



Contemporary Issues of Radical Temper in Leonard Ikerionwu's *Heroes of Change*: a Marxist Study

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Abstract

This paper sets out to examine the contemporary issues of radical temper in Leonard Ikerionwu's prose fiction. It aimed at showing that the myriads of challenges of the Nigerian socio-political enclave have not escaped the creative consciousness of the emergent African (Nigerian) writer and critic. It was discovered that the text under study carefully mirrored the present society from the Marxist viewpoint, highlighting attendant problems such as marginalization among the rank and file of the military, poverty, corruption, unemployment, insecurity and leadership ineptitude. In the light of these potent issues presented, the paper sought to educate and appeal to the masses' conscience to perceive revolution as an alternative means, towards the total restoration of change in human society.

Key Words: Literary Creativity, Radical Temper, Marxism, Commitment, Revolution, *Heroes of Change*

Introduction

Literary creativity in the 21st century has continued to revolve around societal concerns and matters which frequently draw the attention of African (Nigerian) writers from within their environment. This has witnessed writers existing as custodians of the moral conscience of their societies where they practice their profession and project the creative art. Through their literary reflections, which make possible the relaying of events of the past and present history, they consistently demonstrate that literature is not only unique a tool for creative ends, but that it greatly does so in its dynamic and transformational appeal to life. This has seen writers transcending limits, and employing multiple ways of mirroring myriad situations and actions that tug at our very human existence. Thus, through their literatures, the social education, reorientation and re-direction of society, they have effectively accounted for the remediating effect in human lives and relationships in recent times.

Similarly, N. M. Obi captures the view on literature and its social essence as that "... important means of understanding and interpreting human beings and aspects of society such as politics, religion, economics, social conflicts, class struggles and human condition through the medium of language" (487). Contributing, Charles Nnolim notes that:

Literature as art deploys language embellished with pleasurable accessories to paraphrase Aristotle, and it is around the embellished use of language that the creative energy of the



society deploys itself. And to invest the story with meaning, there must be some themes, some moral, and some philosophy of life and some metaphor of life that tugs at the edges of symbols. As in all arts, literature is useful, for as art, it is not a waste of time. (3)

Literature and the society have symbiotic relationship. By this, the literary artist is the fulcrum upon which his creative transmission of values and socio-political norms of men in Africa and Nigeria in particular thrive. Despite this observation, what keeps the artist's thoughts alive is literature which according to Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, "...results from the conscious acts of men in society", and that, "the act of writing implies a social relationship" (5). Thus, various literatures, either oral or written, derive their implicit and explicit inspiration from socially dependent phenomena. For this reason, literature maintains a unique status of uncovering potent truths embedded in the creative process.

From the outset, writers of literature in Africa and Nigeria in particular have been passionate in protesting and agitating against social decay, corruption, leadership crisis, unemployment, child molestation, military brutality, political dictatorship, etc. These topical themes majorly lend credence to revolutionary art which in the opinion of Mao Tse Tung "... should create all kinds of characters drawn from real life and help the masses to move new history forward" (23).

This dimension to art gains currency in some contemporary literatures and show the direction in which the Nigerian literary scene identifies itself with. Interestingly, the works which are classified as 'revolutionary' inspire spirited rebellion against the backdrop of social malaises. They are written by writers who assume their responsibilities as builders and reformers in the society. In this case, they employ satire as a suitable characteristic mode to depict the prevailing contradictions orchestrated by the ruling class and collectively strive for absolute change that literary creativity tenably affords. Their perception of society's dilemma derives from multiple but recurrent phenomena of bad governance among other mentioned problems, potent enough to spur literary rejuvenation. Thus, their literatures vigorously aim at tackling the clogs in the wheel of progress, head on.

That notwithstanding, a cursory survey of the literary oeuvre of scholars such as Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka, Festus Iyayi, Osumane Sembene and Alex La Guma, disclose precedent preoccupations with post-colonial issues. Such is the case with emergent writers of modern extraction, whose creative oeuvre encompass in accomplishing the demands and expectations of African literature in the 21st century. Today, we tend to associate their works as *Janus-faced* with variegated events in the present socio-political and socio-economic dispensation, most especially in *Heroes of Change* (2015).

