

## **The Interrogative as Stylo-Ideological Strategy in the Works of Festus Iyayi**

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### **The Interrogative in the Works of Festus Iyayi**

(Alternative title: The Interrogative as Stylo-ideological Strategy in the Works of Festus Iyayi)

#### **Abstract**

*This paper investigates the unusual use of interrogatives as a stylo-ideological strategy in Festus Iyayi's works. The investigation is carried out against the background of the pervasive use of interrogatives observed in his popular mobilisation publication, originally titled *The Principles of our Union*, commissioned by the Academic Staff Union of Universities in Nigeria. The paper establishes that similar usage is evident in Iyayi's fictional works as well, and that, his use of interrogatives is not only stylistically significant but is also well suited to the revolutionary inclination. The paper employs a general stylistics framework and a supplementary Systemic Functional Grammar perspective to examine the types and the grammatical and rhetorical status of representative interrogatives encountered in Iyayi's works. It consequently establishes that Iyayi has deployed several different types of interrogatives, transformed in a patterned and pervasive manner into grammatical, pragmatic and ideational metaphors, with which to advance ideological arguments and achieve a combined aesthetic*

and ideological objective in his fictional works. A complementary stylo-statistic methodology is also employed to explicate the differences between Iyayi's style and others referred to in the paper. Relevant stylistic data are also presented in tabular form to enhance a visual and vivid appreciation.

**Keywords:** Festus Iyayi, stylistics, ideational metaphors, transformative interrogatives, revolutionary implicature,

### **Background**

Between 2002 and 2004, two mobilisation publications were produced under the aegis of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) by two activists of the Union. They are, *The Principles of ASUU* by Festus Iyayi and *The Role of Chairmen in ASUU Struggles* by W.O. Alli. Both publications are of comparable length, with approximately two hundred and eighty sentences in each text, and they have the same thematic orientation. They both dwell on the responsibility of members of the union, ASUU, especially the union's standard bearers, namely chairpersons and other elected officials. However, a stylistic reading of the texts shows clear differences in presentation style and rhetorical structure. To give a graphic idea of some of the differences, I present below a simple stylo-statistic comparison of some of the syntactic structures in the two publications. The comparison is limited to a few linguistic parameters just to give an overview of the stylistic differences. The ultimate objective is to extrapolate from the elements compared to detailed and substantive indices of style in the works of Iyayi.

**Table 1: A Stylo-statistic Comparison of Festus Iyayi's *The Principles of ASUU* and W.O. Alli's *The Role of Chairmen in ASUU Struggles***

Syntactic/ Stylistic Structures	Occurrences in <i>The Principles of ASUU</i> – Festus Iyayi	Occurrences in <i>The Role of Chairmen in ASUU Struggles</i> – W.O. Alli
1. Sentences	276	287
2. Subordinate clauses	218	134
3. Questions	32	-Nil-
4. Parallel syntax (esp. anaphora and isocolon)	17	3
5. Appositive sequences	16	1

The table above shows stylistic differences about three linguistic features in the two texts: parallel syntax, appositive structures and interrogatives. However, the most pervasive stylistically significant difference in the texts is seen in the use of interrogatives. While Festus Iyayi's *The Principles of ASUU* has 32 explicit interrogatives, W.O. Alli's *The Role of Chairmen in ASUU Struggles* has none in the entire text!. These glaring contrasts not only demonstrate an interesting difference of style but also prompt a further investigation into the use of interrogatives in Iyayi's works in general, which may help to establish a possible stylistic tendency in the works. Such an investigation would also be useful in advancing perspectives in the stylistic and aesthetic use of interrogatives.

### Theoretical Perspectives

#### (a) Style as *Idiosyncrasy*, *Choice* and *Habitualness*

The demonstration of contrasts in the table above is not intended to give the impression that one of the texts is stylistically "better" or "worse" than the other; however, the stylo-statistic comparison does serve to demonstrate a difference of style and to illustrate the theoretical perspective of style as *idiosyncrasy*, as *choice* and as *habitualness*. Style can be described as the totality of the human (*style is the human*);<sup>1</sup> since it distinguishes humans from other species

and also separates individual humans. Stylistics, the study of style, therefore feeds on idiosyncrasy and comparison.

