CHAPTER IV

FICTIONAL ART OF WOLE SOYINKA

The African novelist has used 'novel' to record his experiences in the given time and addressing himself to his society in particular and to the outsiders at large. For effective communication he has used some traditional techniques of narration and also has drawn from African oral literature to give African flavour and authenticity to his novel.

It is a technique that distinguishes a novel from social document. Every novelist has his own style supplemented by his distinct technique of narration. African novelists have used some conventional techniques of narration like story-telling, plot construction and some other indigenous techniques drawn from African oral literature material to make their novels different from European and Western novels. Achebe and Wole Soyinka have used African idiom of English to express African thoughts and concepts but with a difference. Achebe and Soyinka have also employed Pidgin English with professional competence to suit their characters and for dramatising them. Wole Soyinka's English adds to the
complexity of The Interpreters and Season of Anomy. Arthur Ravenscroft has observed that

"At first sight surely the intensity, the denseness of the way language is used."

He further commented that

"It is clearly a poet's novel and again and again one catches whole passages and cadences of Soyinka's own poetry breaking through prose."

as is evident from the last sentence of the extract -

'A buzz of wit, genteel laughter and character slaughter welcomed them from the drive and they entered the house of death. From the direction of the punch bowl ............. ' Gentle titter, then a deep voice intoning. 'I did think her departure to London was very sudden', and right on cue again, measured titters.' (T.I. p.139)
Sekoni an engineer, dies in a road accident and his death at the beginning of the second part of the novel has been clearly indicated by the novelist. It is only in the last two sentences that Sekoni's death is suggested and the remaining passage is an evocation of a wild storm.

'The rains of May become in July slit arteries of the superficial bull, a million bleeding punctures of the sky. ..................

..................

Too late he saw the insanity of a lorr parked right in his path, a swerve turned into a skid and cruel arabesques of tyres. A futile heap of metal and Sekoni's body lay surprised across the open door, showers of laminated glass around him, his beard one of fastness of blood and wet earth'. (T.I. p.155)

Soyinka the dramatist, influenced the narrative of The Interpreters. Charles Larson has observed that the influence of the dramatist has eclipsed the novelist completely.
'The fact that Soyinka is a playwright and a poet is apparent throughout much of the novel. Instead of basing his narrative on the orderly progression of events leading towards a suggestive goal, Soyinka has given his narrative form and pattern by the repetition of certain scenes and images which are used as Leitmotifs and short playlets incorporated into the texture of the novel. Soyinka's dialogue is especially effective and shows the influence of his years of work as a playwright. Many of the scenes read as if they were originally conceived as short plays and later incorporated into the novel'.

Soyinka's dramatic and poetic qualities of his idiom make their way into his novels as is evident from the conversation of Ofeyi and the Indian girl Taiila in *Season of Anomy*:

He laughed, self deprecatingly, "Don't look for lines of the tragic romance of life on my face." Crest-fallen, she looked away, "I don't mean ... Gently he took her hand "Neither did I. All I meant was ... I have been
too busy or too wholesomely dissatisfied to be unhappy."
"Ah Yes ... your eternal discontent ... "
"Divine, what's happened since? It used to be divine discontent." (S.O.A. p.237)

Emmanuel Ngara observes that Soyinka has used dramatic language deliberately in the novels to evoke

"a sense of horror ... of pity in the reader. Pity for suffering humanity."

Soyinka is fond of archaic words and sometimes coins new words and phrases. For poetic effect he deliberately uses slangs and colloquial forms as in Zaccheus and Ofeyi's conversation in *Season of Anomy*.

'Are you sure you ought to be going into this thing? It isn't going to be healthy for us if you intend to ram every single murder crowd that we happen on in the city.' (S.O.A. p.167)

Soyinka has observed economy of words in describing traditional myths and his syntax too is condensed for effect and force.
Eldred Jones observes
'What runs between two full stops may not be a conventional prose sentence, although it conveys meaning and suggestion.'

This is revealed in the talk of the managing director. The managing director which but echoes the radiogram.

'Like two halves of a broad bean, the pachydermous radiogram and the managing director.' (T.I. p.78)

It is not a sentence but a highly suggestive statement with full of meaning.