In the novel, Leonard Ikerionwu tailors his scathing criticism towards the Nigerian terrain, examining extensively, the manifold crisis of human existence that has unnaturally become common pastime in the lives of civilians. He registers his voice with a prose fiction that cast critical



glances at Nigeria's recent history, suggesting a revolutionary modicum of liberating it, and also, revealing to the world that his proactive vision of society also redemptive. It is in the light of the above-mentioned concerns that the research arose. By the same token, a clearer understanding of radical temper would suffice, to be preceded by some reviews of related scholarship and the theoretical framework germane to this study.

The Concept of Radical Temper

Radical temper is one of the literary ways of writing that takes centre stage in the study of Nigerian and African literature. It results in writers employing confrontational means of addressing themes of dictatorship, leadership failure, neo-colonialism, corruption, racism, etc, through literature, which authenticates the lived-protest and reactions of writers within the continent. This method of writing derives from "radicalism" and espouses the belief in radical ideas and principles for far-reaching ends. It further suggests a proactive, transformative and visionary perspective for the attainment of positive change by reverting to the roots. Kenneth Nzebueze Kanu in identifying its stages avers that:

Radicalism could be a human sentiment that could be interpreted in three ways. In the first place, it abuses the objects of moral indignation; secondly, it encourages the destruction of systems and social set-ups considered obnoxious, and finally, it carries out democratic reconstruction of the society based on socialist humanism.(51)

Further, such complexities as highlighted above which radical works project, accounts for the combative nature of the art. This arises when the ailing social structure is overstretched and the call to confront such situation becomes imminent. Thus, this radical ideological position according to Augusto Boal will aim at:

Diminishing, placing, satisfying and ultimately eliminating all that can break the "balance-all", indicating the revolutionary transforming impetus which can lead men and women to perceive that the power to change the world rests in their very hands.(42)

This standpoint in art is taken by African writers as a viable means of dethroning the capitalist superstructure so as to enthrone egalitarian society. Proponents of radicalism anticipate the disintegration of society as long as it remains in the hands of capitalists; they advocate a radical change, a dethronement of the agents of capitalism. This is usually achieved through communal support within the framework of characterization in the fictive art, and by extension, the physical world. Iji M. Eddie sees radicalism as:

...an inclination, a tendency favouring extreme changes, which may also include a return to basic principles of life distorted or dislocated through varied process of corruption. Consequently, radicalism could be further modified to connote a psycho-social exuberance of the creative minority or an individual who revolts against the dominant modes or certain established conventions of the society. (2)



And in radical works, commitment reveals greater insight into the onus of this vision towards the conditions of the masses.

Radicalism is centered on the notion of commitment in creative art, and this basically concerns itself with the welfare of the masses. It has no lopsided interest in the bourgeois class. More so, Chinua Achebe notes that:

The writer has a sense of obligation, a strong attachment to a cause... when we speak of a writer's commitment; we mean his identification with a particular social aim and use of his writing to advance those aims. This of course implies a belief that literature can and should be used as a force for social transformation, and the writer should be responsible enough to do just that.(182)

The literature of commitment upholds a consistent desire to stimulate the consciousness of Africans through literary creativity, to see the visionary perspective of radical ideology, the evils of capitalism and its attendant subjugation of the masses. This also forms the major subject of the radical oeuvre. Its end is the establishment of an egalitarian society through the Marxist dialectical approach.

As a concept in literature that operates in diverse scopes, it has its classical, sociological, political, Marxist, cultural, religious, and military perspectives, which emphasize change. The version of radicalism which this paper settles for is Marxist-driven. In other words, it builds on the Marxist aesthetics (ideology), propounded by Karl Marx and Engels to achieve revolution.

Theoretical Framework

Marxist literary criticism shows concern with the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat classes as presented in a work of art. Here, economic factors are indices of delineation between the two classes. The proponents of Marxism preach that writers should be at the frontline of protecting man from suffering and that literary imagination should reflect man's fight against nature. This is emphasized in the *Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels with the notion that:

...the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of struggles." In the same vein, "it ... sees classes as being in economic categories based on control and access to the means of production, culminating in a class society of the proletariats and bourgeoisies. The two principle social classes are considered as the material foundation of any society. (Ikerionwu 42)

Also, Terry Eagleton sees Marxism as "a scientific theory of human societies and of the practice of transforming them"(111). Similarly, France Muthern quoted by Eagleton states that "Marxism is not merely 'sociology of literature' but aims to explain this literary work more fully and this means a sensitive extension to its form, style and meaning" (200). The thrust of the struggle is the transformation of human society. Harry Shaw too, conceptualizes Marxism as "a system of thought



which explains the struggle that throughout history, the state has exploited the masses” (221). He further states that:

Class struggle has always been the principal means of effecting historical changes; that the capitalist system contains the seeds of its own decay that after a period of dictatorship of the proletariat socialist order and classless society will emerge. (221)

This Marxist ideology expresses the trepidations of the capitalist structure in the society, especially between the rich and the poor, where the poor are the objects of oppression. The fundamental bearing of the proponents of prose fiction is on the dimension of change through revolution, and of art as an effective transformative tool in the society. According to Chinyere Nwahunaya in *Literary Criticism, Critical Theory and Post Colonial African Literature*:

What is often considered as extreme view of the sociological approach is the Marxist approach which ties literature to the economic base and ideological superstructure in its system of dialectical materialism. It champions the downtrodden of socioeconomic class, critiquing texts that assume a class society of economic elitism and hegemony, and champions texts that support the “common man”. It asks of the writer that he uses his art as a weapon to expose the falsities of a bourgeois culture, and becomes a propagandist for the destined society in which all men would be happy and free because they would have lost their economic claims. To the Marxist, the writer who does not do this is unacceptable and even dangerous. (34-35)

The course of the downtrodden is achieved through revolution. This reinforces the notion of class variance which becomes inevitable in the form of conflict between the bourgeoisies and the proletariat. Thus, dual tactics emerge towards revolution in the society: the first harps on the virulent suppression of the oppressive and exploitative power of the property-owning class by the proletariat, the other echoes the steady approach to revolution which revolves around the conflict in the individual conscience. This is Marxist philosophy in motion. It is a philosophy that concerns itself with man’s freedom from oppression with its major thrust on revolutionary humanism. This doctrine advocates the revolutionary transformation of a society in the interest of the harmonious development of the human person.

Contemporary writers within the Marxist circle often address the plight of downtrodden workers of the world, against the backdrop of injustice and misrule. No wonder then that Marx according to Arjun Appadurai; posits that if this has to stop, if the oppressed must be liberated, then, there must be social revolution:

A social revolution is inevitable because the future development of capitalism will take the form of the concentration of capital in fewer hands, while at the same time, there will be ever closer and more elaborate organization of the proletariat, at the climax, the proletariat



will arise and overthrow the capitalist class and expropriate them of the means of production. (118)

Marx and Engels' ideology has long inspired African radical writers to delve into the African society, shifting grounds from a critical realist position to a radical social standpoint with a social realist thought that believes in proletariat potentials for the obliteration of capitalism. This has had an enhancing effect to the growth of classless society and an immeasurable development of humanity. To this wise, radical literatures see capitalism as a symbol of oppression and marginalization of the less privileged in the society. This accounts for creation of the literature of radical impulse, carefully sustained in revolt, uprising and collective struggle by the downtrodden of the society as the only means through which capitalist superstructures can be destroyed.

To this end, one of the major primary concerns of African radical prose fiction is an amendment of the Western modes of bourgeois writing and criticism and to encourage an African Marxist socialist literary aesthetics. Having expressed the views above, we shall now turn over to the text.

Heroes of Change

Leonard Ikerionwu's debut novel, *Heroes of Change* x-rays the socio-political milieu of the present Nigerian environment and makes strong inquiry into the lived conditions of its citizens. A cursory reading of the blurb shows that, the novel is:

... a reminiscent and scintillating synthesis of historical wars which progressively recreates a fictional dialectic of revolutionary consciousness. Through its conscientization and awareness of the peasant farmers, traders, artisans, ex-service men and a lot more, these groups match up to Brigadier Banjo's house; a representative of the tyrannical government. As a conventional novel, it interjects dialectical discourse on burning issues such as marginalization among the rank and file of the military, child abuse, drunkenness, poverty, unemployment, corruption and so on. (Blurb n.pag) *Heroes of Change* is also a tart criticism of inequality and social malaise which pervade the Nigerian society. Practically, the novel is embedded in Marxist terms foretelling a social cataclysm with the masses emerging triumphantly. The novel also intermingles with a few songs and drama.

David Ker in *Literature and Society in Africa* categorizes the expectation of a writer in "The Modern Writers and Commitment". He captures Jean Sartre's view that "it is unthinkable that a writer should not be practically committed" (3). Quoting him on the core of literature, he says that any literary writer "must put himself on the side of the majority of the two billion striving, if he wishes to be able to speak to all and be read by all; failing that, he is at the service of a privileged class and like it an exploiter" (3). Ker considers that the literary writer "must recognize his obligations to his society and throw many explosives as possible, after all his own safety may depend on it" (3).



