African literature occupies a special place among the new literatures of commonwealth and among these modern African writers, Wole Soyinka, the Nobel Laureate, is perhaps the most prolific and most varied writer in his achievements. The present thesis aims at making a close study of Soyinka’s selected plays with a view to presenting him as the most representative dramatist of his age.

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. The introductory chapter attempts to study the growth of English literature in commonwealth countries with special reference to African literature in general and Soyinka’s growth as an artist in particular. The second chapter dwells upon his deep immersion in Yoruba mythology. Chapter three deals with his women characters who are beautiful, firm and determined women who are quite influential on the main protagonist in his plays.

Soyinka’s inner anguish and moral outrage at the brutish aspects of the war ethos are discussed in the fourth chapter. The next chapter concerns itself with the transitional phase in the African society. It also depicts African characters in a genuinely African background also the repercussions created by white invaders in the rural African society.

The sixth chapter throws light on Soyinka’s dramatic art, which includes various theatrical and dramatic devices adopted by him during the
staging of his plays. He makes use of other dramatic devices such as satire, metaphors, symbols, flashback, Biblical parallels and masquerades. He employs all the visual and auditory images at his command to create a total theatrical experience.

Chapter seven summarizes various themes dwelt upon in the preceding chapters. Soyinka's great ability for delineating conflict involving men from different strata of life is quite evident in his writings. Almost all aspects of life come under the microscope of his vision. The problems, the characters and the basic social structure have a universal appeal. The issues discussed are not particular to Africa, but are present in all religions, all races and at all times. The thesis is thus, essentially, a study of various themes employed by the great playwright in his representative plays.

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