

**EXPLOITATION AND RESISTANCE: PETER OMOKO'S MAJESTIC
REVOLT AS METAPHOR OF NIGER-DELTA NARRATIVE**

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ABSTRACT

Literary representations of the Niger-Delta question have seen large portraiture of injustice, exploitation, the psychological and environmental consequences of oil exploitation, and the resistance of the people. Peter Omoko's Majestic Revolt is an added voice advocating the Niger-Delta condition. Although it is a dramaturgic enactment of the historical revolt in 1927 of the people of the former Warri Province against British Colonial Government, which attempted to impose head tax on them, when studied against the backdrop of socio-political realities and theories of exploitation, it is a sad metaphor of the Niger-Delta condition. Majestic Revolt does not only celebrate resistance against injustice in the face of blackmail and intimidation, it advocates retributive justice against internal sabotage of the people's struggle for justice.

KEYWORDS: *Peter Omoko, Majestic Revolt, Head Tax, Exploitation, The Niger-Delta.*

INTRODUCTION

Writers in Nigeria, indeed Africa, have demonstrated commitment to the social, political, and economic realities of their societies by employing the tool of imaginative literature to respond to critical issues of their own milieu. A survey of the trajectory of African literature, for example, would reveal that writers at various times have reacted to pertinent periods and issues of their history such as colonialism, post-independence disillusionment, military dictatorship and corruption, neocolonialism, and internal conflicts and wars. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* encodes anti-colonialist sentiments; Meja Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick* foregrounds post-independence disillusionment; Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* x-rays excremental rot and corruption; Ngugi wa Thiong'o *Devil on the Cross* highlights neocolonialism; and Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty* examines the horrible consequences of the Nigerian Civil War. This interplay between literature and history is acknowledged by Ngugi wa Thiong'o in his *Homecoming* (1972) when he observes that 'Literature does not grow or develop in a vacuum; it is given impetus, shape, direction and even area of concern by social, political and economic forces in a particular society' (xv).

A good number of texts that foreground the condition of the Niger Delta have been birthed, and the literary response to the Niger Delta malaise keep increasing because as yet the conditions that necessitated the emergence of the body of works described as Niger Delta literature or literature

of the Niger Delta are still extant. Although Peter Omoko's *Majestic Revolt*, longlisted for the Nigeria Prize for Literature 2018, is a historical play situated within the context of pre-independence Nigeria, socio-economic and political realities enacted in the text are symmetrical with the condition of the Niger-Delta.

The Niger Delta Question

To appreciate the corpus of texts signified as Niger Delta literature, it is imperative to properly situate the historical, political, and socio-economic contexts against which these works were produced. The Niger Delta, according to Cyril Obi (2012), 'is a relatively small area of about 75,000 square kilometres in Southern Nigeria' (22). As presently constituted, it includes the six states of the South South geopolitical zone - Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers; Ondo State in the South West; and Abia and Imo states in the South East. It is rich in crude oil and natural gas. Akinola (2010) remarks that oil and gas from the Niger Delta 'contribute 40 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 90 percent of total earnings, and 87 percent of gross national income' (cited in Ibaba Samuel Ibaba, etal, 2012:1). Ibaba, etal also quote Nafziger (2008) and observe that Nigeria earned \$500 billion between 1960 and 2006 from oil alone; citing Obi (2009), they equally assert that the country also generates \$4 billion annually from the export of natural gas.

In spite of the enormous contribution of the Niger Delta to Nigeria's wealth, the region reeks of poverty, underdevelopment, infrastructural deficit, and environmental degradation owing to the activities of oil exploration. The region is criss-crossed by old, neglected oil pipelines which have led to oil spills and have affected farmlands and rivers, thereby destroying the agrarian sources of livelihood for the people. Fears have equally been expressed that toxins generated during oil exploration activities, which have all been dumped into the land and waters of the Niger Delta, together with oil spillages may have found their way into the food chain, placing the health of the Niger Delta people at great risk. Approximately 1,000 people were consumed in September 1998 in Jesse, Delta State, as a result of fire from oil pipeline. Fidelis Allen (2012) also captures a dismal picture of the consequences of oil exploration on the region:

On 16 January 2012, an intense explosion and fire at Chevron's oil facility in Southern Ijaw, Bayelsa State of Nigeria, burned uncontrollably, causing severe damage to the environment for 46 days. It turned out to be one of the nastiest in the history of oil-related environmental disasters in the region. Two industry workers were killed instantly, and a huge ecological burden was imposed on over 40 communities. Kuluama Kingdom, the area in question, has several fishing communities on the Atlantic coast where the oil facility is located. Facilitated by strong wind, pollutants spread with speed, reaching the shorelines of these communities, whose only sources of drinking water are shallow wells, which have now been contaminated by pollutants from the oil spill. Since the people depend on shallow wells for drinking water, they must deal with the risk of outbreak of disease that comes with such levels of oil and gas pollution (pp 1).