Sometimes Soyinka doesn't follow even grammatical structure of sentences as in

'She knows I am far more use to him with all his contacts.' (S.O.A. p.183)

Soyinka' word play has literary function as in
'I had to think of my hair
Her hair! My neck to her hair'
and
... Separate only by the thigh-high bamboo
wall giving the so called "party privacy" try
our club Cambana cubicles etc. etc. Egbo
watched the rising pool in which his polluted
beer dissolved in froth ...
"well, I made a choice, I can't complain'
Bandele looked up at him.
'Oh I was only having a chat with me and this
talkative puddle. (T.I. pp.7-8)

Here it can be noticed that the author has been deliberately
manipulating homophonic ("her hair"), assonental ("thigh-
high") alliterative ("club-cambana cubicles") sound patterns
to draw the attention more to sound than to sense.

Sekoni's constant references to the d-d-dome as in
'the d-d-dome of c-c-continuity,' (T.I. p.9). "The Universal
D-d-dome", "The D-d-dome of love," and the "D-d-dome of
Religion" (T.I. p.26) echo the Coleridgian symbol for the
opposites in Kublakhan

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"It was a miracle of rare device, A sunny pleasure - dome with caves of ice!

... I would build that dome in air, That sunny dome! those caves of ice!"

(35-6 and 46-7)

This comparison is brought out by Kofio Wusu in his article on Soyinka's fiction.

Sekoni's language is different from others. Soyinka manipulates his halting articulation, pauses and repetition of the same consonant for special effect. Sekoni's words burst out with sudden explosives as he relieves himself of the burden of thought:

'Sekoni had been toiling and he burst with a sudden effort ..., "In the d-d-dome of the cosmos, th-there is com ... plete unity of Llife. Llife is like the g-g-godhead, the p-p-plurality of its mmmanifest ... tations is only an illusion. Th-the g-g-godhead is one. So is life, or d-d-death, b-b-both are c-c-contained in th-the single d-d-dome of exist- ence."' (T.I. p.122)
Apart from these, Soyinka sometimes uses the same word in several senses at once. He has used the word 'shoot' to refer to cocoa shoot and also to mean shooting the cartel. Likewise 'operation' is used for killing and also as a medical term in Season of Anomy.

Joegolder, the American, Peter, German and Matthias, a boy in Sagoe's newspaper office become memorable characters by their peculiar idiom of English.

Joe Golder's reply for Kola
'If you don't get it for me I shan't sit any more for you.' (T.I. p.101)

Peter though a German, cultivates the feeling that he is an American. For Sagoe's question 'Are you American?' Peter replies in Pidgin English humorously:

"Yeah, wall, not really. I'm German but I use 'merican pass-port. Just gonna get m'self a Zrink. So sorree couldn't comedown wi'ze others to Lagos, burra had a date wiz a minister..." (T.I. p.136)
When Sagoe questions "how does bartender know Mathias?" he answers that:

'Na my country-man'

.. 'Oga I beg una o Dat na different matter.
When money matter dey for ground, nobody dey remember countryman.' (T.I. p.93)

Soyinka wrote his works in a satiric mode. He doesn't spare any institution, social, political or religious. Universities, politics, lawyers, medical practitioners etc., have all been acrimoniously satirised in the The Interpreters as in his plays. Roscoe who finds Soyinka's satiric vision a curious affair, has ascribed it to Soyinka's poignant use of language also in his novels. Soyinka resembles Swift, Sterne and Conrad to some extent in his satiric mode of expression.) But there is a shift in his satirical representation of his society from satirical vignette in his play The trials of Brother Jero where the focus is on the hypocrisy of religious leader and his cheating gullible followers, to mere caricature satirizing the elite and intellectual class of the society in The Interpreters.
Radhamani Gopalakrishnan observes 'In The Interpreters satire comes close to poetry. It hits the bull's eye, and goes beyond Images satirical in purpose, and lyrical in concept, conjure up a vision of contemporary Nigeria, shallow and hypocritical haunted by the whiteman's ghost.'

In The Interpreters Soyinka satirizes "The escapade of the mad engineer" Sekoni, who has built a powerstation using all his imagination and skill only to get it condemned and rejected by some experts at the instigation of the corrupt chairman who has planned to get the contract for his subsidiary company in the name of his two-month old niece.

'The expatriate expert, "Expatriate, therefore impartial," constituting the one man commission of enquiry into Sekoni's project, "winked a truly expert, expat, expert's wink and asks: "Is it unsafe for operation?" "That is the safest idea. You put in technical language. "And the expatriate expert come to Ijioha, saw and condemned."' (T.I. p.88)
Sekoni for destroying the plant in his frustration is sent to a lunatic asylum. Further Soyinka's satire has been directed towards pseudo intellectuals like Oguazors and Faseyis. Soyinka satirizes the fault finding of disobeying who has married Monica an English girl who does not behave like English girl Dr. Faseyi's attitude is revealed in his remarks:

'Darling if the Queen was attending a garden party, would you go dressed without gloves?'

