

## SHORT VIEW OF WOLE SOYINKA'S PLAYS WRITING

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### Abstract

Wole Soyinka is the best known dramatist and different identities from other African writer. He is the African first writer, who won the Nobel Prize in 1986 for Literature. He helps improvable development for making all human being awareness through his plays. Soyinka plays are absurd and difficult to understand. Soyinka plays reflect true fact of African such as political situation problem, education system, economics and social things presents through his plays writing. In the paper, study is based on Wole Soyinka's writing. It is description about Dance, Song, Masquerade and other aspects.

### SHORT VIEW OF WOLE SOYINKA'S PLAYS WRITING.

Noble Laureate Wole Soyinka is the best known of Nigerian play writer. Wole Soyinka is writer, who has personalized writing of drama and their advantage through the depth of his imagination. The language of drama is an inspirable. Images and individual outlooks are reflected in his plays. Wole Soyinka plays writing is about social problem and other issue of Nigerian people. Soyinka's background added originality to his plays. Soyinka's play witting is directly contact with the Nigerian Society in manner from inside.

Soyinka has built his literary career on a remarkable mastery of Western and African cultures and his willingness to challenge traditions. He is proud his African heritage and he has been one of the staunchest defenders of African culture and tradition. Soyinka has one single tradition but reflects other tradition; his works reflect the multiplicity of sources. Soyinka's works are located in the cosmic vision of the Yoruba people of Nigeria. Soyinka is derives his power of writing from the essential forces of an African culture and tradition. Wole Soyinka works are conceive to Yoruba religion beliefs and thought through outside. Some of the major literary influences in his plays have derived from the works of such experimental modern playwrights. His writings are derived Yoruba culture and tradition such in philosophical movement. Soyinka has made a major and controversial figure in African literature and traditions.<sup>1</sup>

Soyinka's plays fuses diverse elements from different traditions of thought and different methods of culture. Soyinka uses of his Yoruba tradition are in keeping with expression of universal human emotions and sentiments. Soyinka is a man like sensitive. Soyinka can reach human soul through his writing. Soyinka's main concern is to stir the human consciousness through his drama. Wole Soyinka is part of Nigeria, who is comes in the Yoruba culture and tradition. Soyinka's writing is backbone of Yoruba culture and tradition. Soyinka mind tries to assert his individuality by deliberately shutting off from other causes. Soyinka's mind wants discovers to a world existing element through the colonial and post colonial images of Nigeria. Soyinka plays writing is interesting to the use of sound and images. Soyinka structures of the plays based on Political, Economic, Social, Religion, and other aspect of Nigeria life. Soyinka combined primary element of Western traditions with Nigerian myth. Folklore and folk opera is techniques as singing, drumming and dancing.

Soyinka became a writer in an important period in the history and literary culture of Africa. Soyinka was written from colonial period when ruled by British in Nigeria. Their plays were published during crucial moments in the politics of decolonization in Nigeria. His works recognized to be as powerful reactions Nigerian country. Wole Soyinka is play-writer and cultural-commentator. Soyinka has been distinguished complex influential through his major works. He has been written within and against the dominant traditions of modern African drama.

The western society had spread tentacles to the African society and had influenced every aspect. These African societies are mostly small scale homogeneous units under divine sanctions to having close personal bond through individuals and it is necessary for people to allow new ideas to enter the old framework through Soyinka plays. The infiltration of new ideas is the stubborn and diehard traditional. The African people have become own thoughts and felling. Human conflict is the substance of literature in Africa. At the moment, the conflict is the substance complicated life patterns. Soyinka plays highlight such conflicts as a result of collision of the cultures. He achieves his immediate objective. He awakens the people from their deep slumber and their mental machine set ticking. He tried to persuade thinking caps of their people.

Soyinka's plays are concerned with expressing the difficulty of finding meaning in a world, subject to incessant change, and as a vehicle for the expression of the valid statements an instrument of thought. The language of Soyinka is evocative. He has always been a supporter of the Yoruba Folk opera is writing attitude in language. He is conscious to the possibilities of allusion and is constantly referring back to details of Yoruba folklore and custom. Wole Soyinka writing is based on his own experiences, beliefs, fantasies, and emotions of colonial and post colonial period of Nigeria. The language of the folk opera is similar to the music and dance. Folk opera is using traditional dance with particular step and musical instrument with song. Folk opera used for a ceremony to worshipper of a goddess of Nigerian. Soyinka presents the universal themes through his plays like *A Dance of Forests*, *The Road*, *Kongi's Harvest* and *The Lion and the Jewel*, etc. The language is enlivened. The clarity of movement and the music find new powers in the plays of Wole Soyinka.