The grief emanating from the degradation of the environment as a result of oil exploration activities is further deepened by the fact that the people have been alienated from partaking of their God-given wealth. Wealth from the region is taken to develop Abuja and other places. Oil wells in the region are owned and controlled by people outside the region. The tragedy of environmental degradation, health risks, and destruction of source of livelihood all occasioned by oil exploration activities are further compounded by the tragic consciousness that oil and gas are

depletable resources. Odein Ajumogobia, in his keynote address on ‘Oil and Gas as Depleting Resources: Creating a Niger Delta Without Oil’ during the 4th Distinguished Annual Lecture Series of Delta State House of Assembly Service Commission, 18th August, 2009, avers that going by projections of current depletion ‘Oloibiri could be the perfect metaphor for the economics of the Niger Delta in only half a century: economies which, over the last 50 years, have been decimated by the exploration and exploitation of Oil and Gas with little positive impact on its infrastructure and human development will be left with little or no capacity to develop or create wealth from other sources’ (pp 2-3).

The collectivization of the wealth of the Niger Delta by the Nigerian state for the advancement of majoritarian agenda has been made possible through obnoxious laws. Before oil and gas from the Niger Delta became the major foreign exchange earner for Nigeria, the laws of Nigeria recognised the principle of derivation. Section 134 (1) of the 1960 Constitution enunciated that ‘there shall be paid by the federation to each region a sum equal to fifty percent of (a) the proceeds of any royalty received by the federation in respect of any minerals extracted in that region’. During this period, cocoa, groundnut, coal, palm oil and palm kernels, etc were the major foreign exchange earners for Nigeria. When oil was discovered in 1956 in Oloibiri, Bayelsa State, and Shell made their first shipment of oil and gas in 1958, the Nigerian state began to change its laws. The Petroleum Decree, 1969, promulgated by General Gowon expropriated the land of the Niger Delta. *Federalism & Resource Control: Memorandum of Delta State Submitted to the National Political Reforms Conference, Abuja, 2005*, identifies other obnoxious laws to include The Petroleum Act, 1969, The Territorial Waters Act, Cap.428, (Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990), The Exclusive Economic Zone Act, Cap. 116 (Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990), and The Land Use Act, Cap. 202 (Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990) (52).

The obvious oppression, exploitation, alienation, and environmental degradation of the Niger Delta by the Nigerian State and the International Oil Companies (IOCs) have not been received by the people of the Niger Delta lying low. There has been resistance in form of protests, intellectual engagements, advocacy and campaigns, vandalism of oil facilities, kidnap especially of foreign oil workers, and militancy.

Isaac Adaka Boro declared a Niger Delta Republic and led the Niger Delta Volunteer Service in a Twelve-Day Revolution that began on 23rd February, 1966, against the Nigerian State, marking the inauguration of organised, armed resistance against the oil and gas injustice being perpetrated against the people of the Niger Delta. According to Temitope B. Oriola (2013:49), Boro, in an inspiring speech to his troops, states thus:

Today is a great day, not only in your lives, but also in the history of the NigerDelta. Perhaps, it will be the greatest day for a very long time. This is not because we are going to bring the heavens down, but because we are going to demonstrate to the world what and how we feel about oppression. Remember your 70-year-old grandmother who still farms before she eats; remember also your poverty-stricken people; remember, too,

Although Boro eventually surrendered to the Nigerian troops and was later killed in the Nigerian Civil War as he fought on the Nigerian side, the seed of resistance against oppression and exploitation had been sowed in the consciousness of Niger Deltans.