Idiosyncrasy describes a paradigm of contextual and convincing literary associations assigned to an author according to the constellation of cognate features recurring in the works of the author. Crystal and Davy (1969) had noted, for example, that one may talk about the style of Shakespeare, of Cicero, of the Victorian age, etc., just as, within the Nigerian context, we can speak of the style of Soyinka – the so-called *Soyinka resque* – or, within the current context, *the style of Iyayi*, etc. The contrasts in the table above also demonstrate the notion of style as a *choice*, that is, the choice between alternative expressions, and one that an author makes from other writers. In this regard, Oloruntoba-Oju (1998, p. 3) had proposed that three summative parameters define literary style: *textual distinctiveness* or significance (“usage that stands out within the text”), *habituality* (“recurrence”; “iteration”; habitualness), and *aesthetic appeal* (“a mark of art or of artifice”). By these parameters, repetitive artistic patterns observed in the works of a writer qualify as indices of his or her style, or of his stylistic choices and idiosyncrasy. Linguists and theorists of style have sometimes scoffed at the idea of such a “personality paradigm” in style, that is, the idea that a particular type of literary style could be synonymous with a particular individual or character. This approach is sometimes called a “biographical fallacy.” Its declamation has roots in multiple critical orientations, including stylistics, literary theory and Marxist aesthetics. However, it is not the intention in this paper to revisit the old and well-documented debates generated by this contention (see Fish 1982 and Eagleton 1976 for elaborations on the important debate within the two respective fields). Suffice it to state here that, notwithstanding such theoretical objections, stylistic idiosyncrasy has remained a highly regarded value in Stylistic studies, and is not discounted within Marxist aesthetics either. By this token, the style of Festus Iyayi’s writing can and has been examined both along the generic axis, as a Marxist style of writing, and the personality axis, as a distinctive style of writing.

The comparison methodology of stylistics referred to above follows logically on the notion of style as an idiosyncrasy. The method

enables a graphic demonstration of how a particular style deviates from an undoubtedly established norm and how one author is stylistically different from another. Epstein (1978) had proposed the analogy of the tennis player, in which case style consists in the “something extra” that a particular player does and how this differentiates him or her from the other stakeholders. The table above not only demonstrates the value of a stylistic analysis in bringing out aspects of style that may be missed in a cursory reading of texts but also in bringing out explicit details of stylistic differences between two authors. This is markedly unlike a literary analysis that can only offer intuitive or impressionistic contentions about the style of writers and of texts. The prevalence of interrogatives, parallel syntax and appositive structures as shown in the table points comparatively to a particular rhetorical or aesthetic density in Iyayi’s text. This then suggests, further, that a stylistic investigation of similar features in some of his other works may help to establish habitual stylistic patterns in his works in general. In other words, the similar prevalence of interrogatives in his non-fictional work above compels the question whether the interrogative may also be a significant stylistic feature in his fictional works. While there have been a number of published interrogations of style in Iyayi’s fiction (see, for example, Chréacháin 1991; Oloruntoba-Oju 1999; Ushie 2007, Osundare 2008, Oloruntoba-Oju 2015; among others), there has been no specific attention to interrogatives in Iyayi’s novels as a possible stylistic element in the works.

It is against the preceding background that this paper now considers linguistic and stylistic dimensions of the interrogative with particular reference to Iyayi’s works. I make the point in the paper that, indeed, interrogatives constitute a stylo-ideational strategy or a stylistic *idiosyncrasy* in Iyayi’s works in general, not just in *The Principles of ASUU*. The other works from which the paper has elicited this stylistic tendency are *Violence* (1979), *Heroes* (1986), “Of monsters and demons in the Nigerian university” (1989) and *Awaiting court martial* (1991). The latter is a collection of short stories and some of the stories from which examples are drawn in this paper are “Jegede’s Madness,” “Awaiting Court Martial,” “Extracts from the Testimony,” “Our Father is Coming Home,” “Flora’s Reply,” and “Three Times

Unlucky." In the process, I identify various kinds of interrogatives in Iyayi's novels and non-fiction. I also make the point that the interrogative in Iyayi's works does serve not only the normal discourse function that interrogatives serve in the normal run of fictive conversations and non-fictive discourses, but also an ideological function in line with the ideological orientation and formulations of the author. While the tabular analysis above draws attention to the prevalence of interrogatives in the examined text, it does not as yet indicate the ideational or experiential value of the feature within the text. It does not, for example, indicate how the features might "tie up" with the thematic concern of the texts. This paper, therefore, links the factive and interpretive levels of style by identifying the various forms of interrogatives in Iyayi's works and demonstrating how they advance his thematic/ideological objective.

