical character of legal practitioners, who after having been fed and trusted, betrays the trust to make their ends meet. Such a practice is detrimental to socio-political stability.

#### 6.1.2 Representing Actions/Events/States

#### EXCERPT 6

DIRECTOR:...the Agbekoya uprising, in which ordinary farmers, in the west of the country, rose and confronted the state. Maybe you remember? Illiterates farmers, whom we had all along thought to be docile, peace-loving, if not stupid, suddenly took to arms and began to fight against the government...And the war was still hot and bitter. Farmers dying, policemen falling, soldiers going and not returning...If we could not speak about the war in the east, because of stiff decrees, would we also be silent about the one in the west? And suppose another should start in the north? Well, we decided not to be silent. We decided to go and rouse people up by doing a play on the subject.

In this excerpt, different lexical verbs represent both actions and a state of being. An analysis of these different kinds of actions strategically represented in these verbs reveals the themes of revolt and war. The representations are therefore articulated the material and relational and mental processes of transitivity processes. Those in the receiving end of the political injustice in the country where taxes are unnecessarily imposed are constructed as agents/doers in the selected discourses. In the material process, this is achieved by placing them as participants functioning as actors of material processes. They are represented as “Agbekoya”, “ordinary farmers”, “we”. The attention is therefore on how Osofisan rides on their involvement through the material process of “rose”, “confronted”, “took and began”, “decided”. These verbal actions are stylistically adopted to represent various ideological strategies the farmers deployed in combating the draconic government. The material processes of “rose and confronted” are used transitively where the actions of the participants are extended to the goal, “the state”. The actions of rising against and confronting the state construct the farmers’ agitation and revolt against the

injustice being meted out to them. With determination, they are ready to squarely challenge the state.

In another verbal usage to represent material process within the same discourse, “took and began” are deployed to show the farmers’ determination not only to go to war with the government but also to do so with force. These two material processes ostensibly reveal the degree of corruption in government and the readiness of the masses/peasants not to give in to the undue tax imposition by the government. Thus, the relational process of “was” is used to depict how “hot and bitter” the construction of revolt and war is. Still, DIRECTOR in this play, in his attempt to construct how fierce the farmers’ revolt or war against the imposition by the government was, uses the mental process of “decide” to show the restlessness and unwavering readiness to not remain silent and to speak against socio-political injustice. These transitivity processes have aided the construction to represent socio-political actions and state of things in the literary text as a microcosm of the society.

#### EXCERPT 7

MOSUN: Oh yes! The council officials grew more daring and more ruthless.

TITUBI: No? help him revive his memory. (*A couple of slaps again.*) Gently, don’t leave any mark on the wretched man. We have respect for the law, even though the law is a donkey. These beggars have been riding it with glee down our spine all these days. And it is enough. We’ve been bruised enough. And enough of pretending not to notice! We didn’t ask anybody’s father not to be rich, did we?

The main verb in discourse by MOSUN is a mental process signified by the word “grew” to demonstrate the action of the government officials to the mental perception of the peasants. In this construction, the mental process is deployed intransitively because the action performed by “the council of officials”, was not directly sensed by the peasants as objects. However, the process is achieved by the actor entity, which is “the council officials” to strategically represent the leader or government that attempts to be “daring and ruthless” in their treatment and imposition of taxes on the peasants. Thus, the use of this mental process by MOSUN justifies the revolt the masses/peasants take to.

Equally, the second verb “is” is used relationally. The underlined excerpt—the law is a donkey—contains metaphorical attributes with negative connotations about the slavish position of law in checkmating the way government officials abuse powers. This relational process represents the law as a donkey that the government official bend, manipulate or dislodge whenever they want to perpetrate socio-political injustice. The law that is originally enacted as machinery to serve as a watchdog over injustice, to mete out punishment for offenders or lawbreakers and stipulate whatnots in the society is now slavish to the control of the government officials to override social justice. To achieve this, the law is placed in the subjective position and it is the identified participant of the relational process signalled by the equative verb ‘is’. More so, to put an end to this, another relational process of action, represented in “and it is enough”

is used to construct the determination of the masses/peasants to revolt against this manipulation.

#### EXCERPT 8

TITUBI: And that was it. I knew at last that I had won. I knew I had to kill the ghost of Moremi in my belly. I’m not Moremi! Moremi served the State, was the State, was the spirit of the ruling class. But it is not true that the State is always right...

The representation in this discourse articulates the reality of self-discovery in fighting a just cause. This representation rides on the conscience of TITUBI’s sense of moral right to retrace her steps from the injustice being perpetrated by her mother to ally with the force of the peasants in the pursuit of social justice. In these mental and material processes, ‘I’ is the senser of the mental verb ‘knew’ and Moremi is the actor of the material verb ‘served’, while ‘knew’ has a mental connotation of reality and discovery, ‘served’ has a concrete representation of deed and justification. ‘I’ in the discourse has referent to the actor TITUBI for her self-discovery and ‘Moremi’ has a heroic referent of a legendary that fought for a just cause on behalf of the state. Thus, these material verbs—knew and served—constructed determination and reality.

