

A Pragmatic Analysis of Wole Soyinka's *The Beatification Of Area Boy: A Lagosian Kaleidoscope*

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Abstract

*Wole Soyinka is one of the Nigerian writers whose works satirize the socio-cultural, political and religious experiences of Nigeria. Extant works have been done on Wole Soyinka's *The Beatification of Area Boy: A Lagosian Kaleidoscope*, especially from artistic perspectives. However, the stratification of Nigerian society has not been sufficiently investigated in the text from a pragmatic lens. This study, therefore, investigates the prominent pragmatic acts in the text to show their context as well as the prominent pragmatic functions inherent in the text. Data were purposively selected and analysed using Jacob Mey's pragmatic act theory. Two major issues were revealed in the analysis namely: ruling-class or privileged-related activities and masses or underprivileged-related functions. The former was foregrounded through the practs of discriminating and ordering while the later was revealed through the practs of complaining, criticising and protesting. The study is a call to the ruling class to discharge their governmental roles fairly and understand that government positions are not to be used to amass personal virtues. The study concludes that literary works are not written in a vacuum but are made to reveal the realities of society.*

Key words: *Area Boys, pragmatic acts, beautification, Wole Soyinka*

Introduction

Political realities are contexts that surround a nation's political experiences. Literature from time immemorial has been a reflection of societal happenings. No writer writes in a vacuum; every artistic work is a conscious or unconscious attempt to paint society. Every type of writing still has a sociological event in mind, even whether it is created in the imaginary. At any point in time, a given society is examined through a range of phenomena like its literature and its political history (Azeez, 2001:372). Literature as a creative and dynamic discipline cannot thrive without language use in representing the worldview of a group of individuals or the writer's personal experiences. Of the three main genres, the dramatic genre appears to be closest when it comes to the representation of human actions at large. This is simply because it prides on dialogue among characters who themselves are created from experiences in society.

According to Schaffner (2004, p.117), quoting Dieckmann (1981), 'in linguistic literature, political language has been used either to denote the use of language in the context of politics, i.e., a specific language use to achieve a specific politically motivated function, or it has been used to denote the specific political vocabulary, i.e. words and phrase that refer to extra-linguistic phenomena in the domain of politics.' It is no news that there is social stratification everywhere in the world where human beings cohabit. The reason is not far-fetched: man himself is beastly in nature and is naturally selfish or wicked. This speaks for why there are usually cases of man's inhumanity to man. Really, "all fingers are not equal"; there are the poor and the rich, the weak and the strong, the masters and the slaves, the conquerors and the conquered, the colonizers and the colonized, the leaders and the led, and the list is almost inexhaustible.

In line with the usual societal stratification, as obtained everywhere in the world and especially as predominant in Africa, this paper sets out to investigate the political realities in Wole Soyinka's *The Beatification of Area Boy: a Lagosian's Kaleidoscope* to show the stratification of the citizens into the privileged ruling class and the unprivileged masses through the instrumentality of Jacob Mey's pragmatic acts. Pragmatics, which deals with how the use of language is shaped by context and how language users might interpret language use in different situations becomes a veritable tool for demystifying language use in society. This paper is set to investigate the pragmatic use in Wole Soyinka's *The Beautification of Area Boy* to show the contexts as well as pragmatic functions explicated in the text.

A Synopsis of Soyinka's *The Beatification of Area Boy*

On sighting the play, *The Beatification of Area Boy: A Lagosian Kaleidoscope*, one would wonder how area boys could be 'beatified'. It then takes a closer reading of the play to decipher how the image of the area boy is presented distinctively and originally. The play, which has a socio-political undertone, attempts to present a different perception of the street 'urchins' otherwise called 'area boys' in the Nigerian social environment.

Generally, society views 'area boys' as a group of 'no-gooders', thieves, pranksters and miscreants, but Soyinka portrays them here as a set of people who are as responsible as the next person and are only busy going about their own business of survival in their world. They have their own life as every other person does and they labour for income as every other person does, too. Therefore, they are not just a mischievous crew or a bunch of miscreants as they are commonly regarded in the typical Nigerian social situation.