#### (b) Linguistic and Stylistic Dimensions of the Interrogative

The interrogative (or question) is primarily a grammatical, rhetorical and functional unit of language. As a basic grammatical unit, it takes a variety of basic forms. These include the "yes"/"no" form; the *wh-* ("what," "when," "where," "why"), and "how" forms. Questions can also be "close-ended" (e.g. the strictly "yes"/"no" form), or "open-ended" (which give a wider answering latitude). As a functional unit, the interrogative is described according to its function, which may be to seek information, ask for reasons, cause or effect, demand explanations, make a request, etc.

The interrogative also reflects the grammatical mood. 'Mood' is a grammatical class that indicates the writer or speaker's orientation or attitude towards the text or the interlocutor (listener or reader). In this regard, the interrogative has functional, interpersonal and stylistic significance. For example, in statements such as: "The man is a king" (indicative/declarative mood); "Do you consider the man a king?"(interrogative mood), and "We must relate to him as a king" (imperative mood), the specific mood employed depends on the intention of the speaker, the interpersonal relationship between the interlocutors, and the stylistic orientation of the user, among other contextual variables.

As a rhetorical unit, questions, like proverbs, act as pathfinders of discourse, leading narrative into many different pathways as they seek to discover the *truth* regarding the issues in discourse. The interrogative also intersects with other moods regarding form, purpose, style and effect. For example, the question, “Do you mind standing up please?”, fuses the interrogative and the polite imperative moods, while a question such as “Is that not why we are here?” is a rhetorical question. The rhetorical question is usually more indicative than interrogative and it often requires no answer (e.g. “Is that not why we are here?” actually means “This is why we are here”). These examples, and the specific ones from Iyayi’s works below, show that the interrogative also serves rhetorical, aesthetic and stylistic functions. As noted earlier, variation is often a mark of artifice or of aesthetics, while the choice that the writer makes from alternative expressions is a marker of style.

An interrogative is also regarded as ‘metaphoric’ when it is a marked variant of another kind of grammatical construction. This analysis follows the Systemic Functional Grammar classification of the “grammatical metaphor” (see Halliday 1985). According to this classification, the grammatical metaphor occurs when an expression deviates from or varies the default/basic/plain (or expected) encoding format. For example, the sentences “Do you mind standing up please?” and “Is that not why we are here?” in the paragraph above are metaphorical variants of ‘stand up’/ “Please stand up” and “That is why we are here” respectively. The default encoding mood is the imperative, but this has been transformed to the interrogative in these questions. The resultant construction is therefore ‘marked’ in some way, creating a sense of unusualness, hence metaphoric.

### (c) Ideationality, Ideology and the Revolutionary Genre

The grammatical metaphor is further classified into ideational and interpersonal metaphors in Systemic Functional Linguistics. Basically, Halliday proposed three metafunctions of language, the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual. The ideational concerns the manner in which the totality of experience is construed and constructed in language, typically through clause components; the

interpersonal concerns those structures of language that index the mood or attitude of speakers and other details that signal the relationship that exist between interlocutors; while the textual refers to elements of language that help to coordinate texts into coherent and recognisable units. The ideational metaphor therefore encodes experience metaphorically through the clause structures of language. It encapsulates, but differs from, the lexical metaphor, basically in that it involves structures and not just words.

Within the context of this paper, the key function of the ideational metaphor is the advancement of ideological arguments, being an obligatory feature of the revolutionary genre. Genre in SFL is recognised according the constellation of features of text pointing to a coherent social activity. In what is termed Generic Structure Potential (GSP), each genre is identified, and predicted, according to certain obligatory, optional and iterative or recurrent elements (see Halliday and Hasan 1985, pp. 56-57). The ideological argument is therefore not only an obligatory but also a predictable feature of the revolutionary genre.

