Chapter 19

Revolutionary Politics and Theater of Semiotics: Challenges and Solutions in Northern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

In recent times, statistics have shown that the northern parts of Nigeria are poorer today than they were in the 1970s. Federal government of Nigeria is seen to be lacking in providing adequate security, quality education, good health facilities, agriculture, unemployment, infrastructure, social amenities and the like. Frustrated youths find themselves engaged in deadly politics, ethno-religious conflicts, political thuggery which has grown into political unrest and insurgency to be precise. The situation seems to be beyond repairs as seen in the present trend of the political campaigns, ethno-religious conflicts which is characterized by bombings, kidnapping, genocidal attacks, loss of lives and poverty, assassinations, hired killers, political blackmail, pre- and post-election violence. The thrust of this paper is to outline the recurring challenges and possible solutions of these revolutionary violent politics using varying semiotics with a view to finding a lasting solution for Nigeria’s fragile democracy to progress to higher heights.

INTRODUCTION

Revolutionary politics has become a trend in the 21st century and all countries in the world have their stories to tell. Statistics have shown that some figures suggested the existence over two hundred and thirty groups in ninety countries between 1989 and 2005 which represent only one-sixth of the humanity engaged in the political ethnic or military struggle from which approximately more than over twenty million refugees, were in flight (Cramer, 2006).

In all these statistics, African countries such as Nigeria, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Egypt, South Africa, Cameroon and Congo account for more fatalities and such revolutionary politics are seen to hinder development in Africa (Adolf, 2005). The issue of revolutionary politics in Africa at large has become DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-0081-0.ch019
a global concern. Africa has continued to witness varying degree of interactions between races, nations and various identities, tribes and groups. These interactions and exchanges which have brought about human development has as well brought about violent activities and also violated the promotion of the state laws. Such activities have also deferred a nation’s socio-economic growth.

The diversity of social interactions makes it a potent source of violent and conflict because of the complexity of its diverse ethno-political and tribal identities. The issues of revolutionary politics in post-independent Africa are mostly related to issues of political and economic struggles and controls which have been exacerbated by rapid demographic growth amidst scarce resources. Most of these are seen to be as a result of intense and bitter competition for political power, control of limited economic and social environmental resources which has diluted the peaceful co-existence amongst nations.

For most African leaders, political power is everything; it gives them access to security, power and wealth and most of these leaders want to remain on the doors of power at all costs. Ake (2006) posits by saying that:

*In post-colonial Africa, the premium on power is exceptionally high and the mechanisms for moderating political power are regarded as a matter of life and death because the state controls the means of acquiring wealth. Thus everything else including development is marginalized. (p. 1)*

The tenets here are the competition for political offices and positions are obviously seen for personal gains at the detriment of the common man with its end result becoming revolutionary. In Nigeria for instance, the destabilizing situation throughout the country after independence lies on the issues of economic, social, religion and political issues relating to wealth distribution and inter-ethnic religion (Otite, 1999) but has now led to a dramatic turn when religious identity has helped in the intensification of identity in the political arena which is again disruptive as ethnicity (Falola, 1998, Pg. 2). Theater of semiotics has become a testing ground for revolutionary theater. However, research has shown that the theatre capacity of communicating discrimination is transforming the society positively for social changes. The theater is seen to be retrogressive, egalitarian; this is also seen to retract, refract and mediate in the society. It is also seen that theatre should help restructure the society rather than the future waiting for it (Boal, 2000). This is what the chapter tries to explore.

**UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS**

The term revolutionary politics is a common usage; it was not a generally accepted definition of what it really stands for, but generally stands for a political upheaval in the government or a nation state characterized by great connotation varying from one country to another, state to state, culture to culture and one race to another especially how it has been perceived and tested (Dung-Gwom, 2009). Violent revolution is at most times described as any type of physical, symbolic, psychological or structural force which is exerted against someone, institution, leadership, some group or something (Kossler, 2006).

Bowman sees violent revolution as the exercise of physical and mental force so as to inflict forceful change, inflict injury on or cause damage or change to persons or property; action or conduct characterized by this; treatment or usage of tending to cause forcible interference to effect change. This definition further receives a broader explanation to include physiological damage, material deprivation and symbolic disadvantage (Moses and Mcilwaine, 2006). However, revolutionary politics leads most times