Ken-Saro Wiwa, writer, environmental activist, and founder of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), began another phase of resistance against economic alienation,

exploitation and the degradation of the environment. Ken-Saro Wiwa, including eight others, was, against international outcry, hanged on 10th November, 1995, at the Port Harcourt prison by the Nigerian state during the dictatorship of the late General Sani Abacha. The Ogoni Bill of Rights (1990) articulates the aspirations of the Ogoni people of the Niger Delta. Several other ethnic nationalities were to follow in the quest for self-preservation. The First Urhobo Economic Summit was held between 27th and 28th of November, 1998, at the Petroleum Training Institute, Effurun. This was followed by The Kaiama Declaration held on 11th December, 1998, at Kaiama. Many other declarations and bills of right by other ethnic groups in the Niger Delta followed, all declaring the aspirations of the peoples of Niger Delta in their quest for self actualisation (Ibaba, etal, 3)

Intellectuals like Prof G.G Darah, Prof. Itsey Sagay, and many others across the region attempted to conscientise Nigeria about the injustice in the Niger Delta. On the political scene, governors, legislators, and other leaders of the Niger Delta organised crusades for the redemption of the region. Section 162 (2) of the 1999 Constitution holds the clause of 13% derivation, but the Federal Government of Nigeria was unwilling to implement this provision in the constitution. In March 2000, James Ibori, former Governor of Delta State, hosted a summit of the Governors and Legislators of the Niger Delta in Asaba the state capital. At the end of the summit, the resolution was reached to press for the implementation of the 13% derivation principle through a strongly worded communiqué. And the government reluctantly began to implement it from April 2000 instead of May 1999.

The resistance against the oppressive policies and practices of the Nigerian state and the oil companies in the Niger Delta also took the form of militancy with the emergence of the Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDVF), Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and other militant organisations that not only kidnapped oil workers and demanded ransom but also bombed oil facilities across the region, causing a drop in oil and gas production and revenue accruable to the Federal Government and eventually calling greater international attention to the Niger Delta question.

The protests and resistance of the region over the decades since oil exploration activities began seemed to have forced successive governments to consider the Niger Delta question, not with the genuine intent of tackling the problems holistically, but with the aim of ensuring that oil and gas exploitation activities flowed uninterrupted. The Babangida regime established the interventionist agency OMPADEC in 1992 with the objective of addressing some of the problems of the Niger Delta. In 2000 the Obasanjo regime established the NDDC and also created the Ministry of Niger Delta, all of these with the resolve, it would appear, of addressing the challenges of the region, but the insincerity of the government in starving these agencies of budgetary funds and incapacitating them in the fulfilment of their mandate lend credence to the belief that the government was merely paying lip service to the Niger Delta issue. The Vanguard editorial of April 28, 2009, captures this hypocrisy of the government succinctly. Excerpts from the editorial captioned ‘Niger Delta Hypocrisy’ state that:

Since the creation of the NDDC, the highest release of its funds, in relation to the approved national budget, was 39.7 per cent in 2002 when its budget of N28.4 billion had only N11.2 billion released, creating a shortfall of N17.1 billion. The more money budgeted for the NDDC, the less that was released. With the rise in oil prices in 2006 and 2007, budget releases of N17.3 billion (N80.2 billion allocated) and 26.1 billion in place of the allocated N97 billion were made. These resulted in a total shortfall of N326.23 billion as only N110.31 billion out of a budget allocation of N436.54 billion got to NDDC since 2002. The Federal Government's silence on redeeming this anomaly is embarrassing and underlines its hypocrisy in addressing the Niger Delta. All of the scenario captured in the preceding pages – the poverty of the people of the Niger Delta region, their alienation from their God-given wealth, the devastation of the environment, the oppressive laws and policies of the government, the expropriation of their wealth to advance the interest of the majority ethnic groups and the ruling class, the protests and resistance of the people, including sabotage – have provided the raw materials and inspiration for writers from the region and others outside the region sympathetic to the Niger Delta issue for the creation of what is regarded as literature of the Niger Delta.

Niger-Delta Literature

Niger Delta literature can be defined as the corpus of texts produced by indigenes of the Niger Delta based on their lived experience of the Niger Delta situation or non indigenes sympathetic to the cause of the region (Tanure Ojaide, 2015:55). Ojaide posits further that the works have the Niger Delta as their setting, and the experiences of the people are the thematic focus of these works. The judicial killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa by the Abacha regime, and the international interest in issues affecting the environment as well as climate change have given greater focus to the literature emanating from the Niger Delta. Because the activities of oil exploitation directly affect the environment and ecosystem of the region, the literature emanating from the Niger Delta, which is largely a direct response to this threat, has received biocentric and ecocritical approaches. Ojaide remarks further that 'A biocentric view involves a broadening of human conception of global community to include nonhuman forms and the physical environment. It also addresses the relationship between human culture and the environment, which have direct impact on the Niger Delta' (58). It is for this cause that Niger Delta writers such as Isidore Okpewho (*Tides*), Kaine Agary (*Yellow Yellow*), Ogaga Ifowodo (*The Oil Lamp*), Ebinyo Ogbowei (*Songs of a Dying River*), and Tanure Ojaide (*The Activist*), etc have focalised the devastating consequences of oil exploration activities on the landscape of the region.