The employment of ideational metaphors can also be construed in stylistic terms since it involves the idiosyncratic choice of a linguistic variant; the different variants (metaphorical and non-metaphorical) constitute different styles, while the iterative or recurrent choice of a particular variant by a particular encoder or writer is ipso facto a stylistic choice. Stylistic choice has linguistic implications and vice-versa. For example, the variation noted above also affects the grammatical or clause structure of the constructions and correspondingly the organization of the related processes. In the interrogative variant above ("Do you mind standing up please?"), a new process marker (i.e. the verb, "do") is introduced and is fronted. An explicit subject ("you") is also introduced, while the locations of the markers for participants (nouns/pronouns) and circumstance (adverbs and prepositions) also change. Similarly, the main process marker in the declarative mood construction (the verb 'stand') changes by becoming a gerundial verb in a new clause construction. These are linguistic changes occasioned by a specific stylistic choice of the interrogative. By the same token the stylistic choice and the corresponding linguistic changes occasion different

textual appreciation, different psychological responses and different stylistic effects.

Against the background of the foregoing theoretical perspectives, I now examine the dimensions of the interrogative discovered in Iyayi's works. I begin with the types of interrogatives, then consider their pragmatic import within the world of the texts and how they constitute peculiar and specific stylo-ideational or stylo-ideological choices in the works.

### **Types of Interrogatives in Iyayi's Works**

The interrogative types identifiable in Iyayi's works are briefly highlighted in this section. It should be noted that the types have been identified and named according to our own linguistic-stylistic observation. Examples emphasise those usages that accord with the ideational and revolutionary objectives of the writer.

*Topic interrogatives*

*Conversational interrogatives*

*Actional interrogatives*

*Introspective interrogatives*

*Cognate interrogative pairs, and*

*Serial interrogatives*

*Transformative interrogatives*

*Topic interrogatives*

Topic interrogatives lay out questions to be answered in the course of a discourse or an investigation. It may occur at the beginning of the text where such questions are laid out or it may occur mid-stream. Examples of the former are common enough in Iyayi's works, while the latter is less common. The following highlighted interrogative from an Iyayi text provides an example of the latter:

The second obligation flows from our definition as intellectuals. *What does this mean? It means ...*" (*The Principles of ASUU*, p. 13).

In examples such as the above, the topic of discourse is laid out, the interrogative occurs mid-text to raise an issue or a line of enquiry regarding the topic; the answer then follows.

#### *Conversational interrogatives*

Conversational interrogatives occur in the course of a discussion between two or more interlocutors; they are invariably spoken, i.e. not acted out, e.g. “You never went to school?” “Not even primary school?” (*Flora’s Reply*,” p. 192)

#### *Actional interrogatives*

Actional interrogatives occur as part of narrative progression and often blend with narrative action and sequence. They function like speech acts and, unlike conversational interrogatives, may be mirrored or even substituted by physical action. For example, a sequence like “Where did I put the bottle? Under the bed?” (“*Flora’s Reply*,” p. 184) blends with the action of searching for the bottle, looking under the bed, etc. Sometimes actional interrogatives serve as a substitute to narration and reveal otherwise unstated actions (see table below).

#### *Introspective (philosophical) interrogatives*

With introspective interrogatives the concerned character ruminates deeply and internally on the narrative situation. The interrogatives are often theme-laden and typically contain ideational information, that is, within our context, information that is relevant to the core themes, ideas and thesis of the text. The information may also be of a radical, revolutionary nature. For example, the idea of the untoward exploitation of workers is phrased as a metaphoric interrogative which is introspectively produced by the character Idemudia in *Violence* (“But had she not milked him and the other workers?” p. 286)

#### *Cognate interrogative pairs*

In Iyayi’s texts will be found numerous instances of what I call *cognate interrogative pairs*. An analogous term, which had been employed in the literature of Conversation Analysis, is “adjacency

pairs." This refers to two sequential conversation units, especially of the statement/response and question/answer format. In this case, however, we refer to two sequential questions. Two contiguous questions are reeled out by the same speaker, in which the second question either clarifies the first or builds on it. Again, the emphasis here is on those pairs that contextually echo the ideational/revolutionary (ideo-revolutionary) concern of the text and of this analysis. Examples include the following.

