

CHAPTER- V

Conclusion

Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University

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The study adduces Soyinka's effort in demonstrating a counter-discourse in literature against imperial discourse and in positing a cross cultural approach in real life and fills the existing critical gap which is needed to justify his contribution towards society. Soyinka sets a binary narrative of Eurocentrism versus Afrocentrism, a perspective that gives importance to African people, culture, belief, religion, tradition, ways of thinking, style of living philosophy, history and ideology. He is critical of Eurocentric attitude but not against its positive manifestations. He propagates the decolonization of colonialism, subversion of imperial culture and appropriation of Eurocentrism. Since he knows clearly that colonized society is inevitably hybridized and so he welcomes postcolonial cultural syncretism. He realizes this cultural syncreticity is the strength of a society that is once colonized.

In the play *The Lion and the Jewel* Soyinka displays that the culture of Western people is equally not exempt from the criticism. They cannot claim themselves to be universal and progressive while other civilizations are regressive and narrow. He discovers a form of resistance by lodging his counter-discourse in which challenges from the periphery are launched against a dominant and established discourse. Foreign invaders are unaware of reality of indigenous culture and their ideological values. Yoruba culture and ideology are suppressed by the colonizers and in this context, Soyinka writes not only to dismantle the colonial propaganda but also to suggest a cross-cultural agenda which would offer a better Nigeria.

Through the shallow minded Lakunle, Soyinka satirizes those people who are unable to understand that ignoring one's own root and mimicking other's is actually a process of self-denial and victimization. This typical character fails to realize that colonizers have imbued in him a cultural alienation that results in a social gap between him and his fellow members of society. The colonizers have injected in him their mentality and he has started thinking himself as a superior to his own people and looking down upon them. A new, improved and liberal colonial phenomena 'neoimperialism' is prevalent in the changing power dynamics that appear in the post-

colonial African society. Baroka, Sidi and Sadiku all of them counter him and reduce him to an absurd and farcical character and create a counter discourse of resistance against the colonial mentality.

Soyinka has pointed out the devastating consequence of European advanced technology through eco-centred philosophy. One of the negative aspects of colonial development is the damage of ecological balance on the earth. He makes Baroka, the village chief, stand against the destructive force of colonial technology and thereby, creating an eco-critical discourse. The colonial government wants to build roads and railway track but only at the cost of destruction of the environment. Lakunle, the advocate of Western advancement can see the technological benefit but is not concerned at all about the environmental degradation. On the other hand, Baroka is worried about it and bribed away the surveyors who came to check the land for laying railway track. It does not mean that he is against the technological development. He proves that he has no problem in accepting eco-friendly modern technologies like stamp machine. Colonialism and modernity are inseparable since most of the hidden exploiting agenda has been executed by the modern technology only. Soyinka foils the Eurocentric propaganda and draws a line between advancement and destruction by defining which modern technology is compatible and which is not.

The innovative way of setting a counter narrative projects Soyinka's writing as a model of postcolonial resistance writing. The counter discourse of Soyinka displaces the colonial discourse and it equips a conscious reader with resistant imagination. In the postcolonial globalized world the text provides a roadmap for people of once colonized countries.

He promotes the thought that there is a need to re-embrace valuable cultural heritages abandoned by new people, and side by side, countering the reverse approach of modernization, imbibe the values of the constructive Western cultures to make a better society.

The play *Death and the King's Horseman's* reflection on life, death and on the moment of transaction between life and death sets a collection of narratives and opinions that Soyinka generates *in a massive reaction against* colonial discourse. The

theme of the story is not new, but what appeals is the energy of revolt, the rhetoric of resistance, the intensity of the suffering and the tragic overtones in the play.

Soyinka presents the complexity of a society where people of two alien cultures live together and one acts as superior to another. There is no cordial way to absorb and understand each other's thoughts and values. The play portrays the problem of understanding, and, even in the end neither of the culture makes any development towards understanding each other. Soyinka says that this complexity can be avoided if both the cultures co-exist letting each other celebrate their respective beliefs. Problem arises when one side starts dominating and intervening in other's life, and the colonizer's could not help it since their main motif was to marginalize the natives and exploit the resources of the native land.