Soyinka literary works are considered difficult due to the complex range of esoteric Yoruba rituals are merged with the idiom of drama. It is difficulty that is sometimes explained in terms of Soyinka's preference for metaphysical systems and an abstract, poetic language. But perhaps one of the reasons Soyinka is considered to be difficult, not to mention elitist. He has to be with his refusal to concede to two of the doctrines central African literature of the 1950s and 1960s. Wole Soyinka needs committed to rehabilitation of the culture images of Africa. The liberation of the collective portrait of black peoples is considered to negative and disfiguring

colonial images and representations. Soyinka was an early and vocal critic of the dominant belief that the function of the new literature emerging in Africa during the last years of colonial rule.

Those literatures were educated to readers about their cultures and societies. Soyinka has no patience for those who argue that works of art are most effective when they are clear, direct and didactic. His major plays have been concerned with what he calls the self apprehension to the subject of African. He has insisted that he is committed to eliciting an African sense of self from history, mythology and literature. But he has been equally adamant in his beliefs that true self apprehension can be acquired neither through the language of cultural liberation and the assertion of pride in one's identity nor through contrast to the cultural system of others. Soyinka would prefer the question of African realities and identities to be apprehended and represented outside the orbit of external factors, including the colonial experience. It is precisely because his quest for modes of representation that are inherent in African cultures and worlds that Soyinka has developed a reputation as the most vocal critic of established ideologies of identity such as the African image and negritude.<sup>2</sup>

Soyinka came to prominence as a cultural critic in the early 1960s by positioning himself against emerging, especially two decades of independence, as collective notions of Africa culture and African identity. Soyinka was committed to the idea of an African world but against its celebration. He wanted the African world and this has important implication for the history of *Death and the King's Horseman* and the debates that have come to surround the play. Soyinka's works cannot be understood outside the parameters established by other writers. He is a part of remarkable generation of African writer. Soyinka's literary career was defined by the tension between the desire to account for African worlds and experiences at the end of colonial rule, using the language and literary models borrowed from the departing colonizer. Soyinka's early plays were not concerned with celebrating a mythical African past, but they were connected to the literary of his generation through their concern for the meaning of the African past both before and after colonialism. Soyinka's attitude towards history and the past was very much more critical than that the other African writers, and early in his career he worried about the transformation of history or memory into an instrument of power and domination by the postcolonial elite. At the same time, he was conscious of the legacy of the past continued to haunt the political order ushered in by independence.

Soyinka's skepticism toward the myth and romance of the African past did not preclude a serious attempt on his part to discover forms of drama. He had developed in pre-colonial African societies and to incorporate them into his plays. In his plays, Soyinka often insisted on the distinction between two types of reality, one that reflects the surface experience of societies and nations going through a period of transition, and one that reflects a deeper experience that goes beyond the politics of everyday life and reaches down to the essence of culture. He lamented the fact that in their dealings with the aspiration of nationalism, a fascination with the past, and a concern with the contingencies of life, African writers had negated another kind of reality that he came to associate with art and literature. Soyinka continued to make between a deeper and an ephemeral reality did not mean that his work were concerned solely with larger metaphysical questions. While such as *Death and the King's Horseman* belong to Soyinka's explicitly metaphysical plays, his larger concern with questions of being and experience are continuously underpinned by an equally important engagement with the world. The world of taxi drivers, market woman, and the unemployed are center of the cosmic universe of his plays. Soyinka's literary career was very much concerned with the contradictions of modern life and their connection to large realms of experience.

Other African writers of his generation many of who are focused on the problems of contemporary life. But he is his attempt to use language to go beyond the visible world. Nigerian independence was to change the context in Soyinka's work was produced by extension and mission. Soyinka consistently argued that his plays were not intended to educate his readers or audience. He also insisted that he was not interested in producing plays that responded to specific episodes either in Africa's colonial past or present. In retrospect, Soyinka's major plays came to be read, sometimes against his own wishes and intentions, as specific interventions into the drama of politics and social life in postcolonial Africa and Nigeria. As an example, his first major play, *A Dance of the Forest*, which won the first prize in Independence Day literary contest, raised fundamental questions about the idea of an African future haunted by a past. A play had not been adequately accounted for; it was seen as providing lessons about the official postcolonial romantic view of the African to dramatize the emergence of political dictatorship. A work in which the major players are some of the infamous African dictators of the period.

An aspect of Soyinka's literary career has been the diversity of his output. He has not only produced works in a variety of genres, including poems and memoirs, but his plays have been diverse in their thematic concerns, methodologies, and ideas. Each of his work has generated controversy in literary and theatrical circles, while many of these controversies in literature have been a reaction to the message of the plays or to some of their technical features or to Soyinka's own commentaries on how his works should be read or perceived. There is no doubt that the major source of contention has been the politics of the dramas or rather what some radical critics have considered to be the absence of political commitment in Soyinka's work.