**Table 2: Examples of cognate interrogative pairs in the works of Iyayi**

- i. "When had he ever had money? When had he ever been free from hunger, want?" (*Violence*, p. 38)
- ii. "But what did they say should be done in such a situation? Cover him up with clothes?" (*Violence*, p. 40)
- iii. "But how would she get the money? And what should she sell anyway?" (*Violence*, p. 51)
- iv. "What would he say to her? That he couldn't accept it because this was sweat money, almost like blood money [?] that his conscience would never give him peace of mind if he accepted it?" (*Violence*, p. 287)
- v. "Hadn't he sold his own blood so that they would not starve? And wasn't that a sacrifice, this frequent selling of pints of his own blood? (*Violence*, 307)
- vi. "... how do seemingly decent academics, our colleagues of yesterday, turn almost overnight, into Monsters as soon as they are appointed Vice-Chancellors? Has it anything to do with the fact that the word [vice] (in Vice-Chancellor) can also be interpreted to mean depravity or immorality?" (*Of Monsters and Demons in the Nigerian University*, p. 46)
- vii. "How was I to console a kid brother of mine who felt heart-broken because the World Health Organisation had left him without a problem to solve for the world? And why should solving a problem for the world be so important to him or to anybody? ("Awaiting Court Martial," p. 50)

- viii. "But then, has that ever saved those who were contemptuous of it? Didn't they all become lepers in the end? ("Awaiting Court Martial," p. 55)
- ix. "Is that what all impotent men are like? Is that what all weaklings are like? ('saira,' p. 66)
- x. "We do it because of something you need; what is the adultery there? Do you call that adultery? (*Violence*, p. 129)
- xi. "Wasn't the money preferable to this hunger[?]"; this situation of always wanting? (*Violence*, p. 133)
- xii. Whose war? Which war? Why war?\*\* (*Heroes*, p. 113)

\* This question mark is not graphologically present in the novel but is implied by the clause structure.

\*\* This example does not fit strictly into the "pair" paradigm but is irresistibly close to it.

### *Serial interrogatives*

In addition to the profuse use of interrogatives as shown in the foregoing examples, Iyayi also stylistically employs serial interrogatives in Iyayi's works. Serial interrogatives occur when two or more interrogative sentences or statements are piled up sequentially. Again, this feature is common to Iyayi's fictive and non-fictive works. In some cases, up to fifteen sentence or statement questions are piled up serially. Examples of prolonged seriation, i.e. not reckoning with single occurrences, interrogative pairs or short series, will be found in texts such as *The Principles of ASUU* (pp. 8-9, 26); *Violence* (pp. 17, 38, 86, 114, 144, 160, 174, 200, 201, 203, 207, 217, 244, 255, 256, 276); "Jegede's Madness" (pp10-11, 16, 37); "Awaiting Court Martial" (pp. 50, 54); "Extracts from the Testimony" (p. 71); "Our Father is Coming Home" (p. 112); "Flora's Reply" (pp. 178; 185); "Three Times Unlucky" (pp. 234, 246), etc. In the table below, I cite a few examples of serial interrogatives.