Majestic Revolt as Metaphor

If we go by Ann Dobie's broad definition of postcolonial literature as that 'literature written in English by people in formerly colonized countries, some of it authored by the colonizers and their descendants, but more of it by those they colonized' (207), *Majestic Revolt* is a postcolonial text. However, its preoccupation with the oppression and economic exploitation of the former Warri Province by British imperialism makes it an authentic postcolonial text, for as Habib avers, postcolonialism has its roots in the history of imperialism (737), and among the several aims of postcolonial criticism is the reexamination of the history of colonialism 'from the perspective of the colonized (737). In *Majestic Revolt*, Omoko highlights some of the strategies of imperial invasion to include subtlety, deceit, and a final forceful takeover. Its reading as a metaphor of the Niger Delta condition can be foregrounded in what Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins describe as 'a complex mixture of contesting discourses, social hierarchies, and power structure' (cited in Dobie, 206). Just as traditional imperialism economically dominates the

colonized, so international companies in collaboration with the Nigerian government economically exploit the subjugated people of the Niger Delta in what today is neocolonialism.

Majestic Revolt is based on the Anti-tax Revolt of the former Warri Province in 1927. In his historicisation of the uprising, Obaro Ikime states that in April 1927, the Native Revenue Ordinance was amended to make it applicable to the South-Eastern Provinces. Prior to this time, the Yoruba and Benin parts of Southern Nigeria had accepted direct taxation. This was not quite difficult for them to accept because these kingdoms were used to some form of taxation or tribute before the incursion of British rule. By 1927, however, the British Colonial Government felt that it was time to extend the same direct taxation policy to the East of the Niger and the then Warri Province, both in the Southern part of Nigeria. While the colonial authorities contemplated the idea of entrusting warrant chiefs, whom the people had come to perceive with strong hostility, with the responsibility of collecting the taxes, administrative officers were sent round the province on a sensitisation tour on the imperative of the direct taxation, which was planned to begin in 1928. Ikime remarks that 'it was at this initial stage that the crisis over taxation developed' (560).

Omoko has imaginatively taken this historical event as the raw material for this play, a metaphor of the Niger Delta question. Palpable apprehension is seen at the beginning of the narrative because of the planned imposition of the head tax. Atake tells Oguma:

I can see you have not heard that the oyibo man's chief has announced that henceforth all adult males in the province will pay taxes on their heads. Three pence on my head and that of each of my eight male children! My ancestors, how have I offended you? (5)

On what basis should the oyibo man leave his country far away to the province to impose a tax on the people? By what moral authority will the oyibo man collect taxes on the people's head? By all intent and purpose, the plan to impose head tax on the people bears all the marks of oppression and exploitation, hallmarks of imperialism. M. A. R. Habib (2005) postulates that although imperialism is understood to mean the strategy whereby a state forcibly expands its control beyond its borders, 'it should be remembered that such control is usually not just military but economic and cultural' (737). Habib restates this again that 'the motives of imperialism have usually been economic' (2011:271).

In his review of theories and definitions of exploitation, Alan Wertheimer posits that to exploit others 'is to take unfair advantage of them', and that the 'first task of a theory of exploitation is to provide the truth condition for an exploitation claim. At least one such condition is a moral criterion: a transaction is exploitative only if it is unfair'. While he concedes that it is not easy to clearly define what one person owes another by way of fair treatment, he, nonetheless avers that taking unfair advantage of someone else may be understood in two possible ways. The first is that taking unfair advantage of another 'may refer to some dimension of the outcome of the transaction,' that is the benefit to the exploiter and the effect on the exploited. The second is that 'there is some sort of defect in the process by which the unfair outcome has come about', for example, that the exploiter has defrauded, manipulated, or coerced the exploited.