More so, Achebe remarks that “The African writer cannot... be unaware of or indifferent to, the monumental injustice which his people suffer”(78). Ikerionwu appears to adhere, rather strictly to Achebe’s admonition above. His critical shifts are basically directed at leadership ineptitude in the country. His commitment towards social transformation in Umuowa is aptly portrayed in the novel. Umuowa, governed by a tyrant, Brigadier Banjo in whose presence the rotten eggs of corruption and leadership misrule are swiftly hatched, does little to assuage the plights of the poor in his community.

In the novel, no reservation is needed to satirize other social anomalies that becloud the community which microcosmically symbolize Nigeria society. Some of the issues raised includes: marginalization, insecurity, poverty and unemployment. They rear their obnoxious heads within the confines of the country and pose greater challenge to the growth of the nation at large.

But with a critical sweep made on the Nigerian security personnel over their lack of patriotism and devotion to the protection of lives and property of the citizens as their fundamental objective, the writer draws our consciousness to the question of insecurity. This failure marks our leader’s delay to identify the location and whereabouts of the adopted Chibok girls by the dreaded Boko Haram insurgents, whose excesses have drawn the attention of international communities in a campaign, tagged “Bring Back Our Girls” which till date, leaves much to be desired.

The next issue raised in the novel is the historical incident of “APO six” in the narrative, which historically witnessed the unlawful killings of Nigerian citizens who were on the way from

Abuja and were mistaken for hoodlums by a group of ruthless police officers of the Nigerian Police Force. The writer uses this historic experience to rouse the moral consciousness of our leaders to the urgent need to change and to desist from throwing caution to the wind.

Remarkably, as events in the novel unfold, Aringo, a major character, begins his search for radical messiahs and heroes, who will emerge from the peasant class to repudiate the ensuing social dichotomy and engender change- heroes whose revolutionary vigour aligns with Marxism in ideology- to exterminate marginalization, corruption, poverty, leadership misrule and unemployment that have become household names in Africa and Nigeria in particular.

With marginalization among the rank and file of the military becoming a major challenge in this age, the writer reckons that it assumes a rather frightening form of modern enslavement built on the pedestal of hierarchy. A case in point abounds in the foregoing analysis.

In *Heroes*, Saturday, Africa’s father, who is a peasant ex-soldier, recounts his ordeal in the hands of senior military officers who oppress lower ranked recruits. He has fought in the civil and

Liberian wars but “was never given any benefit for his contribution to keep the nation a united entity” (18). Through him, we gain a firsthand knowledge of the reminiscence of war; how war led



to the untimely death of his father. But the most striking aspect of his story rests in his lack of education which leads to an “unselective military recruitment and hasty training which did not turn him out as a highly qualified soldier” (23). He remarks that:

Being illiterate military recruits, most of the odd jobs were done by them. They were the ones who were used in the services of the educated military officers ... I was in the adjacent flat doing my usual morning chores for an officer when I heard a sudden piecing and discomfoting cry of two soldiers ...two huge Alsatian dogs had been set ready loose to unleash terror on them...the two Alsatian dogs with tails coiled like a snake, leapt and made a squirm as a dog would play with its kind and attempted to tear them to shreds.... (24-25)

Also, whereas the lower ranked soldiers take to menial jobs and often end up as war casualties, the higher-ranking officers “...felt that they were the jet probers of war” (26). They do not go to the war front to confront any enemy. “They stayed in their air-conditioned flats which are well and exclusively furnished...majority of the senior officers stayed in their big hotels and flats with their girl friends and harem of women; drinking the costliest local and foreign alcohol and enjoying niceties provided for them by the state” (26), *while the recruits are forced into war to die without proper compensation* (Emphasis mine).

The indictment of Nigerian leaders who fail in their responsibility to secure the country against external invasion from the dreaded Islamic terrorists, who have found succour only in altering the peaceful co-existence of the country, is glaringly expressed:

Look at the war against Boko Haram experienced in the country. It is not a conventional one ... see the level of sabotage and conspiracy among the soldiers. It is better experienced than imagined...the military professionalism; the ethics and tactics are not applied. (55)

The writer therefore suggests a way out of the situation: “There should be re-orientation and retraining of our soldiers and all the Para-military officers to match them with international standards” (55).

Having retired as a soldier, Saturday ends up as a palm wine tapper with little or no support from the government who fails to compensate him, leaving him to dwell in abject poverty. His “... walls cracked which allow bats, rats, insects and reptiles to forge inside the walls and fences are too low and some parts fallen which allow goats, stray dogs, drunks and mad people to take refuge at will”(128).