**Table 3: Examples of serial interrogatives in the works of Festus Iyayi**

Serial Topic Interrogatives	Serial Conversational Interrogatives	Serial Actional Interrogatives	Serial (Philosophical) Introspective (Theme laden/ Revolutionary)
But what are principles? What principles have guarded our past actions? In the light of challenges facing us, what are the principles required by our Union today? How should such principles be developed, communicated and shared? What conditions need to be created for the principles of our Union to be applied effectively? ( <i>The Principle of ASUU</i> , pp. 8-9)	"You can't read?" ... "You never went to school?" .. "Not even primary school?" (Flora's Reply," p. 192)	'she thought of where to hide the bottle of malt, but where? Under the bed? ("Flora's Reply," p. 184)	"The dictator himself ridden like a horse by his children? The dictator who ordered the destruction of a whole village because he wanted to acquire their land? The dictator who said with a smile in his eyes that only eleven children were killed in the exercise – but, and then he had really laughed, "not at the hands of the armed police officers?" The dictator who gave his assent to the ten-year jail sentence imposed on the five children who were accused of throwing stones at the dictator's entourage? ... [plus 5 additional questions of comparable length in the series. ("Extracts from the Testimony," p. 71)
"To what extent do grassrootmembers participate in decision making"? (+ 13 other questions in the series) ( <i>The Principle of ASUU</i> , p. 26).	Ready for what? Ready for what? And why do you have that look on your face that says you are lost? Where have you been? Where are you? Where do I call you? And why do you appear to be in such a hurry like a flood? Where are you hurrying to? Do you realize how difficult life has been for me? Do you realize I have held back only because of you. That I have accepted that fate should clean my teeth with its hard chewing sticks only because of you? What do you mean by I should call you when I am ready? ("Flora's Reply, p. 185)	"But what was the time? How long had he been there? Why wasn't anybody at his bedside? ("Our Father is Coming Home," p. 110).	"But had she not milked him and the other workers? What about the long hours of work?" ( <i>Violence</i> , p. 286)

It will be noted that the serial interrogative as described above is different from the earlier type described as cognate interrogative pairs. In the case of cognate interrogative pairs the second question either builds on or clarifies the first. Furthermore, the questions occur as a pair rather than as a prolonged series. This distinction also demonstrates the delicate stylistic variation in the deployment of interrogatives by Iyayi.

#### *Transformative interrogatives*

The works of Festus Iyayi exhibit several substantive examples of metaphoric and transformative use of interrogatives. Indeed, it is this type of interrogative that most saliently brings out the pragmatic, ideational and ideological import of interrogatives in his works. It shows the complex manner in which Iyayi has deliberately varied the mood of constructions in order to advance his revolutionary objectives. As noted earlier, the metaphorically transformed interrogative can be demonstrated by first setting up a hypothetical default mood that shows the interrogative as it might have been in an untransformed state and juxtaposing this with the transformed form. In the following examples, we see how statements are metaphorically and rhetorically transformed from a default declarative mood to an interrogative mood, that is, the interrogative sentences occur as metaphorical variants of hypothetical declarative sentences.

**Table 4: Examples of interrogatives as metaphorical variants of declaratives in Iyayi's Novels**

Hypothetical declarative constructions	Metaphorical interrogative variants in Iyayi's <i>Violence</i>
"He never had money"	<i>When had he ever had money?</i> (p. 38)
"He had always been hungry and in want."	<i>When had he ever been free from hunger, want?</i> (p. 38)

(Default mood: declarative)

(Transformed mood: interrogative)

A keen observer might notice that, in addition to being an example of metaphorical transformation, the second interrogative above also presents an internal metaphorical transformation. First, the plain or literal fact (*He had always been hungry and in want*) is transformed to the interrogative (*When had he ever been free from hunger?*). However, the interrogative itself indicates a further metaphorical concept, that of freedom or bondage. In other words, being [*n*]ever been free from hunger conveys a concept of bondage, that is, of being perpetually bonded to hunger and poverty. Such occurrences (of literal and non-literal grammatical metaphors) are discussed more fully in the section below. What is of immediate relevance here is that mood transformation (from the declarative to the interrogative mood) results in what is known as a grammatical metaphor, a metaphorical variant of a default construction.

However, another kind of metaphor that is immediately evident here is the pragmatic metaphor. The pragmatic metaphor consists of an unstated layer of ‘meaning’ that attaches to constructions and is directly or indirectly inferable from the context of the text. This layer of unstated meaning can be accessed in the interrogatives above by, for example, asking the question: “why had the protagonist always been hungry and in want?” The immediate context provides the answer; the imbalance in the structure of society gives wealth to few and poverty to the majority. Appreciation of this metaphorical layer of meaning leads to a corresponding appreciation of the revolutionary implicature of the text by the reader. The author through the speaker, wants the audience to be aware of this imbalance and to probably do something about it in his or her own little corner, ultimately as part of a collective struggle against this imbalance. As also noted by Osundare (2008, p. 38), “Iyayi’s communicative competence is to expose, to reveal” ... “the alarming socio-economic contradictions in Nigeria and their dehumanizing repercussions.” One may add here that this is a complementary step in the search for a revolutionary alternative to societal injustice and decadence. The examples above show that this ideo-pragmatic implication is frequently conveyed through transformative interrogatives in his work.