(T.I. p.40)

Faseyi resembled Lakunle of The Lion and Jewel in nagging Monica for not wearing gloves to the party. Further Monica has refused to retire upstairs with the other women at the party disobeying Mrs. Oguazor. Faseyi annoyed by the behaviour of Monica wished he had been swallowed by the earth, as Sagoe observed:

"He'll take off. The earth won't swallow him,
So he'll take off, on the wings of his bow-tie." (T.P. p.145)

When Monica has preferred palmwine to champagne, Faseyi is worried as to what people would comment about them. Faseyi is also worried when Kola indulges in conversation with
Monica so long that people might think gossiping is the nature of his high society. Though Monica has met Kola for the first time, she has all the information about him and his paintings.

Soyinka comments on professor Oguazor's party. Mrs. Oguazor unlike Monica Faseyi, extends her full co-operation to her anglophile husband. They have arranged parties in which they hanged chandeliers and decorated the walls with imported plastic fruits, that look so real and which make Sagoe exclaim:

'To hell with patriotism, Bandele, there is no fruit in the world to beat the European apple.' (T.I. p.140)

The 'plastic cornucopia' has been used as effective metaphor to reveal that, even the politically liberated African could be lured and seduced by the western fashions. In satirizing Faseyi and Oguazor, Soyinka intends to show the effects of colonialism on African society. Soyinka is also critical about professor Oguazor who has an illegitimate daughter tucked away in a boarding school, eventhough she is his
favourite child, the 'plastic apple' of 'his eye.' He poses to react sharply when the news is conveyed to him that one of his students has illegitimately conceived. Oguazor ironically insists on the dismissal of immoral students and also lectures on immorality forgetting his own sin and about the 'plastic apple' of his own eye.

Soyinka's satire is ruthless like Swift's in his Gulliver's Travels. The memorable targets of Soyinka's satire are Sir Derin and Chief Winsala. Phoniness is the main satirical butt and it is this phoniness which makes Sir Derin, pronounce his judgements from the bench but himself is put behind the bars for accepting a bribe in a hotel. Chief Winsala justifies his demand for a bribe when he offers the job of a journalist to Sagoe, as in a traditional saying:

'Winsala signalled another drink.
Then he spread out his hands and grinned.
"Sewa S'omo fum wa?" (T.I. p.84)

which literally means 'will you act as a dutiful son should'.
Sir Derin and Chief Winsala are described by Sagoe as unctuous aggravating toads." (T.I.p.76) Sir Derin for fear of
loosing his high position in the society has used Chief Winsala, a politician as his front. These two characters are presented by Soyinka satirically to show the rampant corruption in the society. Soyinka humorously presents a scene where Sagoe pulls a minister's leg:

'I told honourable the chief Koyomi ... you should do something about the sewage system, it is disgraceful that at this stage, night soil men are still dugging shitpits around the capital. And in any case, why shouldn't the stuff be utilised? Look at the arid wastes of the north, I said, you should rail the stuff to the North and fertilize the Sardauna's territory. More land under cultivation, less unemployment.' (T.I. p.238-9)

Soyinka hates the growing corruption and the tendency of the society to allow it go unchecked. Soyinka doesn't spare even the villagers. Dehinwa's mother arrives at midnight with a band of relatives, since some one has a vision that Dehinwa would give birth to a son. It is so absurd to come at midnight to inspect whether the vision would come true. Dehinwa's mother is astonished to find Sagoe with Dehinwa in her
room and accuses her for bringing Sagoe to her apartment. By this Soyinka has exposed in the novel the degradation of the people.

Soyinka in *Season of Anomy* is less satirical when compared to the satire in *The Interpreters*. Ofeyi has composed songs which are satirical in tone. His songs are double-edged as they help in promoting the sale of the adulterated cocoa and also try to arouse the sense of enslavement in his countrymen.

'What's the might of the cocoa-farmer?
Matchet and hoe!
What's the cure for weeds and nettles?
Uproot entire!' (S.O.A. p.60)

Soyinka has used symbols extensively both in *The Interpreters* and *Season of Anomy*. Symbols are used as suggestive devices not merely connotative but also evocative and emotive. In addition to their meaning, they also call up before the mind's eye a host of associations connected with them, and are also rich in emotional significance. Symbols may be traditional or personal. When a traditional symbol is used the native reader understands it without any difficulty.
and enjoys, but when a personal symbol is used it becomes incomprehensive.