The process by which the oyibo man imposes head tax on the people and the eventual outcome of such a policy foreshadows the internal colonisation that the Niger Delta would be subjected to with the discovery of oil and gas. Oshue echoes a similar view when he states that 'Their imposition of taxes on us is a moral threat to our autonomy' (14). While reprimanding the

farmers who go against the ban on harvesting produce and selling to the oyibo man, Oshue also intimate them (farmers) that the oyibo man also planned to make the province a licensed area:

Do you know what that means? Before you can sell your farm produce, you will be forced to pay a lot of money for permission to trade – called license. Even those of you who produce local gin in the bush will not be left out. Before you can sell it, you will have to obtain a license by the payment of a huge amount of money...paid to a stranger – in our own land (pg 28).

Do you know what that means? Before you can sell your farm produce, you will be forced to pay a lot of money for permission to trade – called license. Even those of you who produce local gin in the bush will not be left out. Before you can sell it, you will have to obtain a license by the

This leaves the oyibo man, and by extension the British Empire, better off economically and the people of the province worse off. And just like the Niger Delta scenario where the resources of the region have been expropriated by obnoxious laws and decrees, the planned economic exploitation of the people of the province has also been enabled by an obnoxious law. At the Community Town Hall at Igbudu where the people of the province first gather to discuss the impending head tax, Ighale, referring to the oyibo man, remarks thus: ‘As soon as they settled, they started making laws for us. Trying our cases in their courts and not in our own market squares. And the worst of all, calling our ways primitive. We have all become slaves to their laws’ (15). This reality is also reechoed again by Ighale at Oshue’s residence where elated elders discuss their next line of action after Oshue’s visit to Major Walker. Ighale states: ‘Great warriors of our land, even since the coming of the foreigners all we have been subjected to is to sulk and obey obnoxious dictates’ (81).

The laws that the people of the province had to obey were foreign and strange; the people had no input whatever in the process of making such laws, and the laws did not accommodate their cultural sensibilities and peculiarities. They were cut off from the adjudication process and procedure. Oshue sensitises the people about the oyibo man’s overriding intentions. He asks them: Have you ever asked yourselves why we have become so important in the eyes of the foreigners? Why they remained so resolute in monitoring our activities – making laws for us? (19). Gbudje volunteers that it was because of their simplicity. But Oshue enlightens them:

It can’t be! It is because of our oil palms. The oyibo man is very wise. He wants to get all our palm produce to develop his country. What does he do? He tries as much as he can to get close to us, import his own laws to our land, fix prices for our goods and further enslave us through the imposition of head tax (19-20).

In his analysis of the globalisation of the Niger Delta and its consequences, Obi has noted that ‘the history and destiny of the Niger Delta and its relationship with the world appears to be intertwined with two types of oil: palm oil and crude oil (22).

The decree against which the people are protesting is the Native Revenue Ordinance. In theorising his concept of exploitation, Wertheimer further postulates thus: ‘Let us say that A oppresses B when A deprives B of freedoms or opportunities to which B is entitled. If A gains from the oppressive relationship, as when A enslaves B, then A may both oppress and exploit B’. This is an apt depiction of the scenario in the province because the people are deprived of the inalienable right to self-rule. As Atake tells Oguma at the beginning of the narrative: ‘It is clear that the oyibo man did not only come to stay in our land, he wants to possess it and also force us to live by his dictates’ (5).

The people of Warri Province against whom the oyibo man wants to implement this inhuman policy did not sheepishly surrender to the imperial tendencies of the oyibo man. There was a province-wide resistance that cut across ethnic groups, underscoring the irrepressible and indomitable spirit of the people. In anger, Oguma tells Atake: ‘Me, Oguma, pay tax on my head ... to a stranger. God forbid!’ (6).

At the scene of the Community Town Hall at Igbudu where elders, youths, and women from the different clans were assembled, Oshue inspires the people by telling them that ‘freedom is never given to the oppressed upon demand. It is achieved through struggle and sacrifice’ (21). At the end of the congress, all the representatives of the people from Isoko, Ukwuani, Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo proposed that all trade thenceforth with the oyibo man should be stopped. While chiding the farmers who later breached the ban to not harvest and sell farm produce to the oyibo man, Oshue attempts to rally them to resist the insult being heaped upon them and says:

You all have to rise up against this stranger who is trying to introduce an obnoxious tax system into our land. In the spirit of oneness, brothers, we must all come together to fight that which comes against us ... We must resist any form of taxation and oppression. We must all move together to crush oppression, brother. We shall not wait for the gods or the ancestors to fight our cause. Our destiny and the future of our children are in our hands’ (28).