Soyinka's literary works is to call attention to one of the most enigmatic sides to this complex writer. The fact is that while he has stubbornly refused to write plays that serve an explicit political function or that are read as direct commentaries on social problems. The plays of Soyinka's are founded on a set of conventions and idioms derived from Yoruba traditional. Music, masking rituals, and proverbial language are important sources of meaning in Soyinka's plays. Traditional ideas of the plays are mingling with new ideas. People are daring make a bid to welcome ideas from the West. The traditional ideas are given a fresh lease of life, with this infusion of the old and new. A variegated background such as this forms the backbone of Soyinka's plays.

The masquerades are featured of Wole Soyinka plays writing. It developed in some areas of the plays. Just like that the carving of wooden masks. The masquerades are varying throughout the region in content, purpose and pattern. It includes that elements of drama and it referred to some plays. This kind of masked figure was represented by the great emphasis on costume, music and dancing. The tradition of African artist included the elements, which might be demanded by a drama and audience. Traditional play was being performed before colonial era, and its many forms still performed. Those types are very much of popular and literary in African plays. Those play aims mass audience and unsophisticated audience with little formal education and inspired by Wole Soyinka to the other countries.

Religious forms the backbone of the traditional Yoruba life. The Yoruba believes that there are four hundred and one gods in their pantheon. There are major deities who are worshipped all over the Yoruba land. Oludumare (Olorun) is the Supreme God – 'Creator, King Omnipotent,' All-wise, All-knowing, Judge, Immortal, Invisible and Holy. Ogun is the famous God and a favorite of Soyinka. Ogun is a very interesting God – in that he has the essence, an enigmatic symbol. Soyinka calls 'Fourth Stage'. Below the deities, there are a number of spirits of the ancestors. Some of the gods are ancestors who have been elevated to deities. The ancestors

are worshipped through the egungun masked figures, who through certain rituals become possessed by the spirits they represent. Soyinka makes use of this idea of possession in *The Road*. The use of masks is seen in *Death and the King's Horseman* where the District Commissioner and his wife prance around in the fancy dress of the captured egungun regalia. All this result of tragic alienation. The Yoruba is a skillful carver as he has to carve the masks and other objects for the worship of these numerous deities and ancestors. The carver is the central to Yoruba life and worship.

Christian influences are also seen in the plays of Soyinka. He has declared that he is no longer a practicing Christian, but the influence of Christianity is apparent in his works. The life of Christ made a deep impression on Soyinka. A lot of Christ figures used Soyinka's some plays. Men are victims of people for whom they worked and died high on a sacred tree, leaving the people stunned by their deaths. Willing sacrifice is one of the recurrent themes of Soyinka's plays.<sup>3</sup> Wole Soyinka is not concerned with the African man through the protagonist but he represents the race of human. He realizes that the universal trait of *homo sapiens* is the dual perspnality of men. He had capacity for creation and destruction, which makes him a potential victim of his own ingenuity. Wole Soyinka thinks that salvation comes to a society through the vision and dedication of an individual who with determination pursues his goal in spite of opposition from the society, he seeks to serve. The human will plays a major role in the restructuring of society.

The heroes or protagonist interact with each other and other members of the society. The hero in Soyinka's plays is a firm believer in freedom of the individual. It is reflective of Soyinka's love for freedom of the individual. Soyinka, as a writer and as an individual experienced this painful dualism. The world seen by the young Soyinka was one of domestic brutality. The world outside was marked by intrigue, insincerity and a form of political and economic exploitation. Soyinka's work covers a variety of themes. Variety of theme can be narrowed down to a basic conflict between protagonists Man and Destiny. Death is inevitable man will be reduced to nothing that is a certainty. The playwright sees man as a creature for Death. All life is condemned to die but no other creature shares a man's anguish, because only man is conscious of his losing battle with Destiny.<sup>4</sup>

Soyinka is a writer endowed with a social vision. Vision is a multilayered word not just something with lofty and profound shades. Vision could mean just as insight into the working of a society. He hates false intellectuals and intellectual morons. Intellectual starvation was a live burial and he experienced this while serving his prison term. Soyinka angst was personal and public. Personal because he was imprisoned and ill treated. Because he conscious about corruption and violence around people. Tragic ambience is created only because of limitations of the human spirit. Tragedy arises when voice of protest is stifled and forces of positive changes are suppressed. For him, the people as individuals were more important than the nation. Every real tragedy is an affirmation of faith in life and a declaration in world.

Soyinka's play writing is the coalition of the new ideas and the local culture. Soyinka's writing has fascinated their rich wisdom and practical knowledge. Human psychology and behavior are interesting topic of Wole Soyinka plays writing. It is a short view of to introduction of the plays writing of Wole Soyinka. Wole Soyinka's writing style and technique are different for others. It is conclusion of paper.

**NOTES AND REFERENCES**

1. Soyinka Wole, *Death and The King's Horseman*. New York: Norton 2003, p. VIII.
2. Ibid, p. IX.
3. Pushpa M, *The Plays of Wole Soyinka*, Prestige publication, 1999, p. 16.
4. Ibid, p. 21.