The play is set in the Lagos metropolis of Nigeria, where it is fairly common to encounter boys who are classified in the category of street urchins or area boys. The play centres on a syndicate headed by Sanda. Sanda is a university dropout who is quite smart and can think fast on his feet. He works as a security guard in a shopping complex from where he can source potential clients for his group. The group members are not just criminals because we see them engaged in different trades. Sanda is portrayed here as a benevolent man and a freedom fighter of some sort by his denigrating songs about the military that was in power then

Then comes Miseyi, a former university colleague of Sanda's, who was first shocked and disgusted on seeing Sanda at his security job post and was quick to condemn him. On getting to know the reason behind it though, she gladly joins forces with him. Miseyi later shuns her fiancé to marry Sanda on her wedding night. She is supposed to be married to a top government official that night but she instantly changes her mind in a way that appears quite weird, especially as it is Sanda, who measures no way close to the social and economic standing of her would-be husband.

Judge, a seriously mentally disturbed man, is a further interesting character in this play who deserves to be mentioned and he was once a Lawyer. He can be referred to as a cat with nine lives because he had two brushes with death in a day but escaped luckily. He realized that justice was not won through the law but through the path of mercy. A very complex personality, Judge

produces humour and relief through his verbose expressions as he continues fantasizing about one good treatment or the other.

Mama Put, a local food seller, is also an interesting character who is of importance in the play. She is the mother of one, who is said to have lost her husband in the civil war and watched while her brother was killed for her sake. She does not allow this to drag her down, demoralize or stagnate her. She rather moves to Lagos to make ends meet, being a hardworking woman who defies all odds to cater for her daughter and send her to school.

The play, therefore, touches on some delicate issues such as the abuse of power by the military administration, poverty, oppression, hope, and love. The play employs outrageous songs by Sanda and other characters, which indirectly express Soyinka's discontent with the military administration of the time. Hence, as Sanda struggles for social emancipation from the societal stigmatization surrounding fellows in his category, he also silently champions the course of emancipation from dictatorship as a benevolent freedom fighter of his world.

Literature Review

Researchers have done so much on the works of Wole Soyinka in different genres. Some of these works have been from a literary perspective and others from a linguistic perspective. Few of these works are reviewed in this article. Ejiofor and Kamalu (2011) attempted a study of Soyinka's *The Strong Breed*, with their insights based on sociology and critical discourse analysis. In their article entitled "Leadership and Cultural Frames in Soyinka's *The Strong Breed*, they examined how religion enables persons and institutions to legitimize power and social control in a traditional African setting. And how religion plays a huge role in defining the hierarchies of authority, without logical recourse to individual rights and choices. While Ejiofor and Kamalu (2011) examine Wole Soyinka's *Strong Breed* using critical discourse analysis as a theoretical framework, the current study focusses on Wole Soyinka's *The Beautification of Area Boys* with a theoretical orientation from pragmatic acts theory. Owoeye and Bamigboye (2015) also studied Soyinka's *The Beatification of Area Boy*, examining the shift in style between the play and Soyinka's earlier play, *Madmen and Specialists*. In this study, Owoeye and Bamigboye (2015: 126) observed that: "*Madmen and Specialists* is one of Soyinka's earlier plays where his angst against an oppressive ruling cabal is bared for all to criticize. While Owoeye and Bamigboye (2015) examine the style between Wole Soyinka's *Beautification of Area Boy* and

Madmen and Specialist, the current study examines pragmatic acts and functions in Soyinka's *Beautification of Area Boys*.

Adebayo (2001) studied ideology and style in Soyinka's *The Beautification of Area Boy*, alongside *Trial of Brother Jero*. Ebewo (2002) studies the use of satire in Soyinka's plays, including *The Beautification of Area Boy*. He observes that many of Soyinka's plays are satirical in tone due to the kind of issues he raises in many of his plays. Alo and Ayinuola (2017) examined the ideology in the anthems of selected African states. Egharevba (2004) examined the politics of Soyinka's *The Beautification of Area Boy*, describing the play as an X-ray of "the nation's soul". Eshiet (2004) studied topicality in *The Beautification of Area Boy* with respect to a paradigm shift in the play. In his work entitled *Understanding Soyinka: The Beautification of Area Boy: a Lagosian Kaleidoscope*, Dunmade (2006) studied the salient issues that characterize Soyinka's drama, focusing on *The Beautification of Area Boy*.