Radhamani Gopalakrishnan rightly observes:
'Soyinka's use of imagery goes far beyond the conventional employment of similies and metaphors with emphasis on points of comparison. Individuals representing abstractions cluster together to produce a specific moment in the history of Nigeria.'

'Water' as a symbol is used by Soyinka extensively in his The Interpreter to show all the crises and also progress in Egbo's life. Egbo has identified himself with water in every mood. Water represents the image of death and destruction. Egbo's parents were drowned near the delta town, to which his mother was a princess and in which incident Egbo had a providential escape. Since then every crisis in his life is connected with water. In his childhood he would stay for hours in the oshun Grove at Oshogbo, gazing into the silent waters of the river. But later he started liking and enjoying the sight of the river when spanned by a bridge and used to run light and rapid over its rocky bed:
'And there was sunshine. There was depth too in that turbulence, at least I fell down into the darkness from an unfettered sky. It was so different from..., at the bridge it was elusive, you have to pierce it arrowed like a bird.' (T.I. P.9)

Egbo himself has admitted that he can never escape water

'I suppose I can never wholly escape water, but I don't love things of death.' (T.I. p. 8)

Even after his first encounter with Simi, Egbo has returned to water. He has stretched himself on the rocks in the bed of the swift River Ogun at Ilugun and abandoned the Ibadan Lagos train which goes ahead thundering. That night Egbo gets a unique experience of indulging in a kind of sexual possession by the god of the river, himself reborn and as the companion of Ogun. Here Soyinka has used water as the vehicle for a mystical communion between Egbo and Ogun.
'So now, for the first time since his childhood ascent into the god's domain, Egbo knew and acknowledged fear, stood stark before his new intrusion. And he made it his preserve, a place of pilgrimage.' (T.I. p.126-7)

Imagery and symbolism are interwoven in Soyinka's novels. Soyinka through powerful images narrates Egbo's return to this place and his seducing a virgin.

'The area is full of desolate cathedrals, ignored by the fat whitish ants who built them. There were new ones arising slowly from the ground, the structure rose almost before their eyes; swarmed by hundreds of soft white palpitations, busily suckling little hills alive.' (T.I. p.132)

Egbo shows to the girl the mother and child images which echo divinity and also to symbolize the human drama of the girl's becoming the future mother. Simi too is associated with water imagery. Egbo had seen her for the first time when he was a schoolgiong boy.
'She has the eyes of a fish, Egbo murmered, and the boys said, oh, the creekman has found his mammy watta.' (T.I. p.52)

Egbo's relationship with Simi and the student girl has a clear symbolic significance verging on a modern allegory. Simi has been identified with the water-spirit Mammy Watta and also with the mother earth, by Soyinka. She is the mother earth who can console, initiate, and instil confidence but not to attain the status of life with assigned role of the spirit of fertility, whereas the unnamed girl symbolises fertility. As Soyinka has portrayed Simi in the images of the mother earth, she can't be claimed by Egbo, nor by any other man. At the end Simi comes before Egbo with the sadness of eternity in her eyes which makes Egbo feel that he has escaped from drowning.

Dehinwa, lover of Sagoe symbolises love, tolerant beyond limits. Sagoe derives strength from her. Sagoe's dissertation on voidancy and his drinking are presented as parodies of religious experience.
'Every one is born with them, . . . .

Then it gives a delicate thrill and you know you're there. The first time, it is like confirmation ... a truly religious moment.'

(T.I. p.35)

Sagoe satirically expresses his voidancy philosophy to expose the fraudulent and the meretrecious. The philosophy of voidancy has loomed too large and assumed a disproportionate importance compared to the rest of the work which shows that the playful essayist in Soyinka occasionally prevails over the novelist.

L.R. Early observes:

"The ability of the power to cover up or brazen out their corruption is hilariously symbolised as a massive conspiracy against acknowledging shit."

Sekoni, a visionary and a mystic sees the unity of life under the illusory plurality of its manifestations symbolised in his dome of the continuity.
'In the dome of the cosmos, there is complete unity of life. Life is like the god head, the plurality of its manifestations is only an illusion. The godhead is one. So is life or death, both are contained in the single dome of existence.' (T.I. p.122)

Sagoe throws out all the plastic fruits used for decoration through the window only to show symbolically that such fake fashions should have to be discarded. 'Petrified forest' has not been confined to the house of professor Oguazor but has embraced the entire world revelling in the newly formed plastic cornucopia symbolizing Nigeria.