TITUBI refutes liken herself with *Moremi* because this time, she is not fighting for the state, the state is not right. This is appropriated through the relational process articulated in the relational verb ‘am’ in “I’m not Moremi...Moremi was the state”. The ergative verbs “am and was” are used to construct and relate the positions of the actors—TITUBI and Moremi—in the situation presented. The strategy of representations of actions, events and states in the excerpted discourse has painted a vivid construction of social reality presented in Osofisan’s *Morountodun*.

#### EXCERPT 9

Baba: That its agents fleeced us, that inspectors smashed into our homes to remove whatever they wanted.

The transitivity structure constructed in the excerpt above strategically represents the leaders as the actors of the material processes “fleeced and smashed”. These material verbs are used connotatively to inflict pains on the goals “us and our home” which grammatically and symbolically represent the masses. ‘Fleece’ ordinarily means to trick someone out of money while ‘smash’ means to hit extremely violently. These processes present the horrible and coercive schemes the government officials deployed in imposing taxes on the peasants. The verbs are used transitively to construct how the maltreatment from the actor, government, extends to the goal, the peasants. This action represents the image of politics in the present society.

#### EXCERPT 10

MARSHAL: They looted our homes and set them ablaze, while we loafed there in their city, signing worthless papers.

From the above, two actions are associated with the leaders through material processes of “looted and set”. This, in turn, makes the peasant, those that the material actions are directed, “loaf” in the city. This transitivity structure then constructs themes of corruption and violence. The

government officials are represented as agents/doers in the material processes “looted” and “set”. They are constructed by the pronoun “they”. The intensity of corruption and political injustice is presented through the material verbs ‘loot and set’ that is used transitively. ‘Loot’ implies the criminal act of forcefully siphoning public money for private gains, while ‘set ablaze’ implies the destruction the leaders engage in alongside the looting. Where this is no peace, where the peasants are homeless, poor and despondent, the peasants, as represented by the pronoun ‘we’, are constructed by the material verb ‘loaf’ as lazy and idle. Typically, in a socio-political structure where there is injustice or imposition of dues, the masses suffer.

#### EXCERPT 11

**SUPERINTENDENT:** *You lament your daughter. We lament the land. We weep for the lack of peace, for the violence in the air. We weep that rebels beyond our power fall upon us at will and make a mockery of our manhood....*

This discourse constructs priority placement by the leaders against the interest of the public. While the clamour for a favourable socio-political climate is advocated for by the populace through lamentation, the government officials advocate selfish gains and lament their family woes instead of general woes. The critical stylistic strategy that constrains this is a material process. The behavioural verbs “lament” and “weep” are used transitively to impinge on the circumstance of the actors to their goals. The two behavioural processes ‘lament’ and ‘weep’ in this discourse reveal a lot of information about the inconsiderate dispositions of the leaders or government officials to social and political concerns. The leaders are represented as subverting the just cause of social balance to satisfy their familiar concerns. While the citizenry agitates and cries for ‘peace’, relief and emancipation from woes, or imposition or hunger, the government officials agitate for their ends. The transitivity structure of these behavioural processes reveals the circumstance of the perversion of public concerns to private issues.

#### 6.1.3 Speech and Thought Presentation

This is another critical stylistic strategy used to construct socio-political discourses in the play, *Morountodun*. This is, according to Ogunsiji and Ogunbemi (2016: 388) citing Tabbert (2012), ‘a very manipulative way of implanting other people’s views in the readers’. This strategy is a textual-conceptual framework that allows the representation of words and thoughts of others, and it also presents manipulative ideologies of the authors/speakers as well as those of the readers as an act of constructing meaning(s). Leech and Short (2007) have therefore identified the Direct Speech (DS), Indirect Speech (IS), Free Direct Speech (FIS), Narrator’s Report of Speech Act (NRSA), and Narrator’s Presentation of Voice (NPV). In these excerpts, Direct Speech and Indirect Speech styles have been adopted to present the speeches and thoughts of some characters or situations.