From the foregoing, it can be observed that previous studies have paid insufficient attention to Wole Soyinka's *The Beautification of Area Boys* particularly the pragmatic acts and functions inherent in the text. This study, therefore, examines pragmatic acts in Wole Soyinka's *The Beautification of Area Boys* with a view to examining prominent pragmatic functions inherent in the text.

Theoretical Framework

The Pragmatic Acts Theory, commonly referred to as a theory of pragmeme, credited to Jacob L. Mey (2001) as developed in his seminal text entitled *Pragmatics: An Introduction* was used for this study. The concept of pragmatic acts was started as a substitute for Austin's (1962) speech acts as a result of the weakness identified regarding speech acts. As Odebunmi (2010a: 3) observes, "Jacob Mey's (2001) pragmatic act theory (PAT) is both a critique and an emendation of Austin's (1962) Speech Act Theory (SAT)." According to Mey (2001:214), the main problem of speech acts theory is that it "lacks a theory of action" which it claims to possess in essence. Hence, Mey also considers speech acts to be "non-situated". According to Mey, pragmatic acts are situation-driven and situation-constrained. Hence, for speech acts to be effective, they have to be situated.

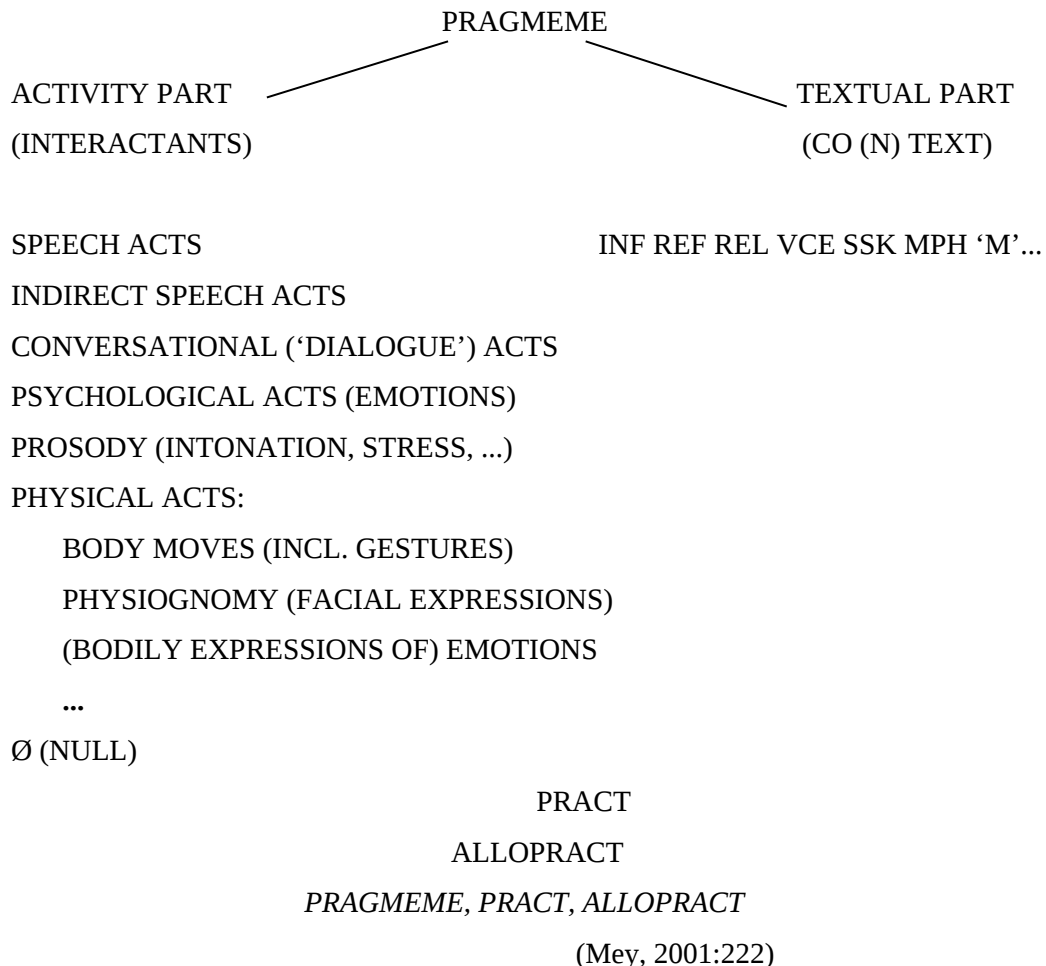
It follows, therefore, that pragmatic acts deal with situating our speech acts in context. For Mey (2001:217), "No conversation can be properly understood unless it is situated within the environment in which it is meant to be understood." By "situated" and "environment" here, is