Season of Anomy is less symbolic and produces some measure of disappointment when compared to The Interpreters. The reader finds it difficult to understand the inner meaning of The Interpreters without any knowledge of Yoruba myths and religious ideas, whereas Season of Anomy is a complete contrast to The Interpreters with no specific mention of religious and cosmological ideas. Soyinka has drawn symbols and images from the world of vegetation which is evident from the titles of the five chapters into which the novel is divided.
The first chapter is 'Seminal,' which is mainly about Aiyero, the home of the grain, and has suggested the sowing of the idea and its spread and growth throughout the country. Second section is 'Buds' which suggests that the sown seeds of discontent and the planted grain have sprouted and put forth buds. Soyinka has concentrated on Ofeyi's evangelising activities in this section. This metaphor doesn't suggest the complete success of Aiyero idea since the corruption of the powerful authorities and the growing uneasiness towards the Aiyero idea and of Ofeyi resulted in an attack by the cartel. In 'Tentacles', the people's growing discontent, the spread of the Aiyero roots into other parts along with the cartel's plans for counter attack have been presented by Soyinka. 'Harvest' which actually suggests the fruition of the crop ironically suggested the harvest of blood and murder, not of the fruition of Aiyero ideals. 'Spores' the last section of the novel has suggested the grain putting together of the mutilated pieces and not the preparation of the grain for another sowing season. Thus the vegetation myths are inverted by Soyinka.

The head of the Aiyero, a self sufficient ideal society has been named as 'the custodian of the Grain' by
Soyinka where the grain not only suggests food but germination, revitalisation, fertility, required fertility and prosperity. Eustace Palmer says of the custodian of the Grain:

"It represents the germ of a promising idea which will grow into a powerful movement that will eventually revitalise the entire country bringing material prosperity, spiritual health, and a concern for proper values."

The images and metaphors drawn from the natural processes the seasonal rhythm and the world of vegetation have recurred in the novel and served the purpose of motifs binding the novel into a whole. Soyinka has used images of natural healing processes against the images of death and attempted to subvert those healing processes. The healing processes are attributed by Soyinka on the one hand to a woman of Goborulu and on the other to the cartel. But when the cartel's healing powers are suggested there is note of irony:

'What they are doing now, Uproot it where they can, destroy the men whom they hold responsible for the spread of the virus of thought.'

(S.O.A. p.80)
And the images of healing processes associated with the dentist are usually surgical; the name of the dentist itself is symbolical suggesting that it is the duty of a dentist to remove the decayed teeth before they infect the whole. The inner meaning implied is that the corrupt persons should be eliminated to cleanse the society. As the dentist himself puts it:

'Select the kinpins and eliminate them'.

(S.O.A. p.107)

The dentist thinks he is different from Ofeyi as Ofeyi is only a theorist whereas he himself is a practical man of action. In his own words:

'I am trained in the art of killing. I utilize this acquisition on behalf of my society'

(S.O.A. p.107)

And he says to Ofeyi

'I have watched your cocoa campaigns, I have followed your troupe about and I concluded that your mission is indeed to educate'

(S.O.A. pp. 107-108)
Their journey together is a symbolic journey of discovery.

Soyinka presents the cartel in association with images - unnatural and abnormal. The cartel is identified with the snake which must be scorched before it strikes, or to a monster child which the rationalists have given birth to. Aiyero observed the natural rhythm for its growth whereas the cartel is committed to unnatural and abnormal growth. The novel has stressed on germination and vegetation rituals prominently but contrary to it, the cartel which is named for inverting the natural process "bury" live cows in the dead of every night to ensure its triumph over the people.

Ultimately, it seems the aim of the cartel is the unnatural mummification of the people.

'The means of this curse was however tangible, the end was the embalming of an entire people even as they breathed, deadening their nerve centres, willing the vital organs to malfunction, ending all co-ordination among the physical and thought processes". (S.O.A. p.129)
Aiyero and cocoa both symbolize good life and are associated with the images of germination, fertility and growth, which make Ofeyi think about mixing the two.

The funeral rites performed at the death of the custodian of the Grain are enacted in terms of regeneration, rebirth and fertility. The description of the rites is the most powerful in the novel and Ahime's association with the blood in cutting the throats of the bulls is quite different from Egbo's cutting down a ram in The Interpreters. In The Interpreters Egbo's action symbolizes destruction whereas the acts of Ahime symbolises reproduction and revitalisation.

'Ahime moved with feline balance, his hand poured back the drapes which fell away from his shoulder as he bent over the bull nearest the aclove. The .........................

............................................