The unconquerable spirit of the people of the province and their historical resistance against oppression is recounted by Otuedon who tells the congress at the Community Town Hall at Igbudu that:

Our Nembe brothers rose up against them and the Royal Niger Company in Akassa. Nana, our brother and King Ovoramwen of the great Benin kingdom fought against those pale vultures, so must we (16).

Clearly, the province has had a long history of oppression and exploitation, owing to the expansionist quest of imperialism which is driven primarily by economic considerations, and the people had at various times resisted such oppressions.

After the arrest of Oshue and his chiefs, Major Walker thought to break their will by offering them royal pardon and a light punishment only if they confess their loyalty to His Majesty the King of Britain? But Oshue refuses, and accordingly, Major Walker sentences him to two years imprisonment with hard labour for breaking Section 21 of a so-called Criminal Code of the Province. Undaunted, Oshue replies:

For the effacement of man’s inhumanity to man we here stand trial ... But let it be known this day, For as much as my people are deprived of their dignity and freedom, For as much as people are oppressed by overnight masters, the Province will remain ungovernable for you and your thieving masters. Nobody, I say nobody, while I live will ever pay tax on his God given head. You can even kill, maim, and traumatize them, but it is impossible to kill the will of the struggle against imperialism. I assure you, my friend, even in my captivity the people will need my consent to comply with your evil laws’ (pp 94).

How did the oyibo man implement all his oppressive and exploitative agenda against the people of the province? It was by subtlety, deceit and coercion. In a revealing conversation with Oguma, Atake is unable to hide his amazement at the subtlety of the oyibo man:

To think that that this is the same foreigner who wrote series of letters to our elders, begging to be friends with us is a thing that beats my imagination. He has suddenly turned into a cunning mouse. It comes to the house uninvited, does not contribute in the payment of rents, yet it stealthily eats the house owner's legs when he is asleep. The oyibo man indeed plays a game of draughts with our collective psyche and today all of us have become his victims, tossed here and there (6).

This total stranger who came in here begging has gradually assumed lordship of the house. He combined subtlety and deception to get a foothold on the province. At a meeting among Major Walker, Mr. Lambert, and Mr. De La Mothe, when Major Walker insisted that the people of the province signed a treaty with them, De La Mothe counters and says 'No, the interpreters made them to' (58). The oyibo man sought legitimacy for his oppressive and exploitative agenda by obtaining an agreement through fraud.

To weaken opposition to his oppressive agenda, he also divides the people by sabotaging their unity. This much is given away by Major Walker himself. He tells Mr. De La Mothe 'Elder Omudje is a very reliable chief. He has been on our payroll since I assumed duty here. I must tell you, he has delivered. I can vouch for him' (pp 56-57). Omoko in this play surveys past failures of resistance owing largely to sabotage and sell outs by some elements among the people. He puts the words in the mouth of the character Oguma who tells Atake that Chief Nana at Ebrohimi was defeated because 'the rat from within went to show the strangers the hole that led to the store house. That was how Admiral Bedford, the cunning beetle was able to find his way into Ebrohimi (6).

In his submission on the concept of exploitation, Levine 1988 (cited in Wertheimer) observes that in an exploitative relationship, '... the exchange must result from social relations of unequal power'. The asymmetrical nature of the social relations between the exploiter and the exploited is given credence by the nature of the interaction between the oyibo man and the people of the province. During the meeting of the Burutu Council of Elders, Otuedon reports thus:

After the subtle entry, the deceit, and the sabotage of the people's oneness, the gun ultimately becomes a symbol of the tool of subjugation and coercion by the oyibo man. When Oshue, leader of the resistance, was arrested and Major Walker wanted to elicit allegiance from Oshue and Oshue refuses, Major Walker tells him: 'Then I shall force it out of your mouth' (94).

A symbolic point of the entire dramatic enactment is the role of the seven year old son of Oshue who shoots Major Walker with a locally made bow and arrow. Omoko's socialist vision seems to suggest that in spite of the suppression of the resistance by the oyibo man, a new generation, the offspring of the Oshue generation, is already born to continue the resistance from where the elders stopped. *Majestic Revolt*, juxtaposed against the realities of oppression, exploitation, and resistance, is a metaphor of the Niger Delta narrative. And until justice prevails, resistance is inevitable because a new generation will arise to continue the struggle. *Majestic Revolt* is a salute and endorsement of resistance against oppression and exploitation, no matter the consequences.

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