implied the fact that utterances can only be understood in terms of their specific contexts and the possible constraints. According to Mey (2001:223), “There is only one force in any act of uttering, whether illocutionary or perlocutionary, and it is pragmatic: the force of the *pragmeme*.” Mey (2001) raises an important question to justify pragmatic acts as a theory of action: “What would be a typical pragmatic look at people using language?” He goes on to answer that a typical pragmatic look at people using language would be to look at them performing “pragmatic acts”. He explains that pragmatic acts do not necessarily include specific acts of speech; rather a pragmatic act is performed when participants communicate implicitly.

According to Mey (2001), for speech acts to be effective, they have to be “situated”, which means that they create and rely on the situation in which they are realized. So, there are no speech acts but only instantiated pragmatic acts (Mey, 2001:218). Odebunmi (2006b: 157) remarks that when we are concerned with pragmatic acts, “the emphasis is not on conditions and rules for an individual speech act, but on characterizing a general situation prototype, capable of being executed in the situation.” This implies that pragmatic acts unfold within specific “situations” and are, therefore, constrained by these situations in which they can only be “executed”. The term, “situation”, suggests that the dynamics of context are central to pragmatic acts. Therefore, the focus of pragmatic acts is “on the environment in which participants find their affordances.”

There are two parts to Mey’s (2001) pragmatic acts model; namely: the “activity Part” and the “textual part”. The activity part shows what participants used in communicating while the textual part contains the contextual features that influence communication. The union of the activity and textual parts produces a “pract” or an “allopract”. By this, we refer to an instantiation of a pragmatic act (Odebunmi, 2011:623). As Mey (2001:221) himself puts it, “The instantiated, individual pragmatic acts, the ‘ipras’ or *practs*, refer to a particular *pragmeme* as its realizations. Since no two *practs* will be identical (being realized in an actual situation, and every situation is different from every other), “every *pract* is at the same time an *allopract*”. It is these instantiated pragmatic acts that Mey (2001:221) refers to as “*pragmemes*”. From the explanation, “*pragmeme*” is a generalized pragmatic act while an *allopract* or *pract* is a concrete and different realization of a particular instantiation of a particular *pragmeme* (Mey, 2001:221). We shall highlight the items on each part briefly as presented in Mey (2001:222) in his model of pragmatic acts.

The textual part contains the contextual features and may be interpreted as “co-text” depending on where they are applied. This is why Mey (2001) constructs it as co(n)text. The contextual or cotextual features on the textual part include “inference” (INF), “reference” (REF, which deals with establishing reference), “relevance” (REL), “voice” (VCE, which here refers to the perspective from which a speaker expresses his intentions), “shared situational knowledge” (SSK) or shared (socio-) cultural knowledge (SCK), according to Odebunmi (2006a; 2006b; 2010; 2011) as introduced into the model, “metaphor” (MPH) and “metapragmatic joker” (M...). M here refers to any “metapragmatic” element that surfaces in the text and that directs our attention to something beyond the text (Tseng, 2010). Akinwotu (2016), citing Mey (2001), explains that the metapragmatic joker points to particular metapragmatic activities and this demands a good knowledge of the context of utterances. As Akinwotu (2016:95) sums it, “metapragmatic joker can be described as an utterance which is creatively presented in a manner that may suggest or mean something that may be different from what is implied.”