He nudged the ridges streams awake and they joined their tributaries to his fountain head. A deep beneficence rested over the motions of his hands opening red sluices for the land's replenishment. (S.O.A. pp.16-17)

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The metaphors used by Soyinka in this description are reminiscent of Sekoni in *The Interpreters* harnessing the power of the waters and directed to the improvement of the land. "He of masseur's fingers stooped at each succeeding sluice gate." He nudged the ridges' "streams awake", are rich metaphors. Some of his metaphors are also used as symbols. To show his anger against the cartel the Dentist has described the cartel as "irritants in the throat, acid in the mouth", and calls them "monster children".

The funeral ceremonies further bring out the symbolism of earth and blood which would express the ability to incorporate death into the continuity of life.

'In the hours before dawn the song leaders from the dead custodians household followed Ahime through the sleeping town, ... All paths must be trodden .........................
The dark figures swayed backwards, leant into the yielding night-membrane, uncoiled in a python lunge upwelling into a dark-toned monody. Then they leapt forward again along the path'... (S.O.A. p.12)
The passage is charged with the imagery and the reader can observe that the procession is likened to a snake recoiling and springing forward again and to a sexual penetration of the yielding night membrane. The imagery of earth and blood are brought out by Soyinka not only in the description of Ahime's sacrifice of the fourteen bulls but also in the song which is sung after the celebrants have passed the fresh blood from Ahime's hands to one another:

'You dip your hand' in the red clay bowl

The gods eat from

Lay your hand upon my earth

Shower me with rain

Lay your hand upon my roof

Fill me with children

Lay your hand upon my body

Bless me with health. (S.O.A.p.18)

The same elements of earth and blood are central to the cult of Dionysian in Soyinka's version of the Bacchae. Soyinka has used images of animals for the cartel. They are described as "blood hounds" (p.20), "bull dogs (p.21)", "fat corporation Swine" (p.20), "desperate geko" (p.139) and the chief Batoki
Iriyese the beloved of Ofeyi and a dancer, whose dance gives the people an idea about the cocoa campaign is raised to the symbolic level of 'cocoa princess'. Soyinka has presented her as a goddess of beauty with distinct affinities to the goddesses of Greek and Egyptian mythologies. Ofeyi reflects about Iriyese:

'The women's acceptance, her collaboration in man's vision of life results time and again in just such periodic embodiments of earth and ideal. It was not a question of beauty or perfection. It ... on its own nature, Iriyese would reveal within her person a harrowing vision of the unattainable. (S.O.A. p.113)

which shows that Soyinka has projected Iriyese as a symbol of feminity which Ofeyi must pursue. In the fourth section of the novel the events are dramatically turned with the abduction of Iriyese by Zaki Amuri's men on the north.
Folklore is an integral part of life and living for the Yoruba and also a means of recreation and advocation as in several other tribes in Nigeria. Folklore includes tales, legends and myths narrated to children by their elders sitting around the fire. On ceremonial occasions like funerals and marriages Yorubas sing tales of bravery and heroism of bygone heroes to the excitement of the people assembled. Sayings and proverbs too are integrated in the life of Yorubas. Chinua Achebe has used proverbs extensively in his novels, and some as dialogues in conversation. Traditional proverbs are imbued with ancestral wisdom and communal significance. For example

'A toad does not run in the daytime for nothing'

In The Interpreters Chief Winala demands bribe from Sagoe through a proverb

'Se wa S'omo fun wa?'

Comparatively Soyinka uses proverbs and sayings sparingly as his novels have urban setting to depict modern situation. Yoruba folklore educates the younger generation about Yoruba
The folktales are highly didactic which help in keeping the social morality. And the traditional myths drawn from Yoruba mythology provide material for African writing depicting socio-cultural crises and to strengthen their cultural heritage. As Igbos have their myth of creation of the world saying that before the creation of life on earth God had sent Chi called Edo with a piece of clay and a staff to divide the earth, and that Edo started throwing clay into the water which ultimately resulted in the formation of Anaedo, so also the Yoruba myth of Ogun, the god of creation and destruction, slaughtering his own people in his drunkenness, and also protecting them from evil spirits.

Soyinka in his *Myth, Literature and the African World* has discussed the nature of Yoruba myth and particularly the symbolic import of Ogun. As depicted in Kola's canvas, in the Yoruba mythology the primal deity is orisanla who is fragmented into multiple gods each one incorporating some of the qualities of the whole. As Soyinka explains in his myth.

"The share of original oneness which contained the creative flint appears to have passed into
the being of Ogun ... with creativity, however, went its complementary aspect, and Ogun came to symbolise the creative, destructive principle."