The pragmatic and revolutionary implicatures described here are analogous to the analysis of implicature provided by Grice (1975). Grice distinguished between the “conventional implicature,” which is ordinarily derivable from the lexical and structural elements of the text, and “conversational implicature” which is dependent on the intention of the speaker and is only derivable from an extrapolation based on our knowledge of the world or of the extended contexts. Grice interpreted conversational implicature as resulting from the violation of certain “maxims of conversation” such as saying things exactly as they should be (truthfully, unambiguously, etc). However, within our context here, the revolutionary implicature derives simply from our knowledge of the background circumstance of the statements involved, and also our understanding of the ideological orientation and outlook of the immediate authors of the statements in the text (the character(s)), and of the ultimate author (the writer of the novels).

The point here is that these interrogatives key functionally (ideationally) in to the ideological/revolutionary concern of Iyayi in his novels and short stories. From the transformed interrogatives we perceive a pragmatic metaphor and derive a corresponding revolutionary implicature based on our understanding of the ideational universe of the works. Our appreciation of transformative interrogatives therefore relies on a three-tiered analysis in which a statement in the default declarative mood is transformed to a statement in the interrogative mood, and hence a grammatical metaphor, from which a pragmatic implication is ultimately derived. This process is shown explicitly in the following table.

**Table 5: Three-tiered analysis of transformative**

<b>DEFAULT MOOD: DECLARATIVE</b>	<b>TRANSFORMED MOOD: INTERROGATIVE (GRAMMATICAL METAPHOR involving change of mood and clause structure)</b>	<b>REVOLUTIONARY IMPLICATURE (PRAGMATIC METAPHOR)</b>
"He never had money."	<i>When had he ever had money?</i> (Violence, p. 38)	"He (Idemudia) never had money because he had always been poor, because of the oppressive system of society."
"He had always been hungry and in want."	<i>When had he ever been free from hunger, want?</i> (Violence, p. 38)	"He (Idemudia) had always been hungry and in want because of the oppressive system of society." (Note that his condition is not traceable to laziness or lack of acumen on his part.) .

In the analysis above, the declarative sentence in the first column from the left is transformed to an interrogative in the middle column. It thereby becomes a grammatical metaphor. However, we also perceive this as a pragmatic metaphor as it contains unstated but inferable implications. Again, the implicature keys ideationally into the thematic and revolutionary concern of the author.

### **Ideo-stylistic Significance of the Interrogative in the Works of Iyayi**

It is arguable that the core theses/arguments in Iyayi's works are mostly presented in the indicative or declarative mood, that is, through the use of indicative or declarative sentences. This mood accords with the intention of the author not to sit on the fence, as it were, in his narratives, but to make concrete and clear ideological statements. This also sets a tone of realism in the works. However, as shown in the foregoing, Iyayi also varies the grammatical mood from the declarative to the interrogative in order to reinforce the theses or statements. The significance of the interrogative mood in revolutionary writing cannot be overemphasized. An inescapable motif of the revolutionary ideal is that it must question the (oppressive) status quo and demand a revolutionary alternative.

The interrogative mood is therefore appropriate to nature of the discourse.

Such deployment of interrogatives in a revolutionary text becomes a stylistic feature when it occurs profusely or in recurrent forms. The examples already exhibited in the foregoing demonstrate that the interrogative is not just a casual feature of text in the works but a pervasive and patterned feature, with a revolutionary objective. The interrogatives advance ideological arguments and contribute to the appropriate revolutionary implicature. In the table below I give a more elaborate template of the varied deployment of grammatical mood, in this case the variation of the indicative and interrogative mood, for revolutionary ends in Iyayi. The ideational thesis or argument advanced by the statements is given in the left column; the representation of the thesis in the declarative or subjunctive mood is given in the second column, while the representation of the same thesis in the interrogative mood is given in the third column. I also give an indication of the revolutionary implicature and stylistic significance associated with the varied usage in the next columns:

**Table 6: Examples of mood variation, revolutionary implicature and stylistic significance in Iyayi**

Argument/ Thesis	Indicative/ Subjunctive mood	Interrogative mood	Revolutionary Implicature/	Stylistic Significance
Violence is denying a man or woman the opportunity to feed well, to be educated ( <i>Violence</i> , p.185-186), to work (p.251), etc.	"It is a violence consciously maintained, whetted and intensified by those who operated the system" (p. 186) (Indicative)	"Violence? ... What is violence? ("Poor wages and too much work he says is violence") (p. 251)	From these different texts we infer a new, radical/revolutionary meaning of "violence" as a systemic denial of means of livelihood to the poor majority in the land.	Stylistic variation is at work here. The interrogative involves the variation of the mood and process of texts with similar meanings. Boredom is avoided; the text is seen from a different perspectives and the meaning of the texts is reinforced in the mind of the reader.

<p>It is unfair for a few in society to have so much to eat that they can even throw some away, while so many others, the majority, go hungry.</p> <p>(Violence, p. 20)</p>	<p>"He had even sold his own blood ... so that he and Adisa would not starve" (p. 154)</p> <p>(Subjunctive)</p>	<p>"Hadn't he sold his own blood so that they would not starve?" (p. 307)</p>	<p>We infer here that the poor have to literally and in some cases practically give their blood to survive in the system.</p>	<p>Stylistic variation is also achieved here as well as reinforcement of meaning. The variation also draws attention to the concept sacrifice. This concept links intertextually with the concept of ritual and redemptive/messianic sacrifice in both primitive and modern religions.</p>
<p>A tyrannical regime trades in death.</p> <p>("When they Came for Akika Lamidi", p. 89)</p> <p>Fear is heavy (p. 84) and is like a tiger eating up one's inside (p. 90), but one should not give in to fear even in the face of tyranny (p. 91)</p>	<p>"We don't have any choice left but to be courageous"</p> <p>("When they came for Akika Lamidi" p. 91)</p>	<p>"Who are you?"</p> <p>[he asked courageously]</p> <p>("When they came for Akika Lamidi" p. 93)</p> <p>...</p> <p>("I'm sure your generals do not sleep well at night ... how could they have sent twenty or more of you to arrest one cartoonist?" (p. 94).</p>	<p>We infer from these statements and their related contexts that the state uses fear as a weapon to intimidate their courageous critics among the poor masses but that they are inwardly fearful themselves and the poor have no option but to confront them with courage.</p>	<p>The author stylistically varies the mood of the statements and the prevailing contexts in a manner that brings home the lesson of courage through the expulsion of fear.</p>

The table above demonstrates the advancement of ideological arguments through the use of grammatical metaphors in the form of transformative interrogatives, leading to specific revolutionary implicatures and specific stylistic/aesthetic outcomes. Mood variation becomes a stylo-ideational strategy, with the corresponding linguistic elements being clearly deployed in service of ideological arguments. As noted earlier, the ideological argument is an obligatory element of the revolutionary genre.

## Conclusion

The profuse use of interrogatives in Iyayi's fictional texts and non-fictional texts exhibits a definitive stylistic tendency in the works. What has been of paramount concern in the foregoing, however, is the manner in which these interrogatives key into Iyayi's ideological

and revolutionary objectives, thereby constituting, not just a matter of style or aesthetics, but indeed a stylo-ideational strategy. In this regard, Iyayi's works constitute a fortuitous template for the stylistic investigation of the use of interrogatives in ideological and revolutionary texts. The foregoing has not only identified different types of interrogatives in the works but has also demonstrated how interrogatives serve as grammatical, pragmatic and ideational metaphors, and, most importantly, how they can be and have been employed and manipulated to serve ideological ends. The sheer stylistic variety involved in the different types of interrogatives, and the associated complexity, is also a mark of aesthetic fusion whereby Iyayi combines the aesthetic and the ideological in his works.

### **Notes**

1. Georges-Louis Leclerc Comte de Buffon famously declared that "style is the man himself," which is usually shortened as "style is the man." The modified phrasing here is meant to de-gender this 1753 rendition by the French author, mathematician and style theorist.

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