On the activity part, we have speech acts (practs – e.g., promising, questioning, warning, etc.), indirect speech acts, conversational (dialogue) acts, psychological acts (expression of emotions), prosody (intonation, stress and rhythm), and physical acts. Under physical acts, we may find body moves (like gestures), physiognomy (like facial expressions) and (bodily expressions of) emotions. All these activities go on among the interactants. However, the indication of “Null”, means that it is possible to have an empty cell. As Akinwotu (2016:91) explains, “As can be seen in the model above, the activity part contains the various choices (features a-f) that a language user has at his disposal in communicating his intentions. It is possible to have all or some of the features in an interaction and it is possible not to have any of them....” This simply implies that the participant may choose to remain silent.

According to Tseng (2010), the notion of pragmatic acts frees the “language as action” theory from the constraints of speech act theory; since “action” is no longer seen as being performed solely by certain types of language use but understood as occurring more pervasively. It has been situated more in the context of utterances. Therefore, both the textual part and activity part of pragmeme is used in decoding the contextual meaning of any utterance or communication.

Methodology

The data used in this research were gathered from Wole Soyinka’s *The Beatification of Area Boy: A Lagosian Kaleidoscope*. Wole Soyinka’s *The Beatification of Area Boy: A Lagosian Kaleidoscope* is chosen for this article because it reflects the socio-political reality of the country and it was authored by a renowned writer. The data analysis in this research draws insights from the activity part of Mey’s (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory (PAT). A total of ten (10) excerpts were purposively selected from Wole Soyinka’s *The Beautification of Area Boys* to reflect the issues foregrounded in this text. The excerpts were subjected to descriptive qualitative analysis within the ambit of pragmatics.

Data Analysis

In this section, attention is focused on the various practs revealed in the data, the context in which they occur, their pragmatic functions as well as the pragmatic strategies with which the goals are negotiated in the data. The manifestations in Wole Soyinka’s *The Beatification of Area Boy* show that the pragmatic functions can be broadly categorized in two ways: the “ruling-class or privileged related activities” and “masses or underprivileged related experiences”. Within these two major functions, the practs of discriminating, ordering, instructing, complaining,

criticizing and protesting are manifested. The first two practs (discriminating and ordering) capture the “ruling-class or privileged-related activities” while the last three practs (complaining, criticizing and liberating) reveal the “masses or underprivileged-related experiences”.

Ruling-class or privileged-related functions

Some verbal activities about some people in the selected plays suggest that the activities of the ruling-class or socially-privileged do not go down well with some people who are marginalized and perceived as not belonging to their class. These verbal activities have been discovered to manifest two major practs, namely: discriminating and ordering.

Pract of Discriminating

Discriminating involves the act of treating an individual or a group of people differently in an unfair manner. This can be manifested through actions towards the person or group or through verbal acts that portray discrimination. Some verbal acts in the selected plays have been discovered to be practising discrimination and they are discussed under this pract of discriminating as seen in the selected excerpts that follow.

Excerpt 1

SANDA. Are you sure he was not a vagrant? One of those...er...touched in the head? Maybe even one of the people displaced from Maroko.

MILITARY OFFICER. That would only make matter worse for him. (*Almost screaming.*) He TOUCHED MY UNIFORM. Can you imagine one of those Maroko vermin desecrating my uniform. For his own sake, I hope he is a genuine judge. (*BAB: 79*)

Considering the use of force and injustice in the above excerpt, the Military Officer, who is categorized as part of the privileged or ruling class discriminates against the Maroko people. The judge mistakenly touches Military Officer’s sleeve amid the crowd and confusion caused by the forceful and unfair evacuation of the Maroko people. The judge is not even from Maroko at all but because Military Officer presumes that he could be one of them, he uses the verbal act of referring to the people of Maroko as “vermin”: “Can you imagine one of those Maroko vermin desecrating my uniform.” To him, having his uniform touched by one of the Marokos is having it “desecrated”. Sanda attempts to placate Military Officer by telling him that he should show Judge some mercy, not knowing that claiming that Judge might be one of the Maroko people will

land him in more trouble with Military Officer. Here, Military Officer employs *reiteration of unpleasantness* (touched my uniform...desecrating my uniform) to negotiate his goal of discriminating against the Marokos. Also, there is REL as well as SSK in the construction of this pract of discriminating here and the VCE is that of military authority.

Excerpt 2

MILITARY OFFICER. You locked him in the boot, then what?