The inability of Pilkings and his wife to understand the essence of native people's culture to stop them from offering ritual sacrifice may lead to calamity. They fail to understand that their action, as believed by natives, will provoke god's anger instead of showering blessings. Elesin's failure is an allegorical failure of wider African nexus. Pilkings' failure to stop the death is symbolic of resistance from the side of colonized people.

The play, apart from presenting the cultural conflict between two alien cultures, also deals with another human crisis that exists in every society. A relatively older set of people who are devoted to their faith and another set of people who belong to comparatively younger generation. In the first group are Elesin, Iyaloja and the women and in second are Joseph and Amusa. This conflict between two generations is perpetual, and there is always a tendency of cultural value be getting waned in the hand of newer generation.

The older generation though overpowered by the alien invasion, held their cultural heritage in high regard. While Elesin finds it proud to sacrifice his life for his community, Iyaloja stand with him and fulfils his desire before death. She is impregnated with Yoruba culture and is devoted to her cult.

Europeans colonized aboriginal people through various means, for example, Joseph in the play is colonized through religion. Joseph is made to ignore his cultural root, and Christianity is presented before him as the only true religion, which the

postcolonial sentiment vehemently denies. Joseph's gullible acceptance of Western religion is symbolic of new generation youths who neglect their own cultural practice, faiths and values and get inclined towards the new way imported by the foreigners, and those youths lack the ability of critical judgment.

Amusa is colonized spiritually and economically and has become a confused person. He is a faithful Muslim who is apprehensive of observing *egungun* which is not a part of Islam. He denies to talk to Pilkingses while they are in *egungun* mask which represents death. He has taken up a job under British administration and is forced to act against his fellow people.

Soyinka does not only reveal the prevailing problem in the society through his writing but also gives hints at the possible solution. When a land is once colonized the trace of colonization cannot be wiped off completely, and it is not possible to live without experiencing foreign influence. So, to Soyinka, it is better to get adapted with the evolving society. In his works he clearly indicates to pick up the positive aspects of Western advancement and use it as resistance. According to Homi K. Bhabha mimicry is a form of mockery that symbolizes resistance. A fine example is the mimicry of school girls in the play when Amusa goes to prevent Elesin from suicide. The girls, while shooing away Amusa and imitating white men, copying English accent and English manner, in a perfect way, it indicates that they have acquired good knowledge of the new culture. They have readily absorbed Western cultural patterns through their education.

Sending native girls to English school, imparting foreign education, and yet staying stuck to indigenous culture is what Soyinka wants to present as one of the feasible ways to counter the face of colonialism. Many people in our society outrightly reject to let their children come into contact with foreign education that causes hindrance to the overall development. One of the market women is reluctant to send her daughter to school lest she gets foreign education and leaves her own cultural value. Soyinka wants this mentality to be discarded in our society and embrace positive side of new phenomena. This problem is acute in Indian society where some communities are still apprehensive to send their kids to English school as they fear getting contaminated, as a result they are, in today's context, lying backward and lagging far behind from development.

Soyinka himself received his education from abroad but he is deeply rooted in his Yoruba tradition which he advocates very strongly. Similarly the character, Olunde, Elesin's son, is studying abroad, and comes back to bury his father who is going to have ritual suicide. Foreign education could not erase his love for his community. When he sees his father fail in sacrificing his life for the community, he himself commits suicide and save his society from an apparent calamity. He became successful in preserving peace by sacrificing his life. He is a great example of strong resistance against the colonialism.