Consequently, this social situation forces Africa to decry his father’s impoverished condition; he makes a sharp comparison between the ruling government and the peasant before Brigadier

Banjo at Umuowa. This sharp divide between the haves and have-not, is captured thus:



We don't know the meaning of electricity, clean water and social amenities that can give joy, pleasure and longevity; your type, the devil's fascist, the majorities are significantly comfortable. Your children are abroad reading without stress. Some are in government's sponsorship of payroll and we, the rejected, only pray to exist each day that passes without hope of existence. (128)

His verbal responses unveil unequal circumstances of class struggles which are part and parcel of human existence at Umuowa.

The theme of wretchedness and poverty revolves around Saturday. His proceeds, which come from palm wine sales and distribution, are hardly enough to feed his family let alone foot his son's secondary education bills. His business fails to yield profit due to the reluctance of debtors like Banjo to pay up their debts in due time. Consequently, Africa is unable to continue his secondary school education, after gaining admission into WAZOBIAN Model Secondary School. He languishes at home running unsuitable errands for his father.

Again, the protection of lives and properties of the citizens remain one of the cardinal points of the military profession. But this is the contrary. The military personnel champion the course of corruption, brutality and further, extort money and the likes from citizens of the country, putting them in perpetual fear and momentary panic with loaded rifles, as they drive along Nigerian roads:

Both the soldiers and Nigerian police in most checkpoints have not only tortured and exploited private and public drivers but have made them fill the compunction forever driving on the road. The earlier something is done to stop it, the better for the country. (56)

These soldiers and policemen take laws into their hands to harass those they are supposed to protect. The warnings of the consequence of their actions, which may culminate in disaster is made referenced to "Apo six" mayhem, an unfortunate event in Nigeria's history, which recounts the deaths of innocent Nigerian citizens, but "...has not taught our security officers a lesson" (56). Interestingly too, much of the bitter denunciation of leadership incompetence are directed at Brigadier Banjo who introduces Sanitary Control scheme, managed by some Para-military men who are bent on harassing innocent market women at Umuowa, rather than engender peace and mutual co-existence.

In the employment sector, eyebrows get raised through authorial commentary on government's sharp practices in the employment of citizens into various establishments in the country. The unemployment rate in the country is so much that certain social conditions necessitate it. Also, the presentation of youths as bearers of the burden of lack of white-collar jobs, having graduated from the tertiary institution, is given flesh and blood in the novel, thus:



The majority of the youths have wafted to different cities in search of white collar jobs that will still regret tomorrow as that might put them out of job... some of the youths are now engaged at home especially those who could not travel nor go to school.(82)

Most of the graduates who roam the streets today come from neglected backgrounds. They search for the jobs that are hardly available: “They out number what one could count; graduates who could not get jobs years after graduation. Many graduated over six to ten years ago without a job”(98). The jobs are existentially absent and the government shows little or no concern for the graduates. Many of those who roam the streets in search of jobs get frustrated; and even when “workers are dying, some are resigning or setting their jobs for one reason or the other while many retire annually yet, we are made to believe job vacancy exist” (99). Despite the fact that workers often retire from civil service on yearly basis and younger hands are occasionally needed to replace them, the government seldom sympathizes with the teeming graduates, who are mostly peasants. Little or no measures are taken by the government to statically ascertain youth’s employment status by devising viable means of accommodating the unemployed into public and civil service or better still, place them on a sustainable payroll. In addition, and worse still is the fact that even those who are willing and capable never get the work in any establishment of their dream end up disappointed; no plans exist in the government’s pipeline to forestall this social challenge. But as soon as government’s wades graduate from tertiary institutions and become certified, the jobs are already there waiting for them with as little efforts as that which demands searching through websites, newspaper tabloids and billboard placements for vacancies. When this attempt fails for the neglected, they become all the more disillusioned and disenchanted. This is hardly the case with the wealthy. The so-called children of eminent figures who attend interviews competitively with their brilliant candidates already know their fate. Since they have the “connection” and financial means to bribe their way through, they would always get a job at the detriment of the poor. Thus Aringo remarks:

Go to most of the oil companies, job is there waiting for the president’s sons, daughters and his cohorts of relations. What of the minister’s sons and daughters, the government, commissioners and their aides. It is only the sons and daughters of the poor that suffer in this “beautiful” and goddamn country. (99)