ADC. I thought we'd take him to the nearest police station, sir.

MILITARY OFFICER. On what charge?

ADC. Interference I thought you said, sir. Interfering with your, er... your control of the evacuees.

MILITARY OFFICER. (*between his teeth*) ...The fool interfered with my uniform. He touched it – do you understand that? He pulled my sleeve, he placed his bloody civilian hands on my uniform. And all you want to do is take him to the police station? Didn't you hear me say he was to be given special treatment? (*BAB: 77*)

Still, within the context of force and injustice, Military Officer discriminates against civilians as he intends to deal seriously with the Judge, a civilian who mistakenly touches the sleeve of his military uniform. Military Officer manipulates the pragmatic parameter of power distance to dictate the turns as he controls the topic of discussion and only allows his ADC to reply to his questions within the allowable contributions. His verbal act of referring to Judge's hands as "bloody civilian hands" evidences the fact that this practs discriminates. There is INF by ADC about what Military Officer has said and this presupposes that there is SSK between the interactants for ADC to have understood what Military Officer means by "the special treatment". The VCE is also that of military authority which is strengthened by the REF and REL in the interaction

Pract of Ordering

Ordering pract here involves telling someone or a group of people what they must do or not do by issuing a command, especially using official power or authority. Some verbal and non-verbal acts in the selected data pract ordering and it was noticed that this only took place within the

circus of the ruling-class or privileged. The excerpts that follow demonstrate the practice of ordering.

Excerpt 3

MILITARY OFFICER. ... (*Thrusts his fists in the air.*) ...

DON'T TOUCH MY UNIFORM!!!

My uniform is sacrosanct

From cap pom-pom to underpant

It cannot bear civilian touch...

DON'T TOUCH MY UNIFORM!!!

The uniform means born to rule

The uniform marks the ultimate school.

Superior to the civic boulder

The uniform marks the all-rounder

Know-all, Be-all, Seize-all, End-all

Alpha and Omega, self install

As president and Head of State

Commander-in-chief, Great Potentate

DON'T TOUCH MY UNIFORM!!!

DON'T TOUCH MY UNIFORM!!!

JUST DO NOT TOUCH – MY UNIFORM!!! (*BAB: 83-84*)

Within the context of force and injustice, the extract above explicates the Military Officer's orders as he employs the physical act of body moves by thrusting his hand in the air to express force and to express unpleasantness. This non-verbal act is used to display his unpleasantness. The VCE here is that of military authority. To negotiate his goal clearly, Military Officer uses the strategies of both *reiteration of unpleasantness* (DON'T TOUCH MY UNIFORM!!!) and *chanting for prominence*. The civilians must not touch his clothes because he is a military officer and civilians are "bloody" people who cannot be associated with him. His discriminatory tone here shows that civilians are treated unfairly.

Excerpt 4

MILITARY OFFICER. ... I am not interested in the usual road blocks. I want this sector sealed up entirely. Not a mouse goes in or out. Round up every moving object, anything that breathes, walks, looks or stinks like an Area Boy. ...Break into the houses and the shops and flush them out. I want nothing

less thorough than the Ogoni treatment. Do I make myself clear?

ADC. Orders clearly understood, sir.

Within the above context of force and injustice, Military Officer gives out clear orders to his ADC to arrest civilians indiscriminately as they intend to round up the Area Boys. He controls the turns in the interaction and initiates the next turn to ADC only when he wants to know whether his orders are clear to him. The VCE is that of military authority and the REF to “the Ogoni treatment”, which the ADC clearly understands, means that there is INF and of course SSK.

Masses or underprivileged-related functions

Some verbal activities by some characters in the selected plays suggest that the experiences of the socially-underprivileged people are unfavourable and unacceptable to them as they attempt to free themselves from such unfavourable situations. These verbal activities have been discovered to manifest three major practs, namely: complaining, criticizing and protesting.

Pract of Complaining

The pract of complaining serves to express feelings of pain, resentment or dissatisfaction. The masses complain about one thing or the other as they yearn for emancipation. The excerpts that follow reveal the pract of complaining within the contexts they occur.