When Kola has painted Ogun as destroyer, Egbo objects to it as he himself has posed for Ogun, and comments that he looks-like

'a damned, blood thirsty maniac from some maximum security zoo'. (T.I. p.233)

Egbo, Sagoe and Kola fail to provide their society the required knowledge about the Ogun myth and its social relevance to better the prevailing conditions as intellectuals and responsible people of the society. At last only Kola attempts to unite the gods and men in his pantheon with Lazarus as intermediary. Bandele is the consol providing moral support to many characters in The Interpreters. Idanre:

'He reached a large hand to tension wires
And plucked a string; earth ............
And taught the veins to dance, of earth, of
rock, of tree, sky, of fire and rain,
of flesh of man and woman.'
In *Season of Anomy* instead of the Yoruba myth Soyinka has depended on the classical myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, which tells the story of abduction of Eurydice by Pluto and Orpheus' quest for her. Ofeyi's search for Iriyese and their relationship has been paralleled by the Orpheus-Eurydice legend. In the original myth Orpheus has not succeeded in his quest, for Eurydice whereas Ofeyi succeeds. Ofeyi's quest for Iriyese takes him through a kind of wasteland. Orpheus and Eurydice myth has helped Soyinka in bringing out the cartel's villainy and the moral idealism of Ofeyi. Soyinka has embedded the Orpheus structure in the pattern of political allegory and has given the characters political, moral and mythical resonance which make the reader feel difficult to grasp the intention of the author. Ofeyi's quest has lasted in the Temako prison and many characters in the novel are associated with the myths in the novel. Suberu is identified with Cerberus the guard of the hell, and Karreraun, the prison governor is Charon who knows the secret of Iriyese's whereabouts. Batoki is identified with Pluto. Soyinka has made Ofeyi to nickname the cartel of four, Zakia, Amuri, Batoki, Chief Biga and the commander in chief as 'terrible quads' which refers to Bendele opposing the attitude of Egbo associates himself with some of Yoruba religious values.
Gerald Moore observes:

"although the novel does not explicitly state it, Bandele is surely identified with the arch-divinity Orisa-nla or Obatala, the Yoruba god of creation with his wise passiveness and accuses to the secret springs of knowledge".

Bandele becomes the human symbol of the aesthetics of the saint, reflecting the personality of the Yoruba deity which Soyinka describes

'within his cresent is stored those virtues of social and individual accommodation, patience, suffering, peaceableness, all the imperatives of harmony in the universe, the essence of quietude and forbearance in short the aesthetics of the saint".

Sekoni is not identified with any deity in the pantheon but evoked the images of Sango, the god of electricity, and of Ogun, the artisan of Yoruba mythology. Sekoni meddles with live wire and gets extinguished like lightning. Soyinka has presented Ogun in a lyrical image where he plays with current
passing through high tension wires in order to produce harmony in the universe as in his poem, 'The four horsemen of the Apocalypse'. The scenes of horror inspired by these four make Ofeyi exclaim 'it is the fifth face of the apocalypse.'

Apart from Orpheus and Eurydice Soyinka has also used specific allusions and symbols. The figures of St. George and the Dragon suggest not only the wealth of Florence but also the mythical battle of St. George with Dragon. The speech of the chairman at the unveiling ceremony of the statue is ironical since the chairman who tells that the statue represents the evils of corruption himself is corrupt.

Though Season of Anomy is primarily about violence and horror, humour is not totally lacking. Scenes such as Batoki's useless arguments with his wife and their bickerings on silly matters create laughter when Ofeyi is with Iriyese, Zaccheus visits them. Aristo, who has accompanied Zaccheus bursts into the room without asking for permission thereby making Iriyese angry and only to receive blows from Iriyese. Iriyese runs, after him throwing shoes at him which makes the reader laugh and also to pity Aristo. In The Interpreters
Sagoe's reaction on seeing plastic cornucopia, at prof. Oguazors party is humourously presented by Soyinka.

Soyinka had used multiple flashbacks in his novels. In The Interpreters and Season of Anomy Soyinka has used flashback technique to record the events. He has not narrated the events in a chronological order. Using flashback, a cinematic device Soyinka tells his readers about the dilemma of Egbo in the past, whether to accept the kingship of Osa or remain as a foreign service official. Egbo has been in the midstream in a canoe and suddenly the canoe has turned away from Osa which makes Egbo decide to go with the tide. The novel starts in the middle of the affairs of the main characters and gradually builds up a picture of their characters and their frustrations and successes by stepping back in time and filling in with pictures of their past. This is evident from the opening scene. The novel opens with a strange sentence uttered by Sagoe:

'Metal on concrete Jars my drink lobes'.