#### EXCERPT 12

**SUPERINTENDENT:** *This recurring question. ‘My daughter! My daughter!’ It’s like a scene in a play. Do you like the theatre, ALHAJA? Me, I’m simply crazy about it. Ask Couple, he’s our Secretary in the boys. You see the irony. That’s a war for you.*

The direct speech style is adopted in “‘My daughter! My daughter!’” by SUPERINTENDENT to emphatically tease and question ALHAJA’s obsession with her nuclear family and personal belongings rather than the public, the market women she is elected to lead and watch over their affairs. Thus, the choice of this particular phrase reveals ALHAJA’s inordinate concern for the safety of her daughter who volunteers to know the accomplice of peasants’ revolt. SUPERINTENDENT, with this style, plays on ALHAJA’s social sense of moral justness. Afterwards, he turns to Indirect Speech style to ask ALHAJA if she ever enjoys the ‘theatre’ being unfolded in the community while she is only concerned about her daughter. This, according to him, presents the irony of a situation where the rich do not want to get hurt but want the poor man to suffer for the evil they (they rich) created. SUPERINTENDENT faithfully reminds of the fact that, during the war, everybody gets hurt.

#### Excerpt 13

**MAMA KAYODE:** *The governor’s voice was sweet, you could almost drink it. And at first, it was difficult to follow his words. And at the first, it was difficult to follow his words. They seemed to come from a church organ. [Mimicking] ‘Ladies and gentlemen, I know you have some grievances. But I have come to speak to you as the father of all the people in this state. This killing must stop. It is senseless for anybody to shoot guns against the government. That person will be crushed. So I am appealing to you. Think of your wives and children. Lay down your arms now and let us talk. All the people who have been misleading you till now, you must hand them over to the government, for they are your enemies, who don’t want you to have peace and progress. We shall deal with them. And above all, you must pay your tax, it’s the only way we can help you...Pay your tax! Pay your tax!’*

This excerpt also contains a Direct Speech style to recapitulate the speech and thought of the governor when he spoke with the peasants about the necessity to pay tax, the power of government to punish whoever aborts the payment and the warning against the peasants’ revolt that has resulted in killing. The style adopts by MAMA KAYODE to reveal this is mimicry. This is used to navigate the psychological disposition of the governor in addressing the peasants. His choice of language plays on antithesis by employing both warnings and appealing and is socially callous by deploying threat to compel them to pay. A socially friendly government represent its speech and thought through warm and friendly words, or at worst, through persuasive choice. If the governor recognizes the grievances of the peasants but his choice of words still rides on “crush”, the governor can be seen as socially dangerous.

**Excerpt 14**

And then Baba stepped forward. He bowed. Like this, very low. He said: “Your Excellency, my son, we have listened carefully to your fatherly appeal. Our roads have been so bad for years now that we can no longer reach the markets to sell our crops. Even your Excellency had to make your trip here by helicopter. Your council officials and the akodas harass us minute to minute and collect bribes from us. Then they go and build a mansion in the city. Sanitary inspectors like Mister Bamsun are bloodsuckers. Your Marketing Board seizes our cocoa and pays us only one-third of what it sells to the oyinbo. We have no electric, and we still drink tanwiji from the stream. Many of our children are in jail for what your people call smuggling. We protested and your police mounted expeditions to maim us and reduce our houses to ashes. But all these do not matter anymore. Now that we have listened to your kind and fatherly appeal, we shall forget all our sufferings and pay our taxes. I promise we shall now send in the money promptly, through the same route your appeal has come to us—by helicopter!”

MAMA KAYODE continues with a Direct Speech style to present BABA’s (one of the leaders of revolt) response to the governor’s speech. The strategy is used to construct how government officials eat fat on them, get away with their farm produces and leave them with deplorable roads while they, the officials fly by air to get to wherever they so wish. This style enables MAMA KAYODE to satirise a socio-political situation where the government officials fleece the peasants to build mansions in the city, but the peasants wallow in hunger and live in a deplorable state. This state is stylistically replicated by the lexical choice of the borrowed word, *tanwiji*—a deadly bacteria in water, and no electric’. The use of expressions such as “our children are in jail” and “maim us and reduce our houses to ashes” constructs the agonies and travails of the citizenry at the expense of the misappropriation of the government officials. BABA’s speech, as manipulatively represented through Direct speech style by MAMA, humorously challenges the governor that they would only pay their taxes when they government officials understand their pains and endure the same problems of having to ply a deplorable road, instead of flying ‘by helicopter’. Thus, it can be concluded that the choice of these particular sentences over others to be presented by MAMA KAYODE is already manipulative of the socio-political situations.

**VII. CONCLUSION**

Squarely, the understanding of political consciousness in the literary discourse of *Morountodun* underscores that in the text, the writer embodies a wide range of social-political issues of Nigeria and the particular endeavour to tackle such misconceptions about politics. To address these within the domain of critical stylistics, we are made to know that Osofisan employed three tools of critical stylistics, vis-à-vis, Representing Actions/Events/States which takes the largest application, Naming and Describing which followed in the application and Speech and Thought Representation which was used at the least. These three tools of CS collectively

contributed to the expression of political consciousness in the text.

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