Excerpt 5

MINSTREL. As you see me, Bro., as you see me. Five naira *ewa* no fit fill picken belle these days, how much more grown man like me?

SANDA. A-ah. But the soldiers say life has improved since they took over.

MISTREL. Perhaps for inside dere barracks. Not for my side of the street!
(BAB: 15)

Within the context of politics in the above excerpt, the Minstrel, a beggar, complains bitterly about the economic hardship that affects the common citizens since the military leaders took over political power in their country. Minstrel employs *reiteration of unpleasantness* to negotiate his goal of complaining about what he is passing through as he reiterates his point for emphasis on “as you see me”. There is SSK between the interactants for Sanda to understand what Minstrel means by “*ewa*” and this allows him to draw his inference (INF) and make his contribution.

Excerpt 6

BUNTU. What's your problem, friend?
MAN. I've got no permit to stay in Port Elizabeth.
BUNTU. Where do you have permit to stay?
MAN. King William's Town. (SBD: 23)

Within the context of force and injustice in the above excerpt, Sizwe Bansi complains to his friend, Buntu about the fact that he has been unjustly restricted from Port Elizabeth due to a permit when he is actually in his own country as a native of South Africa. The maxim of quantity is observed by Sizwe as he goes straight to provide exactly the amount of information that is needed by Buntu. There is SSK between the participants as they share common background knowledge. This allows Buntu to understand Sizwe's complaint about his lack of a permit to stay in Port Elizabeth.

Pract of Criticising

The function of criticizing is manifested in the expression of disapproval of actions and faults of the ruling-class as the masses or underprivileged voice out their displeasure in one way or the other. The excerpts that follow reveal the pract of criticizing within the relevant contexts.

Excerpt 7

BARBER. (*looks up*). Ah, you must admit it's a spectacular one. I noticed it myself as soon as I opened my window.
TRADER. Oh, you too.
BARBER. Me too?
TRADER. All I sabbe na say the morning begin show the pothole and garbage before in normal time. Before before, I no dey see them on my way here. Today 'e get bright so early, I tink say na different street I take reach here.
BARBER. It's still a colourful sky to wake up to. And you can hardly blame it for the refuse dumps, can you? If the town council won't clear them, what can even God do about it?
(BAB: 10)

Within the context of work and survival here, Barber and Trader criticize, subtly, the town council set up by the military government. Barber uses *interrogation* through erotema or rhetorical questions to negotiate his goal of criticizing: "If the town council won't clean them,

what can even God do about it?” This helps him to emphasize his point and to heighten the situation that he is presenting. There is SSK between the two interactants as they draw the right INF from the REF that arises within their interaction.

Excerpt 8

- SANDA. (*eyes glued to the paper*) So they did it after all. They wiped Maroko settlement off the surface of the earth.
- MAMA PUT. Maroko? What now? Can't they ever leave those people alone?
- SANDA. They will after this. There is no more Maroko. It's in this evening paper.
- TRADER. Oga, you mean they chase the people commot?
- SANDA. According to this, they weren't just chased out, Trader. The entire place was flattened. Here. There are even photos. (TRADER *takes the paper*. MAMA PUT *goes across to read over his shoulder*.) Now where do a million people go to find a home?
- BARBER. But they took the government to court. They won. The court ordered government to leave them alone.
- MAMA PUT. (*tight-lipped, walks back to her station*). It's a military government, isn't it? That means they can defy even God's commandments. (BAB: 56)

Following the pragmatic function of criticizing within the contexts of politics, force, and injustice, the excesses of the military government in the then Nigerian society are criticized as the people express their quest for emancipation from political subjugation. Sanda, Mama Put, Trader and Barber criticize the authoritarian attitude of the military regime. The military government take decisions and exercise power at the expense of the masses. Here, however, the excesses of the military government as exemplified in the cruel treatment of the Maroko people as if they are subhuman are criticized. Even though the court has ordered the government to let the Marokos be, they still wipe them out of their homes. With only the exception of Barber, all of Trader, Sanda and Mama Put use the strategy of *interrogation* as they use questions to negotiate this goal of criticizing the actions of the military government. There is SSK among the interactants to draw the right INF from the REF made by Barber and Mama Put.

Pract of Protesting

The protesting pract serves to object to certain unfavourable conditions or situations in which the masses or underprivileged find themselves. The excerpts that follow reveal the pract of protesting in the data within the relevant contexts.

Excerpt 9

Enter a group of SOLDIERS, armed, and aggressive. They charge the various stalls, throwing merchandise, pots and pans in every direction. Protestations. MAMA PUT goes wild, picks up her bayonet and dares them. Three guns are leveled at her. SANDA finally makes himself heard during this stand-off.

- SANDA. Cut it out! Did you hear me? I said, put those guns away! Do you realize you're disobeying the orders of your superior officer?
- SOLDIER. Which officer? Our orders are to demolish all illegal structures.
- SANDA. And I'm telling you the Colonel was here just now, and he expressly said that no stall around here was to be touched.
- SOLDIER. Nobody mentioned any exceptions. Our orders were to tear down all illegal structures. Everything goes in the bonfire.
- SANDA. I don't care what your orders were, but go ahead if you like. Go on smash up one more item and see if you don't end up in the guardroom. (BAB: 87-88)

In the above excerpt, the practice of protesting is revealed within the context of force and injustice as Sanda protests against the actions of the soldiers who have been sent by the military government to tear down structures indiscriminately as a means of curbing the excesses of civilians such as the Area Boys. Sanda employs the strategy of *impersonation* as he threatens the soldiers by pretending that he has the authority of their superior officer who has sent them to demolish everything within reach. Sanda deliberately violates the maxim of quality as he says what he knows to be untrue to negotiate his goal of protesting against the actions of the soldiers. Sanda has the SSK and required background knowledge to draw INF from what Soldier means by "illegal structures" and "bonfire" in the context of use and this background knowledge allows him to convey his protestation using appropriate military terms such as "Colonel", "your superior officer" and "guardroom" to achieve his threat on Soldier as he protests against the indiscriminate demolition of structures.

Excerpt 10

- SOLDIER. But she tried to attack us. Look at her, still threatening my men with that knife. Nobody does that to my men and gets away with it!
- SANDA. That's not a knife, you blind recruit. That's a bayonet. ...she's an army wife. How else do you think she would be in possession of a bayonet? She has a gun too, you're lucky she chose not to use it.
- SOLDIER. (*cranes his neck to obtain a closer look*). Oh. It's a bayonet.

SANDA. Of course it's a bayonet. And she is an army wife. That's why the Colonel exempted this area. Now put everything back as you found it and I'll forget about this assault.

SOLDIER. (*salutes* MAMA PUT) Sorry, ma'am. It was a mistake. ...We'll put it all back...

They scamper round, trying to restore everything as before.

MAMA PUT. Leave it, leave it. Just leave it and leave us alone. Go away. Get out of here!

SOLDIER. Sorry, ma'am. Very sorry. Squad, Fall out! (*BAB: 88*)

Still within the context of force and injustice, Sanda and Mama Put team up to protest against the excesses of the military government by driving Soldier and his squad out of Mama Put's shop. The soldier has the orders to demolish everything they come across indiscriminately, but Sanda and Mama Put resist them by protesting against their actions. To negotiate this goal of protesting, Sanda and Mama Put resort to the strategy of *impersonation* as Sanda deliberately violates the maxim of quality by claiming that Mama Put is "an army wife". The fact that Mama Put has a "bayonet" ends up convincing Soldier that she might be an army wife truly, whereas she had acquired the knife when a soldier had used it to stab her brother to death during a war that broke out in the country. There is SSK which allows Soldiers to understand the REF to "bayonet".

Conclusion

The work focuses on the social stratification of Nigeria using Wole Soyinka's *The Beatification of Area Boy: A Lagosian Kaleidoscope*. Jacob Mey's pragmatic act theory was used for the analysis and data were purposively drawn as they reflect this social stratification. Two major issues were foregrounded in the analyses which are ruling-class or privileged-related activities and masses or underprivileged-related functions. The former was foregrounded through the practs of discriminating and ordering while the later was shown through the practs of complaining, criticising and protesting. The study is a call to the ruling class to discharge their governmental roles fairly and understand that government positions are not to be used to amass personal virtues. The study concludes that literary works are not written in a vacuum but are made to reveal the realities of society.

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