The apparent dichotomy between the peasants and the bourgeois constantly widens by the day at the detriment of the former. Godwin Okpara, a vibrant graduate in Accountancy from a Nigerian polytechnic cannot secure a job with his degree certificate for a decade. Chirstabel Ogbaduju, the first daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ogbaduju’s eleven children remains jobless at home when all attempts to secure a better job to help her poor household proves abortive. Her father’s vulcanizing business and mother’s petty trading in perishable goods is not enough to cater for the family. Under much pressure, she yields to the exploitative tendencies of wealthy men, cheats and pleasure seekers, who constantly prowl at her threshold for some ulterior motives. Thus, she becomes a



prey to be exploited by “...several unsuspecting men...” who “... had either crossed legs with her or duped her of some reasonable amount of money, giving her the hope of getting her job”(104). Her impoverished circumstance compels her to become Alhaji Dansuki’s mistress, an illiterate millionaire, who has six wives and twenty-four children, but still nurtures the prospect of making her the seventh, which she vehemently refuses. Her objection to Alhaji’s request culminates into a strained relationship between them. Consequently, her fantasies and utopian lifestyles are cut short as she is “... drugged, assaulted, raped, abused and finally carried away to an unknown destination and dumped at a refuge heap...” (135). Luckily, respite comes from two Fulani herdsmen Samaritan, who miraculously rescue her. Through Rosaline, a devout Christian and friend, she repents and becomes a Christian convert.

By the same token, Aringo’s reflections on these socio-political matters appeals to and inspire Africa with an interrogative cum dialectic inquiry into the state of affairs of the peasants. In other words, the former’s revolutionary urge for change is equally the latter’s radical response to change. Africa, therefore, reinforces the rational attitude upon which revolution becomes inevitable. From a symbolic and critical view, Africa seems a microcosmic representation of the continent. Although he assumes the role of a radical character, his actions and motives towards revolution seem a direct appeal to Africa. Again, his characteristic disposition towards heroic potentials is a pungent revolt against social inequality between the superstructure and the base. This gesture is attested by him and informs of the seeming but underlying principle of Marxism as it relates to radicalism. Thus, his angling with the downtrodden masses reveals his accentuated position:

I have made up my mind to join those who have been relegated to the background by the exploiters; and those out there that are victimized. I have made up my mind to join in the inevitable part of the heroes of change. (128)

Thus, Marxism sees literature from the materialist perspective; it further aims at the total destruction of capitalism. Where Brigadier Banjo stands out as a fictional representation of capitalist exploitation, Africa corroborates the Marxist revolutionary tenet in form of collective cum communal activism. He appeals to a group of peasants, the blind and the cripple, the exservicemen, Aringo, Saturday, some angry women, traders, farmers, artisans, pensioners, children, all aggressively wielding placards of war and greenish leaves to protest the indignities and injustice meted out against the poor and the entire population of Umuowa, by the capitalist exploiter Brigadier Banjo, who is created in a fictive mould of the Nigerian political leaders:

In a short time, they had multitudinously landed in Brigadier’s compound. The atmosphere became increasingly rancorous. There was tension as they stampeded in procession. They flung the gate open furiously with their songs of protest and angst as Africa led the chant... Anger! Anger! Anger!.... (143)



Thus, the community reaches a memorandum of understanding towards changing the status quo. The Brigadier has no option but to concede defeat to the rancorous crowd of impatient protesters. Africa, who symbolizes the voice of change, reads out the memorandum of understanding aloud to the protesters who gambol and dance for communal victory. This is the Marxist perspective in motion. With Umuowa in control of the government of the day, the much-needed wind of change has come to stay- the proposed plan of transformation positively affects the common man in general.

Conclusion

Our discussion on some of the contemporary issues of radical temper in African prose fiction has shown that, the writer is at home with major social events at his disposal, propelling the society forward through literature, which according to Chinweizu, "... is a matter of orientation, a matter of perceiving social realities and making this perception available in works of art..." (253).

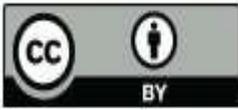
In *Heroes of Change*, the writer is preoccupied with the concept of class struggle, denouncing corruption, leadership misrule, unemployment and marginalization from proletarian perspective. These issues are informed by his Marxist and revolutionary ideologies, which are perceived as the hallmark of meaningful transformation, aimed at ensuring the triumph of an egalitarian society. The paper recommends that the novel be read by all and sundry to engender transformation of Nigeria and in general, the African society.

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