Olunde's death comes under question when it is put before the idea of human right. He questions Jane about the mass killing in a war in developed countries, and tries to justify a single suicide for the sake of a traditional community. As a human being, killing of a person cannot be supported in any way, be it in a war, or in the name of religious sacrifice. The practice of killing must be abolished for the sake of humanity in any context. The intervention of British people to stop ritualistic suicide is not commendable, but, when they themselves are involved in a greater process of human killing, their action to stop a mere single suicide stands arguably amoral.

In Indian context British intervention took positive shape in abolishing the practice of *Satee* in which widows were burnt alive along with the dead bodies of their husbands on pyre. Similarly, the death in the play is also an inhuman practice that must be stopped and Soyinka too does not support it as he has been vocal against the negative aspects of his own culture too. Had he supported the human sacrifice, he would have made Elesin die easily, at his first attempt. But he fails, and later wastes his life by strangling himself. He satirises both the cultures in order to bring about the best of each of the two cultures. Soyinka's motif is to tell the story of past to newer generation and inspire them to breed a discourse of resistance against marginalization.

Readers who go through the complex novel *The Interpreters* and after reading are able to construe what it wants to convey, then there is a strong possibility, that they would come up with a balanced human experience with minute details which would give them a fair lesson of how to face and tackle a society sunk into a neck-deep corruption. There is hardly any society which is not affected by corrupted people, but still those societies continue to exist and function, it is possible because of the honest individuals who possess courage to oppose anti-social people and the

intention to sacrifice. In human history, one of the toughest steps is to count one's ancestor as reprehensible. Generally people regard their forefathers as followers of true path and revere them unconditionally. But, to understand it logically, it is too much vulnerable to accept every action of one's ancestors to be true and this could be a big blunder. Human being is always on the verge of committing mistakes and our ancestors were but humans only. It is no crime to review and rethink the actions of our older generations. There might be many fallacious malpractices committed by them also, and it is our responsibility not to repeat those mistakes. In *The Interpreters* Egbo is the example of such individual who carves his own niche by rejecting the ancestral way, which, he thinks, is an epitome of immoral practices that exploits society. Egbo's ancestors enjoyed the hierarchy of being chief of the community. When the time comes to pass down the post to Egbo, he denies to accept it. The denial here is an individual sacrifice since the post of chieftain would have offered him a lavish life with power and a 'harem' which, to many men, could have been irresistible. But Egbo, holding the interest of his society higher than his personal comfort, resist the temptations, and takes up a job of a clerk to earn his livelihood. It would not be proper to pursue readers to see Egbo as a role model for other reasons, but this aspect of his character definitely deserves applause as it inspires people to gather courage to go against one's ancestors whose influence on the community is pernicious.

The Interpreters proves Soyinka's profound sense of commitment to his Nigerian society in particular and concern for African masses in general. He feels the African elite cannot turn away from shouldering the greater responsibility of uplifting the society which is inflicted by social and political maladies. Lifestyle of colonized countries are inevitably affected by Western influence and it is not possible to reconstitute the original pre-colonial society, that is why Soyinka, not approving Ngugi's didacticism and proposal to discard what is foreign, reacts to colonialism in an assertive way promoting to co-exist with categorically constructive aspects.

The characters in the novel live in their own world and each one of them is engaged in his or her own profession and there is not much common ground between them. But in spite of the differences they manage to be on same track on basic issues,

thus emerging as a solid group. Soyinka has given a convincing account of the predicaments faced by different characters in society.

Soyinka's main purpose in selecting the intellectual people as his preferred characters in the novel is to bring awareness among the intellectual section of society to take up the responsibility of perfecting the society and protecting it from all social and political evils and to preserve its sanctity. Though, in the end of the novel, they have not much succeeded in their endeavour to prevent the corruption, they have gained an understanding of the society that would help develop insight for the future.

Soyinka's select works become a testimony that he bears a modern mind; yet he is rooted to his tradition. He is unconventionally conventional, classy and original in his approach to postcolonial issues. He has been a rebel both in life and art. He is a prominent social voice against apartheid, racial discrimination and all modes and forms of injustice. His inspiring and transformative vision led literature to represent ethical and intellectual reformation.