(T.I. p.7)
Then the reader is in the midst of a group of friends in a night club without proper introduction about these friends. From this scene the readers are ushered into the past where Egbo and his friends are in a canoe in the midstream, travelling towards Egbo's ancestral village.

Sometimes the drift is into the future as in Sekoni's case. Soyinka gives us a vivid portrait of Sekoni as he ... dreams about the future while in the ship returning home:

Sekoni, a qualified engineer, had looked over the railings everyday of his sea voyage home. And the sea sprays built him bridges and hospitals, and the large trailing furrow ... ... but it slipped with grease and pointed to his desk ... ... (T.I. p.26)

Sekoni has drifted back from his dream suddenly and is presented at the desk signing letters and vouchers.

Transitions are too sudden from descriptions to dialogues and also to introspection as is evident from Season
of Anomy. In the first chapter of Season of Anomy Soyinka describes Aiyero and after one paragraph without any introduction to the characters, there is Ofeyi questioning Pa Ahime

'Why did they all always come back?'

(S.O.A. p.2)

The next paragraph does not give any answer to Ofeyi's question. Instead, there is a description of Aiyero and other youngmen and about Aiyero's parent community. In the subsequent passage there is a dialogue between Ofeyi and the custodian, followed by Ofeyi's reaction to the invitation for custodians' funeral. There is no mention of when the custodian died and who has sent the invitation to Ofeyi.

Suddenly Ahime is reintroduced in a dialogue with Ofeyi which would fill the gap of their earlier conversation in paragraph one.

A.C. Okere observes

"Events that take place at different times and places are made to appear contiguous. The
effect is the elliptical nature of the narrative, a technique that demands a lot of assumptions from the reader but which nevertheless gives a poetic texture to the narrative."

This technique is used throughout the novel. There is a scene in the second chapter where Ofeyi returns from abroad and tells Ahime about the Dentist. But his meeting with the Dentist at the airport is narrated later only in the chapter six as a reverie.

The two novels of Soyinka reflects different authorial voices. In The Interpreters Soyinka is not very harsh and has contrived a few hilarious scenes but the mood of the author in Season of Anomy is grim. The after effects of Nigerian civil war and his own imprisonment impelled Soyinka to write Season of Anomy which reflects the horrible things of the civil wars and the gloominess prevailing in the country.

Eustace Palmer observes:

"If The Interpreters raised the curtain on a kind of comic opera, Season of Anomy takes us
into a chamber of horrors to reveal the full extent of human degradation and inhumanity".

In *Season of Anomy* the first four sections from 'Seminal' to the fourth section. 'Harvest' depicts the gloominess. Only in the fifth section, the hope of better times is suggested by the conclusion, with the survival of the hero, even there the atmosphere is not cheerful and congenial.

Soyinka is charged with obscurity which is due to the complex style he has adopted. The complex nature of Soyinka's novels is due to the peculiar use of idiom, myth and symbolism, allegory and flashback devices which are closely integrated into the texture of the novels. This lead some Nigerian critics like O.O. Enekwe and Thiovincent even to question the very social relevance of his works, especially his novels. Lawson feels about the complexity of *The Interpreters* that:

"The very complexity by which Soyinka demonstrates a myriad of writing talents actually becomes an impediment. Too complex to provide a clearly perceived single experience *The Interpreters* is a kind of compartmentalised showcase of the writer's skills."

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Arthur Ravenscroft has commented on *The Interpreters* that the novel lacks an ultimate design, a realised meaning.

"There is more than enough in *The Interpreters* to provide a superb feast for any reader, but do we come to a novel, of whatever order of excellence, with gastronomical expectations only."

James Booth comments on the obscurity of Soyinka

"Like the European modernist he often resorts to a deliberate obscurity, designed to make his art the exclusive preserve of the initiates."

To the charge of obscurity Soyinka says in defence

"Everybody obtains from a work of art very many different things at many different levels and one should never worry unduly that a certain section of one's ... readership is not appreciating it."

"Dereck Elders strikes at the heart of the problem when he refers to Soyinka's style as tedious and finally aimless virtuosity".
Though his style is complex making the novels vulnerable to severe criticism, his novels have attracted readership also outside Africa for the novelty of expression and thematic concerns and the indigenous techniques used by Soyinka.

Soyinka's style has also contributed to the beauty and effect of his novels as observed by M. Rajeswar:

"The ideological any mythical dimensions of Soyinka's works, the minute analysis of society and deep insights into the African psyche and his exploitation of the resourcefulness of the English language lend his works variety and depth besides earning them universal acceptability and acclaim".

which testifies to his unique distinction as a leading novelist and a pioneer of modern African novel in English.
REFERENCES:


