

MYTH AND MYTHOGRAPHY IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN DRAMA

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

What a God!

- It that stands without, within
- It that supports without relaxing
- It that started it,
 saw it through,
 and
 continues with it.

What a Love!

- my dad – my broken but unblemished mirror
- my mum – my torch bearer, unfathomable love
- my siblings – my familial strongholds
- my wife – love eternal: from eternity into It
- my crowns – Tope, Omolade, Moradeke, Adeife, Adeoluwa:
 Stars of my Life.

What a Course!

- the mountains I climbed
- the valleys I waded through
- the depths I delved into
- the years that crawled but flew
- the initiatory ordeals I underwent

the Shore!, the Shore!!, the Shore!!!

Dream

Reality

I Become What

Is

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ABSTRACT

Most previous studies regarded myths as a plethora of concocted stories: they paid little attention to dramatic myth and mythography as productive and effective in African way of life. Modernism, sequestered from the past, created directionless and questioning societies. Solutions, pre-encoded in mythologies and transmitted through generations, were jettisoned. This study, therefore, situates dramatic mythic tendencies, depictions and effects in present African way of lives with a view to highlighting the connectivity of their socio-religious, political, economic and general implications to individual and national lives of the African people.

The study employs Carl Jung's archetypal model which deals with holistic and universal symbols of human experiences. The collective unconscious is the pooling source of human experiences which manifests different but related forms, while a unit of symbol (the primordial original) is the derivative mold from which others emanate. Nine African dramatic texts, Tewfik al-Hakim's *Fate of a Cockroach (FOC)*, Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead (SBD)*, Brett Bradley's *Ipi Zombi? (IPZ)*, Ebrahim Hussein's *Kinjeketile (KIN)*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo's *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi (TDK)*, Femi Osofisan's *Morountodun (MOR)*, Efua Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa (MOA)*, 'Zulu Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods (WOG)* (for feminist related issues) and Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman (DKH)*, were purposively selected because they portray African consciousness in authorship, topicalities and environmental issues. The texts are subjected to content analysis.

Mythic encryptions represent, for all levels of life, the people's accrued mythic experiences. Myth and mythography become everyday creations that are unlimited to the past as ordinary records and stories. They represent present realities with codifications that impact on life and the future. The texts contain mythic tendencies which reveal mythographic meanings and idiosyncrasies relevant to ongoing national and individual situations. Within the African socio-religious life, rites and rituals, marriages and initiations, births and deaths are models of codification. They are symbolic and mythographic representations to entering next level of physical or spiritual life. This is represented in *FOC*, *KIN* and *DKH*. Adil, Kinjeketile and Olunde respectively become heroes through the death of the self. Human reliance on spiritual forces is curtailed at individual and national stages. The powers and presence of gods in human affairs become demystified: man must fight for political and economic independence as depicted in *MOR*, *MOA* and *TDK* as the characters fight the establishment by creating new mythic stories. Textual mythic findings encourage the discarding of anachronistic socio-religious based mythological ideas: rites, beliefs, patrilineal, racial and ethnic discriminations as portrayed in *SBD*, *WOG* and *IPZ*.

Solutions to secular and spiritual developmental problems are pre-embedded in African dramatic textual myths. African life is affected by mythographical codifications that can prevent social eruptions, help maintain social balance and instill peaceful co-existence. Therefore, African myths and mythography should be refined and preserved.

Key words: Dramatic mythography, Archetype, African drama, Mythic encryption, Demystification

Word count: 464

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The generic development of a people necessitates the concoction of facts and fictions in respect of their socio-economic, religious and physical experiences. Over time, these become shrouded in mysteries and are rendered either sacredly or secularly. From them stories, folklores and myths are created. After different generations of their transmission, lots of changes either to the themes, context, style (of delivery, of form) occur though their essences remain.

Some of these stories are considered mythical. They are rendered imaginatively and symbolically. Most of the time, the culture and traditions of a society exist on this structure. Antecedently, myth and its study were not accorded much academic respect. Myths were considered as collections of make-shift stories that portended the child-like attitude and age of man's development. They were regarded as a plethora of stories filled with falsities and with no iota of truth and facts. Myths, therefore, became synonymous with falsehood. This situation even gave birth to a word like 'mythomania' (human tendency to over-exaggerate or to indulge in overt and covert lying) in a field of study as sublime as Psychology (Ngumoha 1988, Lang 1998). Supporting this, though with a variation, Aristotle, in his *Poetics* consigns myth to the world of ordinary words, stories and fables. In consonance with this, Chase (1946: 539) opines: "myth is . . . an aesthetic creation of the human imagination". This statement foregrounds that myth emanates from humans with very active imaginative powers. The notion that myth lacks truth and reality can also be rooted in the Romantic movement and its evaluation of primitive and non-Christian religions.

With Welleck and Warren (1978:191), an improvement in the study and definition of myth regards it as "any anonymously composed story telling of origins and destinies: the explanations a society offers to its young on why the world is and why we do as we do". With this, seriousness crept into the understanding and study of

myth. Scholars could see linkages between myths and the development of the people. It became the job of mythographers to decipher the embedded facts and decode the encoded stories that are told of the past. The study of myth became a tool for cultural rediscovery, remembrance and reorientation towards the re-understanding of the experiences that tribal progenitors went through according to Eliot (1972:13). This refers to their limited understanding of the experiences they had and the coming to terms with their physical and spiritual environments. Myth and the mythic were found to encompass the totality of the development of a people. With this in mind, Ngumoha (1998:18) in *Creative Mythology in Nigerian Poetry* redefines and refocuses myth as “imaginative pictorial anecdotes used to represent higher wisdom in understandable form . . . which have something to do with the inner nature of the universe and of human life”.

Before incursions into the spiritual, foundations are usually already laid at the physical and human levels. According to Abrams (1981; 111):

a myth is one story in a mythology – a system of hereditary stories which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group and which served to explain (in terms of intentions and actions of supernatural beings) why the world is as it is and things happen as they do, as well to establish the rationale for social customs and observances and the sanctions for the rules by which people conduct their lives.

This postulation opens mythographic study into different fields and environments: oral and written myths (Okpewho, 1979:6), psychology (Levi-Strauss, 1972:54), creation myths (Ramsaran 1970), narrative myths (‘*itan*’ in Yoruba according to Dasylva, 1999:12), and ritual performances (Okpewho 1979). There are other types of myth: creation, renewal and rebirth, origin of deities (Long, 1998:695-696), African myths consisting of culture, nature, religion, ritual and hero worship (Onwubiko 1991), myth and drama (Enekwe 1981) and myth and sea creatures like ‘mermaids’, ‘sea-kings, husbands, wives’ (Amadi 1966). It is the examination of these but with specificity on

drama and myth that this study is based. Scholars, like M.J.C. Eucheruo and Ossie Enekwe, have posited that drama is the soul of myth and myth-making.

1.2 Historical Perspectives on Myth and Mythography

(From Classical Period to Modern Age)

Myths, legends and superstitions, according to Brown (1970:7), are not only interrelated but basically linked. Superstition, according to him, originally in Latin as *superstes* meant,

‘a standing still in apprehension or awe’. Superstition is a belief or system of beliefs, by which almost religious veneration is attached to things mostly secular; a parody of religious faith in which there is belief in an occult or magic connection.

In the development of myth in any society, superstitious, religious, ritualistic, and dramatic rites usually creep in. These, basically, serve the needs of the society. Brown (1970: 10), in assessing the tradition of superstition, links it to those of myth. He opines that “carefully assessed, superstitions throw light on the history of our ethnic groups and help us to understand the thought processes of our ancestors in relation to our own”. Various communities have mythic stories, rituals, and beliefs to help showcase the levels of their development in different spheres of communal life as Long (1998:669) puts it: “such ideas have possessed the mind of man since Neolithic and Megalithic times”.

1.2.1 Indo-European [Aryan] Mythology

Among the Aryans or the Indo-Europeans, who settled in most parts of Europe, mythic culture developed as far back as the 2nd millennium BC. Most of the underlying myths and their connotative mythological meanings were unraveled by the untiring works of Max Muller and Georges Dumezil. This encompassed the studying and understanding of the various Indo-European languages like Sanskrit and other modern European languages (German, French, Italian and others).

In two of his scholarly works, *The Destiny of the Warrior* (1970) and *The Destiny of a King* (1973), Dumézil posits that divine power was held in trust by a tripartite godhood in a socio-cultural form or jurisdiction (as a vocation) among the people: warrior, magical-legalistic and farming/production groups. The powers of the unitarian gods were, therefore, distributed though not evenly among the three gods who held supreme powers. There were paradigmatic power shifts as constant socio-religious conflicts occurred. Easily identifiable in this group are the following people: the Greeks, the Romans and the Indians.

Greek Mythology

The Greeks, who worshipped the Olympian gods and goddesses, were mythically inconsistent and unreliable in the explanations of their divines. Their mythical time process according to Long (1998:700) “cover[s] a period from the 2nd millennium BC to the beginning of the Christian era”. A few of their written collections left for posterity includes Homer’s *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, Hesiod’s *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. Due to the differing but continuous interpretations given to most of these works by writers like Sophocles, Euripides and others, tales in the various mythical works interweave. Eliot (1937: Introductory Note) surmises in respect of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*:

whatever may be the truth as to the method of comparison of the two epics, it may safely be surmised that they were preceded by a mass of legend that had in time gained a certain amount of cohesion and become in a sense national. But the constituent element of this legend would have come together from a great variety of sources: and many incidents in both poems can be paralleled in the folktales of widely scattered peoples.

In spite of its attendant disadvantages, this situation gave the writers the chance of making the reality of the gods an acceptable norm. These fact-fiction (faction) admixtures were historical, cultural, religious and even mythical in nature. Writing in reference to this type of position, Eliot (1937: Introductory Note) opines further: “The siege of Troy which forms the subject of the *Iliad* and is the occasion of the

wanderings of Odysseus, is unknown to history”. From the past, the present is defined for the future to happen.

A few of the well-known Greek gods and goddesses include Aphrodite, Apollo, Hera, Athena, Poseidon and Dionysus. All were headed by Zeus, the thunderbolt thrower, “a god of lightening, a god of rain . . . a ruler-father, sovereign and controller” (Long: 700). These were gods who combined both human attributes and frailties but were still regarded as immortals. Like humans, they were greedy and gluttonous. They exhibited hatred and love, were participants in fighting escapades and had sexual relationships among themselves and sometimes with humans. Many of their actions and inactions became religious truths. Fowler (1973:19) asserts this view in his definition of myth: “myths are stories of unascertainable origin or authorship accompanying or helping to explain religious beliefs”.

Indian Mythology

Unlike the lineal arrangement of the Greek pantheon, Indian mythical gods and goddesses were positively and negatively delineated. The positives were the Adityas composed of Varuna (high god), Mitra (sun god), Indra (warrior god) and other lower gods; progenies of the goddess Aditi (mother of earth). On the other side were the Danavas, off-springs of Danu (the restrainer), one of whom was Vritra (the great dragon) who was finally destroyed by Indra. This defeat gave room for the creation of the world. As myths, these stories continuously undergo changes. These can be differentiated from those already documented either in the *Rig-Veda* (brought together about the 2nd millennium BC) or the Sanskrit *Vedas* (a more religious recording). A few of the gods include Prajapati (the arbiter), Soma and Agni (god of fire). The tripartite that came up with the acceptance of Hinduism as state religion were Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the preserver) and Shiva (the destroyer).

Indian mythological works include *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavad-Gita*. In *Bhagavad-Gita*, the myth (or science) of reincarnation and incarnation are extensively discussed by Lord Krishna and his friend and devotee, Arjuna, on the battle field of Kuruksetra, Northern India some fifty centuries ago as posited in

Coming Back: The Science Of Reincarnation (1982): a book based on the teachings of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness). The religion believes that Vishnu (the preserver) continuously incarnates. These incarnations, Ramakrishna, are deified and regarded as saviours (avatars). They help restore the cosmic world continuously to its rightful order while ushering in peace, love and developments. This situation presupposes and agrees with the opinion of Mircea (1965:23):

a myth is a true history of what came to pass at the beginning of Time and one which provides the pattern for human behaviour. In imitating the exemplary acts of a god or mythic hero or simply recounting their adventures, the man of archaic society detaches himself from profane time and magically re-enters the Great Time, the sacred Time.

Roman Mythology

Unlike the other mythologies, the Roman gods are not portrayed as being extremely orgiastic or mythical in birth, action, adventure or life. In his work, Dumézil names Jupiter (head), Mars (war) and Quirinus (agriculture and fertility) as the tripartite power-holders. Between the Greek and the Roman gods, there is a link, especially, in their functionalities: Zeus-Jupiter, Poseidon-Neptune, Artemis-Diana, Hera-Juno, Apollo-Apollo, Dionysus-Bacchus, Aphrodite-Venus and others. The Romans elevated humans to godhood and even restricted some of these gods to cities, villages and specific environments. They were, therefore, worshipped at certain times of the year and at specific places and settings. A few of them were national in orientation and outlook. In his works *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses*, Ovid not only writes of the major gods, mention is also made of majority of the minor, seasonal, household and event-specific gods and goddesses.

Celtic Mythology

The Celts, who now inhabit Great Britain (Ireland specifically), are a people of long history dating back orally to circa 5th century BC while their written history is circa

12th century BC. Like the Romans and the Indians, they also have a tripartite societal set-up. This extends to their godhood of kingship, warriors and the producers (agriculturists). In religion, there were the Druids (priests/administrators), the Vatis (diviners/magicians) and the Bards (oral historians). Their mythologies are historical though not all are found recorded in their mythic texts: the *Leabhar Gabhala* (Book of Invasions), *Dinnshenchas* (History of Places), and *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi*. The first text is on the mythic history of Ireland while the remaining two are on the mythogeographical make-up of a mythical Ireland. The many gods are region-based and localized like those of the Romans with a few national ones.

Their mythic time frame, “the Great Time, the sacred Time”, according to Mircea (1965:23), is divided into four: historical-mythological, Ulster, Fenian and Establishments of Kings. These periods were fraught with problems of settling in Ireland, struggles and wars between the various settlers and the process of deification of the gods. The peoples involved were the Tuatha De Danann (People of the Goddess, Danann), Fir Bolg (Bolg Men), Sons of Mill and others. The gods and their minions included Lug, King Conchobar (and his warriors), Cuchulain (Cuchulainn), Finn Mac Cumhail (and his compatriots), Cesair (a feminine founder), Partholan and Nemed (male founders), Nuada and Bres (Kings of the Tuathas). Their mythic history is full of wars and the mighty deeds of men and women which culminated into the settling of the people and the process of making habitable their cosmogony.

Norse Mythology

Inhabiting Europe also from about the 1st millennium BC were the Germanic and Scandinavian tribes. The myths that emanated from these two cultures are synonymous in structure and origin. This mythic tradition unravelling is derived mainly from the work of an Icelandic historian, Snorri Sturluson (c1179-1241), titled *Prose Edda*. In relating this tradition’s creation myth, Long (1998:702) recounts:

In the beginning was a great void (Ginnungagap). Before the Earth was formed, the world of death existed. In this world (NIFLHEIM) was a great well, from which flowed

11 rivers. South of Niflheim existed an extremely hot world (Muspell) guarded by a giant called Sutr ("the Black"). The rivers of Niflheim froze, and these frozen rivers occupied Ginnungagap. Sparks from Muspell, however, fell on the rivers and melted them. Droppings from this melting took shape as YMIR, the giant, and from Ymir's sweat other giants, male and female, were formed.

Another version relates that the melting drops took the form of the primordial cow, Audumbia, who fed Ymir with her milk. The cow also licked the salty blocks of ice, shaping them into the form of the first man, who is called Buri. Buri had a son, Bor, who married Bestla, daughter of a giant, Bolthors; the children from this union are the gods ODIN, VILI and VE. Odin and his brothers kill Ymir and from his body fashion the Earth.

Like the Greek gods who had their abode on Mount Olympus, the Norse gods lived at Asgard. According to the myth, the state of the world is dependent on the primordial tree, Yggdrasil (the tree of fate) which is upheld by three roots: the underworld (Hel), the world of the frost-giants and the world of human beings.

The gods were in two groups: the Aesirs (amongst who were Odin, Thor and Tyr) and the Vanirs (amongst who were Njord, Frey and Freya). While Odin was the chief god, Thor (meaning "thunder" and whose weaponry was a magical hammer) was the god of thunder. The Vanir gods were more of representations of agriculture, fecundity, fertility, riches and other related fields. Myth has it that though these two groups worked hand-in-hand, there was in the far past, a bitter rivalry between them as the Aesirs intended depriving the Vanirs of the status of full godhood. Like the Indo-European godhood's mythical structure, the Norse godhood also had a tripartite form: Odin and Thor shared the magical law-giver position, Tyr the warrior god's position, while the fertility and fecundity gods were in the Vanir group.

Also embedded in the Norse's culture is the belief in the myth of the end of the world. It is based on the story of the final battle of the gods: the good against the evil. According to Long (1998:702):

The Earth will then be destroyed by fire, and the entire universe will sink back into the sea. This final destruction

will be followed by a rebirth, the Earth re-emerging from the sea, verdant and teeming with vegetation. The sons of the dead Aesir will return to Asgard and reign as did their fathers.

This sounds like the end-time prophecy and, or the Christian idea about the end of the world, which would be heralded by the Armageddonian battle. This battle will also be between the good and the evil with the good winning. Christ will then come to reign for a millennium. This is the type of foundation or source story from which mythologies are derived: the fact in the fiction culminating in mythical fact. Through this process, more light is shed not only on ancient myths and religions but also on the way and manner (oral or written) some modern religious ideas, ideologies and philosophies came to be. Mythically, these gods' dramatic roles give physical reality to the resurgence and maintenance of the world cosmogony - physical, spiritual and time frame.

1.2.2 Ancient Near Eastern Mythology

Apart from the Indo-European mythologies, there are also those that constitute the Ancient Near Eastern mythologies. These include Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Canaanite myths. According to their collective nomenclature, they are extremely ancient myths that portray most first human beliefs in the fertility and divinity of land. The myths, gods and goddesses were agriculture related and referred to as "fertility deities".

Mesopotamian Mythology

Parts of the Mesopotamians were the Sumerians, the Akkadians, the Amorites and the Assyrians (the last three were also called Semites). Their myths, spanning about 4000 years, can be divided into three periods: the protoliterate era, the 2nd dynasty of Ur to the beginning of the Old Babylonian era (mid 3rd millennium BC to circa 19th century BC) and the Old Babylonian era (ending with the Assyrian-Babylonian world in the 7th century BC).

Generally speaking, the pantheon consisted of several hundreds of gods. This aggregated from the various intra-mythic traditions and geographical spread of the people. The other reason was that of historical time during which it was said that “religion and mythology undergo successive interpretations throughout the history of Mesopotamian culture” (Long: 696). This idea is recognized and documented by Thorkild Jacobsen in *The Treasure of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (1976). A few of the more popular gods and goddesses were Dumuzi-abzu, meaning “quickener of the young in the mother womb of the deep” (a god of the marshes with the Semitic nomenclature of Tammuz), Geshtinanna (his sister), Inanna (his consort with the Semitic name, Ishtar), Dutturra (his mother), Ereshkigal (Inanna’s sister). Over time, the connotative motif of the divinity myths changed from the uncomplicated duty of maintaining the agricultural fertility and fecundity of the physical world to that of maintaining the general cosmic order. During the middle era, focus again shifted to other gods and goddesses with their forms metamorphosing. These were Enlil (“lord wind”), Inanna (who became a war goddess), Anu (or An as the main god) and his wife, Ki (the earth goddess). From their union came Enki (lord of the soil). This action represents the fertility of the earth which, through their procreation, brought forth trees, marshes, rivers and all vegetations.

During the last era, the mythic-epic of *Enuma Elish* and *Gilgamesh* which links humanoid “to the created order” emerged. The *Enuma Elish* epic relates the story of the hero, Marduk. It depicts that a new world can be created from the old. Out of the demise and destruction of the old gods, a new cosmic world can be created. On the other hand, the *Gilgamesh* myth focuses on the adventures of Gilgamesh (a young ruler of Uruk) and Enkidu who from enmity became friends. Both myths connote that no matter the human and physical victories, death is the end; the conqueror of all.

Canaanite Mythology

These are the myths of the Ugarites, the Hebrews and the Phoenicians who, together, were referred to as the Western Semites in ancient times. Directly contrasting the ‘subjective’ religious textual evidences of the Christian historian, Eusebius of

Caesarea, in his work *Preparation for the Gospel* (based on the work of the Phoenician writer, Sanchuniathon) were the mythical texts discovered in 1929 at Ras Shamra (site of ancient Ugarit). Eusebius had been biased and condemnatory in his treatment of the Canaanite religion. The Ras Shamra discoveries helped in the refocusing and understanding of the Canaanite mythic-religious beliefs.

The pantheon consisted of some of the followings: El (the sky god) who was the main god but did not hold absolute power, Asherah and Astarte (his wives/sisters) and Anat (daughter). El and Asherah gave birth to the morning and evening stars, the sea (Yamm) and the underworld (Mot). There was also Baal Haddad (god of war, wind and thunderstorm) who was the son of the rain god (Dayan). Among the gods, just like among those of the Mesopotamians, there was always leadership struggle. Baal went against El and was supported by a few goddesses like Anat. This warfare depicts the struggle of the younger generation to free itself from the shackles of the older generation. Again, it shows that Baal was introduced into the environment late. The war, therefore, shows the process of his struggle for acceptance among the Canaanites' already established gods. The understanding of the Canaanite mythology and religion sheds more light into the polemical stance of the Old Testament Hebrew writers. While the Canaanites were polytheists, the Hebrews were monotheists.

Egyptian Mythology

Hebrew Biblical writers recorded but condemned in its entirety the Egyptian mythologies. This was because they did not conform to their idea of monotheism. Dyson (2006) christened these mythologies "religion of ancient Egypt". They consist of unrecognized series of ancient myths, nature worship and innumerable myths of national and local importance (each local area had its own myths). Their relevance and importance changed in reference to any dynasty or ruling house on the throne at any specific time. In the pantheon, a few of the main gods included Osiris, Ra (god of creation), Amon, Thota, Ptah, Khnemu, Hapi, Horus, Set and Geb (earth god). The goddesses included Isis, Nephtys, Hathor, Nut, Neit and Sekhet. Over time, the following gods attained full prominence as creators and supreme gods depending on

the period: Ptah (Memphite theology during ancient Egypt 3000 BC, Atun or Atem in the Old Kingdom), Amon-Re (in the New Kingdom with the joining of two gods: Amon with the sun god, Ra (a successor to Atum or Atem)). Egyptian mythic stories always vary with time, dynasty and the pharaonic periods. This is exemplified in one of Dyson's (2006:148) creation stories which he gave out of the many existing different versions:

...only the ocean existed at first. Then Ra, the Sun, came out of an egg (a flower, in some versions) that appeared on the surface of the water. Ra brought forth children, the gods Shu and Geb and the goddesses Tefnut and Nut. Shu and Tefnut became the atmosphere. They stood on Geb who became the Earth and raised up Nut, who became the sky. Ra ruled over all. Geb and Nut later had two sons, Set and Osiris and two daughters, Isis and Nephthys. Osiris succeeded Ra as king of the earth, helped by Isis, his sister-wife. Set, however, hated his brother and killed him. Isis then embalmed her husband's body with the help of the god, Anubis, who thus became the god of embalming. The powerful charm of Isis resurrected Osiris, who became king of the netherworld, the land of the dead. Horus, who was the son of Osiris and Isis, later defeated Set in a great battle and became king of the Earth.

Various beliefs, ideologies, rites and acts, which have affected not only a few religions all over the world, sprang from Egyptian myths. Temples were constructed for the gods and goddesses. The one for Ra and his successors became the centre of Sun worship at Heliopolis. The ideas of the 'enriad' (a group of nine divinities) and a 'triad' (divine father, mother and son) are also rooted in this mythology.

These gods were clothed in and represented "with human torsos and human or animal heads". Within these icons, Ra had the head of a hawk, Anubis head of a jackal, Hathor head of a cow, Mut head of a vulture, Thoth head of an ibis, and Ptah a human head or that of a bull (Apis). These animals subsequently became sacred, venerated and dedicated to each god. This iconographic worship slipped into other religions especially early Christianity.

Some of the myths were pharaonic or kingship focused. Therefore, overtime, some of the pharaohs assumed the cloak of divinity. This, even, extended to other characters in the hierarchy of authority. According to Dyson (2006:152):

true deities were sometimes confused with human beings who had been glorified after death. Thus, Imhotep, who was originally the chief minister of the 3rd Dynasty ruler Djoser, was later regarded as a demi-god. During the 5th Dynasty, the Pharaohs began to claim divine ancestry and from that time on were worshiped as sons of Ra.

The 'divine' pharaohs, at their deaths, were mummified in their tombs. According to *The Book of the Dead*, a funerary text written about 2415 BC, Egyptians believed in an after-life existence. The soul, referred to as Ka, goes back to the world of the dead and is judged accordingly. All the earthly possessions and utensils that the soul of the dead might need to live comfortably in heaven were usually placed in the tomb along with the mummified body. Mummification was, therefore, at a high level. With this, a lot of Egyptian historical facts and ways of life have come through the time. Examples are the gold artifacts and drawings found in the child-pharaoh's tomb of Tutankhamen.

One of the earliest ideas of monotheism came from Egypt. Putting an end to the then prevailing polytheism, Amenhotep IV also changed his own name to Akhenaton ("He who is devoted to Anton"). Though the idea did not last long, he was able to delete the letter 's' from the word 'gods' from all Egyptian monuments. Years after him, the Egyptians returned to their polytheistic way of life especially because the Pharaohs wanted to be glorified. They encouraged beliefs in all other gods, themselves inclusive. Summizing this, Long (1998:698) posits:

The key mythological themes are creation, procreation, revival and the unity of the two lands. The temporal pharaoh was only a symbol of these orders. The power behind them is expressed in the sun, in the earth, and in animals, especially cattle. The language and symbols of power may at anytime be translated from one into another –

for example, the sun might be described in the symbolism of cattle or the earth in the symbolism of the sun.

1.2.3 African [South of the Sahara] Mythology

Africa, South of the Sahara, is also filled with mythological beliefs and connotations. In his definition of myth, it seems that Lansford (2006:82) has Africa in mind when he writes:

Myths are universal, occurring in almost all cultures. They typically date from a time before the introduction of writing, when they were passed orally from one generation to the next. Myths deal with basic questions about the nature of the world and human experience, and because of their all-encompassing nature, myths can illuminate many aspects of a culture.

This presupposes that the African life and its experiences are encompassed in their myths which express not only how the people live but how they perceive and see creation from primal time. Africa can easily be divided into four regions – North, South, East and West. Each of these regions, populated by different peoples, espouses different but related myths. Running through their differences is the unified but generalized belief in a creator-god that is usually held “high and far above the heads of all. He is not one among many but wholly other. He is not of the rank and file of the divinities” (Awolalu, 1979: 16). The lower gods in these pantheons, usually worshipped, are seen as linkages between the people and the creator-god. Elucidating this theory, Grillo (2006:45) states:

Generally speaking, African religions hold that there is one creator-god, the maker of a dynamic universe. After setting the world in motion, this supreme being withdrew . . . people do not ordinarily offer sacrifices or organize a cult around this high god. Instead, they turn to secondary divinities who serve the supreme being as messengers or go-between. These secondary divinities are sometimes portrayed as children of the supreme god but religious teachings also regard them as refraction of a divine being.

For the Xhosa and Zulu of South Africa, Unkulunkulu ('ancient/great one') is the creator-deity. He is said to have created social customs and values. He introduced the ideas of death and immortality when he sent the Chameleon and the Lizard with messages of life and death respectively to humans. His father is called Unvelingage - "he who exists before all things". Still in South and Central Africa, Chinawezi, the primal cosmic serpent called mother of all, along with her husband, Nkuba, the lightning god, divided up the world. She took the earth and he the sky (his urine is supposed to be the rainfall). Both went on to have a daughter, Nawezi and a son Konde, who married and had three offsprings.

Among the several East African groups around Lakes Malawi, Victoria and Tanganyika, Mulungu (Murungu) is the supreme God that is associated with the peoples' ancestors. He is "always present but is sought only in prayer of last resort" (Grillo, 2006:28).

The Bambara of West Africa epitomizes this sort of idea in their mythology. Faro, one of the two creator-spirits, after Gla and Dya (twin forces of creation) came out of Fu (nothingness), went on to create the sky while Penu created the earth. The four directions were created by both. Before returning to the sky, Faro brought into reality water as well as land creatures. The Akan of Ghana believe in Nyame, the mother goddess, who created the world and is associated with the moon.

Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, Olorun or Olodumare is the main god who sent Orisa-Nla (Obatala) to create the world. Olodumare, like other creator-gods, is not directly worshipped except through the lower gods like Ogun, Sango, Oya, Esu and others. Esu is a mythic-trickster character hero who instigates havoc and disorder as a way of infusing new cosmic and personal order. He is to be differentiated from the Christian Satan as he "serves as an intermediary between gods and humans. He takes messages to humans from the supreme god, Olodumare and returns to him with sacrifices from his worshippers" (Lansford, 2006:53). He is also known as Elegba, Legba and Eshou (in the Brazilian tradition). Grillo (2006:62) documents that among the Yorubas "401 Orisha line the road to heaven" (*Orisha* is a Yoruba word for god or

deity). This is corroborated by Awolalu (1979:20) who states: “the actual number of the divinity is not easily determinable: it has variously been estimated to be 200, 201, 400, 401, 460, 600, 601, 1700 or even more.”

African mythologies do not exist in a vacuum. They portray and represent human characterology and traits through cosmic creation, recreation, and preservation. The Dogon of Mali, as an example, according to Grillo (2006:57) believes:

The first being was a smith (metal worker) able to transform the elements of earth and fire into tools. When he fell to the earth from the heavens, his formless body was broken into joints, giving him permanent shape and definition. When the supreme being made human beings, he gave them joints as well. The elbow symbolizes the human capacity to work, to be fashioners of the world, like the divinities. The clavicle or collarbone is the most important bone in the male skeleton because it resembles a hoe, indicating God’s intention for human beings to bring together the elements of creation through agricultural labour.

In summation, therefore, it will not be far-fetched to agree with Grillo’s (2006:63) statement:

African myths express values, identify moral standards and embody profound philosophical reflections . . . a myth that recounts a sacrifice as the act that established order at the beginning of time can provide the model for a ritual sacrifice that aims at restoring social harmony.

This statement is also in consonance with Wellek and Warren’s (1978:191) position that myth is “the explanations a society offers to its young of why the world is and why we do as we do.”

1.3 Purpose of the Study

It must be stated that Isidore Okpewho, a foremost African scholar, has done extensive work on prose, myth and their relational effects on African life in works such as *The*

Epic in Africa (1979), *Myth In Africa* (1983) and several other scholarly works. This study, therefore, seeks to build on this foundational work with an extension into the mythographical implications of dramatic works on African life. It will examine the mythical labyrinth of intricacies embedded in drama, especially African dramatic works. It seeks a focus in African writing through complementing works of Okpewho and other relevant scholarly writings.

This study also seeks to unravel most of the socio-cultural idiosyncrasies that are embedded in the history of African people as recorded in the various plays of modern African playwrights. It would not be an overstatement to say that some of the unifying agents of a group of people are their social norms, values and traditions. These rules and regulations (whether formal or informal, religious or secular) come about through inter-generational experiences of the people among themselves, between their various neighbours (whether near or far) and their immediate environments (whether physical, metaphysical or spiritual). Elucidating this concept, Frazer (1923, Part III: 153) opines that myth is “devised to explain an old custom: of which the real meaning and origin had been forgotten.”

In the not too distant past, Sir Maurice Bowra (1932) and Ruth Finnegan (1970) among others have argued in their works that Africans have not contributed much to the genre of oral literature, especially, in the epic and the myth. This study seeks to correct these largely eurocentric opinions. With the examinations of some textual dramatic works, it would be possible to affirm that many African playwrights have exploited the resources of oral traditions by concocting, inventing and utilizing myths or the mythic in their works. Such works have covered the socio-religious, physical and economic spheres of the developmental life of their people. It is in the light of this that Taiwo (1967:11) asserts:

oral traditions form an integral part of the culture of any group of people In Africa, as elsewhere, oral traditions reflect the people’s way of life. What oral literature is current in any area depends on the character, temperament and occupations of the people.

Supporting this position, Dasyuva (1999) in his *Classificatory Paradigms in African Oral Narratives* posits that among the Yoruba of Nigeria, while some of the Ifa divination verses are traceable to Yoruba myths, others are informed by the people's sociological make-ups. In a recent study by Ope Ola of the Department of Curriculum Studies, Faculty of Education, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, the Ifa divination seedings are linked to, and seen as, precursors to the computer. His study, which examines the inter- and intra-relationships between Ifa and Mathematics, opines that the binary system of the computer evolved from Ifa's *odu-ifa* binary (*Ifa* corpus or verses), the divination strings (*opele*) and its binary line arrangements.

From the layman's general perspective, myth, mythology and mythography are full of fallacies and trivialities. This is aptly put by Carter (2006: 52)) who states that all myths "are products of the human mind and reflect only the aspects of material human practice" which come out of the people's "especially active imagination" (Preminger *et al*, 1975:539). They are tell-tales. This study seeks to correct these ideas while addressing the situation with the examinations of selected dramatic texts. At the end of the study, it is hoped that the concept of myth will be better repositioned for a fuller understanding of the past, the present and the future. We might then see myth like Ngumoha (1998: 18) does: "a story invented as a veiled explanation of truth and reality".

Furthermore, the study intends to examine how, through the dramatic media, concepts of myth, mythology and mythography might serve as cultural mirror of a society. Mythological stories, by their nature, are replete with symbols which obstruct easy interpretations especially by less discerning minds. Therefore, the 'inner' culture of a people is preserved from the uninitiated. Mythical stories embody the *raison d'etre* as well as aetiology of different rituals, values, institutions and traditions that inform a people's psyche. With search-light on most of the so-called ordinary stories, a lot of what operated in the past and their effects on the present would be revealed. As an example and according to Onwubiko (1991), the British, through the two major wars fought with the Ashanti of Ghana in pre-colonial times, felt that the latter were conquered. On the other hand, the Ashantis were of the mind that they had always won

the wars because that which embodied their nationhood, their essence, the Golden Stool, was never captured. At a time, they even allowed one of their Kings, an Asantehene, to go on exile as a sacrifice to secure the Golden Stool.

This study seeks to see myths and mythography as means of education, amusement, socio-religious conditioning, generational sustenance and the continuity of a people. With the examinations of the relevant texts, it will be proved that a society can only exist if its foundation is well-grounded in its past. The past encapsulates the actions and inactions of ancestors which subsequently become mythic stories. These, the present generation will seek to model itself after as succinctly put by Enekwe (1978:33): myth “is important in terms of an ideological position, that is, the ideology of the moment”. This position shows that myth, which must have emanated from the past, act as an effective tool of shaping the present.

Myths are not time or place limited. That which is mythic in a place or time is reality in another. It is an on-going phenomenon emanating from the experiences of a people in association with themselves and their environments. This situation, termed Urban Myth, has been studied since the 1930s. It was first called ‘Urban Belief Tales’ in the 1940s and 1950s. It is basically a study of contemporary myths as they unfold and are spread through all media; oral and electronics. According to *Bookrags*, an educational website, urban myth also called urban legend is “a fictional tale that circulates widely, is told and retold with differing details, and is supposedly true”. This study seeks to, therefore, unravel and link unfolding myths as they relate to the current socio-economic and religious life of the people.

1.4 Delimitations of the Study

The basic focus of this study is on contemporary African dramatic works that reflect the African cosmogony. The nine dramatic texts to be examined are representative of the different regions of Africa.

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. <i>Fate of a Cockroach</i> | Tewfik al-Hakim |
| 2. <i>Kinjeketile</i> | Ebrahim N. Hussein |
| 3. <i>The Marriage of Anansewa</i> | Efua T. Sutherland |

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4. <i>Sizwe Bansi is Dead</i> | Athol Fugard et al |
| 5. <i>Morountodun</i> | Femi Osofisan |
| 6. <i>The Trial of Dedan Kimathi</i> | Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Githae Mugo |
| 7. <i>Wedlock of the Gods</i> | 'Zulu Sofola |
| 8. <i>Death and the King's Horseman</i> | Wole Soyinka |
| 9. <i>Ipi Zombi?</i> | Brett Bradley |

These works, considered representative of the collective struggles of the specific people examined, are traditionally grounded deriving their stories from the essence of the people. Their topicalities are based on the past and present struggles and future hopes of the people. *The Marriage of Anansewa* and *Wedlock of the Gods* are specifically chosen as gender representative texts: written by females and professing, in part, the struggles of African women to escape generations of traditionally propagated “maleficent slavery” (Osundare, 1986:45) and prejudices.

Lastly, all the playwrights are Africans. They all celebrate “the general cultural heritage as well as the contemporary socio-political and economic situation of the African world” (Fashina, 1994:98) in their writings.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study examines textual dramatic works which juxtapose history, fiction and facts. In these instances are to be found “archetypes because of their specific and concrete universal symbolism for archetypal images are to be found everywhere, laicized, degraded, obscured or disguised” (Ngumoha, 1988: 45).

Archetypes stand as, and represent universal symbols of, and in human experiences. Usually, they can be living things or abstract ideas, objects, events, settings and characters through which unique patterns of holistic or universal symbols can be drawn. In varying environments, historical humans with differing entreating characters (negative or positive) have been turned into archetypes (Eliade 1965). Positing further, Ngumoha (1988:61-62) states:

literary and critical traditions have invested these themes with far greater social importance than the more mundane motifs pursued by folktales. The implications of these heroic models for society is that they are exceptionally crucial to cultural survival and development, for one of the major functions of myth is the creation of exemplary models for a whole society.

Foregrounded is the fact that myth operates from “a collective consciousness” (Jung 1972) or a psychic substratum. Man, through his wide exposure and varied experiences, is able to draw from nearly the same well of images and symbols as archetypes derive

materials from a pool of human experiences, his interpretation and meaning of these selected materials are, especially informed by the quality of the experiences that he has undergone or witnessed and his level of consciousness, all of which are integral to his personality. (Dasylva, 1995:82)

It can safely be posited that archetype is fundamental to oral literature development and criticism. To showcase this extensiveness a review of the archetype in its various ramifications, especially in relation to the field of literature and literary criticism, is necessary. According to Balogun (Year Unstated: 143), the discourse on archetype can be delineated into two developmental schools of thoughts: historical (anthropological) and psychological. Referring to the historical, he states:

The human mind possesses certain elements which accommodate some images or figures that keep recurring in the imaginative perception of man. A colossal link of the present with the past reveals the presence of some ideas or events and experiences on the individual psyche, which keep recurring in his cultural life from generation to generation. The explanation is that such recurring thoughts have their origin in the history of man.

This position is in tandem with Jung’s (1972) and Frye’s (1973) ideas of the primordial. Two worlds, the ‘without’ and the ‘within’, are said to exist. The symbols

from the 'within' are brought to the 'without' in this mechanism of symbols encoding and decoding. The presupposition foregrounds the existence of an internal ongoing action, *a priori* mechanism (Jung 1972) and a pool of experiences that the individual, in conjunction with his community, can draw from. There is a continuous remodeling of cultural elements and values through the maintenance of meanings while the symbols and content remain basically unchanged. According to Balogun (Year Unstated: 145) and Frazer (1964) this 'continual' recurrence of the same or similar incidents are always told in similar manners. Archetypes are, therefore, repeated symbols hidden in mythical stories and according to Frye (1973: 35), "they have peopled the heavens of all roads from time immemorial. To discard them as values would be a distinct loss".

For the psychological school of thought, Sigmund Freud, one of its two co-founders, sees man as working under certain images and ideas. Man's consciousness should be powerful enough to suppress these, if and when necessary. When this proves almost impossible, man breaks loose and enters an 'irrational frolic' time. This can happen when he is in a 'dementia' state and, or is sleeping (dream-state). According to Freud (1957), a part of the human personality, the 'id' is 'raw' allowing animal and sexual drives to surface while the 'ego' puts in the checks and balances. With this, man can either consciously or unconsciously engage in acts of wish fulfillments.

On the other hand, Aristotle's definition, cited by Jung (1972: 65), becomes also relevant as a build-up on Freud's position: "an idea supraordinate and pre-existent to all phenomena". This, Plato elucidates as God predating light and is therefore, 'supraordinate' to it. Jung further opines: "man carries his social imperatives within himself, *a priori*, as an inborn necessity" (1934: 263). This *a priori* factor can be subdivided into three: innate, preconscious and unconscious. These tendencies are prevalent in all human deeds and psyche. The innate is that which comes with birth while the preconscious "contains all hereditary behaviours in all creations . . . all the instinctive behaviours". (Balogun, Year Unstated: 146) They are transferable from one generation to another. On the other hand, the unconscious breeds the fantastic, the creative and the artistic in the human psyche. The birthing of primordial patterns,

images and symbolisms which culminates into the archetype is sourced from here. These tendencies codify beliefs and enforce morality according to Raglan (1958:127) in his “Myth and Ritual”.

Jung sees four types of archetype in his work *Four Archetypes* (1972). These are the Mother, Rebirth, Spirit and Trickster types. The Mother type deals with images derivable from feminine rooted relationships at all levels and with all ideas of life. Examples can be of living and non-living objects: goddess, virgin (land), cow, fertility, fecundity, fruitfulness, spring, country, witch, river and so on. The Rebirth archetype deals with that which portends life and, or death. In life there is death and vice versa. Examples are death, grave, war, the mythical bird, Phoenix (which rises from its own death ashes). The Spirit archetype involves the belief of, and in the spirits, the spirit world and other ideas embedded in and from it. This involves religion, magic, incantations, invocations and worship at the shrines, temples, churches or mosques. All are spirit images. Finally, there is the Trickster archetype which involves the symbolisms of cunning, indirectness and the use of characters like Ananse (the spider in Ghanaian mythology), Ijapa (the tortoise in Yoruba mythology), Brer Rabbit, Brer Fox, and Brer Bear (from African-American mythology as popularized by Joel Chandler Harris through his *Uncle Remus* stories), the wise-old man and so on.

Aristotle, cited by Barnett (ed: 1960), summarizes archetype as “the original pattern or model from which all other things of the same kind are made”. With the use of the archetype vis-à-vis human societies, their mythological beliefs and the examination of the relevant texts for this work, the researcher seeks to examine and situate germane symbols, icons and patterns at the different levels of communal life and development while also portraying their resultant effects. This should result into providing “social solidarity . . . integration of the society by providing formalized statements . . . thus protecting cultural continuity” (Kluckhohn, 1952:64), “and create the future possibilities of the society and fall into acceptable changing social order” (Kunene, 1970: xv).

1.6 Working Definitions and Concepts

- i. *Myth* – /miθ/, plural – myths

The etymology of the word is directly or via the French ‘mythe’. The modern Latin is ‘mythus’ while the Greek is ‘mutho’ meaning ‘speech’, ‘myth’.

It refers to traditional stories espousing the deeds and actions of heroes and supernatural beings. In other words, myths are products of a people’s efforts at providing aetiological explanations to phenomena especially natural ones, which otherwise are considered inexplicable. It is also related to human behaviours and characteristics. It attempts to answer questions on the origin of man, postulates on the creation story and the origin of a people in line with mythical stories handed down by their forebears. A few of the simple but inexplicable questions that usually crop up within this field are:

Why is the sky so high?

Why do pigs dig with their mouths?

Why is the tortoise’s shell corrugated?

Why do people not eat specific animals?

Myths, therefore, provide explanations through various avenues like the followings:

- a. Through oral tradition which has the tendency of addition or subtraction. Each time the story is told part of the core truth is depleted but replenished with additives.
- b. Myth is regarded as communal property. In its limitation and divisiveness, it explains the worldview of the owner-community. This position is partitive.

- ii. *Mythography* – /miθɒgrɑ:fi/ plural - Mythographies noun – Mythographer

It refers to the total volume of myths and artistic representations on any mythical subject, in and from any community. This is the assemblage and arrangement of myths according to subject matters, themes and specificity. In a functional role, myth serves as a metaphoric projection and or as approximate of human behaviours.

iii. *Mythology* - /miθɒlədʒi/ plural - Mythologies noun - Mythologist

This is the study of a body or group of myths that are derived from a particular people or culture. They relate stories about their ancestors, heroes, gods and other supernatural beings and their history.

Etymologically, the word is from the 15th century. It came directly from or via French. While its late Latin representation is 'mythologia', the Greek version is 'muthologia' meaning the 'science of myth'.

iv. *Mythopoeia* - /miθɒpi:ə/ plural - Mythopoeis noun - Mythopoeist

This is the process of creating myths. It is a 19th century word coming directly from or via late Latin. The Greek derivative is 'muthopia' with the breakdown as 'muthos' ('speech, myth') and 'poiein' ('make').

v. *History* - /hist^(ə)ri/ plural - Histories noun - Historian

This is the study of past events in relation to a period in time, specific life, or the development of a people, institution, or place.

Etymologically, it is a 15th century word which is Latin derived. In Greek 'historia' translates to 'history, knowledge, narrative' while 'histor' means 'learned man'.

vi. *Legend* - /ledʒ^(ə)nd/ plural - Legends adjective - Legendary

These are old stories passed on from generations to generations presented as history but extremely unlikely to be true.

Etymologically, it is a 14th century word. Its French is 'legende'. Its medieval Latin is 'legenda' ('things to be read') while its modern is 'legere' ('to read').

1.7 Working Textual Abbreviations

The nine dramatic texts to be examined are represented in the full work under the following acronyms:

1. *Fate of a Cockroach* *Cockroach*

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 2. <i>Kinjeketile</i> | <i>Kinjeketile</i> |
| 3. <i>The Marriage of Anansewa</i> | <i>The Marriage</i> |
| 4. <i>Sizwe Bansi is Dead</i> | <i>Sizwe Bansi</i> |
| 5. <i>Morountodun</i> | <i>Morountodun</i> |
| 6. <i>The Trial of Dedan Kimathi</i> | <i>Trial</i> |
| 7. <i>Wedlock of the Gods</i> | <i>Wedlock</i> |
| 8. <i>Death and the King's Horseman</i> | <i>Death</i> |
| 9. <i>Ipi Zombi?</i> | <i>Zombi?</i> |

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

2.1 Literary Perspectives

Myth is an aspect of oral literacy in the narrative form. According to Dasylva (2004:1), myth “is not just story-telling; it is the telling of a life experience”. In another sense, myths are community-based. Stories, which over time have become anonymous and lost in the hoary origins and destinies of different people, become mythical. They tend to become the people and are collated as part of their total socio-political and religious experiences. They also become the explanations and reasons different generations of a people pass on in their communities as answers to questions on nature and developments. They are, therefore, man’s attempts to explain what otherwise are real and natural phenomena that seem inexplicable.

However, according to Long (1998), Thales of Miletus (6th century BC) is the first critic who took a stand on myths, especially on Greek myths. His idea on the myth of water, as part of creation myth, opposed all known philosophies (as at then). Other critics like Plato, Aristotle and Euhemerus made their inputs. For Plato, myths are pedagogical, lending credence, giving information and enlightenment to “deeper truths of philosophy”. On the other hand, Aristotle saw myths as fanciful, untruthful and fictionalized stories, which ought not to be taken seriously. From these two divergent schools of thought stemmed so many other theories not too different from them.

The French theorists, Voltaire and Charles de Brosses, see myth as an “expression of the childhood experiences of the human race” (Long, 1998: 694). Encapsulated in these mythical stories are the socio-physical, cultural and spiritual experiences humanity went through at its infancy. It has been posited that man, as at then, lacked the full power of language, like he has now. Therefore, symbols and imagery were the order of the day: the means and medium of myth-making in

communication. Within the limited linguistic power of infantile humanity, symbolic drawings in writing (like the Egyptian hieroglyphics) and stories (like myths) came into use as keepers, recorders and conduits of transfer of inter-generational experiences. This theory gives allowance for the gradual development of man from infancy to other levels and in various fields and sectors of endeavors: scientific, literary, social and others.

Supporting the above theory with minor modifications, Giam Battista Vico and Robert Louth posit that myth not only encompasses the stories of origin but also those of subsequent and growing experiences of a community. Therefore, myths stand for “all the subsequent meanings and relationships through which the history of a particular society is expressed and experienced” (Long, 1998: 694). Myth becomes the totality of the people with a profundity so deeply ingrained that their psychic and spiritual communal make-up are involved through the poetic oracular like the Yoruba of Nigeria (through the Ifa institutionalized myths and oracular incantations) (Awolalu 1979).

The scope of the study of myth has thus expanded to other socio-cultural fields like comparative religion, anthropology, psychology, history, drama and others. This extensiveness has brought in scholars like Mircea Eliade (historian of religion), Max Muller (myth and language specialist), Edward B. Taylor, Emile Durkheim, Bronislaw Malinowski and Claude Levi-Strauss (anthropologists), Geza Roheim and Joseph Campbell (psychologists), Nelson O. Fashina, Ebrahim Hussein, Wole Soyinka and Ademola O. Dasylva (myth playwrights and poets). Studies have ranged across various time-frames, regions, cultures and tribes. Mythologies like those of the Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Canaanites (Ancient Near Eastern mythologies), Indians, Greeks, Celts and Romans (Indo-European mythologies), Germans and Scandinavians (Norse mythologies) and African mythologies have come under study. Some of these mythographers, from other fields, argue on the link(s) between myth and their various fields though without specific consensus. However, mythology, from the general viewpoint, is a compendium of human experiences with hidden icons and symbols that can aid in the understanding of human reality in relation to their past and present.

Myth has also been described as the precursor of poetry and the oracular according to the tenets of the Romantic movement. The relationship between language and myth shows meanings in religious mythology, while the study of myth in Psychology was given a boost with the creation of Depth Psychology as a specialized field of study. With these approaches, rationality becomes applicable in the study, interpretation and understanding of mythography.

In the literary field, the different genres have been utilized to preach the dictums of mythology as portrayed by modern Africa writers through their writings. In poetry for instance, works like those of Christopher Okigbo's *Labyrinths*, Tanure Ojaide's *Labyrinths of the Delta*, Niyi Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth* and Ademola Dasylva's "If the Gods Must Live" in *Songs of Odamolugbe* have mythical elements. African prose works like *Myths and Legends of the Swahili*, *Myths and Legends of the Congo*, *The Origin of Life and Death*, *On Trial for My Country* by Stanlake Samkange and *Emperor Shaka the Great* by Mazisi Kunene are also thematically mythological. Similarly, in the genre of drama, mytho-dramatic works include amongst others: *Kinjeketile* by Ebrahim Hussein, *The Imprisonment of Obatala* by Obotunde Ijimere, *A Dance of the Forest* by Wole Soyinka, *Anowa* by Ama Ata Aidoo, *Song of a Goat* by J.P. Clark and *Fate of a Cockroach* by Tewfik al-Hakim. As writers, they, and many others have delved into Africa's traditional, historical, socio-economic, political world and its 'origin', thereby juxtaposing modern ideas with their mythic related works. This has brought in the idea of faction – a mixture of fiction and facts in creative writing. While Okpewho (1979) sees fact as traceable to historical legend and fiction as romantic or mythic legend, Dasylva (2004:73) refers to faction as "historical deconstruction of existing chronicles" in his article, "Playing with History, Playing with Words: Ngugi and Mugo's *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*."

In most of the above texts, myths provide the background for attacking and correcting afrophobic ideas (not only of Africans in Africa but also of those in the Diaspora) as "Myth, history and art are made to blend together to give meaning to the liberation message" (Dasylva, 2004:83). These "liberation message[s]" can be set along prosaic, dramatic and, or poetic lines in order to re-orientate the African mind;

or better still to correct, on a larger scale, pre-independence colonial ideas that were wrongly sourced and spread as African. Lewis Nkosi's *Rhythm of Violence*, Ebrahim Hussein's *Kinjeketile* and Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* are a few of the works that treat liberation issues.

Along the above line, Clark (1967) complains that Nigerians, if not most Africans, are not very much aware and conscious of their oral traditions as much as they are about European and Western mythologies. They are, therefore, unconscious of the effects of myths and mythology on their general and specific lives. In the long of it, they become "early sequester'd from my tribe" according to Clark in the poem, "Agbor Dancer". To help ameliorate this situation, John P. Clark, an Ijaw from Nigeria, a poet and playwright, has written so much. His works are sourced from Ijaw "traditional material" according to Izevbaye (1971:168). Again, Ayi Kwei Armah, another African writer, from Ghana sources his works, which he mythologizes, from his society's past, present and unfolding scenarios and events (Palmer (1972), Ezeigbo (1982), Wright (1989) and Gillard (1993)). In a critical comment on some Armah's works, Ezeigbo (1982:30) surmises:

The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born and *Fragments* are set in post-independence Ghana before the 1966 military take-over from Nkrumah's government. *Two thousand Seasons* and *The Healers* are set in distant past of the Akan history.... Armah thus covers a reasonable period of the history of his people. He explains the life and activities of the national leaders, politicians, intellectuals, bureaucrats and the ordinary people. He gives an eloquent picture of the spiritual bankruptcy and the loss of moral vision that plagued the entire Ghanaian society. He goes on to analyze the corruption and bad leadership that contributed to the 'wholeness' and unity of the Akan people. There is a vital connection between the past, the present and the future in the life of any society.... Armah is conscious of this connection between the past, present and future... he tries to establish the link between the corruption in the present-day Ghanaian society and that which ravaged the Akan societies in the distant past.

Other writers through their works seek to correct the historical inexactitude that had characterized the western world's written record of Africa. This anomaly had been propagated by colonialists and their academia at different levels of their socio-religious, economic and political activities. Here, we can talk of apartheid and the racist ideas behind it in South Africa, land deprivation programme in East Africa, wrong cultural impositions and disruptions in West Africa and the imposition of Islam which affected the socio-cultural development of North Africa. Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo's *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, Ama Ata Aidoo's *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, Kobina Sekyi's *The Blinkard* are among the works that address such issues.

A few of these playwrights have gone far beyond writing for documentation and correction purposes as evidenced in their recent revolutionary postures. They now call for total change, demanding that Africans sit up and turn around the total gamut of the repressiveness of either the colonial, independent or neo-independent governments. Okpewho (1983:3) opines that these writers are:

guided by a certain revolutionary conscience and do not think the old mythology provides sufficient answers for the problems of contemporary African society. In their works, we find an intensification of the critical spirit, an urge to overhaul the foundations on which the old social outlook was erected and consequently an energy directed at creating a new mythology that would offer for the projected or emergent society a firmer road to self-realization than could be found in the older tradition.

These writers, therefore, metamorphose the old mythologies into the new thus blending the present with the past. The past predicates for the future, so it cannot be totally discarded. According to the American historian, Bailey (2006:47), "One is tempted to say that old myths never die, they just become embedded in the textbooks". In support of both Okpewho and Bailey, Ramsaran (1970:1) states: "the old mythology never entirely eliminated persists in the deeper levels of the work of all true artists, unsophisticated and sophisticated alike". A few literary works or "textbooks" that

share this view include Femi Osofisan's *Red is the Freedom Road*, Bode Sowande's *A Sanctus for Women* and *Farewell to Babylon*.

Examining what African writers do with this, Okpewho in *Myth in Africa* (1983) comes up with four situations: 'tradition preserved', 'tradition observed', 'tradition refined' and 'tradition revised'. Traversing through works like Mofolo's *Chaka*, J.P. Clark's *The Ozidi Saga*, Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-wine Drinkard*, D.O. Fagunwa's *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmale* (rendered as *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* by Wole Soyinka), Wole Soyinka's *A Dance of the Forest*, Ayi Kwei Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons* and others, Okpewho opines that each writer in his work(s) seeks either to preserve, restore, build or reform the tradition that spews him and his work(s). These writers have been forced to identify both the differences and the links between tradition and modernity. The extent to which each of these writers identifies these features depends largely on the amount of creative freedom which the writer is willing to assume in handling the material derived from the creative history of his people (Okpewho, 1983:215).

Like Claude Levi-Strauss, who in his structural analysis opines that myth is both vertical and horizontal (traversing the up and down movement on a scale), Okpewho's four positions on the incursion of modernity in myth cut deep into oral narrative. Both agree that myth and theme (myth-theme or 'mytheme') combine to provide this inter relationship.

Examining *The Ozidi Saga* as a representative text on 'tradition preserved', Okpewho (1983:164) writes of the playwright, J.P. Clark: "In reducing the method of the saga to a play, Clark is therefore seeking to preserve the tradition or at least restore the saga to its truly total form". Tradition preserved texts situate actions *in situ*. Plays are written "to stay close to the traditional context as well as the text" (Okpewho, 1983:165). This is in line with the idea of Nuruddin Farah, the Somalian novelist, playwright and teacher who posits: "At the centre of every myth is another: that of the people who created it" (*Gifts*, 2006:44). This epicentric myth-theme stands as the controlling factor of any story. Its preservation gives homage and loyalty to tradition. The limitation of the preservation of myth lies in the intrusion of modernity and

modern realities. For example, in Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-wine Drinkard* references are made to Lagos, Benin, Ibadan, Kaduna, houses of mirrors (skyscrapers), car and so on. Cross-mythological references are also made for example, Ogun, the Yoruba god of iron (metallurgy) is alluded to in the Ijaw's *The Ozidi Saga*.

For 'tradition observed', Daniel Olorunfemi Fagunwa's *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmale* (rendered as *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* by Wole Soyinka) is the textual tool of examination. This heroic-hunter lore portrays the cultural hero, Akara-Ogun, as a pathfinder for his race towards the achievements of truth, development, wisdom and positivity. In 'tradition observed', the usage of modern features is total. The norm is that modernism and traditionalism can creatively cohere. Within the works using it are contemporary outlooks, modern religious and educational ideas, modern moralities and comparisons with other mythological ideas. In summation, Okpewho (1983:184) opines that Fagunwa (as a representative writer of this mode)

is rather less chary about infiltrating it (his works) with foreign elements than a writer like Clark is. This is because Fagunwa is less interested in preserving the tradition in its original form than in giving it a contemporary appeal. He is more conscious of the need to put traditional culture in tune with trends in contemporary life and so has simply chosen, in his fiction, to rearrange select materials from the oral narrative tradition in a more or less original way that allows him to get across some of the ideas that will appeal to contemporary society.

In discussing 'tradition refined', Okpewho focuses on Wole Soyinka's works: *A Dance of the Forests*, *The Interpreters* and *The Road*. Running through all is the mythic personality of Ogun, the Yoruba god of iron expressed in, and through various humans with the Ogunnian traits. Tradition refined presupposes indebtedness to real narrative legacy but also assumes a "link between antecedence and posterity". This coincides with the idea of the British philosopher, Ryle (2006: 14) who asserts:

a myth is, of course, not a fairy story. It is the presentation of facts belonging to one category in the idioms appropriate

to another. To explode a myth is, accordingly, not to deny the facts but to re-allocate them.

Soyinka, in refining tradition and myth, “re-allocates” and repositions the facts to suit purely contemporary settings and themes as posited by Okpewho (1983:189):

The durability of the tradition, for him, does not necessarily lie in retailing the same tales over and over even in the context of chosen fictional experience He has consequently endeavored to squeeze the old tales of their enduring essences before future generations, tossed and swept in the flood of ever-changing modes, will have lost a sense of their relevance. The results of Soyinka’s creative alchemy can be seen in the ways in which various characters in his works, gripped in the struggle with an ever present, insistent reality are in large measure supported by the qualities of mythic figures for whom they are really present-day manifestations.

The radical African epic, *Two Thousand Seasons* by Ayi Kwei Armah, comes in handy in the treatment of ‘tradition revised’. Most of the texts in this mode show the process of abandonment and subversion and a deconstructed narratology as in Femi Osofisan’s *Morountodun* and *No More the Wasted Breed*. Usually, like other texts, they depict the struggle of a people. The new radicalism that comes into these writings is the portrayal of how the people can achieve their ‘promised’ victory and also keep it from being stolen by the bourgeois, capitalist or ruling class. Writing in reference to this type of writers and their works, Okpewho (1983:204) asserts:

Some of them have embraced the Marxist-Socialist programme as the only real solution to Africa’s present socio-political problems . . . the old tales are dismissed as indices of the infancy of intellect of the race where the oppressors of the race would like it to remain or else as devices by which the ruling class of the traditional society perpetually kept the masses in servitude. What is needed now is a programmatic replacement of these tales and their symbols by new ones, or at least a thorough reassessment of the parameters of the old mythology so as to reassert the sights and claims of elements of the society who were far too long dispossessed. Whether as whole tales or as

metaphors, therefore, tales about gods and heroes and other superior beings have no place in the new radical outlook, because they help to perpetuate an unjust order and do not take due account of the urgent problems of contemporary society. Something else must be put in their place without, however abdicating any of that imaginative power on which their system was fashioned.

The attachment of mythic figures, according to the above, to characters and characterology in works of art limit their independence, creativity, possibilities and voluminousness. Modern writing through radical outlook expands the horizon of mythology to include not only human struggle but the possibilities of victory over present realities of imperialism, nepotism, capitalism, intellectualism and socio-religious limitations.

A major work espousing the human ability to overcome situations is Plato's *The Myth of the Cave* (*Allegory of the Cave* or *Parable of the Cave*), written 360 B.C.E, where Socrates speaks with Glaucon, a young follower of his. It depicts the eternal, perfect, cosmic archetypes which Plato's doctrine refers to as 'ideal forms'. According to it, at the highest level of knowledge, all real things will be directly known: beholding the ideal form is beholding the perfect ideal (i.e. the non-material). This philosophical myth portrays the idea of the existence of only one ideal form of any material: the initial, perfect and eternal one. There is only one real tree, one human or one dog though all others within the collection are grouped by the same name. Others in the groups are derivatives and are imperfect representations of the original; the ideal archetypal human, tree or dog. According to Dechene (2008:7):

At the highest level inside the cave what people are actually seeing when they think they are seeing reality – and everyone at every level thinks he's seeing reality – are man-made images of the real images that exist outside the cave.

He opines that Plato's allegory shows the archetype as the foundation of all forms. Using cosmic archetypes the images inside the cave become encoded while

they are decoded outside. They show Plato's belief about world justice, human and world well-being. The archetypal images are portrayed in the following themes:

1. Light – This shows the seeker's movement from ignorance to enlightenment and imprisonment to freedom resulting into the upward development of the intellectual and spiritual spark within him or her.
2. 180 Degree Turn-Around – To become enlightened, the ignorant and unenlightened must be ready for a change and to be reborn. The idea of following the old ways must be discarded. The seeker must walk the opposite way the masses are following.
3. Enlightenment through Pain – Any seeker ready to move from a level of enlightenment to another must be ready to endure pain at all and any level of development.
4. Archetypal Implications – The cosmic archetypes used by Plato within the cave portray that all are imprisoned and ignorant until one moves towards the light or the sun. In life, archetypal information are encoded. Only the seekers can decode, understand and utilize them. In decoding the archetypes, Plato through Socrates posits in Dechene (2008: 9):

This entire allegory ... you may now append, dear Glaucon ...; the prison house is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun, ... the journey upwards to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world ... in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort.

Playwrights, through their various works, utilize different literary methods and devices to merge myths and dramas and turn myths into dramas. These mythopoeist-playwrights employ history and other literary devices to serve their purposes. One major device is language. This can either be prosaic or poetic: poetic when the characters concerned are 'divine' or are assumed to be and prosaic when they are commoners. Language can also be revolutionary like in the works of Bode Sowande and Ebrahim Hussein. According to Okpewho in *The Epic in Africa* (1979: 226), language use include play on sounds, phonological echoes and relationships

(assonance and alliteration), power of words (verbal impact through names and praise names) and mythopoeia (myth-songs) as

The needs of the myth are well served if the narration is executed with the power and appeal of words even if factual authenticity – especially for tales that have an historical basis – has to be compromised in the process.

Created mytho-dramatic events are espoused at various artistic and realistic levels or environments. Most of the events situated in the past are extended to the present. The environments from which they are sourced as history can be physical, metaphysical or spiritual for in the words of Abrams (1981:111), myths are “stories that include supernatural causality, that take place in both the secondary world (heaven, hell or a sacred shrine), and the physical world”. In the Yoruba myths expounded in the works of D. O. Fagunwa and Amos Tutuola, the juxtaposition of these environments is so intense that one might not be able to differentiate between one and the other. The worlds are super-imposed one on another. Myths, in these works, have become sacred history peopled by characters that are supernatural beings, mythical ancestors and even ordinary, everyday humans. Most, especially the heroes and heroines, are regarded as extra-terrestrial beings and play parts in the stories “invented as a veiled explanation of truth and reality” (Ngumoha, 1998:18). In the light of this, myth and mythology metamorphose into mythography. Defining this, Frazer (1964, Part 111:153) opines that it is “a fiction devised to explain an old custom: of which the real meaning and origin had been forgotten.”

Carl Jung, with a universal and holistic outlook, according to Ignace Lepp in *Death and Its Mysteries* (1968:9) attests to mythology to be a “valuable source of information concerning the collective unconscious, which he supposed to be common to all men”. That is, all myths are subsumed to be extracts of mythologies. The idea is of one myth becoming a universal reality if and when added to all others in an intra/inter relationship mode. The influences of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung become better felt when myths are defined as recurring symbols and motifs that are shared not

only by a specific people but by all and in all places as Preminger *et al* (1975:48) posit:

the primordial image or archetype is a figure whether it be a daemon, man or process that repeats itself in the course of history wherever creative fantasy is freely manifested. Essentially, therefore, it is a mythological figure.

This 'common language' expresses same values, emotions and ideas. Abrams (1981:111) attests to this when he states: "a myth is one story in a mythology – a system of hereditary stories which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group". This asserts that myth and mythology are sourced from the world of (un)realistic stories as they are told and assumed to have occurred. The situation gives impetus to the fallacies, untruthfulness and mythomania that operate within the world of myth and mythology. For redirection and correctional purposes, mythography as a field of study was developed. It seeks to correct wrongly held mythic and mythographic opinions. It espouses myths and mythologies with the new indices of mythography in the belief that there ought to be a paradigmatic shift from what Preminger *et al* (1975:536) refers to as "constructing out of their especially active imagination, tall tales" in reference to mythmakers and myth-making. The understanding is that in the stories are embedded deep physical and spiritual meanings: esoteric secrets that in the words of Abrams (1981:111) "served to explain (in terms of the intentions and actions of supernatural beings) why the world is as it is and things happen as they do, as well as to establish the rationale for social customs and observances and the sanctions for the rules by which people conduct their lives."

The above observations help illuminate our conception of the many types of myths that abound. In mythogenesis, myths can be classified in relation to the themes they expound. This agrees with the opinion of Onwubiko (1991:39) when he writes that myth is

a story which is believed to be true and has its origin in the far distant past history of a people and their culture. Man made them himself, in non-literate cultures, to answer the

questions that have troubled his mind since the origin of time.

He goes on to delineate what he calls African myths into five kinds: culture, nature, religion, ritual and hero. While the culture myths are concerned with the divines and animals, the nature myths espouse facts of nature as natural elements while phenomena are personified. The myths of religion refer to stories of origin, genealogy of priesthood and spirits and human-divine interactions. The forte of the ritual myth is in explaining why certain rites and rituals come into existence and their religio-cultural and social importance to the people. The hero myths show the process of survival of the people and the parts played not only by humans and divines but even by animals. Dissecting these, Onwubiko comes to the conclusion that through all are just three kinds of stories: origin, explanatory and didactic. This position is attested to by Grillo (2006:64) when she writes:

African myths express values, identifying moral standards and embodying profound philosophical reflections. In Africa, knowledge and culture have traditionally been translated orally from one generation to the next. The mythology of these oral cultures is embedded within their ritual practices. For example, a myth that recounts a sacrifice as the act that established order at the beginning of time can provide the model for a ritual sacrifice that aims at restoring social harmony.

In his theme-based classification, Long (1998:695) opines that myth includes those of “creation and origins, the birth of gods and divine beings, death and the afterlife and the renewal and rebirth of the world”. Creation myths are concerned with how the cosmos came into being and how the divines were involved in the irruptions that occurred in primordial time. This is also an attempt to interpret the nature of the cosmos and the relation of human life to it as it has happened through the ages (Ramsaran, 1970:1). Usually, after the creation of the world either from ‘violent acts and warfare among the gods’ or ‘*ex nihilo* from out of nothing’, there is always a separation and a healing. The gods move back to heaven (sky) and the humans remain

on earth after a 'sacrifice' or an agreement must have been made or reached. Long (1998: 695) calls this "a structure of rupture". We might also refer to it as an edenic occurrence. This is in consonance with the myth of creation in the Biblical Book of Genesis where 'gods' came together to create a perfect, spiritual world from where the created humans were later evicted for their lack of obedience.

The other type of myth concerns the origin of deities. According to Eliade (1960:21), "origin myths continue and complete the cosmogonic myth; they tell how the world was changed, made rich or poorer". Mythical stories in this mode are usually symbolic, represented by objects like sky, moon, rain and others. These archetypes become, in the words of Ngumoha (1988:22-23):

motif or image that functions as a universal symbol in human experience. The symbol must have the same meaning for a great portion of humanity as is exemplified in Mother Earth, which is a creative female principle.

The pantheon that emerges has relevant meanings to the people. The gods and goddesses "serve as mythic allegorical emblems, symbols, paradoxes and secret language" (Ngumoha, 1988: 42). To an extent, they express human foibles as they fight, love and procreate with supernormal strengths and supernatural outcomes. They express the positives and negatives of nature, order, crafts, vegetation, topography and other aspects of normal human life. Their spatial space includes physio-temporal, metaphysical and spiritual environments. They are worshipped by the people as manifestations of the original creative deity.

The myth of renewal and rebirth foregrounds that the physical and spiritual worlds work in a cyclical time frame. These "various rituals and dramatic forms of behaviour took place at intervals during this process, giving expression to the sacred structure of time" (Long, 1998: 695). Creative power, which needs rejuvenation and occurs at specific times, is given expression in the renewal at the end of a specific circle symbolizing the re-enactment of the original creative action. Ngumoha (1988: 110) calls it the "nostalgic dream". It is a mythical remembrance of a historical (or non-historical) event. Even the myth of Arcadia (the Golden Age myth) is said to be a

remembrance of the Garden of Eden inhabited by Adam and Eve. This remembrance is even present in English poetry: Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" and Milton's "Paradise Lost."

Generally, symbolism plays a great part in the meaning make-up of myths. Hidden in them are icons that represent meanings which have importance and speak volumes of and to the people. Eliade (1965:23) opines that "every primordial image is the bearer of a message of direct relevance to the condition of humanity, for the image unveils aspects of ultimate reality that are otherwise inaccessible".

Some of the rites, rituals and objects used during mimetic ceremonies are symbolic representations of what the people believe (to have happened but which have consequences for the present). During the installation ceremonies of the Awujale of Ijebuland in Nigeria, the King, "local founding myths are preserved by their re-enactment" (Apter, 1992:19). Among the Yorubas in Nigeria, the myth of *Egungun* (masquerade) celebration in the words of Aboyade (1994:4):

is not only an acknowledgement of the ancestors but a vivid reminder that the dead mingle with the living all the time and that life itself is a never-ending continuity. The ancestors, clothed as masquerades, share in the life of the community. They partake of the food and entertainment and speak in their own peculiar guttural sounds.

In some societies, birds represent different ideals and traits: buzzard (cruelty), eagle (courage), pelican (self-sacrifice), peacock (pride), phoenix (immortality). Apart from these, birds are seen in most myths as messengers of the gods. Different creatures, whether in the air, on earth or in water, are usually venerated, deified and represented as symbols of the invisible presence and representations of the divine. Cats were venerated in Egypt, cows in India and pythons in Idiko-Ile (Nigeria). This is reflected in totemism which is described by Ngumoha (1988: 78) as involving

a system of social organization of tribal societies in which animals, plants or other natural objects are looked upon as personal or group symbols, protective deities or spiritual

kin. Totemism admits that a mystical relationship exists between a group or an individual in a totem: there are also ideological, emotional, reverential and genealogical relationships of social groups or specific persons with totems.

This shows that mythology serves as culture mirror. It allows a society have a two-way mirror examination of itself: inwards and outwards. Refining and fine-tuning the values and mores of the society are achievable. The death of a society grounded in this philosophy is not easily attained and like the Phoenix its continuity and resurrection from its own ashes are guaranteed. Malinowski argues that this will “strengthen tradition and endow it with a greater value and prestige by tracing it back to a higher, better, more supernatural reality of initial events” (qtd in Bascom, 1965:191).

Mythography, according to Eliade (1965:145), functions as a “process of instruction through role models and modeling”. Each of the mythic characters and situations, which are continuously re-enacted at cyclical and specific human times, serve as societal values. Members of a community are supposed to either abide by or strive to emulate the mythical embedded values. Order in the community’s cosmogony is, therefore, maintained. The myths become educative and illustrative through the acts the people believe must have happened.

Myths and mythography serve as points of entertainments through psychological and emotional (re)conditioning. In the African world, the telling and retelling of tales is regarded as an avenue of entertainment. Through the retelling of tales the psychological make-up of a society is re-assured and sustained in line with the demanding prevailing societal norms. All these show that mythic beliefs run through the fabrics of the community and play a great role in the socio-religious and psycho-emotional (im)balance of individual members of a society.

Moreover, mythography seeks to see behind the temporary and temporal veils shrouding these assumed ‘fallacious’ and unbelievable stories. The applicability of myths and mythology to present socio-communal situations, rules and regulations become synonymous with giving reasons on why and how binding customs and

traditions came to be. In the words of Ngumoha (1988:18), mythographies assume the position of “imaginative pictorial anecdotes used to represent higher wisdom in understandable form . . . which have something to do with the inner nature of the universe and of human life . . .”, and are “stories invented as a veiled explanation of truth and reality.”

In summation, this study seeks to examine the truths and realities embedded and utilized in contemporary African drama. Their relationships to the present realities will also be expounded and hidden meanings extracted. This understanding will no longer be limited to a few as Emperor Julian and Philosopher Sallustus’ opinions portend (qtd in Eliade, 1965:72): myths are “divine truths and mysteries hidden from the foolish crowd and apparent only to the wise.”

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

CHAPTER THREE

Ideological Relevances, Initiations and Symbolisms in African Drama

3.1 The Texts and Ideological Relevances

The trickster hero text, *The Marriage of Anansewa* by Efua T. Sutherland, reports the exploits of Ananse and his daughter, Anansewa, based on a story-telling art called *Anansesem* (Ananse stories /folktales). It is an explorative journey into the oral narrative traditions of the Akan speaking people of Ghana. Ananse, a trickster, is the cunning spider (man) who is always entangled within his own traps and webs of deceit and lies. He sets out using what he has to acquire the wealth, name and honour that he does not have. His bargaining chip is his educated daughter, Anansewa. She is dangled at four noble chiefs; Chief of Akata, Chief of Sapaase, Chief of the Mines and Chief-who-is-Chief. Through many pitfalls, he succeeds in installing his daughter in one of the nobles' houses, and as such changes his socio-economic status. The text portrays, to a large extent, Sutherland's love and understanding of her people's trado-cultural world. According to her (1968:42):

I'm on a journey of discovery. I'm discovering my own people. I didn't grow up in rural Ghana.... there are certain hidden areas of Ghanaian life – important areas of Ghanaian life, that I just wasn't in touch with; in the past four or five years I've made a very concentrated effort to make that untrue. And I feel I know my people now.

When she established the Ghana Experimental Theatre Players in 1958 and the Ghana Drama Studio, her major aim was to develop traditional ideas and values through the avenue of drama (Angmor 1978). Her belief, like that of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, is founded on the inculcation and usage of traditional languages in the world of African literature.

She effected and put into practice *Anansegoro* – a method of traditional story telling adapted for the stage. The effective, constant and active participatory roles of Storyteller, Players (Actors-In-Reserve or “participating audience”) and Property Man (all are characters cum technical crew) come into play. Through their influencing roles, they become more than just background voices, pictures or allusions. They come alive. The active and visible part of Story-teller in *The Marriage of Anansewa* is comparable to that of the Director in Femi Osofisan’s *Morountodun*. Both tell and direct their stories and productions.

Besides the application of the system of *Anansegoro* there is the use of *Mboguo*: *Anansesem*’s musical performances which include songs (pre-prepared and or on-the-spot songs contributions), dances and claps. *Mboguo* songs can effectively be used to start a play with their reflective refrains. Rituals of libation are performed. After this, a play or a story-telling performance starts: the interest of the audience is already aroused (*The Marriage*, vi-vii). Dances occur within the play: these can be spontaneous or scripted. Examining its use and effectiveness, Sutherland (1975: Foreword, vii) writes:

Mboguo in its traditional concept and usage has been inherited wholesale by *Anansegoro*. However, in addition, it can be used to develop action and characterization or to acquaint the audience with shifts of time or place.

The management of the story and stage setting is largely Brechtian. Sutherland’s stage is a conduit for examining prevailing socio-economic and religious affairs with mythic ideas. It becomes a tool of social control and dissection; a classroom or a laboratory through which changes can occur. Brecht’s alienative dramatic works utilize anti-hypnotic stages and dramatic devices with the aim of helping the audience distance itself - mood and emotion - from the plays. Appeal is made to the audience’s reason and not emotion. Similarly, Sutherland employs the part of Storyteller (narrator) who tells the story and naturally mixes with the audience. There is also the extensive use of songs (more than fifteen) and light. Stage properties are given to the actors, physically on stage, at the instance needed, and in the full glare of the audience.

The orchestra, just like the Players, is always on stage and not at the backstage. Finally, the characters are types rather than individuals. Portrayed are over-riding social struggles and their outcomes. According to Sutherland (1975: Foreword, v):

Ananse appears to represent a kind of Everyman artistically exaggerated and distorted to serve society as a medium for self-examination. He has a penetrating awareness of the nature and psychology of human beings and animals. He is also made to mirror in his behaviour fundamental human passions, ambitions and follies as revealed in contemporary situations.... That Ananse is, artistically, a medium for society to criticize itself can be seen in the expression, 'Exterminate Ananse and society will be ruined'.

Sutherland also communalizes her drama. The community (in this wise the audience) is encouraged to be part of the play. Through the impromptu dances, instant repertoires of verbal calls, answers and related songs to stage actions the community is allowed to add up-to-date reactions to the unveiling and production of the play (*The Marriage*, vi-vii). This is encapsulated in the words of Okpewho (1983:174):

For those African writers who have taken the trouble to preserve the mythic traditions of their people as a homage to the roots of their creative genius, the loyalty to tradition is often accompanied by the urge to lend it a larger cultural appeal in tune with contemporary taste.

On the other hand, *Kinjeketile* (or *Hero's Name*) (1970) by Ebrahim N. Hussein is an epic dramaturgy which provides basic information on the Tanzanian culture that gave birth to it. It records the struggle of the people to free themselves from German shackles in the late 19th century to early 20th century. The Germans, welcomed among the friendly Tanzanians, overtime confiscated and appropriated the land making the latter serfs and slaves on their own land. The Tanzanians were subjected to various aspects of depersonalization and dehumanization. Commenting on the reality of the text, Hussein (1970, Introduction: vi-vii) submits:

Firstly, I have tried to show how the Wamatumbi felt about the cruel invasion by the Germans, especially to show the master-servant relationship then pertaining. Secondly, I have tried to show briefly the political climate of that period (1890-1904). Thirdly, I have touched on the theme of economic exploitation of the Africans by the Germans, when Tanzania was being deprived of her produce and manpower, and yet her people were being made to pay taxes without being given any chance of earning an income.

The people endure until the seer, Kinjeketile, comes along. The spirit, Hongo, influences him, opening vistas of freedom for the people. These visions are contradictory and bloody. In his confusion, Kinjeketile encourages the people but found it impossible backpedaling when reality strikes. He nearly sold his people, putting his trust in a betraying spirit. Hussein in *Kinjeketile* (1970, Introduction: vii) opines that Hongo

possesses Kinjeketile, but the course of action he reveals to him, involving possible bloodshed, is above his domain. But as he is also the mediator between man and God makes Kinjeketile's dilemma all the more intensive, together with the fact that Kinjeketile is in turn the mediator between men, Hongo, the *mizimu*, the *miungu* and *Mungu* (God)

In portraying Kinjeketile, a mono-mythic hero like Soyinka's Ogun in *Idanre and Other Poems* (1967), Hussein posits that he borrowed "freely from imagination when historical facts did not suit my purpose". An historical Kinjeketile existed: his full name was Kinjeketile Ngwale and he lived at Ngarambe, now in Southern Tanzania. He is mentioned in *Records of the Maji Maji Rising* (1969i). His influence was felt from 1905 until he was executed in 1906. Hussein utilizes the faction philosophy: admixture of facts and fiction. The Kinjeketile of the text "is a creature of the imagination and although the "two men" closely resemble one another in their actions, they are not identical" (*Kinjeketile* 1970: v). This foregrounds that myths, like in this text, explain historical and non-historical communal happenings. Meanings and symbols are encoded in the events and they predicate for the future. Hussein agrees

with Femi Osofisan (2005:4) who writes on the usefulness of Art in the society in the article, “Literature and the Cannibal Mother”:

Art is capable both of reproducing and altering consciousness; indeed, it is the principal agency for the propagation of prejudice. The writer is never neutral on the transmission of culture; by conscious or unconscious volition, he or she is the bearer of the seeds of regeneration; and it is in his or her womb that are stored the vital fluids which will either kill the seeds or vomit them intact or favourably impact on their future destiny.

This work, set *in situ* amongst the common people of Tanzania, looks at their sufferings and liberation struggle under German colonizers devoid of union or elitist interference or influence. It is the common people, amongst whom Kinjeketile arises, that are affected. Like all *hoi polloi* over the world, they accept the situation but bid their time while lacking unity. In Tanzania (Tanganyika as at then), there were many sub-ethnic groups which believed in their individualities. When Kinjeketile emerges, he “taught the people the meaning of unity, and encouraged them to unite by symbolically using water as a medicine against divisive forces” (*Kinjeketile*, vi). In this struggle, Kinjeketile is, therefore, able to unite all the different tribes towards the war.

The major mythic issue in the text is realized through the character of Kinjeketile, the seer. He is an ordinary man who gets in contact with the spirit, Hongo, through the medium of “a pool in a tributary of the River Rufiji” near his home at Ngarambe. For more than twenty-four hours, he is under the river re-appearing untouched by water! The power to control dangerous animals like lions comes upon him. From under the river, he claims he is given water to make his warriors invincible and a fly-whisk to invoke blessings on them. These endear him to the people who flock to his side. He unites and sends them to war under the control of Kitunda.

Mythic characters are grounded in their humanness. Kinjeketile is not an exception. He is faced and battered with doubts especially when he is told that he had

prophesied that the Arab, Seyyid Said (the Sultan of Zanzibar, another oppressor), would take over after the people's victory.

Kinjeketile: After winning the war we will be under Seyyid Said? I said that?

Kitunda: Yes. Are you ill...? Your face ... where are you going?

Kinjeketile: I've been cheated! They have killed me - no, I have killed myself! It was a dream, yes, I was dreaming! No, no, no, no! I have been cheated! No! (He gives a terrible cry and falls down).
(*Kinjeketile*, 21)

He doubts more when he sees Hongo's bloodied and terrible image of the future for the people. This shakes his faith in Hongo, the vision, the water and the essence of fighting. What upholds him is not his spirituality but his belief in the power of the people and their future. He refuses to recant when he is urged to by Askari and the German Officer. According to him, his defiance is founded on the following premises:

Do you know what they will say tomorrow? The officer will say that we were wrong. He will say to our children that we were wrong in fighting him. He will tell that to our children, Kitunda. That to fight him is wrong! That to fight for one's country is wrong! And he wants me to help him by retracting all that I said.... The moment I say that, people in the north, south, east and west will stop fighting. They will fall into hopeless despair – they will give up.... A word has been born.... One day the word will cease to be a dream, it will be a reality! (*Kinjeketile*, 53)

The recanting of Kinjeketile and its would-be-effects on future Tanzanians is one of the major issues of the text. The success of his not recanting made him a rogue in the eyes of the Germans but a mythic hero whose life and times are now celebrated in Tanzania. Okeama (2005:2) posits:

During colonialism, the resistance was called the Maji Maji Rebellion. After independence, it was renamed the Maji

Maji Insurrection. And so it is that the chiefs hanged by the Germans as criminals are today honoured as heroes.

The play, *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1974), along with the two other plays in the *Statement* (1974) collection, *The Island* and *Statement After An Arrest Under The Immorality Act*, are workshop productions devised and coordinated by Athol Fugard, along with John Kani and Winston Ntshona in the line of a people's struggle as painted in *Kinjeketile*. These plays, according to *Time*, depict a "dialogue between African innocence and experience; between the country and the town; and between the masks the African is obliged to wear and the man within" (qtd from Blurb of *Statement*). This is the thematic focus of *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*. The play had its debut on October 8, 1972 at The Space, Cape Town in South Africa. In London, it won the London Theater Critics' Award for Best Play 1974. The play, rooted in a drama workshop, was not premeditated but derived its source out of a Fugardian experience. He has

maintained that the genesis of *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* lies in an unforgettable photograph he saw hanging in a studio window. It was of a South African black man wearing his best suit and an angelic smile. He carried a pipe, a walking stick and a newspaper. ("African American Performing Art Community Theater", 2005)

The text documents the travails of two main characters, Styles and Sizwe Bansi, in becoming integrated into the racially segregated society of South Africa. Styles is the black man who has seen it all and wants a way out; he establishes a photographic studio to become independent. This also serves as a conduit for other blacks to concretize their 'dreams'. Sizwe is the still-enmeshed black man looking for a way of living by and within the rules of apartheid; his passbook expires sending him back to a no-man's land while to live, his name must 'die'. In this work, the policy and nomenclature of apartheid are not mentioned but their effects are felt. This is explicitly put by Rich (2002:2) when he states that the

strength of Fugard's work lies in the way in which his works convey strong political messages without being dogmatic.... While his plays were not explicitly anti-apartheid, the sorrows that arise in them do so as a result of apartheid.

Represented and portrayed in the text are the visages of Apartheid: forms and effects as they affect the blacks within the South African society. Styles would be required to work for thirty years before qualifying for a gold wristwatch "when they sign you off because you're too old for anything anymore" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 9). He decides treading another path to get an advantage over the system. He becomes a photographer of not just photos and people but of dreams. He willingly becomes a channel for the achievements and realizations of individuals' and groups' dreams. His still photos and movies 'catch' the individual or group in the present and propel them into their aspirations or dreams (mostly within the horizon of the apartheid system). Within his cyclical actions, he activates the fight or struggle against ingrained apartheid policies. With the Doom insecticide, he fights the cockroaches inherited in his new shop but loses. The battle is won with the most unlikely of all war tools: a cat named Blackie. He becomes a psycho-sociological warrior on behalf of the Blacks: helping to re-psyche and re-balance them. Fugard symbolizes him as the enlightened one that can serve as a watershed for the suppressed blacks and a sign of hope: one that wants out of the debilitating system.

On the other hand, Sizwe is the black man that must lose his name and identity to survive within the system. He goes to take a 'card' and then a 'movie' at Styles Photographic Studio. To Styles, he is a 'dream' which comes alive in the extremely long epistolary dramatic actions exposing majorly the negative impact of Apartheid on the black population. He comes across as unsecured socially and psychologically. His passbook is expired. He has been 'raided' and is legally exiled to King William's Town, "a dry place... very small and too many people" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 27). He wants to stay in Port Elizabeth, have a job and be able to fend for his family. His record book, residence permit, reference book, passbook and native identity book endorse him to King William's Town in opposition to his desire.

Getting him out of this imbroglio is the crux of the second cycle of the text between him and Buntu. Finding a passbook by the dead Robert Zwelinzima exposes the socio-psychological trauma Sizwe Bansi undergoes personally at the hands of Buntu and the system. With the passbook, he has a chance of staying and earning a living at Port Elizabeth but his name and identity must be buried. According to Fugard (1974, Introductory Page), "Facts... are flat and lacking in the density and ambiguity of truly dramatic images". Disdaining facts, Fugard relies much on dramatic images. No mention is made of apartheid whereas the lives and actions of the people express it. The text expresses the various levels of suffering the people undergo. He brings this to the fore with exemplifications of relevant characters like Outa Jacob, Buntu, Styles, Baas Bradley and Nowetu. In each character are deposited different atoms of apartheid. According to Walder quoted in Brinks (1993:5):

The most powerful moments in the *Statements* plays, their most memorable images, take us beyond the private pain in which (Fugard's) own concerns are rooted to suggest the shape of suffering and hope for an entire community.

The text, inclusive of its characterology, epitomizes a universal picture of man in pain and suffering under the yoke of man. The apartheid problem is seen as unrestricted to South Africa. It is a universal phenomenon under different colourations. Fugard resorts to role-play where each character subsumes and acts out different character roles. Styles acts as Baas Bradley, Man becomes Sizwe and in the finality of it, Robert Zwelinzima eats up Sizwe Bansi. Through them, the system becomes a reality, analyseable and fightable. Brinks (1993:4-5) summarizes this:

role-playing extends the scope of the character's involvement in the narrative.... Instead of being merely this individual complicated in this situation... Styles becomes a crowd ...to a whole community (the township), a whole society (the blacks in South Africa)... makes it possible to represent the all-encompassing yet invisible System on the stage.

Fate of a Cockroach by Tewfik al-Hakim, a three-act satirical comedy devised for and written in the line of the absurdist theatrical set-up, like *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* thematically portrays a struggle for life and freedom. Tewfik al-Hakim (8th Oct 1898 - 26th July 1987), the playwright, was an Egyptian born in Alexandria. He was a novelist, playwright, theatre director and autobiographer. He was a Permanent member of the Higher Council for Arts and Literature, a Journalist with *Akhbar al Yom* newspaper, a Deputy Prosecutor at the Mixed Courts, Alexandria and a Director, National Library, Egypt. For his more than seventy works spanning dramas, novels, memoirs and essays (political and literary outputted between early 1930 and mid 1980s) the Egyptian government in 1961 awarded him the State Merit Award.

Referred to as a playwright of ideals, Al-Hakim is reputed to have developed, according to Twair, in her article, “Cultures and Cockroaches” an Egyptian theatrical identity through the content, regional colour and language of his drama. He was the first Egyptian professional writer to rely on his full-time writing vocation as his sole source of income. The “visible theatre tradition in Arabic Literature” (Hutchins 1998: 4) created by Al-Hakim stemmed not only from his Egyptian background but also from his interaction with other writers especially in Paris where he had gone in 1925 in pursuit of a doctorate in law (but failed to return with it). Al-Hakim, in his autobiography, *The Prison of Life* (1997) traces what spurred his literary sojourn and affiliations to and with Paris:

As for actual creative writing, it did not begin seriously for me until after I had been to Europe and drunk at the true springs of culture and of the actual formation of my intellectual make-up. The wonder is that in Paris I did not continue along the line I had followed in Egypt, the line of humour, vaudeville, operetta - the popular theatre in general. ...what happened was that I lost interest in this easy kind of art... I followed a new direction, with a different caravan of playwrights, authors, and producers who were effecting an innovative revolution against the other, successful way. It was the caravan of Ibsen, Pirandello, Bernard Shaw, Maeterlinck If they triumphed later it was thanks to group of cultured people

who neither weakened nor despaired in commending their art.

This influence, which Al-Hakim tapped but redirected to serve his own writing purposes, is felt in most of his works from *The Song of Death*, *The Tree Climber*, *Not a Thing out of Place*, *The Prison of Life*, *The Sultan's Dilemma*, *The Maze of Justice* to *Fate of a Cockroach*. In the last work, he busies himself with the problems of freedom: socio-religious, economic, psycho-cultural and even governmental. He allows the text to “deal, directly or indirectly, with some aspect of freedom” (*Cockroach*, Introduction: vii). This “undisputed pioneer of dramatic writing in Arabic” (*Cockroach*, Introduction: vii) has

never been interested in political creeds and isms ... shown himself deeply concerned with such fundamental and potentially dangerous issues as justice and truth, good and evil and, above all, freedom (*Cockroach*, Introduction : vii).

This preoccupation with freedom is also portrayed in the title of his autobiography, *The Prison of Life* “in which he discusses the individual's inability to escape from the imprisonment imposed upon him by the circumstances of his birth” (*Cockroach*, Introduction, viii). This thematic focus is also reflected in the *Sultan's Dilemma* and *The Song of Death*.

Fate of a Cockroach examines a cockroach's struggle for life and freedom alongside the absurdist inclination of a man aligning himself with and in the cockroach's struggle. It portrays

man's natural love of freedom, his refusal to despair in the face of adversity, are exemplified in the Cockroach's strivings to climb out of the bath (*Cockroach*, Introduction: vii).

The King, a cockroach, falls into a bathtub. His struggle to get out is reflected in the struggle of Adil, the hen-pecked human husband, to cut himself off from the suppressive hold of his wife. These two struggles portray the eternal mythic struggle

of all creatures to find spaces of freedom to operate. Each creature either falls into oppression (like the cockroach) or allows himself to be oppressed (like Adil). The fight for freedom has spanned eons and cuts across all spheres of life and creatures. In the text, Al-Hakim delineates various levels of mythic oppression that have been operated in time past: humans over humans, gender suppression, humans over other creatures and other animate creatures over others. These cut across cultural, psychological, socio-religious, economical and geographical inclinations and limitations. The text foregrounds the idea that all these are based on long held universal archetypal beliefs that are deeply entrenched in the psyche of each type of creature concerned.

Cockroaches and Humans are shown to be gender conscious and oppressive. In the absurdist world of the cockroaches, the King believes he is the all-in-all: he is the King because his whiskers are the longest: "... my whiskers are longer than yours" (*Cockroach*, 2). Queen continuously challenges this position: "That is a trifling difference It is your sickly imagination that always makes it appear to you that there is a difference between us" (*Cockroach*, 3). In the human world on the other hand, the feminine Samia lords it over her husband, Adil, in all spheres of their matrimonial life. He does all the home duties as directed by his wife: all his rebellious feelings are bottled up. With this, it is easy for him to align with the cockroach's struggle for freedom. As an example, Samia commands Adil, her husband:

You should know that I want you to spend this day usefully. D'you hear? There are my clothes and dresses all crumpled up in the wardrobe- get down to sorting them out and hang them up at your leisure one by one so that when I come back from work I'll find everything nicely sorted out and organized. Understood? (*Cockroach*, 75)

The eternal mythic belief of specie superiority is displayed in the text: humans over other creatures; cockroaches over ants; the gods over all. Humans, through the eyes of Samia and the Cook, see the cockroaches and the ants as roaches and destroyers which must be exterminated: they contribute nothing to development but

destruction. Even Adil, who aligns himself with the Cockroach's struggle, saw it as a spectacle. The ants, on other hand, are supposed to be retards but their organized life is a surprise to both the humans and the cockroaches. Adil exclaims:

Yes, ants carrying off the corpse of the cockroach. Come, Samia, look! It's a really extraordinary sight – a crowd of ants carrying off the cockroach and taking it up the wall. Look, Doctor, they're taking it towards one of those cracks.
(*Cockroach*, 72)

In opposition to this reality, the King states: "in relation to ourselves, they are inferior creatures" (*Cockroach*, 21).

The humans are seen as the superior even in the myopic, confusing and limited world of the Cockroaches. The divines, the Priest cannot define, happen to be the humans. Like in all religious myths, the whims and caprices of the 'gods' become religious tenets, rules and laws. The coincidental events that happen in the lives of the 'worshippers' are regarded as divinely ordained, appropriated and executed. The saving of the Priest from the ants, which is really the use of a mop by a human to clear the ants, is seen as a divine intervention and protection. In the Cockroaches' doubt and uncertainty, the King affirms: "Neither the cloud's origin nor yet its scientific composition is of interest. What is important is who sent it down and wiped away the ants with it" (*Cockroach*, 21).

Al-Hakim questions and lays bare the supernatural in religious and mythic beliefs. Limitations in religious horizons are responsible for most basic religious and mythic beliefs. It is not as if they are real. The ants could not have believed the cockroaches were "thinking creatures" (*Cockroach*, 21). They are just foods to the ants. The cockroaches see the ants as stupid and dumb creatures whereas in their own world, the ants are organized and have the power of speech. As 'gods', the humans lack understanding, intra-familial and inter-specie communicative powers. And they are the highest form of life known! The following questions become relevant: Are the 'gods' not the fictive imagination of all creatures? Are the strongly held specie superiority opinions not baseless? These questions, suppositions and Al-Hakim's

textual examination of the Egyptian worldview are an indictment on the government, people and general beliefs of Egyptians and humans generally. Accordingly, theatre-tix@osu.edu comments: “In the juxtaposition of fantastic and realistic settings, Hakim creates a searing indictment that extends from Egyptian leaders to the general populace.”

The text, set within the worlds of the cockroaches, ants and humans, is absurd in orientation. This absurdity allows both the playwright and the audience the chance to see all these creatures in their different worlds. The audience, crisscrossing the different worlds, is able to make sensible judgments on all the mythic and archetypal symbols utilized in the text. These worlds, though seen as lower by other creatures, are not. All the creatures, at their own levels, rate high their own intellectuality, superiority and spirituality. This is supported in the article, “Creative Antagonisms” (1990) by E1-Din where he states: “All higher forms of human life rest on spiritual principles, which we label freedom, thought, justice, truth and beauty”. All the creatures are cut off one from the other. Each believes it is the highest being of intellectuality and creativity alive. Any other thing above it, known or felt, is divine: anything below is a non-entity not to be taken serious. Symbolically, human societies are stratified. All that Al-Hakim posits in the text operate within the stratifications: religious, economic, intellectual, cultural, ethnic and other forms. Savant (a cockroach) succinctly puts this in reference to the ants:

Inferiority is always a cause of trouble, but we must be patient. We cannot bring those creatures who are lower than us up to the same standard of civilization as ourselves. To each his own nature, his own environment, and his own circumstances. The ant, for instance, is concerned solely with food. As for us, we are more concerned with knowledge. (*Cockroach*, 21)

whereas to the humans:

The cockroach or black-beetle is a harmful insect that infests cloth, food and paper. It is often found in lavatories and has long hairy horns or whiskers. It spoils more food

than it actually requires as nourishment. It can live for about a year (*Cockroach*, 36).

Other creatures also live in the physical and spatial environments appropriated by each creature simultaneously. It seems the higher the 'consciousness' of a creature, the better it can perceive other 'lower' ones becoming more impersonal and dispassionate towards them. Conversely, the 'lower' creatures deify, glorify and turn into mysticism and religiousness the acts - deliberate or otherwise - of the 'higher' creatures. They neither see nor understand them: only the effects of their actions are felt. From these actions Savant, the scientific minded cockroach, develop theories:

There is some sort of relationship but I do not yet know the reason for it. Nevertheless, we have been able to deduce a constant law in the form of a true scientific equation, namely that light equal water and darkness equals dryness. (*Cockroach*, 14)

Or

The scientific composition of this cloud is well known: it consists of a network of many threads from a large piece of moistened sacking....

However, I very much doubt the existence of any connection between this priest's prayer and the descent of this cloud. (*Cockroach*, 16)

(The first quotation refers to the filling of a bathtub with water in the morning for bathing and its emptiness in the evening when not in use while the second describes the use of a wet mop: both done by humans).

Babafemi Adeyemi Osofisan, a Nigerian born on 16th June, 1946 in Erunwon, old Western Region (now Ogun State) goes by the pseudonym of Okinba Launko. This contemporary and Marxist-oriented writer is known as a novelist, playwright and essayist having written and produced more than forty plays with about twenty-five published (Adeyemi 2009). Foregrounded in most of his works, according to Wikipedia (an online educational website), is a "critique of societal problems and his

use of African traditional performances and surrealism . . . A frequent theme . . . is the conflict between good and evil”. This same thematic focus extends to *Morountodun*, the play-in-a-play text under consideration. The play, premiered at the University of Ibadan Arts Theater in 1979, won in 1983 as *Morountodun and Other Plays* the first Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) Prize for Literature. It is a textual examination and dramatic discourse based on the revolt of ordinary farmers against the high-handedness of the Nigerian Government in its taxation policy and implementation. The revolt, the Agbekoya Uprising of September 1969, (Agbekoya means “Farmers Reject Suffering or Oppression”) shook the government to its roots. Reacting, the Government showed its callousness, rigidity and suppressive tendencies towards the common man in the society. The playwright, awarded Nigeria’s highest academic prize in 2004, the Nigerian National Order of Merit (NNOM), seeks to attack the political corruption, taxation imbalance and national injustice entrenched in the psyche of government and its operators.

In the post-independence euphoria of ‘baby’ Nigeria in the 1960s, the national and regional governments became spendthrifts and were peopled by corrupt politicians. Theirs was to siphon the treasuries, as it was the duty of the people to supply their needs. Corruption was, therefore, rife and a way of life. Osofisan in *Morountodun* seeks to examine a little aspect of this national disease in the form of taxation and its attendant effects on the common people: lack of roads and infrastructural development, corrupt officials, suppression and oppression of the people and other hydra-headed problems. According to Mama Kayode, Baba stated the following in his reply to the Governor’s speech:

Our roads have been so bad for years now that we can no longer reach the markets to sell our crops. Even your excellency had to make your trip here by helicopter. Your council officials and the *akodas* harass us minute to minute and collect bribes from us. Then they go and build mansions in the city. Sanitary inspectors like Mister Bamsun are bloodsuckers. Your Marketing Board seizes our cocoa, and pays us only one third of what it sells it to the *oyinbo*. We have no electric, and we still drink *tanwiji*

from the stream. Many of our children are in jail for what your people call smuggling. We protested and your police mounted expeditions to maim us and reduce our houses to ashes. (*Morountodun*, 65)

The society is stratified into the proletariats and the bourgeoisies. The government sees fit to tax the people to the extreme without a concomitant development in their lives. The bourgeois represented by Alhaja and her spoilt daughter, Titubi, see no need for any revolution as they are rich:

With good luck and stubbornness
With sweat, sweat and cleverness
De-ter-mi-na-tion!
Ma-ni-pu-la-tion!
Oh fight for your share
And do not care! (*Morountodun*, 7)

They forget that in their uncaring and selfish struggle to become rich and prosperous, it is the common people that are sucked to the bones. This situation creates the class struggle exemplified in the clash between the farmers and the government. This is an everlasting mythic struggle. The German philosopher Karl Marx (1818-1883) succinctly phrases it in his *The Communist Manifesto* (co-written with Friedrich Engels): “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle”. The farmers embark on an armed struggle after all democratic and communicative avenues had failed to move the government and the bourgeois class.

Though the fight is uni-frontal, the people have been suppressed at various levels through different avenues and by different government officials. There are the socio-economic and political levels of suppression by the government itself. The social life of the people is curtailed as long as there is no finance to alleviate their suffering and upgrade their general lives. The people, common farmers that they are, rely on the provisions of good roads and transportation to ferry their produces for sale in the towns. These are not provided: the Governor gets to the people through a helicopter. If the people can get to the town, their profits are slashed not only by the ordinary buyers but also by the government-accredited buyer, the Marketing Board. At the political

level, the people have no say in the government: they are only at the receiving end. The overfed Governor personifies government:

His cheeks were shining. My God, I remember, he was so handsome I was afraid to look...

The governor's voice was sweet, you could almost drink it. And at first it was difficult to follow his words. They seemed to come from a church organ. (*Morountodun*, 64)

The suppressed people could not see their reflections in either the governor or the government.

The tools of oppression are basically based on psychological and socio-cultural indices. The psyche of the people is toyed with: the belief that they are common and illiterate is supposed to foreground their stupidity and pliability. This attitude towards the people is reflected in the almost inane speech of the governor to the people:

I know you have some grievances. But I have come to speak to you as the father of all the people in this state. This killing must stop. It is senseless for anybody to shoot guns against the government. That person will be crushed. So I am appealing to you. Think of your wives and children. Lay down your arms now and let us talk. All the people who have been misleading you till now, you must hand them over to the government, for they are your enemies, who don't want you to have peace and progress. We shall deal with them. *And above all you must pay your tax, it's the only way we can help you... Pay your tax! Pay your tax!* (*Morountodun*, 64-65) (Italics mine)

The lack of tax from the people hits the government, which offers no incentives to the people except the governor's preaching that their tax must be paid. It is believed that the people cannot think for themselves and therefore can be lead by the nose. This proves to be otherwise:

Molade: ... Our men are killing them men for men.

Mosun: One day we went and burnt down the Council office.

Mama Kayode: They sent soldiers, and we ambushed them
(*Morountodun* 63-64)

And as the government cannot stomach arguments and dissensions against its policies, (even though they are anti-people), it moves against the farmers to crush them.

Various government officials and offices become tools and avenues of oppression: the sanitary inspectors, the police, the council officials, the *akodas* and the Marketing Board. According to Mosun:

All our properties were public property while the inspector was here. If you argued, you went to work free of charge for the government in the white college (*Morountodun*, 63)

The “white college” here stands for prison. This idea is depicted in the incidence between Titus and the Inspector (*Morountodun*, 62-63). The police, in its true colour, as the bludgeoning arm of the government is used to main and kill the people. The council officials, because the people protest against their high tax assessment, increase the payment and “Tax assessments began to gallop like antelopes” (*Morountodun*, 64). The *akodas*, the local enforcement officials, harass the people for bribes. To cap it all, the Marketing Board is unrighteous in its financial dealings with the farmers, cutting more profits to its side than to the farmers. From all angles and through all government avenues, the people are short-changed.

To redress this, Osofisan re-creates the myth of Moremi enlivened through the actions of Titubi. This old Yoruba origin myth is processed to be reborn in the modern myth of Titubi mystified in *Morountodun*. The old myth epitomizes the geographical and origin settling problems of the Yorubas especially in their battles against the Igbos who hounded them, dressed in raffia (to portray their supposedly unearthly origin). Moremi gave herself to the discovery of their unique origin, dress and fighting prowess. For this, she became honoured in the pantheon of Yoruba goddesses. Titubi seeks to reenact this heroic exploit but with a diabolic and twisted convolution and conclusion. She would get to know the farmers, especially their leader, and betray him

by handing him over to the police. She seeks, like her social class wants, to break the insurrection. With this, the old myth would have been subverted and manipulated to a negative use. Osofisan, in a mind-shattering, psychological play on the psyche of Titubi makes her the bent arrow: that which was sent on a journey with a message but reacted upon and destroyed itself. This is also reflected in Chinua Achebe's major character, Ezeulu in *Arrow of God* (1964).

Faced with the reality of the people's suffering, Titubi participates fully in their wars and becomes a protector, campaigner and advocate of their struggle for freedom. She is confronted with mind-disturbing and troubling questions:

That was when I began to ask questions. Questions. I saw myself growing up, knowing no such suffering as these. With always so much to eat, even servants feed their dogs Yet here, farmers cannot eat their own products for they need the money from the market. They tend the yams but dare not taste. They raise chickens but must be content with wind in their stomach. And then, when they return weary from the market, the tax man is waiting with his bill ... It could not be just ... In our house, Mama, we wake to the chorus of jingling coins. And when we sleep, coiled springs, soft foam and felt receive our bodies gently. But I have lived in the forest among simple folk, sharing their pain and anguish ... and I chose ...

For without knowing it, the shame of my past had come flooding my eyes. (*Morountodun*, 66)

Her mind does a comparative analytical discourse between her own world of comfort and that of the barefaced needs and poverty of the farmers. Her change is a startling occurrence as it baffles the police (DSP Salami), her family (Alhaja) and the farmers (their leader, Marshal). In this transformation, the myth of Moremi metamorphoses, changes focus and theme thereby alluding to that of Titubi (*a la* Morountodun). The myth of Morountodun becomes a relevant issue in the modern day of freedom struggle: a mind ready to change, affecting not only itself but its environment and issues surrounding the development of the people. Her engagement and participation in the struggle typifies a changeable future in the life of the common people. Through her and her marriage to Marshal, the social classes co-join while the future becomes

certain as “In the end peace came, but from the negotiating table, after each side had burned itself out” (*Morountodun*, 79).

Osofisan, a marxist-oriented writer, borrows this mytho-historical material from the Yoruba mythology. He deliberately distorts it to serve his specific thematic purpose in preaching Marxist theory. His revolutionary ideals, ideas and goals are stated, subtly though. In real life and as an extension of his belief, he founded in 1991, The Centre for the Study of Theatre and Alternative Genres of Expression in Africa (Centre STAGE Africa). Through the text, he states like a Marxist, that the capitalist class sucks and takes overt advantage of the lower class. His idea, like that expounded in *The Communist Manifesto*, is that the capitalist or the bourgeois class would one day be eradicated by a joint worldwide working class revolution. A classless society would then subsist. This, to an extent, is realized in *Morountodun* for at the end the two warring classes become unified through the marriage of Titubi and Marshal. Only the proletariat class can make up its mind to bring this situation to fruition. Osofisan recognizes this:

But still, you must not imagine that what we presented here tonight was the truth. This is a theatre, don't forget, a house of dream and phantom struggles. The *real* struggle, the real truth, is out there, among you on the street, in your homes; in your daily living and dying ... (*Morountodun*, 79)

The text and its content serve as a mouthpiece for the common man. In his world, the government neither cares nor sees him. He is left to fend for himself. The only contribution needed from him is his tax (which is the only way through which the government can ‘help’ him!). In choosing to be a witness to and a recorder of these textual but real events, Osofisan utilizes literature as a tool of social utility. Merwin (1967: 142) acknowledges this in his reference to poets (and writers as a whole):

It is possible for a poet to assume his gift of articulation as a responsibility not only to the fates but to his neighbours, and to feel himself obligated to try to speak for those who are in circumstances resembling his own, but who are less capable of bearing witness to them.

Osofisan, through the characterization of Director and his utilization of Marxist ideology, succeeds in implanting and impacting in the audience the seeds of revolution against injustice perpetrated on the common man to the advantages of the ruling and bourgeois classes. As stated by Director, he and Osofisan have

decided not to be silent. We decided to go and rouse people up by doing a play on the subject. We decided to do a play about it, and take it round to all open places.
(*Morountodun*, 6)

The literary-historical dramatic text, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, according to its Preface, is an

imaginative recreation and interpretation of the collective will of the Kenyan peasants and workers in their refusal to break under sixty years of colonial torture and ruthless oppression by the British ruling classes and their continued determination to resist exploitation, oppression and new forms of enslavement.

It is not an exact reproduction of the farcical court trial at Nyeri, which sentenced the historical Dedan Kimathi, the Kenyan revolutionary, to death for struggling for that which was his. The text, set in the Kenya of 1956, is symbolic of Kenyans' struggle through the Mau Mau Uprising against British imposed colonialism. These deeds of resistance, as exemplified in political personalities like Jomo Kenyatta, Paul Ngei, Fred Kubai, Achieng Oneko, Bildad Kaggia and Kungu Karumba, were based on retrieving the Kenyan land 'stolen' and appropriated by the British colonial power through its settlers, soldiers of fortune, the clergy and finally its forces of occupation which settled in Kenya.

The Mau Mau Uprising led by military Generals like Dedan Kimathi, Njama, Matenjagwo, Mbaria Kahi, Kimemia, Ole Kiso and others sought, through armed resistance, to reject colonially imposed slavery on the nation of Kenya. It was a collective struggle that derived its strength from a national resolve to right situations. To counter this state of affairs and fortify its base, the British government sent in its

own military force headed by Generals like Lathbury, Hinde, Erskine and others. The Homeguard and K.A.R soldiers, majorly blacks but headed by whites were also mobilized to oppress, fight and arrest the Kenyans. The revolutionary fighters, who were forced into the forest to continue the struggle through guerilla warfare, built a way of acquiring loyalty from the people. Oath taking was established. To an African, the myth of oath taking, founded on blood and traditional symbolic icons, is bounding to a very large extent. According to Settler, his black workers were:

. . . loyal, meek, submissive.
Then that devil, Field Marshal, came
Milk clerk, oath clerk, murderer!
Poisoned simple minds
led astray their God-fearing souls
with his black mumbo jumbo. (*Trial*, 29)

Even with this, there are still betrayers among the people, and disappointedly among the revolutionaries as the issue of trust comes to the fore. Kenyans in the struggle are divisible into three groups: the fighters (revolutionaries), the collaborators (the betrayers) and the unconcerned (the neutrals). The fighters, in the mould of Kimathi, are ready to and do lay down their lives towards the realization of a free Kenya. The collaborators are the betrayers like Wambararia, Hungu, Gaceru, Gati and Gatotia (the hooded Gakunia). The elite, in the likes of African Business Executive, Politician and Educated African, who ought to be supportive of the struggle, become betrayers of the revolution. They are tools utilized to break the ranks of the fighters, weaken and betray them for killing by the whites. The last group, the unconcerned, consists of those who are neither here nor there (not guerillas, not collaborators): the common people arrested everyday for no reason and those with similarities to Boy and Girl (before meeting Woman). They suffer at the hands of both sides as they are hardly trusted. Betrayal is so strong among the Mau Mau fighters and the common people that Kimathi and Woman fall preys: Kimathi is sentenced to death and Woman is arrested.

Another major mythic issue Ngugi and Mugo examine is land deprivation and acquisition. The original landowners, the Kenyans, already deprived of their land try

repossessing it through militancy. On the other hand, the whites who appropriated it through false means and by force want to hold on forever. In this fight, it is apparent that he who owns the land owns the people and their lives. According to Kimathi, the British have neither ever being truthful nor trustworthy:

Deals! Pacts! Treaties! How many nations have you wiped out, and later said: well, according to this treaty and that treaty, they had ceded their land and their lives. (*Trial*, 33)

As a confirmation of Kimathi's accusation, Henderson, a white, expresses his feelings about the land and the people:

I love your country and your people ... I am a Kenyan. By might and right. Right is might ... I'm only fighting for my own, spoils of war if you like. (*Trial*, 35)

This extends to the thematic preoccupation of colonization and its nefarious effects on the people imposed on. Most of Ngugi's works are concerned with his country's problematic transition from colonialism to the post-colonial period and the resultant neo-colonial effects. Colonization, as was operated by the British, suppressed the socio-cultural and political psyche of the people. The people were divorced from their traditional beliefs. The deceit of imperialism is succinctly exhibited in the text. This runs through exploitative tendencies, prejudiced judiciary, land deprivation and false magnanimity of 'giving' independence through the policy of 'Majimboism' (regional independence). All are done in self-interest towards the development and entrenchment of British colonialism and imperialism. In the struggle against this, the people rise up through various avenues: politics, military, religion, culture (oath taking) and even in the arts (through a drama group). This uprising is opposed vehemently by the British colonial power through the suppression and oppression of the people. Military violence is unleashed upon them through the Homeguards, the K.A.R soldiers and the imported British forces of occupation. The people are arrested, imprisoned, raped, maimed and killed. Dehumanization and depersonalization become the order of the day all in the name of colonial imposition. Kimathi points out that in

this type of struggle the common man is used to fight the common man (from different cultures and countries):

It's always the same story. Poor men sent to die so that parasites might live in paradise with ill-gotten wealth. Know that we are not fighting against the British people. We are fighting against British colonialism and imperialist robbers of our land, our factories, our wealth ...

This kind of imperialism's vermin
Makes my blood boil with hate
Did you come all this way
Many thousands of miles
Across the sea, over the air,
A long way from your home,
To kill our people
So that Lord So-and-So
Might drink other people's blood in peace?
(*Trial*, 64)

Another relevant mythic issue examined in the text relates to that of recanting. The arrest of Kimathi is carried out to ameliorate the power and force of the struggle. Another major reason is to use him as a bait to puncture all the beliefs the people have in the struggle. If Kimathi could rescind his actions, participation in the struggle and therefore betray his fighter-colleagues, then a major aspect of the Mau Mau defeat would have been achieved. Kimathi's reward would be the preservation of his life. Talking to Kimathi, Henderson subtly states:

But now you are in custody. Hanging between life and death. Plead, plead, plead guilty. It's a game, yes. You can name your prize. You'll have your life. Only, we must end this strife. Plead guilty for Life! (*Trial*, 35)

Knowing the implications of recanting not only on himself as a person but as a personification of the struggle, he refuses. This increases the fighting zeal of the guerillas as Woman sacrifices herself but gets replaced by Girl and Boy.

The Trial of Dedan Kimathi by Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Githae Micere Mugo is an extension of the beliefs of the two playwrights. Ngugi was born as James Ngugi in 1938 at Kamiriithu near Limuru, Kiambu District in Kenya. A Gikuyu by birth, he schooled at Makerere University College, Uganda and Leeds University, England. A novelist, journalist, editor, essayist, lecturer and playwright, his works are concerned with his country's transitional problems from colonization to independence with the attendant problems of neo-colonialism. With his political beliefs, he had brushes with different Kenyan governments. He believes that all literary works by African writers should be written in African languages as he writes in his own native language too. Works not in this format he calls Afro-European Literature. His political leaning, in support of the people, is portrayed in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*. Mugo, a female on the other hand, was also a student of Makerere University in the early 60s and an editor of "Penpoint". A Lecturer in her own right, she is a literary critic, playwright and poetess. According to the text's Preface both writers believe that "Imperialism was the enemy of all working peoples ... the wealth produced by the labour power of many people, went to the hands of a few".

The text is an exemplification and realization of this belief, portraying the fact that people can be free from different negative mythotypes and levels of manacles, when they are resolved in unshackling themselves either as individuals, groups or as a nation.

'Zulu Sofola (1935-1995), in *Wedlock of the Gods*, interweaves tradition, love, taboo, sacrifice and the need for a society to continuously look inwards towards developing all spheres of its life. Born to Nigerian Igbo extractive parents from Issele-Uku (in Delta State), she is regarded as the first published female Nigerian playwright. She studied at Virginia Union Baptist Seminary and The Catholic University of America, obtaining her doctorate degree from the University of Ibadan. According to Mabel Ewrierhoma (2005 interview, 'The Daily Sun Newspaper'), a Nigerian Professor of Drama and Theatre at the University of Abuja, Nigeria, Sofola, who is regarded as one of the first generation of African female writers along with Mabel Segun, Ama Ata Aidoo, Efua T. Sutherland, Nadine Gordimer, Bessie Head, Flora

Nwakpa and Micere Githae Mugo, has about twenty published and unpublished plays to her name. A few of her plays include *The Disturbed Peace of Christmas* (1971), *Wedlock of the Gods* (1972), *King Emene* (1974), *The Wizard of Law* (1975), *The Sweet Trap* (1977) and *Old Wines are Tasty* (1981) among others.

The text, *Wedlock of the Gods*, is situated in the environment from which the playwright comes (Southern Nigeria). It is traditional, disallowing any colonial or postcolonial influence. It is an essentially pre-colonial setting which portrays the characters and the events in their natural traditional environment. Everything regarded as 'modern', which become external and intrusive, is done away with. Sofola paints a system as it was but advocates changes from within it without any external force or influence.

Her major grouse is with a mythic tradition that becomes static in the face of natural and social developments. She states pictorially, using very incisive African imagery, the negative effects on a society that decides to sacrifice self and its youths to a changeable systemic belief. *Wedlock of the Gods* shows her feminist attitude towards the oppressive nature exhibited in tradition and belief in regards to women. In the text, the tradition of mourning, intra-familial adoption of widows and patriarchal societal structure become her focus. She is one of the female writers, according to Evwierhoma (2005 interview, 'The Daily Sun Newspaper'), who:

recognize[s] need for the liberation of women from the forces of socio-economic and political marginalization as reflected in literature through their creative efforts. So they make radical attempts to challenge and change the conditions which oppress women in text and context. They seek to redress any wrong done to women through negative portrayals in acts and literature.

Sofola paints a tragedy which shakes the concerned community. She hopes with this systemic shake-up, the society will have a self intra-examination and make adjustments. In situations of mythic rites and rituals, on which most traditional societies are founded and based, there are usually clashes between the progressive and the conservative elements. While the progressive look at the effects of rites and rituals

and how to fine-tune them to benefit the society and individuals more, the conservatives are more concerned with their preservation, not minding the glaring anomalies. This is reflected in *Rebel* by Bediako Asare. *Wedlock of the Gods'* Production Note (*Wedlock*, 1) expresses this situation better:

Wedlock of the Gods is a tragedy which finds its roots in the ritual of death and mourning. The traditional solemnity of the ritual is distorted however for rather than engaging in the normal funeral rites and rituals which should have cleansed her and sent the spirit of the deceased to the world of the gods, the widow expresses a sense of liberation from an unwanted marriage, while the mother of the deceased performs rites meant to destroy her son's widow as an act of vengeance for supposedly killing her son.

Another mythic issue tackled in the text is that of vengeance. In the African world, God is the avenger and situations that need avenging are left to him. Otufo advocates this: "God gives and God takes away" (*Wedlock*, 7). But when Odibei sets out to become the avenging hand for the assumed killing of her son, Adigwe, she is condemned not only by the playwright but also by the community. In the pre-colonial African world, avenging a wrong with another is seen as abrogating the powers of the gods to do their duties. Therefore, avengers always come to a negative end (Awolalu 1979). In the text, Odibei, who is appealed to, but refuses all entreaties, is herself killed by Uloko.

The pre-colonial traditional African cosmogony was mostly patrilineal in structure with very extremely few matrilineal societies. The societies only saw the good in a male. This consigned the female, more often than not, to the background, turning her into an object of trade. Therefore, the societies could really not be bothered by the feelings and aspirations of their female populace. To live, they must abide by the rules and laws set by the male-dominated societies which are always self-serving and feminine-unfriendly. Sofola sees this gender oppression by another as a social problem limiting the progress of the oppressed in all facets of life. The irony is that the

same females who suffer help perpetuate these mythically out-dated rites and rituals on their own sex.

These rites and rituals exemplified in the text by the mourning period of Ogwoma, the medicinal door-lacing protection by Nneka and the hallucinatory spell put on Ogwoma by Odibei show a society guided and guarded by certain religious customs. These rules, at all cost, must be followed unless the taboo-breaker is ready to pay the price. In breaking her mourning-cleansing period, Ogwoma and her love pay with their lives though the lawful punishment is rhetorically stated by Nneka:

Do you know that the punishment for this deed is a swelling of the body with water leaking from everywhere? Do you know that nobody will agree to treat you for fear they might also catch your curse? Do you know that even after death no forest will accept your body?
(*Wedlock*, 19-20)

The rite Nneka performs on Ogwoma's door serves dual purposes: to notify anybody and everybody that the room is spiritually compromised and to wade off, if possible, the inherent dangers. The hallucinatory incantation Odibei carries out on Ogwoma supposedly 'captures', 'imprisons' and takes over the latter's consciousness and self-awareness. She is forced against her will and self-interest to do that which hurts her personally. And so she drinks the water and dies. This presupposes that spiritual and incantatory powers are reposed and imbedded not only in physical objects like vines, and snail shells but also in words (especially in the arrangement of their verbal structure, semantic and logical compositions).

Sofola describes an entirely traditional society bedevilled by its own creation. It is unable to change in accordance to the dictate of the times. Therefore, the broken taboo and the consequences brought about through human machinations introspectively should ginger a psycho-cultural and socio-spiritual re-evaluation in the community's cosmological and psyche awareness. This, basically, is the undertone ideological message Sofola incorporates in *Wedlock of the Gods*.

Wole Soyinka, the iconoclast writer and Nobel Prize winner, was born on 17th July, 1934 in Ogun State, Nigeria. In the Author's Note (1975:7) to *Death and the King's Horseman* he posits that his idea is to expound on the myth and mythography of his people (the Yoruba) and not to explore any major clash of traditions as

The Colonial Factor is an incident, a catalytic incident merely. The confrontation in the play is largely metaphysical, contained in the human vehicle which is Elesin and the universe of the Yoruba mind – the world of the living, the dead and the unborn and the numinous passage which links all: transition. (*Death*, 7)

Most of Soyinka's works, which cut across all the genres of Literature, are basically hinged on and tilted towards the mythologies of the Yoruba people with Ogun, the god of iron and war, at the hub. In *Death and the King's Horseman*, Soyinka exposes the world-view of his people and juxtaposes this with their belief in the afterlife. In establishing the theatre groups, 'The 1960 Masks' (1960) and 'Orisun Theatre Company' (1964), this artist-cum-activist used these avenues to touch his people's traditional base and be a conduit to effecting changes in their lives. Gregory Bossler, in the journal 'The Dramatists' (2000:9), affirms that Soyinka "received the Nobel Prize in Literature in part for his dedication to literature as agent of social change".

Death and the King's Horseman explores the relationship between the physical and metaphysical spheres of the Yoruba world-view through the eyes and life of Elesin, the King's Chief Horseman. Owing to his privileged and hereditary position, he is supposed to commit ritual suicide (a self sacrificial death) thirty days after the demise of the reigning king. He would, therefore, be able to accompany his erstwhile King on the journey to the world of the ancestors. With the accomplishment of this, the balance of the world would be maintained. According to Budianto and Wulander (2005:199),

... the failure to do so might result in a great disaster to the community as the dead King might put his curse upon his people.

From the beginning, Elesin portrays himself capable to measuring up to the communal expectations: he would willingly let himself die. He affirms this with the Not-I-Bird poetic analogy. The snag comes when his innate weakness is exposed. He confesses:

.... In all my life
As Horseman of the King, the juiciest
Fruit on every tree was mine. I saw,
I touched, I wooed, rarely was the answer No.
The honour of my place, the veneration I
Received in the eyes of man or woman
Prospered my suit and
Played havoc with my sleeping hours.
And they tell me my eyes were a hawk.
In perpetual hunger. Split an iroko tree
In two, hide a woman's beauty in the heartwood
And seal it up again. Elesin, journeying by,
Would make his camp beside that tree
Of all the shades in the forest (*Death*, 19)

According to him, his life is immersed in womanhood but he forgets to abide with the warnings of both Praise-Singer and Iyaloja: women as cloy to spiritual development. Apart from this, the Colonial Administration's representative, District Officer Simon Pilkings becomes another clog in Elesin's suicidal achievement. This culture clash, though a reality, is not totally the basis of the textual inherent problems as posited by the two characters:

Pilkings: I'm sorry, but we all see our duty differently
Elesin: I no longer blame you. You stole from me my first-born, sent him to your country so you could turn him into something in your own image. Did you plan it all beforehand? There are moments when it seems part of a larger plan. He who must follow my footsteps is taken from me, sent across the ocean. Then, in my turn, I am stopped from fulfilling my destiny. Did you think it all out before, this plan to

push our world from its course and sever the cord
that links us to the great origin? (*Death*, 62-63)

It is a matter of duty: one temporarily succeeding and the other tragically failing. In the limited success of Pilkings, the communal physical and spiritual world of the people is tilted off its course. His wisdom, limited and warped, is succinctly expressed by Iyaloja while talking to him: "To prevent one death you will actually make other deaths? Ah, great is the wisdom of the white race" (*Death*, 73). Elesin's failure is not only personal, it is also communal. He falls from the high and privileged pedestal the society had put him: he becomes a scavenger. His community becomes endangered and Iyaloja accuses him:

This is the man whose weakened understanding holds us in bondage He knows the meaning of a King's passage; he was not born yesterday. He knows the peril to the race when our dead father who goes as intermediary, waits and waits and knows he is betrayed. He knows when the narrow gate was opened and he knows it will not stay for laggards who drag their feet in dung and vomit, whose lips are reeking of the left-overs of lesser men. He knows he has condemned our King to wander in the void of evil with beings who are enemies of life (*Death*, 7)

This failure allows for the wrong re-alignment of the world where the son becomes the father so that the world's tilting would not be total and a palliative course could be taken:

Iyaloja: Whose trunk withers to give sap to the other? The parent shoot or the younger.

Elesin: The parent

Iyaloja: Ah. So you do know that. There are sights in this world which say different, Elesin. There are some who choose to reverse this cycle of our being (*Death*, 70)

Olunde (the son) takes on his father's (Elesin's) mantle of duty and dies to accompany the dead but waiting king in place of his father. In this wise, "His son will feast on the meat and throw him bones" (*Death*, 76).

Death and the King's Horseman affords Soyinka the opportunity of delving into the cultural history of his people in relation to their experiences under Britain's colonial rule. History and myths are inseparable. From historical events and happenings, just like Soyinka examines, mythical problems develop, are explored and solutions are proffered. According to Barthes (1993:124),

historical perspective is very important in deciphering myths since they are not natural but historical products. Myths that dress themselves in natural existence are determined by history. Myths stem from a historical concept.

Colonialism is seen in the context of a historical happening under which the people are able to re-examine and then re-establish their world-view though their cosmology was shaken and threatened. The colonial situation is only a stage through which Soyinka preaches and examines the various cultural and religious beliefs of the Yoruba people. Writing online, Joseph Wilson (1997:2) posits that the text

contextualizes colonialism as a matter of modern history and allows art and culture to go beyond and deeper into the innate human soul to find its sources of creation.

Soyinka resurrects the actuality of a British (colonial) - Yoruba incident which happened in 1946 in Old Oyo Empire, South West Nigeria. It took in a British colonial District Officer, Simon Pilkings, the Chief Horseman of the King, Elesin and Olunde, Elesin's educated son. It revolved round the communal encouraged and tradition enforced self sacrifice that Elesin was to commit on the thirtieth day after the demise of his king. Though willing to go through the process, Elesin failed. His son, therefore, died "to keep the world from tilting". The cyclical time and mythic world-view belief of the Yoruba people come into focus. This mythic world consists of four stages or

realms which co-exist simultaneously without defined boundaries. Each individual expects to go through all at one point or the other either in his physical or spiritual existence. Elesin, through his self-sacrificial suicide, is supposed to keep all these aligned. This cyclical interconnectivity of the Yoruba mythic cosmology revolves through the following realms: the Unborn, the Living, the Dead (the Ancestors), and the Void (the Abyss) (Awolalu 1979, Aboyade 1994, Gikandi 2003). This is attested to by Iyaloja while reprimanding Elesin for his monumental failure but assuaging the sorrow of the new bride:

Iyaloja: He knows that he has condemned our king to wander in the void of evil with beings who are enemies of life (*Death*, 71).

Iyaloja: Now forget the dead, forget even the living. Turn your mind only to the unborn (*Death*, 76).

The World or realm of the Living entails the physical environment where the day-to-day activities of living take place. Here, each individual, through his or her actions plans for the future in the other abodes. This place is usually referred to as 'Oja' (Market). This is Elesin's world, from where he prefers to die. In dying, just like his King, he would have stepped into the realm of the Void. According to Katrak (2009:5), this realm of the Abyss

is the place of ghosts, wandering spirits, strangers and terrible forces whose goals are to destroy the harmony of the Yoruba world. The Unborn must travel safely through this realm to arrive in the land of the Living.

It is the duty of hereditarily appointed individuals like Elesin to keep this very thin opening or road always open through sacrifices, personal and communal, with and through their dedicated and communally ordained life-force. The bridge Elesin is supposed to build would have allowed his King cross into the world of the Dead (or the Ancestors). His total failure would have resulted into a stagnant world culminating into the extinction of the race. From the realm of the Void or the Abyss, the dead, if

the way is opened, do not linger but go on to the world of the Dead or the Ancestors. Here, the dead becomes a protector of his people still in the world of the Living and he is always remembered through family sacrifices and festivals. This place is referred to as '*Ile*' (Home). The Yoruba pantheon lives here. The ancestors, who need or want to live again, take off from here back into the world of the Abyss or the Void and if successful in crossing it, go into the realm of the Unborn from where again, they join the world of the Living.

The death of Elesin, apart from its non-conformity with the British idea of dying on its suicidal basis, is to keep the world of the people intact and moving. In his death comes life for his people. According to Elesin, his sacrificial death is "that moment for which my whole life has been spent in blessings" (*Death*, 62). This process is stopped by Pilkings with his do-gooder and arrogant intrusion which stems from his lack of and refusal to accept and understand the tradition of the people he oversees. His action nearly derails the world of the people from its course. He is reprimanded by Iyaloja at the end:

Iyaloja: Why do you strain yourself? Why do you labour at tasks for which no one, not even the man lying there, would give you thanks? (*Death*, 76)

Iyaloja: No, child, it is what you brought to be, you who play with strangers' lives, who even usurp the vestments of our dead, yet believe that the stain of death will not cling to you. The gods demanded only the old expired plantain but you cut down the sap-laden shoot to feed your pride (*Death*, 76)

Elesin, "the man whose weakened understanding holds us in bondage" (*Death*, 71), also comes under knocks for his failure to uphold his sworn duty not only to his dead King and friend but to the community, dead and alive. At the beginning of the text, he confesses to his feminine-related weakness. When the issue of his taking a bride comes up he is warned of the spiritual and physical limitations and effects. When his failure occurs, he could find no genuine reason except to accept it as his own: his human

frailty resulting in his hesitation to step into the void. Ruminating with his new bride, he laments:

Elesin: First I blamed the white man, then I blamed my gods for deserting me. Now I feel I want to blame you for the mystery of the sapping of my will. But blame is a strange peace offering for a man to bring a world he has deeply wronged and to its innocent dwellers. Oh little mother, I have taken countless women in my life but you were more than a desire of the flesh. I needed you as the abyss across which my body must be drawn.... For I confess to you, daughter, my weakness came not merely from the abomination of the white man who came violently into my fading presence, there was also a weight of longing on my earth-held limbs (*Death*, 65)

This mythic exploration of the Yoruba world, in its grating against the British colonial principle and action, is Soyinka's way of espousing a belief that had kept the people as one for generations. The effect of the failure of this singular action could not have been felt immediately as Elesin himself points out to Pilkings:

Elesin: The night is not at peace ghostly one. The world is not at peace. You have shattered the peace of the world for ever. There is no sleep in the world tonight...

You did not save my life District Officer. You destroyed it.

And not merely my life but the lives of many. The end of the night's work is not over. Neither this year nor the next will see it. If I wished you well, I would pray that you do not stay long enough on our land to see the disaster you have brought upon us (*Death*, 62).

Soyinka, in this mythohistorical drama, shows that through writing and art a people's past experiences can be brought into focus for their future generations to learn from. Joseph Wilson (1997: 1) puts this succinctly:

The role of performative art is very important shaping and regenerating the culture and political identity of a people and a nation for Soyinka. Art connects the culture of a people with the cosmic and the archetypal primal sources of beginnings. Soyinka's belief in the interrelation between a culture's art and its cosmic history is manifested in his depiction of his Yoruban cosmology in his writings.

Brett Bradley, the South African playwright cum director and the author of *Ipi Zombi?* in Graver's drama anthology *Drama For A New South Africa* (1999: 201-219), was born in 1967. He has variously been described as "The whiz-kid of transformed drama" (Knox 1998), "South Africa's edgiest director" (Krouse 2003) and the "Bad boy of the [South Africa] theatre scene" (Rudakoff 2004). These nom de plumes are not farfetched considering the plays and dramaturgical innovations he has brought to bear on his post-apartheid South African dramatic works. His plays, which include *Orfeus*, *Zombie*, *iMumbo Jumbo*, *The Prophet* and the anthology *The Plays of Miracles and Wonder: Bewitching Visions and Primal Hi-Jinx from the South African Stage*, are replicated in the play *Ipi Zombi?*.

Ipi Zombi? explores the worldwide attitude to the myth of witchcraft and its precursory communal fear of the unknown. In appraising this thematic issue and other related ones through this award winning play, Larlham (2009:7) posits that Bailey has been

... variously charged with trespassing onto sacred cultural terrain and hailed as a trailblazing visionary forging the way toward a new South African theatre – a theatre capable of accommodating the complexities and collisions of belief, tradition, aspiration and imagination that characterize life in that country today.

Written as a faction (fact and fiction), the play dramatises the real events that lead to the death of twelve school boys from a bus accident and its attendant after-effects where some women were accused of witchcraft (and of having orchestrated the school boys' deaths). These witches were assumed to have turned the dead boys into zombies; unthinking, controllable and desouled human bodies kept in the wardrobes of the witches. All these occurred in 1995 in the Kwazulu-Natal town of Kokstad, South Africa.

The play, written to observe the South African psyche especially during the post-apartheid period, presupposes that the euphoria of the end of apartheid was waning and reality was dawning on the country. The time brought in poverty instead of plenty, xenophobia instead of unity and exclusion instead of compatibility and inclusion. The people, especially the blacks, were socially and psychically returning to the fear-filled and oppressive days of the apartheid period. It is a mythical ritual-drama which portrays a convoluted world where nothing is as it is and nothing can be taken for granted. Bailey depicts the inner thoughts of South Africans. According to Larlham (2009: 8-9),

Bailey's trademark devices and aesthetic elements include the following: site-specific stagings using semi-circular hay-bale seating; burning herbs and lighted torches that create an atmosphere of multisensory stimulation: song, dance and percussion overlaying and driving the play's action; actors whose faces and seminated bodies are often smeared with gray-white pigment (sparking associations with Xhosa initiates, European mimes and the stone visages of Eastern statuary) . . . invents ceremonies involving mysteriously symbolic objects and actions, sometimes with masks and iconic costume elements . . .; an often dreamlike stage reality emerges, populated by zombies, angels, devils, ancestors and spirits.

Bailey's mish-mash world succinctly represents the immediate post-apartheid South African environment. The euphoria of freedom existed only during the tenure of Nelson Mandela. The justification for this type of play stems from the political, social, religious and economic travails the country stepped into after Mandela's term. It was

in this world of imbalance that the blacks, who fought for their country's 'freedom' and with blacks in government, could not have a footing.

After fighting their oppressors, whites especially, the blacks turned on themselves and foreigners living amongst them. The palpable communal fear, which comes across in the play, is regarded in *Plays and Miracles* (2003: 85) as "the fear of the wilderness in the human psyche, in society". Bailey attempts to use the myth of witchcraft as an avenue to scrutinize what the period of wilderness meant to the people: of walking into freedom without being free, of being represented in government without being considered and served. The people saw themselves betrayed by their own and left to the vagaries of life. This 'wilderness' for Bailey, according to Larlham (2009:13),

represents those natural forces beyond human control and rational understanding as well as the primal energies of "the forest within", the secret depth of the unconscious.

This, in the physical life of the people, was realized through violence, intimidation, and discrimination (based on the fear of the unknown). They did not understand the undercurrent happenings; they struck at anything and everything within their range with all at their disposal. This is confirmed by Larlham (2009:7):

The shifting stylistic modes and thematic emphases of Bailey's productions over the past decade trace a trajectory of transformation for the South African psyche during the same period, from the exuberant optimism of the mid-1990s to the anxious disaffection of the new millennium.

The play examines an approach the people utilized to show their disaffection towards the lackadaisical development in their country: an inward attack on themselves. This was basically directed at the underprivileged, the poor, foreigners and generally people seen as not belonging or conforming to the new norm of opposing the new but floundering black controlled governments that came after

Nelson Mandela's. The people, unable to attack the government, found ways and means of making their betrayal felt.

Bailey examines the world and myth of witchcraft through various eyes: the accusers, the accused, the police, the religious leaders (traditional and modern) and others. He discovers that the belief in and fear of witchcraft permeates the society and can be triggered, just like in the play, by an innocuous statement of and rumour based on the words of an eleven year old girl. The play, just like in the real life event, accepts that twelve schoolboys died in a Kombi bus crash. The root of the trouble is based on two accusations: that the accident had been caused by fifty women-witches who were 'seen' at the scene; that the dead boys had been kept in the wardrobes of the witches as zombies (undead slaves). The colleagues of the dead boys, therefore, took the law into their own hands, tried the women in absentia and through jungle justices killed some.

Before taking an issue as delicate as this to the stage, Bailey undertook his own personal odyssey. The play, rife with rituals, songs, dance and traditional belief and mementos of the Xhosas, a black tribe in South Africa, is part of the outcome of Bailey's living with and undertaking lessons from Zipathe Dl'amini (a traditional Xhosa shaman healer and diviner). Bailey in *Plays and Miracles* (2003:16) records his experience:

Here, I learned the songs and dances and found the atmosphere and meaning that I put to use in *Zombie*, *iMumbo Jumbo* and *Ipi Zombi*?

The play reflects aspects of Xhosa spiritual life that he had learnt. For this, he has been criticized as playing with the spiritual and traditional life of the Xhosas and the blacks in general. As a white South African, he has also been condemned as anti-black in his thematic focus. His cast is always peopled by blacks and the themes are majorly black focused with emphasis on the innate thoughts and actions of blacks which degenerates into bestiality. In supporting his works, Bailey points out in *Plays and Miracles* (2003:79):

We are delving into the realm of African ritual in an endeavour to touch people profoundly, subliminally even, in drama.

Larlham (2009:13), in support of Bailey, expatiates in his article “Brett Bailey and Third World Bunfight: Journeys into the South African Psyche”:

The production offers an explosion of hysteria, taking its audience on a widely theatrical “journey into the South African psyche” by mixing pantomimic antics, Xhosa songs and dances, direct audience address, dialogue, driving percussion, stylized movement, musical theatre - style song and - dance numbers, izangoma ceremonies and trance-dancing.

The examination and utilization of the myth of witchcraft is not limited to Africa. According to Awolalu (1979:79-91), the presence of witches and the practice of witchcraft is universal. Its existence is not only in the present as it has existed in different civilizations and amongst different peoples: Europeans (Smyth 1973), the Azande, the Yoruba and the Nupe in Africa (Duerden 1975) and in the United States of America (Awolalu 1979). Witchcraft is said to be rooted in the word ‘wit’ (to know). Its practitioners are supposed to be wise in the derivation and application of their supernatural powers. It is the application that has been termed as negative. Therefore, witches are seen as evil. Awolalu (1979:84), in his examination of witches and witchcraft amongst the Yorubas (in Nigeria), posits:

... witchcraft is intangible; it is not anything that can be handled or touched. Witchcraft is projected from the mind - it is psychic.

This is the main reason the play could not establish the presence and action(s) of the witches. All the accusations and actions of Senti and his accusing gang are based on hear-says and instant jungle justice: there is no shred of evidence to back their position against the accused. The following dialogue portrays this:

Krotch: We need evidence, where's the evidence?
Boys: No need for evidence! No need for evidence!
Krotch: What about the law! What about the law?
Boys: We are the law! We are the law!
Senti: Comrades, let us kill these criminals without delay.
Fire: Viva the spirit of killing the witches – Viva! Viva!
(*Zombi?*, 215)

On the other hand, the playwright delves into the realm of personifying the Devil and the Zombies. The Zombies, exiting the cupboard are “a group of white-painted boys ... [who] gather to feed on MRS MAGUDU” (*Zombi?*, 217). Like Bailey, Awolalu (1979:82) agrees that the intangibility of the actions of witches cannot be in doubt but the physical effects of their actions are felt in the lives of their victims.

Bailey, in his neutrality and attempt at explaining the (non)presence of witchcraft through the lives, psyche and problems of South Africans, has not been too specific. He has, on the other hand, been successful in showing that the common people suffer where there are political, economic, social and religious problems. This is in consonance with the submission of Awolalu (1979:87) on witchcraft, its myth and its sociological implications:

Thus, witchcraft is brought in to explain misfortune. When anxieties and stresses arrive in social and domestic life, when things do not go according to plan, when there is barrenness or sterility, depression or misery, ghastly accident or premature death, failure in business, in academic or other pursuits, the Africans pick on witchcraft as the cause. In this way, things that otherwise would have been difficult to explain, easily find explanation.

3.2 Initiations and Symbolisms

All over the world, Africa inclusive, the process of becoming a man, of being purified, of being accepted into an exclusive group involves initiation and its processes. This procedure comes with its specific but varied symbolic activities. It is not limited to the religious life as it permeates all aspects of an individual's developmental life within a society. According to Eliade (1965: x), initiation

denotes a body of rites and oral teachings whose purpose is to produce a decisive alteration in the religious and social status of the person to be initiated.

In *The Marriage of Anansewa*, there are various levels and initiation types, and initiatory processes encapsulated in and by their symbolic significations and importance. Eliade (1965) asserts that there are three types of initiation process: the collective rituals (age-group, tribal initiations and transitory initiations from adolescence to adulthood) which are obligatory; the entrance into secret societies, cults or confraternities which is not obligatory; the vocation of the religious (which trains the religious and the clergy). This last one is individualistic with its intense and personalized experiences.

The marriage ritual and process that Anansewa embarks upon cut across the pre-marriage, the marriage and the post-marriage periods. Her initiation into this world starts with the Outdooing ceremony for, according to Ekuwa, “If this grandchild of yours is going to marry a chief, then it is our duty to prepare her in every way we can for the position she will be occupying in a palace” (*The Marriage*, 35). This initiation process not only announces her as ripe and ready for marriage, it also cleanses and purifies her for that significant phase and status change in her life. During the ceremony, the following ensues:

Aya: At the very crack of dawn, we cleansed you. We clipped your nails, we shaved you. With new sponge and new soap, and with life-giving water, we bathed you We squeezed lime on your head to season you, so that when life's hardships approach, you will be capable of standing firm to field them ... in your name, we have sprinkled sacred palm-oiled yam. We have touched your lips with an egg to invite blessings for you, and we have adorned you with gold to honour you This day, I am declaring to the public, that what we know to be beautiful, we have done for this child of ours.

Ekuwa: Man, give me my child's brass bowl Sir, give me the *nyanya* please Give me the egg for my child's soul. Anansewa, look, here is your soul's egg. I place it before you. May it attract good fortune for you. (*The Marriage*, 38-40)

This rite cleanses the participant physically and spiritually preparing her for the loving but problematic and engaging life of womanhood. The physical entails clipping of nails, shaving and bathing. Cleanliness, held in high esteem, is promoted in all facets of African life. In the spiritual, the use of the egg becomes representative of the participant's spiritual embodiment – the soul. The ability to bear the problems of marriage life is acquired as “we squeezed lime on your head to season you” (*The Marriage*, 39). Water and the *nyanya* leaves are the cleansing agents: water is the purifier while the *nyanya* “is a vine used in ritual ceremonies, believed to have the power to purge and avert evil forces and to purify” (*The Marriage*, 39). Symbolically, the participant, through this initiatory process becomes ‘a new person’ prepared for married life. The gold she is adorned with symbolizes her uniqueness and the treasure she would be for the husband when she marries. These rituals are carried out “at the very crack of dawn” (*The Marriage*, 38) signifying a new life for Anansewa and other girls who might ever pass through this type of initiatory process.

There is also the head-drink. This is a show of intent of interest in, and to an extent, marriage on the part of the prospective groom and his family. It is symbolized by the fracas between Akosua and Akwasi (*The Marriage*, 17-19). Accordingly, this is

an important token by which the marriage is legally established; symbolized by a token sum of money and some drinks, and handed over formally on behalf of the prospective husband to members of the family of the prospective wife. (*The Marriage*, 18)

Ananse misuses this initiatory part of the marriage ceremony. He also misapplies the customary loopholes existing in the tradition. He takes money and gifts from all four suitors (*The Marriage*, 13, 23, 30). He calls it “oiling the wheel of custom” while Storyteller gives the audience another angle to the issue:

It's very clear that he knows the customs more than well It would be amazing if there was any among those four chiefs who didn't know that a man who desires to marry somebody's daughter *can* improve his chances by paying his way with gifts. Ananse has selected men who will do exactly as he hopes and do it properly too If negotiations have only reached this stage, is there any law binding him to give his daughter in marriage to any of those four chiefs? (*The Marriage*, 16)

Ananse plans a make-believe death situation for his daughter in order to be extricated from the customary guilt, as well as to test the suitors' love for her. According to Storyteller, "The point about head-drink is / that it's paid for the living" (*The Marriage*, 63). All the chiefs are, therefore, advised not to come for the marriage ceremony "Because the object of your interest / Did not survive for you" (*The Marriage*, 63).

Ananse and Anansewa engage death as avenues of transition from one level of understanding to the next and from the flesh to the spirit and back. This confirms Eliade's (1965:9-10) position: "he who makes the passage dies to one life in order to gain access to another". There is a great use of death initiatory motifs during the funeral for the "dead-and-alive". When Anansewa is taken through the death stage, it is meant to test her suitors and find the best and the most loving. She also becomes eligible for illumination through this death ordeal. The right suitor-lover is found:

Ananse: Ancestors, I am pleading with you, /
If it is your desire
As it is ours / That Chief-who-is-Chief
Should marry Anansewa, /
See to it that she returns to life! . . .
Love is calling you, return / Wake, oh wake!
Chief-Who-Is-Chief loves you true . . .

Oh, she is waking Does love have such power? Christie, open the door, and let everybody in to see the power of amazing love ... There is my child, awakened for me by love. How strong love is. Love has awakened my child.

(The Marriage, 79-80)

Transitory rituals and initiatory celebrations are neither always final nor totally spiritual in orientation. In *The Marriage of Anansewa*, Ananse starts as a poor man and uses what he has to seek for a better life. When he comes into money (from all the suitors through the customary headdress), he goes to the church to celebrate as one of “the big spenders” (*The Marriage, 24*). He transits from a life of poverty to that of wealth. It represents a new dawn after the gloomy experience of poverty. The mime and the *Mboguo* of the church collection reveal this (*The Marriage, 25*). He becomes accepted “to deposit with the best of the spenders” (*The Marriage, 24*) in the church in front of “the biggest crowd” (*The Marriage, 24*) that could be found after “notices of all memorial services” (*The Marriage, 24*) had been screened from “every kind of newspaper on the market” (*The Marriage, 24*).

In the Akan mythological narratives, Ananse is reputed to be a spider that spins webs of intrigues round others and inadvertently itself. To actualize this, Sutherland uses a web screen symbolizing, at least for stage purposes, Ananse’s mystic link to the spider. Again, it represents his hibernative characterology. Whenever Ananse goes behind the screen, he either reflects on his present situation and thinks of escape routes or seeks for better emotional and psychological balance. Needing to retreat (while suffering from “over thinking” resulting in a headache), he goes behind the web (*The Marriage, 34*). In another instance, he is reported as “hiding” (*The Marriage, 44*) and drawing Anansewa behind it to convince her of the need for her to ‘die’. The web thus becomes an avenue for the unification of their thoughts.

Ananse becomes an observer in the development of his intrigues and plots with the utilization of the web screen. After lying to Aya and Ekuwa that the family’s cocoa farm in the village had been set on fire, he withdraws behind the screen watching them decide to return home. He wants them to leave so that he could process the ‘death’ of Anansewa. In each scene of lying, Ananse goes through initiatory progression from gestation to birth: from the time of lying, intrigue set-up and to the time of its fruition.

Mythical time-frame is utilized at different levels in the text. Storyteller, who relates the story, tells the audience that he “was present when all this happened” (*The*

Marriage, 15) referring to the total textual events. The idea is that the story is within one lifetime. He even has the audacity of asking the audience: “You were here, weren’t you, when Ananse started drilling his daughter, Anansewa, in pretending dead?” (*The Marriage*, 60). The collapsibility of mythic time is brought to the fore when Storyteller opines: “And so, since *Anansegoro* doesn’t take long to grow, time having passed, let me remind you that this is the day set by one of the four chiefs ...” (*The Marriage*, 60). This confirms Okpewho’s (1983:105) statement:

It is therefore important to establish that when the narrator counterbalances the “pastness” of his tale by giving it a contemporary stamp, he is not merely dragging it from one extreme to the other but seeking a balance which frees the tale from any kind of commitment to determinable time....

It will not always be easy to determine what is past and what is present to the narrator, because in the scheme of experiences that he narrates, there are no rigid time boundaries.

To achieve this mythical timelessness, the hero must undertake mythical sojourn(s) in any or all of the following realms – physical, social or spiritual. One of the earliest journeys made by Ananse is contacting and convincing the four royal suitors to marry his photographed daughter. He is able, singly, to cover the country. Hyperbolically, he confesses:

I covered miles. I traveled the country by bus, by train, by ferry-boat. I lobbied for introductions into palace after palace. I listened with ears alert. I observed with keen eyes. I assessed everything before I selected the four chiefs to which I could show your photographs with advantage.

Anansewa: But why on earth four?

Ananse: Oh, let’s say that covers North, South, East and West. (*The Marriage*, 11)

Whenever Ananse feels weak or in need of rejuvenation (psychologically or emotionally), he withdraws behind the web-screen to hibernate. In this, his ability of

self-examination, introspection and analysis is depicted. These internal mythic sojourns to find the power to go on also provide solutions to his predicaments (*The Marriage*, 32, 44, 54-55). Aya and Ekuwa are made to travel back to Nanka, “our home town” on a wild goose chase of enemies who, according to the falsity of Ananse, burnt the family’s cocoa-farm. This journey in time, into the past, is to right a wrong which is assumed to have happened. In the mythic allusion to Odum and Abena (*The Marriage*, 21), the playwright takes the audience into a time past. This mythical remembrance symbolizes laziness and unpreparedness for married life.

According to the Introductory Essay in J.P. Clark’s *Ozidi Saga* (1977), each character in a work of art usually employs motions and gestures that express, for the audience, definite moods, emotion and messages. These cumulate into the totality of motions, gestures, facial and bodily expressions in the successful production of a play. The characters become symbolic not only for the playwright who invented them but also for the watching and discerning audience. In the text, there are, at least, two basic types of characters: the narrative and the dramatic. Within the narrative mode, Storyteller, who is the narrator, is helped by Property Man and Players. On the other hand are the dramatic characters who participate in the main drama: Ananse, Anansewa, Ekuwa, Aya and others. Most of these characters are sociologically and psychologically symbolic. Ananse, the main mythic character, is a cunning planner who uses what he has to get what he wants. Mythically, he is a spider spinning webs of deceit and lies. He webs and unwebs himself and others. In self-assessment, he says, “As I’m standing here in my *colo* trousers, I’m not a man to be sneered at. I circulate. I’m capable of going and coming” (*The Marriage*, 14). This is a warning that he should not be underestimated in his simplicity. Commending Ananse’s craftiness and cunningness, Storyteller opines:

it is possible for Ananse to profit from the gifts his daughter’s suitors bring, and not be bound by any obligation at all.

What craftiness. Also, he has been careful to explain what his daughter, Anansewa, stands to gain from his

design, but nobody has heard him making any direct hints about what he personally will gain. (*The Marriage*, 19)

There is the pliable daughter, Anansewa, who wants the best for herself and whatever else the father wants. They think and act alike. For some time, they become one enmeshing into the web and coming into a filial agreement (*The Marriage*, 49). She is obedient, discreet and becomes a little spider too, standing “right behind the webscreen” (*The Marriage*, 49):

Anansewa: Tell me quickly what it is that I must do ... I'm ready
Ananse: Are you whole heartedly, or only half heartedly ready?
Anansewa: From head to toe, I'm ready. (*The Marriage*, 49)

In the symbolic issue of the traditional head-drink, Akosua and Akwasi represent lovers who give and receive gifts but are not officially committed. Through them, it becomes plain that Ananse and Anansewa, though receive gifts from the four suitors, are not traditionally beholden to them. Akosua lambasts Akwasi: “They know I'm not your wife until after you have come to their home and placed the customary headdress on their table” (“They” here refers to Akosua's parents) (*The Marriage*, 18).

Aya and Ekua are useable and disposable. They belong to the ‘old school and thoughts’ that cannot fit into Ananse's dangerous but revolutionary plan. He uses them to achieve an end and dumps them when he feels they would become obstacles.

The above points to one fact: myth is reality. According to Ngumoha (1998:66):

The unscientific languages of ancient civilizations were their mythologies, and all the ‘facts’ were framed in anthropomorphic forms Only the student of symbolism can see through the subterfuge.

Sutherland is a student of folklore and mythology and agrees with Ngumoha by using symbolism to portray the issues discussed above and others played out in the text.

In another time-frame the events in the text, *Kinjeketile* by Ebrahim N. Hussein, encompass the period of the Maji Maji Insurrection. According to Okeama in his article, “Maji Maji: Yesterday’s criminals, Today’s heroes” (2005:1):

On February 27, Tanzanians marked the 100th anniversary of the Maji Maji uprising. It was on February 27, 1906 that the German colonial authorities executed the leaders of the uprising. The Tanzanian people launched the resistance against German rule in 1905.

To become mythic and have mythic powers infused in him, Kinjeketile spends about twenty-four hours under water with the spirit, Hongo. During this period, it is assumed that he undergoes self initiation into the world of the spirits and ancestors. To keep this contact intact, Kinjeketile visits the river at specific times according to Kitunda (*Kinjeketile*, 20). Apart from this mythic sojourn, Kinjeketile is possessed through a trance by Hongo. His journey into the spiritual world (*Kinjeketile*, 12) starts the Maji Maji Insurrection. The process of the trance shows him being dragged, physically and spiritually, towards the river and, surreptitiously, to the world of the spirits where he is briefed. His initiation is through the medium of the river:

. . . he emerges in a trance. He picks up a rhythm and the walk becomes a dance He breaks into a dance ... is now tense and stiff like a wood carving ... he bends into a crouching position His wrists intercross - as if tied together. The arms jerk up and down but the hands remain in the same position. He falls face downwards, hands over his head. He writhes agonizingly towards the river, his arms forward.

. . . and he is “pulled” to the river. (Kinjeketile, 12)

He confesses that he was with the ancestors: “Hear from me who comes from Bokelo, the land of our ancestors, the message from our forefathers, ‘Destroy the Red Earth!’ (*Kinjeketile*, 16). His initiation symbolizes his acceptance by the ancestors as their messenger.

Four young men also participate in the mythic sojourn in their own rights as members of the *nywiywila* (“whispering campaign”). They become war campaigners taking up the “noble task of spreading the news” (*Kinjeketile*, 17). They are enjoined to “Go like the wind and spread the news / to the south, north, west and east” (*Kinjeketile*, 17) representing their complete worldly horizon. They also undergo rites to spiritually fortify them. This is carried out by the seer and prophet, *Kinjeketile*, who takes

... some maize flour from his bag, mixes it with the water and gives it to the young men. One by one they kneel before him as he offers each a nibble of the mixture, and blesses them. He applies on each man's head some of the mixture and blesses them with the whisk. (Kinjeketile, 17)

The maize flour, one of the major staple foods of the people, represents the wholeness of the nation while the water from the ancestors represents their affirmativeness in the issue. Applying the mixture to their foreheads and using the whisk given him by the ancestors, *Kinjeketile* passes on protection, guidance and blessings on to the four men from the ancestors and the spirits.

The entire fighting personnel undergo its own group and individual initiations into the world of “ancestors’ protection, conviction and blessings”. This materializes through their contact with the ancestor’s water in “a small pot” (*Kinjeketile*, 15). According to *Kinjeketile*,

*This is the water given us / This is the water of life
He who partakes of this water / No harm will befall him
No bullet will penetrate his body ... / All this is possible
because of the power of the water. / Maji! (Kinjeketile, 16-17)*

The men drink from the water which is also sprinkled on their heads (*Kinjeketile*, 19). They are made to believe in their invincibility. The water serves as a nullifier, disrobing them of tribal limitations that had debarred their joint struggle against the Germans. Now,

We will unite and we will be one body.
And as it is in a human body / When a toe gets hurt,
the whole body feels the pain. /When a Mmatumbi gets whipped,
it is the Mzaramo who will feel the pain. (*Kinjeketile*, 16)

The characters are mythically symbolic, psychologically engaging, sociologically resolute and relevant not only for the past but for all time. They are not ordinary individuals as they represent and symbolize the various aspects and shades of the struggles of the people.

The two women, Bibi Kitunda and Bibi Kinjeketile, are epitomes of feminism. While the men are concerned about social and political changes, they take care of the home: fending and caring for the children and their husbands. Their love and thoughts for their families come across quite explicitly. Through them, problems of the homes are portrayed: lack of food, children dying, onset of famine, absence of the men from home and its effects. With all these limitations, they still scrounge to take care of their homes. Both women are also affected by the struggle, as their husbands are front-liners of the struggle: Kitunda is the army general while Kinjeketile is the spiritual leader. They are pillars of support in all situations for their husbands: they do what they ought to do and let be what they do not understand. Talking about her husband, Bibi Kinjeketile says: “I don’t go peering into his affairs too closely” (*Kinjeketile*, 2).

Representing the younger generation, Ngulumbalyo’s decisions and behaviour are rash and careless. He is extremely impatient; unmindful of the after effects of his actions. He and Kibasila are the major cause of the loss of the war. He either forgets the war strategy or decides to forgo it. He leads his men, without any cover, into hails of bullets chanting: “Maji! Maji! Maji!” (*Kinjeketile*, 49).

Kitunda is a metamorphosis of a suffering and oppressed personality who becomes a war leader. He is portrayed as peaceful, truthful, detribalized and concerned about the people. Though made the leader based on the belief in the water, he has his personal doubts. He never based his war strategy on the water therapy. He relies on unity and planning. He defers the war until the equipment and warriors are made ready. In the deciding battle, Ngulumbalyo and Kibasila scuttle his good plans. Though he feels and knows the inadequacies of Kinjeketile, he never betrays him. He

stands by the seer transporting the war from the spiritual to the physical. The loss of the war is unattributable to him but to the warriors' very misplaced belief in the water and the poor implementation of the war strategy.

Kinjeketile, the main character, is the seer and prophet standing in the spiritual gap between the people, the ancestors and the spirits. After his river initiation, he is reputed to have extra-ordinary powers. He becomes an epitome of the psycho-spiritual and physical struggle of the people. Personally, he gets to the level of doubting the message he terms "a dream". His conviction later switches from the power of the spirits and the ancestors to the unity of the people. Refuting the power of the water, he postulates:

we will be strong; but not by being strengthened by some dubious aid from the outside. We will be strong because this strength comes from us – our own strength. With this we will fight and we will win. (*Kinjeketile*, 29)

In him, the physical and spiritual are embodied. He paints for the audience and his people what the future holds: a limited reliance on the spirit but more on their own power and efforts in escaping subjugation, suppression and oppression (from any source: either Seyyid Said or the Germans).

Symbols are characteristic of the archetype (Ngumoha 1988). The text utilizes many symbols to portray the universal picture of its message. The smoke (*Kinjeketile*, 1-4), which emanates from Kinjeketile's house, represents the worship and propitiation of the spirits. On the other hand, "plantation" (*Kinjeketile*, 1, 3, 4) symbolizes the tool and medium of oppression of the people by the Germans. As an extension, 'plantation' on the psyche of Blacks was an oppressive place and avenue used in enslaving those exported from Africa during the slave trade era. The Mmatumbi become workers on the plantations set up by the Germans: without payments, suffering various types of inhuman degradations. The Germans are referred to as "Red Earth". The 'earth' is a universal icon; from where all humans are assumed to emanate; the mother of all. 'Red' in the African cosmogony represents danger. The Germans are seen as humans but dangerous ones not only to themselves but also to all

other humans. The use of the drum situates the text in the African world. It is a means of communication between places as used by Kitunda and exemplified when the message of the disappearance of Kinjeketile is sent from one village to another:

Kitunda goes to his house, brings out a drum, and beats it loudly. He stops to listen. He sounds it again. He stops, listens. From a distance another drum is heard in answer. Kitunda stops drumming but the other drum continues.
(*Kinjeketile*, 13)

Kinjeketile returns from the river with two metaphysical gifts from the spirits: flywhisk and water. The flywhisk denotes the spiritual connection between the seer and the spirits. It also serves as an impartation of spiritual blessings on the people. The water unifies the various tribes and is assumed to be able to make the warriors invincible to the German guns. Though it fails as an invincibility agent, it succeeds in unifying the people. Nazareth succinctly expresses this in his article, "East African Drama" (1978:109):

Actually, Kinjeketile knows that the water as such does not have protective powers; he knows that the people are all-powerful once they are united and so, he is using the water to unite them. However, the people believe that the water will really protect them from German bullets.

The insurrection gets its name from the water, 'maji'. According to Okeama (2005: 3), the uprising "got the name Maji, Maji from Kinjeketile's 'magic' water." The people's belief in it is total: it unifies them but contributes, inadvertently, to their defeat.

From another point of view, Fugard in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* proves that initiations come in different forms. They are not only religious, cultural or social but encompass the whole gamut or facets of the lives of the concerned. In *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, initiation is a focal point that is subtly exposed but well utilized. It rivets the lives of the blacks well within the apartheid system of South Africa.

A major initiatory avenue is through the economic life of the South African minorities. They are pauperized neither because of their educational levels nor social

standings but due to their skin colour. Getting good jobs is a herculean task. The only ones available are of the *hoi polloi* type: those that ‘keep them in their places’. Styles must keep his job for thirty years to be compensated with a gold wristwatch: Outa Jacob must move from one farm to the other begging for farm hand jobs until he died: Sizwe must break government rules to be employed. Getting these degrading jobs and being made servile through them has debilitating effects on their socio-psychological make-up. They go into these jobs with the understanding that their whole being would be suppressed. This initiatory rite is rooted in the belief that their silence and identity loss will one day gain them their freedom. According to Brink (1993: 8), it appears to the suppressed Blacks that “The only way the System can be beaten, it would seem, lies in a denial of identity, in playing the game, in remaining fully within closure”.

Along this line, Styles paints a picture and process of initiation into the world of economic oppression and subjugation through his exploratory examination of happenings at the Ford Motors. The men, consciously and freely, accept the type of life they are dumped into: that of servitude, double-talk and double-life. Through this process, they become men, at least, who could financially take care of their homes. This, in the long run, Styles rescinds:

Come on, Styles, you’re a monkey, man, and you know it.
Run up and down the whole bloody day! Your life doesn’t
belong to you. You’ve sold it. For what, Styles? Gold
wrist-watch ...

I was right. I took a good look at my life. What did I see? A
bloody circus monkey! Selling most of his time on this
earth to another man ... (*Sizwe Bansi*, 9)

He sees his personal light of freedom and un-initiates himself from the main systemic line. He, therefore, sets up a new life for himself: a self-initiation into a world of dreams, dream capture and dream utilization. To achieve this, his initiatory process takes him through the absurd war journey against the cockroaches with the help of the insecticide, Doom, and the cat, Blackie. His movement into the absurd world of “capturing dreams” and turning them into “moving movies of dreams” demand an

initiation of absurdity. He attacks the cockroaches with the right instrument of the insecticide, Doom, but fails. The cockroaches even went for a meeting to take inoculation against the insecticide! It is not until he brings in a cockroach-eating cat that the battle is won!

Getting the photographic shop open demands a movement into a world of self-adjustment, self-worth and self-confidence. To move forward, Styles unburdens himself of his family (as a cargo). His parents and wife see no sense in his new exploit. They would prefer him stuck to the bondage world:

‘You call that work? Click-click with a camera. Are you mad?’ I tried to explain. ‘Daddy, if I could stand on my own two feet and not be somebody else’s tool, I’d have some respect for myself. I’d be a man.’ ‘What do you mean? Aren’t you one already? You’re circumcised, you’ve got a wife’ Talk about the generation gap!
(*Sizwe Bansi*, 10)

Styles breaks free, initiating himself into the world of turning dreams - moving, still pictures and movies - into instant but temporary realities for the deprived blacks. With this, the individual’s or group’s psycho-social and economic world becomes enlivened and broadened. This happens to Man (Sizwe) and the character that come for a family card with twenty-seven members of his family. In reporting this change after the family patriarch dies, Styles says:

I was watching him carefully something started to happen as he saw his father there with himself, his brothers and sisters, and all the little grandchildren. He began to smile ...

Man (Sizwe) takes and becomes a ‘movie’ and ‘walks’ into a new world. Here, he walks towards but stops “right in front of the city of the future” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 21). This is a socio-economic movement from the world of Apartheid and depravity to one of opportunities, happiness and freedom where:

Your wife opens the letter and what does she see? Her Robert, walking home to her! She shows it to the children. 'Look children, your daddy is coming!' The children jump and clap their hands: 'Daddy is coming! Daddy is coming'.
(*Sizwe Bansi*, 21)

In the African world, death is not a finality but the opening of a door into a world of continuity. It has its own initiatory processes, symbolisms and traditions (Duerden 1975, Awolalu 1979, Ibitokun 1995). Sizwe undergoes this process, albeit physically, before becoming an acceptable new member of the Apartheid system. His 'death' and subsequent loss of personal identity gives life to Robert. Through Robert's own real death, Sizwe comes alive. The situation agrees with the African ideology of life in death and death in life. For Sizwe, Buntu becomes the Chief-Priest who initiates him through the inculcation, memorization and the opening of a new account with the Sales House (utilizing the dead Robert's Native Identity Number and personal information). He is taken through the process of salary payment and its acceptance. This initiation and its acceptance cover the psycho-spiritual, socio-economic, political and civil life of Sizwe. For Buntu, the pride and the price of holding on to a name is not worth it:

Robert, John, Athol, Winston Shit on names, man! To hell with them if in exchange you can get a piece of bread for your stomach and a blanket in winter. Understand me, brother, I'm not saying that pride isn't a way for us. What I'm saying is shit on our pride if we only bluff ourselves that we are men. (*Sizwe Bansi*, 43)

In relation to the death process, it is hard to put a time-frame to the actions in the text. Time becomes a continuum toyed with by Fugard. Time utilization range from Styles' six years at Ford Motors, to the two months of seeking permission to use the photographic shop and the total stoppage and capture of time itself on the "still and moving pictures or movies" of Sizwe and the Family Card. Time becomes mythical while characters suspended in it play out their parts, imposing their characteristics (Bakhtin 1930). Styles describes the Grandfather, an example of a life gone-by, as an epitome of timelessness:

His grey hair was a sign of wisdom. His face, weather-beaten and lined with experience. Looking at it was like paging the volume of his history, written by himself. He was a living symbol of life, of all it means and does to a man. I adored him. (*Sizwe Bansi*, 15)

In the picture he takes, time becomes stationary and only moves when he dies. Sizwe is also caught in time until he accepts to become Robert. He could then smile on the photographic instruction of Styles (*Sizwe Bansi*, 44). He steps on to the Time Line a confused and lost man representing the common black man. He gets off refreshed, reborn, refocused and re-orientated. Duerden (1975:49) succinctly captures the effect of these character changes, in relation to time, when he states:

Time is not a continuous circle from one year to the next Instead it is a multitude of scattered points acting as centres from each of which time and space have a different organization, each one an alternative isochronism. Energetic activity by individuals' ancestral souls can change the organization at any of these centres, but individuals in other centres try to compose a pattern on outlying centres, very much in the same way that the sun tries to impose a pattern on the earth, withdrawing the shade of night without consulting man.

Within this suspended mythical world of time, space, matter and energy, these characters, through their actions, embark on different types and levels of mythic sojourns and journeys: physical, metaphysical, spiritual, socio-economic and even political.

At the first meeting with the audience, Styles takes himself through a self and socio-psychoanalytic examination. He not only finds himself wanting, he condemns his divisive and oppressive society. With his humorous side that must have kept him balanced, he takes the audience through the labyrinth of Apartheid. This internal monologue is the introspection that provides a solution to his situation. His decision to become a photographer is not self-flagellation: his aim is to help other depressed and repressed black men rocket to their utopia. This would be through a momentarily but

sometimes captured-action-in-time. Both parties are encouraged to see and to assume going on a mythical sojourn into a world of achievement and bondage breaking. Styles epitomizes this in two instances: Man (Sizwe)'s photo is referred to as "A Dream" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 17), while Sizwe becomes convinced through the movie that he is "Mr. Robert Zwelinzima, man about town, future head of Feltex, walking through the city of the future" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 21). This mythic 'dream' and sojourn of reality into a utopian world is achieved through the medium of Styles' camera. The characters are catapulted from the physical into their world of achievement or would-be-achievement:

This is a strong-room of dreams. The dreamers? My people. The simple people who you never find mentioned in the history books who never get statues erected to them or monuments commemorating their great deeds. People who would be forgotten and their dreams with them, if it wasn't for Styles. Put down, in my way, on paper the dreams and hopes of my people. (*Sizwe Bansi* 13)

In this mythical journey towards freedom, Buntu and Sizwe go to Sky's place. Returning, they head into a myriad of confusing roads finding themselves in a mythical world of options (of either freedom or continuous slavery). It is a journey into the world of the dead: the dead Robert Zwelinzima, the soon-to-be-dead Sizwe Bansi and the soon-to-be-resurrected Robert through Sizwe. This journey, fraught with its attendant problems, gives Sizwe a new lease of life just like any mythical sojourn into the world of the dead would (Ulysses in *The Odyssey of Homer* (1937), Anansewa in *The Marriage of Anansewa* (1975)).

What appears presented in the text is the juxtaposition of the omnipresence of death and apartheid as one. Freedom is achieved when there is movement from the worlds of apartheid and death to that of rebirth, resurrection and renewal. Styles' photographic studio is sited beside a funeral parlour. People confuse one for the other. According to Styles,

I get two types of knock here. When I hear ... (knocks solemnly on the table) ... I don't even look up, man. 'Funeral parlour is next door!' But when I hear ... (energetic rap on the table ... he laughs) ... that's *my* sound, and I shout, 'Come in!' (*Sizwe Bansi*, 13)

Two rooms or shops, one of dreams (life) and the other of burial (death), stand cheek by jowl as symbolic options within the apartheid world. Each character must take a mythic journey into one, out of choice. Outa Jacob goes the funeral parlour way where "No matter how hard-arsed the boer on this farm wants to be, he cannot move Outa Jacob. He has reached home" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 28). Robert Zwelinzima goes this way also but is given a second chance through Sizwe Bansi and the photo he (Sizwe) takes at Styles' photographic studio. Even the non-human characters like the Cockroaches find their way via the funeral parlour. Without their extermination, Styles could not have walked the road of dreams, freedom and life. Brink (1993: 6) opines:

the past itself is identified with death, and the theatrical act with (re)incarnation - which affirms the present as life and opens the possibility of a future.

At the hands of Fugard, nearly all the characters are symbolic of not only the apartheid environment but also of all places and situations where oppression reigns. The major character of the text, Styles, is not only a psycho-sociological commentator, he also becomes a medium of socio-political and policy changes. Through him, as a mythic character, others are able to achieve their freedom. As a freedom seed-planter, he shows himself a political satirist by subtly mocking the apartheid government and its policies with his analytical criticisms and effective actions. Through his experience and comments, the limitations and unpalatable life lived by the minority are represented but condemned.

Through 'Baas' Bradley, Styles gives an authentic picture of what Apartheid is: the economic deprivation, slavery, misuse and overuse that the blacks are subjected to. He derives momentary pleasure from the reversal of roles when he becomes Bradley's interpreter. Bradley represents the uncaring, unloving and economic-sapping attitude

of the whites and Apartheid. Here, the black workers become the 'slaves' of Apartheid; to be used as wanted by the system. They are deprived of their own language(s) but must speak that of their oppressors!

Some of those who suffer this situation include Style's father, the Man with the certificate, Robert and Outa Jacob. Style's father, used by the system to fight for world freedom, is denied his own on returning to South Africa. He is dumped and left to fend for himself. He dies lonely, unappreciated and still under the Apartheid locks and keys. The Man with the certificate gets his "Standard Six Certificate, School Leaving, Third Class" at the age of forty-eight after spending seven years learning. He could then hope to become a boss-boy after working for twenty-two years! Like the Certificate Man, Outa Jacob is denied his freedom until he dies. Blacks, through him, are portrayed as suppressed throughout their lifetimes as "The only time we'll find peace is when they dig a hole for us and press our face into the earth" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 28). According to Buntu, blacks have no resting place or time until they die and reach "Home" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 28) like Outa Jacob. 'Home' here symbolizes the finality of death, the only place of rest for the blacks after their lives' sufferings. This connotes a philosophical-religious bias of the "suffer here, enjoy in heaven" mentality. Overtime, white imperialists, through their religious missionaries, have preached this to conquered and colonized people all over the world. Robert, like Outa Jacob, is grounded to nothing by the System. The major difference is that from the ashes of Robert, Sizwe rises: giving hope for the future, "a dream". Wanting out of this subjugation, Man seeks for freedom through the photographic session with Styles. In him, the procedures of death, life and death (again) of Robert, Sizwe and Robert (Sizwe) are portrayed. He represents blacks who will achieve freedom through a process of change in their inner and outer lives (encompassing the various facets of their beings). One of the few who lives at par and with understanding of the system is Buntu. He is a realistic survivor, a pathfinder and helper who changes Sizwe's world-view and socio-economic status. Like Styles who helps blacks capture and live their dreams, Buntu brings them alive psychologically and socio-economically. He did this to Sizwe convincing him that he is better a living-ghost than a dead-ghost.

For Fugard, the text and its realizable outlet, the stage, are subtle preaching pulpits against apartheid. His sermonic symbols are not limited to the characters as they extend to the different symbolic icons stylistically employed in the text. The African men (young and old) are 'boys' to the whites (young and old) who are 'baas' ('sirs') to the former. The Ford Motor plant, where they work, becomes a microcosm of the apartheid world. The gold wristwatch is an enslaving life cuff that binds the blacks to a life of drudgery and enslavement. It is an enticement that keeps a person enslaved thinking of the 'economic freedom' that might come after twenty-five years of hard slavish labour. In the plant also, the blacks are requested to sing "The joyous songs of the days of old before we had fools like this one next to me to worry about" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 7). The songs are such that would keep their emotions and feelings under cover, as "you must see to it that you are wearing a mask of smile. Hide your true feelings, brothers" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 7). To live successfully in a world of slavery, a 'slave' must appear always happy to his master!

Styles has his mythical war against the cockroaches with the aid of the insecticide, Doom, and the cat, Blackie. The cockroaches are the white minorities who are the entrenched rulers and policy-makers within the system. The Doom style is the old way of fighting which is no longer effective as the cockroaches, nay the whites, have developed a defensive mechanism of 'inoculation' against it. The Cat's way is new, innovative and effective. It is the 'insect-eater' (*Sizwe Bansi*, 12), - the apartheid system killer. It portrays the future manner of warfare against apartheid. With this metaphorical explanation, one stands to disagree with Brink's (1993: 4) tortuous and inappropriate symbolic reading. According to him:

Clearly in this scene the cockroaches become a metaphor for the black masses infesting the whites capitalist's 'condemned' premises. This becomes most evident in the failure of the attempt to 'doom' the 'pests'. But for the metaphor to work, Styles himself becomes, at least temporarily, allied to the forces of white repression. An even more convoluted situation arises when a failure of the first attempt to evict or kill the cockroaches is followed by a much more efficient method: a cat called Blackie does the

job. Even if one resists the temptation to tread much further through this particular labyrinth of metaphors, Styles' appropriation of the strong-arm tactics that traditionally characterized the apartheid regime sends some unexpected signals.

The old shop with the cockroaches stands metaphorically for the world of Apartheid. It is sited in Red location. In the African world, red is synonymous with danger but through it comes peace and equality: the blood to be shed by the blacks before freedom is achieved. The new shop, a studio, becomes the medium of achieving 'dreams' through Styles' camera; a dark tunnel that leads into light. The camera serves as an icon for the propulsion of the individual spirit to the fore.

Generations of Africans can be traced through the mythic camera capture of the Grandpa's family (through the Family Card). It shows that traditions and culture are dying. With the Grandpa's death, freedom is curtailed for "He was a living symbol of Life" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 15). The picture itself depicts the happy world of Africans before the policy of Apartheid was entrenched. According to the man, "We have come to take a card. My father ..., my father always wanted it" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 15). The beauty of the African life, its people and its culture are caught in this mythic space to always portray what the African cosmogony was, is and ought to be. Styles sums it up:

... there it was - New Brighton's smile, twenty-seven variations. Don't you believe those bloody fools who make out we don't know how to smile! (*Sizwe Bansi*, 16)

The dictum is that all men, especially the blacks in South Africa, should be and live like the grandpa unlike Style's father who, representing all subjected black men, gave all but gained nothing.

According to Sizwe and Buntu, a card, 'my book', rules each black man's life. In exasperation, Man exclaims;

That bloody book ...! People, do you know? No! Wherever you go ... it's that bloody book. You go to school, it goes too. Go to work, it goes too. Go to church and pray and

sing lovely hymns, it sits there with you. Go to hospital to die, it lies there too! (*Sizwe Bansi*, 35)

The reference or record book consists of “Your whole bloody life ...” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 24). It documents everything about its owner especially the Native Identification Number: without it, the person becomes a non-human, a ghost. The other books include the pink card, passbook, permit book and the hawker’s license. The blacks’ various phases and facets of lives are controlled: the how, where, what and when. While the books become physical symbols of life for the blacks, they connote the deadness and subjugation of their lives. Ironically, from this deadness, especially that of Robert, resurrects the ghost-like life of Sizwe. From the ashes of Apartheid comes new life and future for black South Africans. The Church Burial Committee that Sizwe, as Robert, is encouraged to join further aggregates the mythical burial of the Apartheid system for the new life of Robert and an apartheid-free South Africa. To get to this level, Buntu and Sizwe, returning from Skye’s place, face a crossroad: a mythical determinant of fate and the future. They make choices culminating into their seeing Robert’s corpse and achieving symbolic freedom not only for Sizwe but also for all black South Africans.

Another text that examines initiation and symbolism through freedom is *Fate of a Cockroach* by Tewfik al-Hakim. Commenting on Al-Hakim’s works, the internet magazine Al-Ahram Weekly Online (1988) opines that they are “plays with philosophical themes culled from a variety of cultural sources.” Some of these plays include *Pygmalion* (1942), *Solomon, the Wise* (1943), *King Oedipus* (1949) and *Fate of a Cockroach* (1973). In *Fate of a Cockroach*, the different variants of creatures and characters are taken through levels of initiations (socio-economic, psycho-cultural and spiritual) which symbolize various messages for the immediate Egyptians and the general world audience.

Each of the creatures is stabilized into definite pedagogical and behavioural levels. These are in tune with what each, through cultural and educational upbringing, has gone through. This is reflected in their psyche, beliefs and actions. They are conditioned by past happenings refracted in their present actions. These actions result

in socio-religious and psychological reflexes. Al-Hakim consciously creates characters locked into predetermined life boxes. He advocates freedom from these limitants through the examination of the various levels and types of initiations and their symbolisms that the characters have been and should be (or not be) exposed to.

The creatures' hierarchies are sociologically divided into three: ants, cockroaches and humans. The strata show the ants as the least placed, the cockroaches in the middle and the humans at the top with the 'highest consciousness' (all self imposed assumptions). All the creatures live in the same spatial space with the higher ones having the knowledge of the existence of others while the lower ones lack this knowingness. The ants are regarded as useless, the lowest and the least developed. This is in consonance with opinions always held of those occupying the least position on any social strata. Other groups usually attribute the ills and backwardness of any society to them. Taking the ants through the necessary initiation rites through their ability to work, Al-Hakim shows the ants as different. All believed and preconceived ideas are jettisoned. The ants are communal in nature, working for the benefit of the community. Unknown to other creatures, the ants are initiated into collectivism. This is symptomatic of proletariats all over the world. Though derided by the others, they work from and through one consciousness: keeping to and advancing their general but unified purposes. Other groups do not understand them as they operate at their own level, speaking their own language. Therefore, the Cockroaches in their ignorance could only conjecture:

Savant: ... the carrying of blessings and food should be accompanied by manifestations of joy, acclamations and singing.

King: But we hear nothing - groups walking in utter silence.

Savant: That is so. We hear no sound from them because they are such tiny creatures. Who knows, though - perhaps they are making thunderous sounds?

King: Perhaps they have a language?

Savant: Perhaps they were singing? (*Cockroach*, 18)

On the other hand, the cockroaches initiated into the world of individualism see no reasons to help one another but regard themselves as the topmost specie alive. In their conceit, like any society's bourgeois class, they are selfish and self-centred considering all issues from their myopic and mono-sense perspective. They see themselves in comparison to the ants in the following lights:

Queen: Are there no creatures superior to us?

Savant: No, we are the most superior creatures on the face of the earth.

King: ... We are the sturdiest of creatures on earth, is that not so, O venerable Savant?

Savant: Most certainly, Majesty.

King: Are the ants stronger than us? Impossible ... Do the ants know us?

Savant: Of course not.

King: Have they got the slightest idea of the true facts about us, about our nature? Do they realize that we are thinking creatures?

Savant: The only knowledge they have about us is that we are food for them.

King: And so, in relation to ourselves, they are inferior creatures. (*Cockroach*, 21)

They swing between the scientific assumptions of Savant and the supernatural and coincidental religious-based beliefs of Priest. These two extremes are the pivots their society rests on. The scientific discoveries of Savant are still elementary and subjective: lots of assumptions and observations without conclusions. Priest's religiosity is rooted in coincidental happenings that are not fact based. On behalf of the unseen and unknown gods, he demands sacrifices for prayers to be accepted: he cannot go to them "empty-handed". According to Duerden (1975:29), "But the gods of the sky are not controllable by the priests of the group, and therefore they are remote from ordinary people's lives". In opposition to these 'sacrifice and prayer' sessions but while agreeing to pray based on the following reasons, Savant hits on the rationale for the establishment of religions:

I shall accept to do so, so that I may invalidate his argument. If there really is someone up there who hears our voices, understands our language, and pays attention to our entreaties, that's fine. If not, we have lost nothing. (*Cockroach*, 25)

When King falls into the tub, the cockroaches are given a new chance at fast tracking their socio-religious beliefs through the instigations and prodding of Queen. With this, another initiation level could be attained maybe into the world of collectivism and organizational capabilities.

The third but 'highest' level of assumed consciousness belongs to the uncoordinated, uncommunicative and disoriented humans. The wife is tyrannous, the husband is hen-pecked, the doctor is confused and the maid does not know her place. The wife is the husband of the man. He does all he is ordered to do; bottling up all his frustrations. Samia, the wife, enjoys the situation and sees nothing wrong in it; it is natural. So when Adil, the husband, rebels it is strange to him too. She is supposed to be the husband giving orders. This is un-mythic, untraditional and un-matrimonial. Al-Hakim examines this unbalanced matrimony and its effects on those concerned. In this wise, the husband is psychologically disturbed while the wife is full of herself. This reflects in their atrophied lives. They lack the real tools of communication and the ability to matrimonially progress.

The struggle of Adil to come to terms with himself and his situation results in his mythic initiation and fairytale alignment with the struggle of King. The cockroach's continuous fight to exit the bathtub becomes his own: unshackling himself from his strong-willed wife. The final failure and extermination of the cockroach has a psychological and symbolic effect on him. He remains tied to his wife's apron string and so he calls on the maid: "Umm Atiya, bring bucket and rag and wipe me out of existence" (*Cockroach*, 76).

In the African world, the courtyard in a house is a small enclosed space (still within the house) used for relaxation. This is the world of the Cockroaches, "as viewed of course by the cockroaches" (*Cockroach*, 2). It portrays the cockroaches' entire worldview and horizon as limited, myopic and selfish. This is richly displayed in their

thoughts and actions. Their time is conversely different from the humans: “The time is night though from the point of view of the cockroaches it is daytime”. It is an upside-down, absurdist world where “bright daylight being so blinding to them that it causes them either to disappear or go to sleep” (*Cockroach*, 2). Symbolically, this portrays them as shying away from knowledge and all that can open them to new ideas. They are stuck in their worldview and hate the searing progressive light that would free them. It is even “a hole in the wall” that leads to the palace!

The ants are natural scavengers and like their ilk are organized. They represent the everlasting proletariats who can only feed from the crumbs that fall from their masters’ tables. To survive the repressive world they are condemned to their communalized lives. These ardent communal workers tell the audience the advantages of their sort of unity:

*Here is your great feast, / We carry it together, together
To our towns, our villages / A great and splendid cockroach- . . .
None of us will hunger know, / Because we all lend a hand,
We’re members of a single body / There is amongst us no one sad,
There is amongst us none who’s lonesome,
There is amongst us none who says
‘I am not concerned with others’.* (*Cockroach*, 17)

They show an ingenuity of purpose in their lives (and even in the transportation of their foods). The cockroaches and humans are surprised. They are said to be organized to the extent of having Ministers of War and Supply!

In a contrastive analytical assessment of these characters in relation to mythology, each of these species symbolizes a stratum in the society. The cockroaches are the upper middle class elites or the bourgeoisie who are pompous, opinionated and parasitic. They assume they can proffer answers to all societal problems whereas they are most of the time empty barrels. They reject responsibilities preferring to delegate (*Cockroach*, 18-19). The ants, suffering at their hands, prefer to take their own destinies in their hands. They fight common communal problems, living and portraying themselves as united as common people do all over the world. At the ‘top’ of the ladder are the humans who are the distracted and uncoordinated leaders.

Usually, these 'rulers' see nothing good or productive in the common people (as reflected in their opinions on the ants).

On an individualistic level, the characters are symbolic and representative of heroes and villains that have peopled various mythologies over the world. Among the cockroaches, the King is the self-styled and self-appointed leader who has nothing progressive to give his people: he only schemes after the acquisition and retaining of power. Through this selfish individual, Al-Hakim passes his message, making him the scapegoat and the sacrificial cockroach (lamb). His kingship, before he becomes the sacrifice, is based on the

length of my whiskers. I was really delighted at the length of my whiskers. I immediately rose up and challenged all the cockroaches to compare their whiskers with mine and that if it was apparent that mine were the longest then I should become king over them all.

Queen: And they accepted the challenge?

King: No, they conceded it to me there and then, saying that they had no time for whisker-measuring.

Queen: And so you automatically became His Majesty!

King: Just so. (*Cockroach*, 5)

The Savant is the scientist, always probing and looking for observations and theories. Adventurous and of an inquiring mind, his summations like those of human scientists and adventurers (of old) are ambitious, grandiose but self-serving. No solution comes from him though he provides a launch pad for others. He is the opposing force to the unfounded, emotional and (co)incidental beliefs of the religiosity of Priest. From these clashes and alignments, development will come. This is an allusion to human history: out of the headlong collision of science and religion came a developing cohesive world. Through Savant, the myth of religion and its establishment are exposed and exploded.

Priest's concerns are heavenly though his ideas and their foundations are co-incidentals. They are faith beliefs based on subjective observations, superstitions, happenstances and coincidences. All these and the requests from and through the gods

can only be achieved through prayers, supplications and sacrifices. The destination and recipients of the prayers and the existence of the 'gods' are faulted. These are based on the fears and demand of (re) assurance of the supplicants as Queen posits: "Leave the matter to the Heavens . . . Maybe unbeknownst to us, it will be accepted" (*Cockroach*, 26). Religion and its myths, created out of human fears of the unknown, are foregrounded on the whims and caprices of 'gods' who might or might not exist.

While the Priest fights for what he believes in, the cowardly Minister, the bureaucrat, avoids all responsibilities (even to fight for the corpse of his son). He does "not want to put you in such predicaments because of my son" (*Cockroach*, 19). People like him are leaders who proffer solutions but cannot and will not carry them out due to their lack of courage and resolution. The forward-looking Queen is the only balancing force and voice. Although reduced to the second fiddle by tradition, she struggles against this limitation, fighting for her rights and those of others. She revolts against age-old sexist ideas held in relation to females. She is the lone voice ready to move headlong against the vagaries of the ants. She is ready to fight the ancestral and mythic beliefs held of the ants through new ideas. The 'leaders' of the cockroaches frustrate these. In desperation, she lashes out as she sees all from a holistic perspective:

The question is too important to be purely a personal one - they all know that, these most excellent leaders of the Kingdom. However, they don't want to know so they pretend not to, because they are without resolution, without willpower. (*Cockroach*, 19)

Like cockroaches like humans though in an inverted manner. In the 'upside down' world of the humans, it is the man that is feminine and vice-versa while their medical doctor, who should understand them, is also lost. The woman, Samia, like Queen, the cockroach, is fighting for recognition in a masculine world. She aggressively imposes her self-worth and personality on her husband and their matrimonial world. She becomes the quintessential amazon superimposing herself and her values on the man. As the *de-facto* wife-husband, the audience gets a taste of a

world ruled by a woman. This is opposite to that of the world of the cockroaches. The man, Adil, is the suppressed manhood who losses all as stated in his oxymoronic statement:

It's desire on my part to please her, because she's a woman, a weak woman, taken up with her youth, her advancement, her talent. I don't like to shake her belief in her own strength and superiority. I would regard that as meanness, meanness on my part as a strong man. I hold that real manliness demands that she be made to feel her strength and her importance and to raise her morale.
(*Cockroach*, 65)

Their doctor, who could have found solutions to this matrimonial displacement, is also confused. He swings between the couple: from one end to the other. He finally stabilizes in the world of the husband: aligning himself with the cockroach and the symbolic struggle of the husband to free himself from the shackles of his wife. Unknown to him, he had been in chains too.

In their selfish and individualistic world, the cockroaches only congregate if individuals have something to gain. There is no national, or specie harmony and fervour. From the dim past to the present, only tomato and sugar have been known to attract their group ego, consciousness and unity. This symbolic individualism that retards national and personal growth is alluded to by the cockroaches themselves:

Savant: ... the cockroaches assembling round the food won't make a bit of difference - they'll just eat and fill their stomachs, then each will take himself off

King: That's true a number of cockroaches, happened to assemble round a piece of sugar we found. ... and I seized the opportunity of this gathering to deliver the speech from the throne. ... hardly had I uttered two words than I found each one of them waving his whiskers, and going off on his own. They left me shouting into thin air! (*Cockroach*, 12)

In the normal physical and humanoid world, meetings and congregations of the rulers, the rich and the bourgeois only happen when there is something to be gained. And as quickly as they do, they disperse with their individual booties.

Over the eons, the common people have been regarded as 'breeders,' contributing more than enough to populating the world. Al-Hakim represents them with the ants that reject birth control unlike the cockroaches. Elites are usually small in numbers so that their riches can be maintained while the poor breed like rabbits (ants) compounding their poverty. Savant alludes to this comparison:

...we have a characteristic not found among the ants, namely birth control. The ants let their numbers increase so enormously that they are driven into a food and storage crisis, and the need for food leads to war. (*Cockroach*, 20)

It is a tool of oppression meant to keep the ants and the common people in their place through infighting and struggle for survival. However, in this fight for the basic things of life, the ants live a communal life just like any poor group of people (as long as the elites do not disrupt their lives and the arrangements of their communality).

Umm Attiya becomes the avenging hands of the gods (humans). At the end, King is drowned: the dead cockroach and the ants are wiped off the face of the earth.

Adil: She's done it. Look - she's removed the ants, the cockroach and the lot. She's cleared the wall of everything.

Doctor: Bad luck! (*Cockroach*, 74)

and Adil then asks to be exterminated too:

Umm Attiya, bring the bucket and rag and wipe me out of existence. (*Cockroach*, 76)

The existence of gods were primal creations of humans in their fear and (mis)understanding of their environments (Awolalu 1979). This is the argument also

put forward by Savant. The circumstantial gods in the text, the humans, unknown to the ants and cockroaches regard the both as nuisance, not worth the trouble. The human gods do not even care whether prayers and sacrifices are offered to them or not. All events which happen to the cockroaches and the ants and regarded as “positive influences of the gods” are coincidences. The ‘gods’ care less and are unconcerned about the other creatures as they have their own problems. This position runs through nearly all religious and pantheonic mythologies (Eliade 1960, Ngumoha 1988, Long 1988, Apter 1992, Aboyade 1994). This results in the worshippers believing in predestination, an unchangeable fate and control through the wills of the gods.

Mythic time frame operated by both the worshippers and the worshipped always differs. The cockroaches’ daytime is the humans’ night: “The time is night, though from the point of view of the cockroaches it is daytime” (*Cockroach*, 2). The ants’ problem, to the cockroaches, is not a new thing as King tells Queen: “Do you want ..., a solution to a problem that is as old as time?” (*Cockroach*, 4). Myths created from problems are usually as old as the problems, predating the present generations. The Cockroaches, therefore, in trying to understand their ant-related problems, advance various propositions based on their observations from time past:

King: The ants know the discipline of forming themselves into columns. (*Cockroach*, 9)

Savant: The ants, because of their tiny size, can do what they like, but we larger creatures are in a special position. (*Cockroach*, 13)

Savant: First, the ants have a Minister of War ... Naturally. A minister who devotes all his attention to the business of organizing armies. Is it reasonable that all these vast troops should march with such discipline and order in serried ranks without somebody responsible behind them, somebody specialized in organizing them? (*Cockroach*, 19)

Savant: A brilliant Minister of Supply. A brilliant one - the operation of storing food in warehouses on that

enormous scale must have some remarkable economic planning behind it. (*Cockroach*, 20)

It is established that myths are formed on daily basis from the actions and inactions of people as individuals and groups. Through his action and struggle, King becomes a mythic figure among the cockroaches and the humans. His mythic sojourn starts when he made himself King based on the length of his whiskers (which is also mythical). It ends with his demise in the new world he goes to survey: his adventure and subsequent death have the aura of what myths are created from. In the process of finding a new horizon, hope and world for his people, King perishes. The basin, to the cockroaches, is an uncharted, unexplored new world and horizon. The problem of the ants in itself has thrown up various mythical reasons and plausible solutions. The mythical sojourn, over time, of the ants rubbing against the cockroaches creates in its own stead mythical stories. The psychological movement and transference of Adil's consciousness, from a humanoid to that of an insect, is a mythical sojourn towards freedom in his personal world. This Kafkaesque world is symbolized in the character of Gregor Samsa in Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* who transmutes into a giant insect. Adil goes through and experiences the range of human emotions like horror, kindness, and pity from both his wife and doctor. Through this sojourn, the audience gets to know his innermost troubles and achievements.

The text, *Morountodun*, set *in situ* in the Yoruba environment of the old Western region of Nigeria of the 1960s, utilizes various symbols to portray prevailing ongoing situations as at then. The then currency nomenclature was based on that of the country's colonial rulers; British pounds, shilling and pence. This currency is utilized in the commercial world of the text (*Morountodun*, 17-18). Yoruba language situates the events in the Yoruba world. Its use beautifies, explains and orientates characters and situations to the textual events and the specific environment. Songs and riddles, as long as they are not malleable to contextual and meaning changes, are rendered in Yoruba. According to the playwright, "it should be remembered that songs in Yoruba help to preserve the Yoruba locale of the action" (*Morountodun*, 80). Directors staging the play are therefore enjoined to stick, as much as possible, to all the ten songs in the

text rendered in Yoruba except “where the linguistic circumstances call for other substitutions” (*Morountodun*, 6). The Yoruba locale is envisioned with the factual recall of specific places like Gbagi and Agbeni markets (*Morountodun*, 13, 27) in Ibadan, a foremost city in Nigeria. The origin of the Yorubas from Ile-Ife is also alluded to (*Morountodun*, 31).

Apart from the above specific physical places, the time-frame of the text is hard to pin-point. There are the Moremi past - the great indefinable time of several decades ago (*Morountodun*, 31), the Titubi present time of infiltration of about five-seven weeks (*Morountodun*, 55) and the farmers’ insurrection period calculated pre the textual events of up to seven months (*Morountodun*, 6). All cumulates into the historical and realistic Agbekoya Uprising of 1969 in modern day Nigeria. The old myth is garnered and transmuted over the decades into the modern world. Its infusion with modern ideas creates a different time-frame that spans from “several decades ago nearer the dawn of the Yoruba civilization at Ile-Ife” (*Morountodun*, 31) to “the year 1969, the month of September” (*Morountodun*, 5). The audience is initiated into the historical and cultural mythology of the Yorubas. The characters become typifications of Yoruba ancestry portrayed, largely, through a generally re-tuned and redefined characterology as envisioned by this modern playwright. This text adheres to the mythical tenet of unspecific time of events and happenings. Usually, it can span from a millisecond to eons of time depending on the fluidity and reason(s) for the specific event(s) to gestate, materialize and take effect either in the life of the hero or the people concerned.

Majority of the characters become heroes through their mythic sojourns: from everyday life into the mythical world of the play and the mytho-historical antecedence displayed. The playwright opines that mythic heroes are not limited to the royalties, the bourgeois or the wealthy. His heroes are the common people and “Illiterate farmers, whom we had all along thought to be docile, peace-loving, if not even stupid” (*Morountodun*, 6). In their transformation towards mythic heroism, the farmers’ lots demand that they move from their home Wasimi (‘A Place of Rest’), at least five times in the heat of the police attacks (*Morountodun*, 44). This continuous physical

movement signifies an inward and spiritual metamorphosis. Through it, they become creative, unified and focused in their struggle. For them, the struggle is spiritual and all encompassing:

Mama Kayode: ... We're fighting to live
Mosun: Water fertilizes the earth, blood the spirit of the race.
Molade: We struggle, our dirges wash us clean
Mama Kayode: We're older than pain and betrayal
Mura: Older than your politicians and your rulers
Mama Kayode: We own the earth, we are the earth itself.
Molade: And the future is ours. Is for our children.
(*Morountodun*, 67)

Titubi's mythic sojourn starts with her change of clothing to reflect her new status: a downgrading from the spoilt child of Alhaja to that of a commoner albeit a betrayer in the making. This metamorphosis happens in a prison. For her, there is the imprisonment and temporary freezing of her past and her world of comfort: the idea is that she could return to retrieve these. According to the Direction:

*The CORPORAL goes out and returns with a prison gown.
TITUBI **steps aside** and changes into the gown. The
CORPORAL collects her old clothes, including her
jewellery. But she refuses to remove the necklace.
(*Morountodun*, 15) (Bold mine)*

She goes on to be initiated into the temporary character she would role-play for the farmers. This re-orientates her mentality and psyche. However, it does more as she becomes concretized and supportive of the farmers' movement. The necklace she sticks to and which bears the Moremi insignia, a dagger, earths her belief, action and embolden her transference into the mythical.

For Moremi, the playwright seeks to clarify issues from a textual but omniscient point of view. Like Titubi, she also moves from her comfort zone into a world of uncertainty: royalty to a willing war-prisoner. Her initiating rites are of different levels: religious, social and personal. Her spiritual rite of passage is effected by the priests as part of her mythic sojourn and initiation:

The priests led me darkly into the grove for the appropriate ceremonies, and then slowly, we danced past the shrine of my husband's grandfather, Oduduwa. You know, going from god to god, looking into their impressive eyes, then walking through the streets, past the throngs of silent forms, the people watching, immobile, I felt like one drunk on wine. I felt strong and light, the noon breeze was in my veins ... (*Morountodun*, 32)

After the religious and ancestral fortifications, her age-group, Yeye-Oba, (Mother of the King) arrives, first to change her resolve but later to encourage and immortalize her proposed actions. For her, their song becomes a dirge forcing her to query them: "am I gone already to the land of our ancestors that you accompany my corpse with such lament?" (*Morountodun*, 34). To them, her sojourn is unto death whereas she sees it as a harbinger of good tidings and future: "This is a day of joy, my friends! The land is going to be reborn" (*Morountodun*, 34). Finally, she fights and lies so that her emotion and love for her husband, Oronmiyon and son, Oluorogbo, do not sway her. It is after all these that heroism becomes entrenched and "suddenly she freezes, to become her legendary statue" (*Morountodun*, 39).

Majority of the characters and specific events are extremely relevant and symbolic to the development of the mythology the playwright strives to (re)create. Baba, the oldest amongst the farmers, is the nominal, moral and, to an extent, the spiritual leader of the struggle. He is the link between the forgotten past with its ideals, values and ideas and the ongoing but precarious present. In the trial of Buraimoh and Lawyer, his is the only dissenting voice. His opinions, judgments and conclusions are old fashioned and strange to all, especially Marshal. According to Baba

Buraimoh is Mosun's father, we cannot erase that. And as long as there's blood between our fingernails, they say, there will be lice in the hair. Lawyer's father also sat with me on the same pew in church, at that time when we could afford the luxury of Sundays. The verdict cannot be death. It is legitimate to kill in war. We're jackals then. But executions are a different thing. Especially when the

victims are our own kinsmen even when they've gone astray. We don't want our people to lose all respect for human life. (*Morountodun*, 54)

Marshal is his contrastive but complementing character. He is rash, younger and disdaining of after-effects. As the military general, he challenges, at every possible step and decision, the opinions and conclusions of Baba. He is combative, fitting his role and position as a war leader. In the end, he becomes or makes himself, unconsciously though, the scapegoat through whose death freedom becomes a reality. Titubi (*Morountodun*) is the epitome of the past myth of the Yoruba Moremi. While Moremi represents the past, Titubi stands for a modern myth and what can be when a myth becomes modernized and structured to fit the everyday life of the people. In her is seeded the ill-advised vision of the ruling elite for overthrowing the farmers' populist struggle. Through her unprepared-for-metamorphosis, she becomes a fighting tool on behalf of the farmers. Each of the characters was different before the war. With and through the events of the war, each crosses the grove of initiation supplanted and replanted from and into different situations and environment. Baba, an ordinary farmer, becomes a leader in war; Kokondi, a mammy wagon driver becomes a fighter; Mosun, an abandoned child a warrior; Wura, a rejected mistress, a warrior; and Marshal, a child of the poor, a war-general.

In the textual events are hidden meanings and symbols symptomatic of the playwright's and the text's thematic focus. The union of Titubi and Marshal is inconceivable at the beginning as one is a betrayer and the other, a distrusting individual. In their marriage, based on permission given by Alhaja, lies the future of the society. There can be a unified and egalitarian society if the ruling and bourgeois classes would allow it. All societal classes can live in harmony, not minding their differences.

The movement from war to marriage, marriage to war and war to peace especially in the lives of the farmers symbolize the unstableness of life occurrences. Each event must be considered before being allowed to fructify. Each event is hydra-headed spanning from an individual action and disgorging into different deltas. A

symbolic example is the disobedience of Marshal and his group. In refusing to listen to Baba who asks for a day's respite for consultations to take place before attacking the Central Police Station, Marshal and his group perish to the last man. Here, he overreaches himself by throwing aside traditional homage, respect, ideal, values and norms epitomized in Baba. In the playwright's mind, the types of Marshal are not fully needed in a future peaceful and justice-free world. Peace and dialogue must always be given a chance, at any conceivable space and time.

Though *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* is set within the time-frame of the 1950s, (with the time-limited Mau Mau Uprising and British imposition of imperialism), the textual events cover a period of four centuries. Kimathi asks Business Executive to "unchain four centuries of chains" (*Trial*, 45). Kimathi's "four centuries" of slavery corresponds to the biblical four hundred years of slavery of the Israelites in Egypt and Babylon. This biblical allusion reflects itself in Africa's "four centuries" of slavery and its incumbent freedom. Therefore, the re-enactment of black people history (*Trial*, 45) which spans the beginning of slavery to the struggle for freedom is a depiction of the timelessness of the issues involved. These past events, which are sub-divided into phases, spill over into the present. They reflect on the Kenyan people and nation culminating into the court trial and the sentencing of Kimathi. The struggle for freedom becomes epitomized in the fighters led by Kimathi, Woman, Boy and Girl. The present (or real) textual events basically span two days which revolve round the court and its proceedings. Interspersed within and acting as the foregrounding reasons for the court events are the flashbacks which are spread through the text.

The 'assumed' killing of Kimathi mythically symbolizes a transition from the present to the future. Through it, the future becomes assured. The inner and psychological wrangling of Kimathi are stilled and answered. According to him:

In the forest, I was sometimes plagued
by doubts,
If I died today
Would our people continue
the struggle?
I would look at the braves

killed
I would say:
If I died today
Will this blood ever be
betrayed?
That was my Trial.
But now I know that
for every traitor
there are a thousand patriots. (*Trial*, 83)

Stipulated in the exclamation of Boy and Girl is that Kimathi is “Not dead!” (*Trial*, 84). The struggle and commotion that ensue in the immediate Stage Direction that follows epitomize the eternal but now specific futuristic fight between “opposing forces” (*Trial*, 84). This struggle and darkness is for “a little time” as light and the winners in the persons of the peasants emerge, “*singing a thunderous freedom song*” (*Trial*, 84).

Each of the characters, especially the revolutionaries, sojourns individually into the mythic world. Kimathi, the main character, as the leader is seen as not human. According to Henderson, Kimathi had prophesied that no white could ever catch him. He fought in different wars, suffered in the forest and bore several spiritual and psycho-social traumas. All these culminate in his arrest which is believed impossible by Boy and Girl:

Boy: How then could they arrest him?
Girl: They have caught his shadow. (*Trial*, 62)

Boy reinforces this when he questions:

And suppose it's not Kimathi, and it is his double, his shadow whom they have arrested? (*Trial*, 31)

Kimathi alludes to Woman, who equally runs the action in the text along with him, as representing “our women” deserving of “monuments” (*Trial*, 73) for all she undergoes. She serves as a messenger, link, teacher, comforter, protector and even as a

missionary of the struggle converting people to its cause. She also undergoes the rebirth process from an unconcerned individual to a revolutionary. She states:

Yes. I too have lived in the city. I know the life you have described. Fighting ... Drinking ... Fighting ... Drinking ... Kangari, Karubu, busaa, chang'aa Mathare Valley... Pumwani ... all that and more. I was a bad woman ... a lost stinking life ... until I heard the call.

... The call of our people ... (*Trial*, 19)

It is this 'call' that concretizes her life to develop and struggle for her people. At the end, though arrested, she acts and serves as a Classical dramatic device of a *deus ex machina* to Kimathi and the struggle.

Boy and Girl also come from among the unconcerned citizenry. They flood the streets as loafers, eating crumbs that fall off the whites' tables until Woman takes them under her wings. She tutors, lectures, encourages, challenges and indoctrinates them until they become convinced about the struggle. Walking their own path, their plan of helping Kimathi escape is performed at the end of the text. Their test of loyalty and initiation comes through the transportation and delivery of the gun-in-the-bread message purportedly meant to help free Kimathi. They become, for Kimathi and Woman, the next generation of guerrilla fighters and revolutionaries who will carry on the struggle. The future for them is certain and is one of unity in the face of despair, fear and oppression. Girl questions and admonishes Boy:

Only a few hours ago after you told me about the Woman, and we talked about it you still had spirit, you had hope. Have you forgotten the resolution we made together?
(*Trial*, 52)

From the above, it is clear that the characters are not ordinary but mythically symbolic of the forces of evil and good in the eternal struggle for the control of man and his sociological balance. Woman, as already pointed out, is representative of all women who are mothers: the cocoons from which emerge new generations of humans

and in this situation, revolutionaries. The diversity of her experience and character is captured in the Direction given by the playwrights:

She is between thirty and forty years of age, with a mature but youthful face, strongly built. Good looking ... Though apparently a simple peasant, the woman is obviously world-wise, and perceptive of behaviour and society. Throughout, her actions are under control: her body and mind are fully alert. Fearless determination and a spirit of daring ... She is versatile ... A mother, a fighter... (Trial, 8)

Boy and Girl become the future hope of the fast disappearing present revolutionaries through governmental hounding. They are backboned and enmeshed in the revolutionary ideology preached by Kimathi (the physical and spiritual leader of the movement).

The military personnel marshalled for the suppression of the people are blacks and whites. It seems that the black soldiers are more dangerous than the whites in trying to satisfy their masters. Escaping the black soldiers, Woman comments: "Wui, that was another narrow one. Escaping from the leopard's claw to fall into the lion's mouth" (*Trial*, 14). This type of soldiers represented by Second Soldier and K.A.R soldiers are regarded as "lost sons of the soil" (*Trial*, 14) by Woman. They are unconcerned by the plights of their people. They become individualistic and selfish, fending for themselves to be paid "One hundred shillings" and "posho" (*Trial*, 65). On the other hand there are sympathetic individuals among the soldiers as represented in First Soldier. In his deeds and actions, he limits himself. His understanding lies with the fighters though he works for the imperialists. In the end, unfettered, he joins the push for the struggle along with the revolutionaries. His consciousness had been aroused and therefore his rebirth is unproblematic. The white soldiers are symbolic of the use to which the common man, dressed as a fighter, is directed. The English common man is used against his African counterpart through indoctrination by the elite as exemplified in the answers given during the interrogation of the captured white soldiers:

Soldiers: We are the Queen's soldiers!
1st Soldier: We are only obeying orders. (*Trial*, 64)

Shaw Henderson, the prejudicial judge who regards himself a friend but in reality is an enemy of the Kenyans, represents the whites. Even in prison, he becomes the tyrant oppressing Kimathi, an old friend (*Trial*, 54-58). He is the face of imperialism that would brook no objections and is undeterred from its aims. Kimathi, therefore, becomes condemned before stating his case:

Henderson: It will have to be from the hangman's rope, Mr.
Field Marshal.

Kimathi: Already sentenced, am I? How is that for even
handed British justice! (*Trial*, 54)

The white Settler is not different. He sees the blacks as tools to be used and domesticated as he, a soldier of fortune, had won his booty: the Kenyan land. He represents the whites who see the Kenyan land as a prize to be shared not with the original owners but amongst the settlers alone. The blacks, on their own land, should become second-class citizens repressed, oppressed and "loyal, meek, submissive" (*Trial*, 29).

Apart from the mythically symbolic characters, some of the events are emblematically relevant to on-going situations not only in the text but also in the socio-political arena of Africa. At the beginning of the play, Kimathi in chains (*Trial*, 13) stands for Africa undergoing four centuries of slavery while the text's denouement portrays a freedom-seeking and achieving continent. During his court trial scenes, there are various delineations separating the blacks from the whites. The blacks sit on rough seats while the whites are comfortable. The blacks are shabbily dressed in comparison to the whites. The whites have permission to speak anyhow and any time while the blacks can only murmur or be quiet. This is symptomatic of the relationship between the two races for the last four centuries since contact. At the end of the text, a change occurs: the blacks fight for their freedom and all that are theirs.

This struggle between the two cultures is symbolized in the mime of black people history (*Trial*, 4-5) which comes in phases: of entry into slavery, of oppression

and struggle for freedom. This is also represented in the Stage Direction with the machine gunfire opposing the drums:

*Staccato burst of machine gunfire.
The drums respond with a deafening, rhythmic intensity.
(Trial, 6)*

According to Woman, the blacks are ‘ants’ and the whites ‘elephants’ (*Trial*, 14). To counteract the situation, Kimathi emerges as a leader: spiritual and physical. The whites and the blacks refer to him as Prime Minister and Field Marshal (*Trial*, 3, 24). He becomes a democratic and war leader at the same time. A person loved and respected in both peace and strife periods. He epitomizes the full respect and trust the beleaguered people of Kenya have in him: an all-in-all leader. When, therefore, he is caught, a fusion of bread and gun is concocted to bail him out: the gun to kill and the bread to give life. Woman states: “Bread is life” (*Trial*, 22).

In one of the most powerful symbolic imagery of the text, the whites are shown as wanting to perpetuate themselves as permanent “riders” and the blacks as permanent “horses” (*Trial*, 34). This protracted situation is utterly rejected in the person and ideology of Kimathi. Rejecting Henderson’s “there has to be a horse and a rider” apologia, Kimathi posits:

Well, let me be Balaam’s ass then. Yes, the one who rejected his rider. When the hunted has truly learnt to hunt his hunter, then the hunting game will be no more.
(*Trial*, 34)

To achieve this figurative positioning, the major Kenyan characters, especially, undergo socio-economic, religious, psychological and physical initiatory rites. All his battles and traumatic personal ordeals in becoming a leader help Kimathi metamorphose into a stronger being. His tribulations, after being arrested during the special emergency period, culminating into his torture and sentencing become his initiatory rites. They turn him from the ordinary into a seasoned, ritualized and carrier-sacrificial hero. Boy and Girl start their initiatory classes and tests from the streets

ending them in their meeting Woman. Their main test is transporting the gun-in-the-bread package to Fruitseller. Commenting on their passage from childhood and innocence to adulthood and revolutionaries, Woman opines:

I thought you told me you were ready for initiation. Son, I told you, you are a man and no longer a child. I shall not accept less of you. (*Trial*, 60)

Like Boy and Girl, Woman moves from a rough and directionless life to one of dedication and single-mindedness focused on her people's struggle. Her own change comes when she hears:

The call of our people. The humiliated, the injured, the insulted, the exploited, the submerged millions of labouring men and women of Kenya. (*Trial*, 19)

Her sufferings toughen her as she undergoes all in the name of initiatory process. This culminates in her arrest in trying to help Kimathi escape.

These characters become convinced and solidified in their belief in the struggle because of the oath they took. The oath taking serves as the first initiatory rite for all: fighters and the non-fighters. It aligns them to the struggle's ideology. According to Kimathi, he could not betray the movement because, "This is what I, Kimathi wa Wachiuri, swore at initiation" (*Trial*, 54). Oath taking also changes the awareness of the common people as Settler's once docile black farmers become something else. Oath taking, according to Settler:

Poisoned simple minds
led astray their God-fearing souls. (*Trial*, 29)

whereas to the blacks, it unites them into a focused fighting force that derides and exposes betrayers.

Initiation, in *Wedlock of the Gods*, is not just a process of rituals and rites that make a man out of a boy or introduces him into the internal, esoteric and eternal secrets of the community; it is also a life-saver and a restorer of hope to the hopeless.

Age, in this situation, no longer becomes a criterion. Ogwoma's younger brother, Edozie, at the tender age of ten is requested by the oracle to be initiated into the mysteries of the community thereby becoming a man. There is, therefore, a string of life energy that runs between the gods, the community (as a group and as individuals) and the initiation rites. Within it resides the life force of the people (Duerden 1975).

This gynotext, though African in orientation, can be referred to as an African-Arabian Night story telling hybrid. The time frame spans only a night and a day. The first night opens the eyes of the audience to the conflict on ground. The next day, a full one, takes the audience through the conflict resolution and denouement. The events are so jam-packed that their happenings and effects, which ordinarily should have taken a longer time, become mythic in the duration of the text and in relation to real life happenings. The first night's events are at Ogwoma's house. The next day, the events rotate between the houses of Ogwoma, Ibekwe and Uloko and the bush. The end is at Ogwoma's house where the lovers die.

In breaking the taboo ascribed to the period of mourning, the lovers elevate their own status from the ordinary to the super-ordinary; what is done had never been done before. Okolie posits:

Never before has it been heard that a woman in mourning
lets another man in. (*Wedlock*, 31)

Their psycho-sociological suffering at the hands of the community and especially Odibei, the avenger, catapults them into the realm of scape-goatism and sacrifice. Their deaths become an avenue for the society to re-examine itself and develop into other levels of socio-religious and cultural consciousness. Their mythic and heroic personalities are confirmed in the light of what they die for: love. The broken taboo becomes light in the face of their love and deaths. The community becomes more aware of the eternity of their actions and the relevance in their deaths.

Heroes are known for their steadfastness to the cause they believe in. Sometimes they live and die for their cause after facing a lot of hurdles from various angles: their deaths epitomizing their success. The case of Ogwoma and Uloko reflects this. From

the beginning, Ogwoma and Uloko decide to face the music of their action. They stick together with a focus and decisiveness that show that they are determined to achieve their purpose. The equality and sameness in their thinking and focus is reflected in the following statement which Ogwoma (in the absence of Uloko) says at the beginning of the text and Uloko (in the absence of Ogwoma) re-echoes near the end:

I was not going to wait for another blink of the eye this time. (*Wedlock*, 9, 36)

Each of the characters, therefore, becomes symbolic not for himself or herself but for the society based on what he or she represents. This allows the text to be seen as all-encompassing in its rejection of a society living in the past. The characters, as much as myths and the mythic continue to be made and broken daily, are still as relevant today as in their nineteenth century setting. The text's community strives as much as possible to protect its institutions, laws and cultural values through specific characters. On the other hand are those who see the institutions, laws and cultural values as outdated and in need of replacement if the community must progress.

Uloko is the trespasser and 'breaker' of the community's laws; he not only 'enters' a woman during her mourning and cleansing period, he impregnates her. Basically, he deserves punishment and he gets it three folds; Ogwoma dies, his embryonic baby-son dies and he commits suicide. For him and the society it becomes clear that he stands for the injunction that love supersedes the community and its avowed laws. His estranged woman, Ogwoma, is supposed to do her duty by her dead husband but she fails. She becomes controlled from and by her heart and is divided amongst so many loyalties and societal induced responsibilities. She is married to Adigwe so that her father could have money to treat her sick brother; she must mourn for three months for a husband not loved; she should be 'inherited' by Adigwe's brother; she should give birth to a child through her new husband to continue Adigwe's lineage. But she wants none of these: she follows her heart, gets pregnant for her former love and thereby incurs the society's wrath. In her is depicted the suffering and oppressed woman in a feminine-unfriendly environment. She sees the

light and tries to break with tradition through her feeling of love. She becomes not only a sacrifice to an avenging force but also to a tradition refusing change. A strong-willed, confident and freedom-seeking individual, she dies requesting her love to “meet me there” (*Wedlock*, 54).

Mythic and heroic characters usually have supportive friend(s). Ogwoma is supported by her great, constant but unbiased friend, Anwasia. She is the barometer through which the audience knows Ogwoma’s feelings and on the other hand, the community’s opinion in respect of the broken taboo and the lovers. In her role as a peacemaker she is joined by characters like Otubo, Ata and Udo. There are also the parents of the lovers: Ibekwe and Nneka for Ogwoma, Ogoli and Udo (self-adoptive father) for Uloko. All strive to maintain, through love, the laws and instructions of their community. It becomes late, through the deaths of the lovers, before they recognize that their community must change its restrictive laws and become malleable to situations and circumstances.

There is Odibei, the supposedly aggrieved mother of late Adigwe. She allows herself to be used by the ‘avenging hands’ of the community gods to bring down the lovers. Without concrete facts, she assumes her son was murdered:

Adigwe died of swollen stomach. A man who dies like a pregnant woman did not die a natural death. Somebody killed him. (*Wedlock*, 6)

And the killer would be Ogwoma helped by Uloko. It is easy for her, therefore, to find all ways and means to avenge his death. In this, she succeeds but pays with her own life. According to Awolalu (1979), the African soil and cosmogony avenge when blood is split.

The text, firmly rooted in the rituals and rites of mourning, symbolizes these in the actions and situations the widow is supposed to immerse herself. She must have a fire burning always with the continual production of ashes. Her head, which must be shaven, should be covered in ashes along with her body. The following extracts paint succinctly the dismal picture of a woman in mourning:

Direction: *but Ogwoma sleeps by the fire as she is still in mourning. The fire is out, but there are ashes and a few short pieces of firewood.* (Wedlock, 5)

Odibei: why is she not here in those ashes? (Wedlock, 6)

Odibei: Is it to see her shaven head or her body in ashes ...? (Wedlock, 15)

The fire in this ritual stands for her husband while the ashes remind the widow of her fate: what her husband and marriage relationship are reduced to. Sleeping by the fire is supposed to endear and remind her of her husband who is being helped to find his lit way to the world of the gods. Through the ashes on the ground she is reminded of the separation that has and will continue to occur through death. The ash she rubs on her body shows the eternal link between her and the husband (either through the children or their families). The three months suffice for the dead to find his way to the abode of the spirits. Through this process, she becomes cleansed physically with her womb ready to take in another child for another man (Wedlock, 42).

Another group of symbols utilized in the text relate to sex relationships: humans and animals. In fits of anger, both Odibei and Uloko make the following observations:

Odibei: Some of you young men need to be reminded that not all cutlasses that went to the farm are used. Some just don't cut that deep. A man is not a man simply because he parades an okra sprout.

Uloko: And not all husbands are husbands. You should have discovered what type of cutlass your son had that even in mourning his wife clings to me. (Wedlock, 15-16)

In the African world, direct reference is not usually made to human sexual parts. In the above, therefore 'cutlasses' and 'okra sprout' are references to the masculine sexual organ. What is in question here is the usefulness and effectiveness to which it is put. On the other hand, 'farm' and 'that deep' refer to the feminine sexual organ. The

continuation of this symbol is seen in the various references to Ogwoma (as a person and as a female) as 'a door':

Anwasia: Couldn't you have waited for the three months of mourning to pass before letting him in?
(*Wedlock*, 8)

Nneka: He walked in without shame? (*Wedlock*, 20)

Ogoli: A man goes to a woman; it is the woman who opens the door. (*Wedlock*, 23)

Anwasia: But the man can force the door open if the woman refuses. (*Wedlock*, 23)

The copulation which results in pregnancy holds Uloko as the man who walks (through the action of sex) into Ogwoma while she, as the door, allows him in into the sexual privacy of her body.

In referring to both Ogwoma and Uloko, various character-commentators use very explicit symbols and imagery which are animal related metaphorically. Most see Ogwoma as a harlot who willingly and seductively allows Uloko to impregnate her. Uloko is seen as forcing himself on the helpless widow. Both therefore become 'dog', 'goat' and Uloko, especially, a 'beast' and a 'vulture'. These are sexual metaphors that portray sexual and predatory aspects of the animals under focus:

Odibei: I suspected this dog when her people were hawking her for any available man. (*Wedlock*, 16)

Nneka: Oh, God! You let ... Oh God, that goat touched you? You let that beast touch you ... (*Wedlock*, 19)

Ogoli: Where is that shameless goat that wants to take all I have from me? (*Wedlock*, 23)

Ogoli: I could not sell a grain of salt in the market because of this dog. (*Wedlock*, 23)

Nneka: ... Where is that vulture who does not want me to smile for what I have? (*Wedlock*, 36)

Nneka: ... This goat forced himself into my daughter without shame. (*Wedlock*, 36)

The African world sees the birth of a male as the continuation of a lineage. This is reflected through both Uloko and Ibekwe. In his situation of having broken a taboo, Uloko still ascribes to Ogwoma's pregnancy a son. He perceives this to be a blessing on their troubled and unblessed union:

My love, it was in our stars that we be one. That son in you has sealed it all. (*Wedlock*, 13)

Ibekwe, on the other hand, sacrifices the feelings, hopes, joy and life of his daughter for that of a son. To get money for the sacrifices needed to get his son well, he "tied" his daughter "like a goat and threw" her "away to a man" she "hated" (*Wedlock*, 18). The community prefers a son to a girl for though the girl "is a source of wealth" to the father, it is the son that continues the lineage.

Time in mythology is never specific as the timeline is always the total time frame of life: from eternity into eternity. A writer picks his specifics and relates his myth to the chosen time and place. Soyinka in *Death and the King's Horseman* picks the historical happenings of Elesin and Pilkings and effects dramaturgical changes to suit his mythic thematic focus. In reality, according to Soyinka, the events took

place in Oyo, an ancient Yoruba city of Nigeria, in 1946. That year, the lives of Elesin (Olori Elesin), his son and the Colonial District Officer intertwined with the disastrous results set out in the play. The changes I have made are in the matters of detail, sequence and of course characterization. The action has also been set back two or three years to while the war was still on, for minor reasons of dramaturgy (*Death*, 6)

All the actions in *Death and the King's Horseman* take place within one night, specifically within a few hours. It is a night within eternity that has bearing on the past, the present and the future of the people. The various realms of existence (the Unborn,

Living, Dead and the Void) in relation to the community's world-view become the hub as all intermingle and coalesce into the success or failure of the one night action. Elesin confirms the importance and the shortness of time in the night's events to Pilkings:

You are waiting for dawn white man. I hear you saying to yourself: only so many hours until dawn and then the danger is over. All I must do is to keep him alive tonight. You don't quite understand it all but you know that tonight is when what ought to be must be brought about. I shall ease your mind even more, ghostly one. *It is not an entire night but a moment of the night, and that moment is past. (Death, 62)* (Italics mine)

At the specific "moment of the night", the world of the people comes under the influence of the action or inaction of the voyager: he can imperil or protect the movement of their physical and spiritual worlds. His appropriate action would have paved the way for all the worlds to become rightly aligned. He would become a mythic hero. On the other hand, Elesin fails and puts his community in jeopardy and Iyaloja calls him a "self-vaunted stem of the plantain" (*Death, 68*).

On his sojourn to becoming a mythic hero, the voyager, Elesin cannot be refused anything: "The world is in your hands" (*Death, 18*). He is seen as having a leg in the world of the ancestors. Therefore, he must not be offended. Getting him offended is putting a curse on those left behind. The voyager is born to live and die a hero. At the moment of his death, Iyaloja could not refuse giving him the hand of a betrothed girl.

Iyaloja: The voice I hear is already touched by the waiting fingers of our departed. I dare not refuse (*Death, 21*).

Elesin, while alive, sees himself a hero of the living and of the ancestors: the community as a whole. He posits in the analogy of the Not-I-Bird that of all the characters the bird visited, he is the only one unafraid of death. He is ready for death:

the process of joining his ancestors and fulfilling his hereditary duty. According to him:

My rein is loosened.
I am master of my Fate. When the hour comes
Watch me dance along the narrowing path
Glazed by the soles of my great precursors.
My soul is eager. I shall not turn aside (*Death*, 14)

His promise is to keep the world on its fixated journey. He tells Praise-Singer that the world was not unhinged during “the time of my forebears, it shall not in mine” (*Death*, 11).

Elesin, in his mythic journey, experiences the throes of death. He undergoes and tells the audience the processes involved in the ritual and rites of the metaphysical journey. The other participants, the dog and the horse, have already preceded him. His death process is a self-willed and self-hypnotized one. He fails because his physical body is leaden with the lust of a newly found ‘earth’; a woman. His heroism and sojourn come to naught as they are cut short.

Elesin’s son becomes the ‘finisher’ of the mythic journey started by his father. In the latter’s failure, the world becomes open to the curses of the late king and the ancestors and assaults from negative spirits in the realm of the Void. Olunde becomes the hero as he completes the mythic sojourn. Iyaloja, in her great sorrow, tells Elesin while the corpse of Olunde lies on the ground in front of them:

There lies the honour of your household and of our race.
Because he could not bear to let honour fly out of door, he
stopped it with his life. The son has proved the father Elesin
and there is nothing left in your mouth to gnash but infant
gums (*Death*, 75)

Most of the textual characters and actions stand for specific symbols and meanings not only in the Yoruba world but also in the general sphere. Joseph Wilson (1997:5) postulates:

While living is a personal experience, everyone is a fragment of reality. Thus every action has an impact on everything. All Yorubas and the entire world are interconnected ...

Elesin's attempted suicide is "a communal act ... suicide is a social act in this play" (Wilson, 1997:5). Elesin Oba (the King's Chief Horseman) is not only the name of this character; his hereditary position cloaks him with it. Woman points out:

it is not he who calls himself Elesin Oba, it is his blood that says it. As it called out to his father before him and will to his son after him (*Death*, 35)

He is a mythical character infused with the spirit of upholding the interconnectedness of his people's cosmology (physical and spiritual). In him is entrusted the stability of his community. His failure is, therefore, a deep blow to the fabrics of his personal world and that of his people. Though he knows what his duty to his people is, he is held back by his humanity. Like all mythic characters, who have at one time or the other failed, his tragic flaw could not be surmounted by his self-will. He knows his flaw but still succumbs. His son, Olunde, becomes the avatar: for him and their community. Olunde is a contrast to his father. Unlike Elesin, he is very sensitive and sober in thoughts and actions. Though he is in training to become a medical doctor in Britain and is thought to be severed from his traditional roots, he proves everybody wrong. He condemns his father for not upholding the culture of sacrificial suicide and rights this wrong with his own life. He proves the meaning of his name: 'The Owner has arrived' (Olunde - *Olohunde*). He is the lord and owner of the tradition he dies for as he becomes the father of his father according to Iyaloja while replying Pilkings:

If it is the father of your prisoner you want, Olunde, he who until this night we knew as Elesin's son ... (*Death*, 72)

While the position of Praise-Singer (Olohun-iyo - One with the Sweet Voice) is hereditary, that of Iyaloja (Mother of the Market) is not. Both are upholders of the tradition: Iyaloja as the head of the market women and Praise-Singer as the traditional

bard of Elesin. Both warn Elesin against his untoward behaviour in getting a betrothed bride. Elesin fails to listen. Both also, at the end, condemn his failure. They serve Elesin and the community as moralists, recorders, encouragers and condemners: the communal clarion callers. Praise-Singer eulogizes the positive attributes of Elesin before his fall but condemns him afterwards. Iyaloja praises and cautions Elesin before his failure but totally refuses to listen to any of his excuses afterwards.

The Pilkings' – representatives of the British Colonial power – who think their civilization is better than those of others could afford to downplay other peoples' values and traditions. Like all mythical conquerors, they look down on the ruled and try to force-feed the latter with their own civilization's vaunted values. Simon Pilkings comes across as arrogant, irreligious, but duty conscious. He sees nothing good or progressive in the people he oversees and condemns them at all levels: he is the prototype mythical colonialist and conqueror. His wife is a mellowed-down model of himself. To a level, she is understanding and more sensitive than her all-assuming husband. Olunde even confesses to this though at the end irreparable damage had been done

I've always found you somewhat more understanding than your husband (*Death*, 52)

Through the use and understanding of symbols, myth making and myth decoding become accessible. Meanings are readable into myths and mythology with the decoding of the codifications. According to Barthes (1981),

The signification process within Literature cannot be separated from codes playing around in readers' minds. It is these codes that actually function as guides as to where they should arrive when reading a work of art.

The signification within *Death and the King's Horseman* is mainly controlled by connotative code appearing as myth system.

The text is replete with symbols from the Yoruba mythological world-view which impact the overall cultural and historical thematic message. The basic setting is the market. Elesin had lived all his life's happy moments in the market among the women: he would prefer to die amongst them. The market is translated as 'oja'. The Yoruba lore extension is 'oja / ajo laye' meaning '(to be in) the market or life is (to be on) a journey'. On the other hand, heaven becomes 'ile' (home) derived from 'orun ni ile wa' – 'heaven is our home'. The market, for Elesin and all Yorubas, is the earth or the physical world which is regarded as a transitory stage. This is why Elesin professes: "The market is the long-suffering home of my spirit ..." (*Death*, 9). According to the Stage Direction, Elesin takes "A passage through a market in its closing stages." (*Death*, 9). In the same breath, there is a reiteration as "ELESIN OBA enters along a passage before the market ..." (*Death*, 9). Walking the passage is walking the road to his destiny. The market is the earth world through which he journeys while the 'closing stages' indicates the end of his earthly journey; death.

The District Officer's bungalow, the tango style of dancing and the old hand-cranked gramophone represent the mythic infusion of the colonizers into the world of the conquered. All these, though in the world of the conquered, represent status and power. The "old hand-cranked gramophone" stands for the then still relevant but atrophying British Empire.

The playwright focuses on the contrast between the two civilizations presented in the text: the British and the African (Yoruba). From the Stage Direction (*Death*, 27), the distinction is created as:

glimpsed through the wide window ... are the shapes of SIMON PILKINGS and his wife, JANE Then the figure of a 'Native Administration' policeman emerges and climbs up the steps ... (Bold mine)

Western civilization is depicted mythically as a time constrained civilization: it has stood the test of the past but its life-span was fading. Its light, knowledge and development are waning as its two representatives are cast in shadows. On the other

hand, Amusa “emerges” as a full figure and “climbs up”, not only as an individual but as a civilization to be equated with other civilizations.

The Egungun in the Yoruba world is a “society of mature adults whose purpose it is to make lineage elders keep to their defined roles” (Morton-Williams, 1956:92). They are also regarded as mythic ancestral spirits returned to associate with the living. For Pilkings to, therefore, seize the gauntlets of the Egungun (masquerade), redesign and wear them with his wife to a masque party becomes an affront to the culture that is spurned. They show no respect just like their culture and civilization had not shown most civilizations it had come across. This is a desecration of the mythic belief, values and culture of the Yoruba people. The Pilkings’ see the gauntlets as ordinary ‘costumes’ whereas the people (like Amusa), even after converting to other religions, still regard it as belonging “to dead cult” (*Death*, 24).

There is the textual myth and symbol of the moon. Ngumoha (1998:140) points out:

According to the blurb of *Moonsongs*, “the moon is a complex of masks; a versatile shuttle between night and day, sea and sky, castle and slum”. Add to this, life and death.

The moon is a gateway to the world or realm of the ancestors and the gods. It is the ‘house of osugbo’ - a group of moon worship initiates - that can recognize and decipher its movement for Elesin:

The moon was my messenger and guide. When it reached a certain gateway in the sky, it touched that moment for which my whole life has been spent in blessings (*Death*, 62)

It is, therefore, a time-teller and a way-shower to the initiates of its mysteries. They are in the position of informing Elesin of the ripeness of his time to dance into death willingly. He gets the message “through the voice of our sacred drums” but fails because of “thoughts of earth” (*Death*, 62).

With this demythologizing process defined by Budianto and Wulander (2005: 198) as “the historical investigation of myth from nothing to its present condition,” it is unarguable that Soyinka utilizes lots of traditional symbols (inclusive of some universal ones) to showcase his characters, events and actions while transmitting his mythic message to his audience

Brett Bailey’s *Ipi Zombi?* shows that myth can be situated in a specific period and time but it will be representative of all its type of story in a timeline infinitum. The factual happenings related in the textual fictional rendering are said to have occurred in

Bhongweri Township, not even six hours drive from where
we are tonight, not even three years ago from this night
(*Zombi?*, 203)

For Bailey, a mythopoeist-playwright, the play discusses an ever-present issue in any stressed society. The “six hours” and “three years” are epitomes of both the immediacy and the archaism of the issue: it is relevant at anytime on the eternal mythical time frame. The fear the playwright expresses in the play is not a new thing. It is immemorial in the mythic annals of the human race. Its presence is still felt in present and developing civilizations. The fear is an innate one and is

a story of something bigger than all of us, ... about
something that eats people bones and everything ... turning
the people against each other, making children kill their
own mothers, and eating the people of that town
(*Zombi?*, 203)

This communal fear is inbred and dwells just below the human consciousness waiting to be ignited by human situations appearing unsolvable and unexplainable by ordinary justifications. Bailey, through the play, tries to assuage and bring into the open this mythical, unnameable and palpable human fear of the unknown. His focus is to produce and induce a catharsis that would help ameliorate this ever-recurring and ever-

worsening reaction of the human psyche to situations it cannot fathom. Larlham (2009:15) reports:

Bailey casts himself ... as a spokesman for a newly imagined spiritual collectivity - even as a theatrical saviour, bringing a life-giving injection of ritual energy to a dying art form.

The other mythical fear expressed relates to witches and witchcraft. Witchcraft has existed from time immemorial and witches have always been feared and hounded, even unto death, for their real and assumed actions (Smyth 1973, Duerden 1975, Awolalu 1979). This fear is not time bound as it cuts across human time-line from eternity into eternity. While exploring this mythical fear of witchcraft, Bailey brings to the fore the social implications in respect of the social status of the victims. Over the centuries and in most societies, witches that have been hounded, exposed and killed by various means have mostly always come from the lower class. Meersman (2007:2) alludes to this when he writes that Bailey

uses not our fears, but our sympathies for the blind, the forgotten, the broken and the voiceless in order to torture us.

This universal mythical theme has permeated, from eons, the human collective unconscious. Bailey does not see it stopping but he preaches for an (scientific) evaluation of the situation before any accused is condemned. Towards the (non)existence of witches, he displays neutrality. On the other hand, he advocates that justice be seen to be done in the sort of situation played out in the text, not minding the time-frame (now or in the future).

The text is open-ended in the aspect of a protagonist-hero. It sees this mythic problem as affecting all through all time: a collective human failing in accusing others unjustly. Bailey personifies those hounding the witches in Senti and his group. This group walks a falsified road of mythic heroes. Its sojourn into this revered world is littered with falsities, negativities and the blood of the innocent. Like the witches, this

group stands condemned as all its actions are based on suspicion without evidences against those condemned. On the other hand, members of the group appear as revolutionaries and harbingers of a new world devoid of witches and witchcraft. Senti, therefore, recognizes that he would be jailed and his colleagues arrested. His revolutionary belief is based on this treatise he postulates:

Even the police, they do not protect us at all ... This thing is not finished, I promise you, I'll go to jail - may be for twenty-five years. That's how life is. But this thing is not finished. I'll be back. And when I get back I will get those who have sent me to jail. That's how life is. (*Zombi?*, 217)

According to Bailey, in this situation of the common man against himself, there is no vanquished and no victor. The thematic lesson is that man should change in his quest of hounding others (especially the underprivileged) on flimsy sectional, tribal, situational, religious, economic, social and political divides and excuses.

The mythical themes examined in the text dictate that the characters become universal instead of being limited to their environment. Each aspect of life portrayed has its own type of policing against the negative forces which attack the people's communal life: the religious and the physical. At the physical stratum, Cop represents the governmental arm which enforces peace in the society. At the religious level, Sangomas represent the ancient traditional beliefs while Priests are for the modern Christian tradition. These three policing forces are shown to be irrelevant and incapable of fighting and arresting the 'fear' which pervades the society.

In lieu of these, a new force made up of youths "cleaning this town" arises. It is led by Senti, Zol and Fire. It challenges the old policing traditions which have become ineffectual. It voyages into a new mythic world of disputing with the gods and fighting the witches who wield mystical powers. According to Narrator, Senti's group embarks on its jungle justice campaign because

For six weeks those bodies lay there in the mortuary. Sangomas came, but they could not bring life back to those bodies, they were saying "no, there are too many witches in

this place, the witches eat holes in our power. This thing is too strong!” And what can our ancestors do and what can even Jesus do when this thing is eating a community? (*Zombi?*, 218)

The group’s actions are based on the flimsy accusations of the symbolic Steve and Crotch characters (inclusive of the eleven year old Malaksa). Like Malaksa, in real life, Steve declares accusingly:

Ja, now I’m remembering ... as we went off the road I saw fifty females in front of the taxi, just watching, with no clothes on, naked, undressed (*Zombi?* 204)

This accusation is based on fear, stress, hallucination and despair. It stems from the deep pain of the loss of his twelve friends. This type of accusation is prevalent in the hounding of witches: the more irrational the accusative situation and information, the more the people are jostled into believing the accuser. Relating witch-hunting and hounding records from the United States of America, Awolalu (1979:84) documents the following details:

In 1688, a girl in Boston accused an old washerwoman of bewitching her, and as a result the woman was hanged. Thus went the witchcraft craze in New England. Twenty persons and two dogs suspected of being witches’ familiars were hanged as well.

Usually, there are no concrete evidences: it only needs an accusing finger to be pointed at one or for one to be accused of being a non-conformist (Duerden, 1975:78-79). This is supported by the decisions and actions of the boys:

Senti: Who?
Boys: That thin ugly black one - there on the corner
Senti: Why?
Boys: She lives alone in a big house!
Senti: Who?
Boys: That fatty fatty -
Senti: Why?

Steve: She has a big cat, a big cat, a big black cat!
Boys: Kill all the suspects. Let's kill all the suspects!
(*Zombi?*, 214)

In this line of thought, characters like Mambamba (mother to one of the dead boys) and Mrs Magudu become victims. These are underprivileged women who have, in their own ways, been touched by the pain of the loss. Mambamba's accusation is based on Krotch's illusionary vision of seeing fifty women at the crash site:

Krotch: It's her! She was there at the crash, she is a witch. (*Zombi?*, 206)

Mrs Magudu's death originates from her eleven year old granddaughter's accusation that the dead boys are kept in her cupboard. Inherent in these accusations are the real reasons stated by Boys. For Mambamba, it is because Xolani, her son, was Krotch's best friend (*Zombie?*, 206) while Mrs Magudu is accused as

Boys: She hates us because we are young and she is too old and we love her daughter. (*Zombie?* 213)

These women and others paid the supreme price not because their accusers found them evidentially guilty of the crime but because according to Duerden (1975:13)

. . . . It is particularly the poor and underprivileged individuals who are reputed to be guilty of witchcraft, because they are the ones who are particularly prone to resentment.

Intombi 'Nyama, another character, is a full representation of the present world. The playwright uses her to show the social strata universality of the belief in witchcraft. A superstar, who comes from the urban area, she becomes the mouth-piece of the dead boys in a séance where the zombies ask for freedom from inside the cupboard. There is also Devil who is in all places; goading all the characters to misbehave and causing havoc, mistrust and insecurity. The choir resorts to umbrella

opening: a symbolic representation serving “as a shield against the evil” committed by the group in opening the coffins.

While the playwright puts the audience in suspense in respect of the presence or non-presence of witchcraft, he gives the picture of the zombie boys who exit the cupboard:

Inside waits a group of white-painted boys, naked but for loin-cloths, arms twisted behind their backs and wearing long narrow African masks. They throng out onto stage, bobbing like vultures, and gather to feed on MRS MAGUDU and to menace the crowd. (Zombi? 217)

These “white-painted” zombies replicate a belief expressed by Duerden (1975:92) on the use of ceremonial white. According to him, white might not mean angelic or innocence as

... the use of white in rituals implies restriction rather than purification.

The restrictions imposed by painting an individual in white patterns or dressing him in white clothes are the same as the restrictions limiting him to his own compound and preventing his dirt, which is an extension of his soul remaining behind to become confused by other souls.... However, everything that is white and bright ... may become dangerous to creative individuality.

The dead boys, therefore, theoretically become separated from the living and cannot behave as ordinary humans anymore. This is also expressed in Chinua Achebe’s *Arrow of God* where Ezeulu is painted white to represent him as half god, half man: he could not behave generally like other humans: he could not ordinarily leave his house and go on a journey.

The success of this work lies in Bailey’s powerful juxtaposition of the symbolic physical and spiritual lives of the people. From it, he draws the limitations of their practice and advocates for the infusion of another force, the humanity of man, to

operate at all levels of their lives. This is attested to by Meersman (2007:3) in an overview of Bailey's works through the eyes of the audience:

Bailey is familiar to festival audiences for incorporating ceremony and sacrament within productions. These works were aggressive - about fire, blood and bones. Bailey broke down our defences with drums, screams, knives and broken glass. Possessed, we as audience, joined in with his Bacchae. One left his theatre charged up by the adrenalin of the experience, renewed through catharsis, liberated by the irrational ...

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

CHAPTER FOUR

Mythotypes in African Drama

4.1 Mythic Issues and Mythotypes in the Texts

Efua T. Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa* and Mythotypes

a. The Spider and Its Webs

A major reason for writing the play, according to Sutherland, is to encourage the development of traditional ideals, customs and folklore amongst the younger generation who have been inundated with western ideas and ideals. In the myth, Ananse is a spider who continually spins webs entwining self and others in his schemes of making situations work for him but to the detriment of others. In the symbolic reality of mythography, Ananse, according to Sutherland in the Foreword (1995: v) to *The Marriage of Anansewa*, represents

a kind of Everyman, artistically exaggerated and distorted to serve society as a medium for self-examination. He has a penetrating awareness of the nature and psychology of human beings and animals. He is also made to mirror in his behaviour fundamental human passions, ambitions and follies as revealed in contemporary situations.

Ananse uses the web screen medium to achieve most of the above. After spinning webs, he retires behind the web screen to reflect, plan, rejuvenate self and find ways and means of convincing (or confusing) others to his line of thinking. He confesses to the ability of being able to tie and untie his webbed knots; "I must do everything in my power to untie the knot I tied myself. I've got to succeed in untying it ..." (*The Marriage*, 51). He emphasizes this: "if it looks as if I have tied a knot, I haven't tied it so tight that it cannot be untied. A little more thinking is all that is needed to untie this knot" (*The Marriage*, 15).

He gets rejuvenated whenever he retires behind the web screen. In mythic tales, heroes go on and into retreats from where they come out stronger and better. After ‘spinning’ a web round his daughter, Ananse himself confesses that he needs a rest: “I’m tired. I need some rest” (*The Marriage*, 15). Storyteller confirms this: “Ananse certainly needs a rest after spinning such a web” (*The Marriage*, 15). This is not an ordinary rest but an hibernation and a deep introspection for planning and untying knots. When he finds himself in a knotty situation and questions, “What am I going to do? In such a fix, what am I going to do” (*The Marriage*, 32), the web screen is used to cover him. Watching that situation, Storyteller informs the audience: “His mind is far away. It’s as if he weren’t with us here He has retreated far, far away. He is nowhere near us. Whatever is it that could bring him back? A Song?” (*The Marriage*, 33). It is the song, “Who is knocking?” (*The Marriage*, 33), which symbolizes the knocking on the door of Ananse’s mind that catches his attention. His web, as a spider, screens him from the general world just as any man needs his personal screening off time for personal introspection, self-examination and rejuvenation.

b. Increase in Fortune and Status through Cunning

Animal folklore heroes like *Ijapa* (Tortoise) and *Ananse* (Spider) increase personal fortune by playing on the weaknesses and gullibility of others. In the text, Ananse plans using what he has to get out of poverty and increase his assets base. After letting his daughter into their world of needs, he professes:

As a result of a most severe cracking of my brains, I’m at last able to see a little hope gleaming in our future and I’m directing my steps towards it ... Step by step, my feet are in motion under the direction of my mind, and I’m on the road to free you and me from want. I’m not saying I want that much. But what if a few things can come my way ...
(*The Marriage*, 5)

He, then, sends letters out hoping to use a lot of subterfuge to ensnare the four nobles through the medium of marrying off his daughter. In exasperation, his daughter exclaims, “Oh, my father is selling me” (*The Marriage*, 11). Largely, he succeeds in

not only enriching himself (and changing his social status), but also in getting a royal marriage for his daughter. This is after a lot of web spinning and unspinning involving lies, deceits, cunning and an imposed assumptional death situation on his daughter (*The Marriage*, 48-50). Out of her 'death', he even gets presents from the suitors and knows what their intentions towards her are.

Christie utilizes this type of cunningness. She also professes to use Ananse's situation to tie herself to him. The cunning personality of Ananse is not deceived by all Christie's behaviour. Christie questions herself: "This man George! For how long am I going to serve him before I get him?" (*The Marriage*, 51). In another instance, she is happy to be referred to as Mrs. Ananse by a taxi-driver: "He is calling me Mrs. Ananse.... Mrs. Ananse, eh? It does sound good." (*The Marriage*, 54). Ananse, who is aware of her deep intentions, sardonically confirms: "You have heard things you want to hear, haven't you?" (*The Marriage*, 54). In the end, Ananse, while ensnaring others, is caught by Christie: "Rare helper! Supporter, your thanks awaits you" (*The Marriage*, 81). The deceiver caught in his own trap! It shows that no matter how wise, like Ananse, a hero is, there is always somebody or situation wiser or higher. This theory is pervasive in mythology. In the Mesopotamia myth of the Gilgamesh epic, Enkidu dies while Gilgamesh finds and gets but loses the power to give Enkidu eternal life. He discovers that he could not conquer death as he had conquered all other things: humans and non-humans. During the Greek Trojan War, Hector, who protected Troy and his brother Paris, was killed by Achilles. The latter, regarded as the greatest of all warriors, was killed by the most unlikely of all warriors, Paris, who could not hold a sword against any major warrior of the time. There is always something or someone greater, wiser, better or higher than the hero who will eventually, at the height of his heroic achievements, succumb to the new force.

c. Marriage Traditions, Customs and Rites

The issue of fathers marrying off their daughters for various reasons is an ever-present one – from time immemorial. While fathers always have specific reasons like Ananse who wants out of poverty, daughters always reject the offer posing like Ananewa:

My father is selling me ... / I'll never comply.
I will not let you sell me / Like some parcel to a customer.
Not ever! (*The Marriage*, 11)

Usually, fathers have their ways through filial love, brutish force or the cunning of the world (which Ananse employs on Anansewa).

To prepare a young girl of marriageable age for this onerous journey, the first step in the Akan (Ghanaian) tradition is the outdoor ceremony. This initiation rite prepares, strengthens and purifies the young girl for the marriage world. A certain age is meant for this rite as stated by Aya: "But to wait until five years after the girl has become a woman, and then say 'outdoor her'! That's not good custom-keeping in anybody's world" (*The Marriage*, 35). The process, rites, materials, chants and incantations are cumulatively symbolic acting as mythological representations of what the people want for the young girl's married life.

The "beautiful" rite, overseen by Aya, starts "at the very crack of dawn" symbolizing Anansewa's entry into a new life with hopes for the future. Anansewa is carried, "preventing her feet from touching the ground. A veil covers her face". Her virginity and purity are not to be corrupted but preserved into the new life she is being transported to. The veil differentiates her old life from the new. It covers the old life, making the new life a mystery and until she is unveiled, she does not know what it entails. The ritual consists of her cleansing as "we clipped your nails, we shaved you. With new sponge and new soap and with life-giving water, we bathe you" (*The Marriage*, 38). According to Duerden (1975:107) among the Akans, ritual washing and cleansing "told a man what his character as a member of his clan should be and reminded him of his need to preserve it himself". The man or woman becomes an acceptable and responsible adult in the community. He or she is initiated into the personal and communal fortunes of the community. For Anansewa, all materials used are new. Mythically, this symbolizes for her not only a new life but also the creation of a new identity with the washing off of her old, naïve and adolescent life. She becomes a new representative and an understanding member of the community.

She is “seasoned” with lime, which is bitter, to help her go through the tough marriage life. She is told: “when life’s hardships approach, you will be capable of standing firm to field them” (*The Marriage*, 39). Palm-oiled yam is sprinkled for the gods and the ancestors to help reduce the hardships she might face in life. According to Awolalu (1979:169), palm-oil “tones down or softens that which would have been otherwise wild and uncontrollable” while the yam represents the highest level of food available. These indirectly ask the gods and the ancestors to accept the best humans can offer and to reciprocally return the best to the concerned. The egg and egg yolk represent fertility and a new life (Duerden, 1975:53). These are used as requests for blessings for the girl as she prepares for a new life. The egg, representing her soul, portrays a beautiful life with the attraction of good fortune. The *nyanya* leaves, which are placed in the water in the brass bowl, are meant to help purge, purify and avert evil on behalf of the young girl so that she would have a successful married life. The water, a purifier, is a gift for a new life. Anansewa is showered with gifts to start her new life. The money and prayers are dropped, said into, and over the water cleansing them for her usage. The Outdooing initiatory ceremony prepares a young girl to become physically, psychologically and spiritually ready for her married life.

The next step begins when the girl finds a likely suitor. This is the placing of the headdrink ceremony. Ananse capitalizes on the unofficial aspect of this official ceremony to rip off the suitors. To him, the suitors should be “willing and eager to oil the wheels of custom” (*The Marriage*, 13) by sending “something for the maintenance of the object of his [their] interest” (*The Marriage*, 13). The suitors send gifts in cash and kind with the knowledge that there is no legal contract binding them to the girl. This is portrayed in the analogy of Akwasi and Akosua. Akwasi’s unofficial headdrink gifts are thrown in his face. He is encouraged to make the ceremony official and Akosua promises:

And after that, I will stop when you call. I’ll take care of your house. I’ll sweep, I’ll scrub, I’ll wash your clothes and I’ll quarrel sweetly with you to your extreme delight. (*The Marriage*, 19)

The headdrink, though craftily employed by Ananse, is the traditional ritual process used by the two families that are to be joined in marriage to know one another. Accordingly, the headdrink is:

an important token by which the marriage is legally established, symbolized by a token sum of money and some drinks, and handed over formally on behalf of the prospective husband to members of the family of the prospective wife (*The Marriage*, 19)

It bestows honour and respect on the intending bride and her family.

d. Cosmic Irruption and Rebirth

Mythical lore holds that there are usually cosmic disturbances and irrutions, positive or negative, before mythic heroes intervene to correct the imbalances. Ananse's socio-economic world is ruptured. He is not making the ends meet; "Life is a struggle. Oh life is a pain While life is whipping you rain also pours down to whip you some more" (*The Marriage*, 1). To right this irrution, he sets out on a self-regenerative process. According to him, he had to cover the cosmic world to rewrite this history and contact those necessary:

I covered miles. I traveled the country, by bus, by train, by
ferry-boat. I looked for introductions into palace after
palace. I listened with ears alert. I observed with keen eyes.
I assessed everything before I selected the four chiefs to
whom I would show your photographs with advantage ...
that covers North, South, East and West.
(*The Marriage*, 11)

In this process, he embarks on heroic thoughts and actions defying the ordinary man's everyday actions. He releases himself from his own web of lies and deceits. In the final analysis and in his bid to have both cosmic and personal rebirths, he and Anansewa embark on 'killing' her. Anansewa exemplifies the worldview of her people in entering the world of the dead and then resurrecting through the power of love.

They believe in the power of love and that their cosmos is divided into two – spiritual and physical. The incantatory power of her father to raise her not only from death but also to appeal to the ancestors portrays that the spiritual and the physical in the African world are intertwined. The ancestors have a say in some of the physical happenings. After libation is poured to the ancestors, Anansewa is asked to “Listen with the ancestors” who accept to send her back to the living.

At the end, and as clarified by Clark in the *Ozidi Saga* (1977): “There is a general sense of relief and rejoicing that natural order has at last been restored” (Introductory Essay, xxi).

e. Modern Revolution and Demystification of the Supernatural Forces

In the text, a slight rejection of the gods is found in relation to their actions and effects on humans. According to Okpewho (1983: 204), contemporary writers, especially those of Marxist-Socialist inclinations delete the godhood from their works as

tales about gods, and heresy and the other superior beings have no place in the new radical outlook, because they help to perpetuate an unjust order and do not take due account of the urgent problems of contemporary society.

In pursuit of this, Sutherland uses Ananse, an ordinary man who finds himself limited. Through personal efforts, he is able to retrieve and create a new world not only for himself but also for his daughter. Instead of always making religious appeals, man should use his brain and willpower to extricate himself from many of the self-imposed webs he finds himself.

The use of Storyteller, Property Man and the Song Leader reduces to ordinariness the religiousness that could be detected in the play. These characters interact with, comment on and even help the main characters on stage. Storyteller even opines that he had been with Ananse since this specific story started. He is also at the end. Property Man hands out all needed stage properties to the characters on stage in the full glare of the audience.

Ebrahim N. Hussein's *Kinjeketile* and Mythotypes

a. Oppression, Suppression, Famine and their Effects

The text establishes the oppression and suppression of Tanzanians by Germans through various persecutions. The men, forced to work on German cotton fields without payments, are still made to pay tax. This affects the people's lives in various ways. The women, like Bibi Kitunda and Bibi Kinjeketile, are left to fend for their homes. They could not find food. One of the fatal casualties of the famine is Bibi Bobati's son.

The men are dehumanized. They are beaten as in the case of Kitunda. He had

straightened up to ease his back a little. The overseer slashed him with a whip. Kitunda wrenched the whip from the overseer and immediately the headman was called in who ordered Kitunda to be whipped some more. (*Kinjeketile*, 3)

The women are not exempted: Bibi Kitunda stands in for her sick husband on the plantation (*Kinjeketile*, 11). This connects with the universal sufferings of the oppressed. Historically, oppressors always have ways and means of oppressing the conquered. To escape this situation, the Tanzanians through the inspirations of Kinjeketile and Kitunda decide to fight back. This is foregrounded in the words of Mkichi:

But it is better to die than to live like this. We are made to work like beasts in the cotton plantation. We are forced to pay tax. We die of hunger because we cannot work on our shambas. I say death is better than this life. (*Kinjeketile*, 8)

Though the battle is lost, the war of freedom is started for other generations to carry on. It becomes certain that the future is secured: freedom can and will be achieved. Kinjeketile confirms this:

A word has been born. Our children will tell their children about this word. Our great grand-children will hear of it. One day the word will cease to be a dream, it will be a reality. (*Kinjeketile*, 53)

b. Betrayal, Unity and War

Betrayal, prevalent in oppressed lands, is also present among the people. It runs its allegations from the physical to the spiritual. Nearly all the major characters, tangible and abstract, physical and spiritual, are accused of one type of betrayal or the other: all having to do with oppression and the struggle for freedom. One of the fundamental reasons for betrayal is epitomized in the words of Kitunda: “We are a hungry people, and hunger drives us to betray one another” (*Kinjeketile*, 5). To escape hunger and allocation of working portions on the plantations, Mnyapala, the overseer, steals and takes “other people’s tender maidens, for the Askari to spoil” instead (*Kinjeketile*, 11). Chausiku, Kitunda’s daughter, is forcefully “stolen” to be “used” by the Askari. Mkichi and Mngindo also accuse Kitunda of betrayal when he advocates patience and caution before any uprising is embarked upon. He is even encouraged to betray his daughter: to give her out to be “used” by the Askari! For this, he would be given two whole days off from work!

On the war, Kitunda accuses Kinjeketile of betraying the trust of the people: “You have cheated us. That stuff about being possessed by Hongo and the water was an act, a deception” (*Kinjeketile*, 28). Kinjeketile encourages the people to believe in the ‘magic water’. He wants to use it as a unifier. On his part, Kinjeketile accuses Hongo, the spirit, of betraying the people, his worshippers. He even doubts the giver and power of the ‘magic water’:

who gave us the water? Was it really Hongo? If it was Hongo, why did he say that we shall be the children of Seyyid Said? Why is he selling us, his own people to another master? ... Perhaps it is he who is betraying us. (*Kinjeketile*, 29)

His grouse with Hongo is the transfer of the people to another external power. A few of the questions that must have run through the mind of Kinjeketile might include the followings: why the transfer from one oppressor to another? If this will happen, why believe in and use the water? Why not embark on a war to ensure permanent individual and communal freedom? In the fight for freedom nobody, spiritual or physical, it appears, could be trusted. What Hussein paints here is the spectre of a new form of intra-continental oppression lurking behind the political scene, especially in Tanzania (Alain 2000).

Unity is the recipe for fighting an enemy. The text exemplifies this with Kinjeketile as its focus. On the surface, it appears that he fails but on second reflection, “a word has been born ... One day the word will cease to be a dream, it will be a reality!” (*Kinjeketile*, 53). The belief is not majorly in the water for the war: it is meant to serve as a mythic medium of unifying the people towards freedom.

Disunity is a limitant to the people’s inability to oppose the Red Earth. Each tribe feels it could stand on its own in all facets of its communal life: military, religious, socio-economic and political. This individualism contributes to their falling under German slavery and becoming dispirited. Old Man gives a relevant formula to this situation: “But to be able to go to war against the Red Earth we must be united. To go to war disunited, fighting one another, is impossible” (*Kinjeketile*, 7). Kinjeketile preaches this unity after his mythical sojourn into the river (*Kinjeketile*, 15-17). He derives his unifying ideology from the gifts of the gods and the ancestors basing it on their consent and approval: “Do not be afraid. Do not fear, for our ancestors support and are behind us” (*Kinjeketile*, 19). According to him, the disunity is caused by “clouds of smoke and fog” (*Kinjeketile*, 15). This disunity, which he calls “darkness” and “cold”, hides the tribes, one from the other, creating hatred and separation. The healing balms are “the rays of the sun” which will “banish from your eyes” all limitations to unity and development. All the tribes become united seeking to defeat the Germans. According to Kitunda, “Day by day we are growing stronger. Yesterday, and the day before, and today, our brothers have come to join forces with us” (*Kinjeketile*, 23).

Kinjeketile advocates belief in man's innate purposeful will and power in effecting changes in and around himself. This is when doubts assail him about the authenticity of Hongo's message and gifts. It is strength in unity and not any spiritual assistance that can deliver the people: "We will be strong; not by some dubious aid from the outside. We will be strong because this strength comes from us – our own strength." (*Kinjeketile*, 29)

During this advocacy, Kinjeketile and Kitunda's hands are forced into war. The people, reposing total trust in the mystical water, agree with Kinjeketile's choice of Kitunda as the army general. The general vacillates between belief in the water and the power of the people. He wants to be doubly sure. Militarily, he advocates for and got the *Likida* war dance so that the warriors could be well trained. In the end, the war is lost not because of his lack of effective leadership but due to circumstances surrounding the war. It is reported that because the men break and violate the taboos set by Kinjeketile (*Kinjeketile*, 40), there are deaths amongst them. This is despite partaking in the water. For most mythic heroes, their falls are usually attributed to the failure of their protective or defensive mythic instruments. Kinjeketile's failure lies in the loss of the water's efficacy. The success comes in the planting of the revolution seed that will be harvested by future generations.

c. Encompassing Presence and Power of the Supernatural Forces

The supernatural forces, especially Hongo, made their presence felt through their human medium, Kinjeketile. Kinjeketile's under-the-river journey and his possession by Hongo depict this. His possession shows the ability of the gods in taking over the human and his thinking faculties. The physical manifestation of possession sees Kinjeketile "stiff like a wood carving" (*Kinjeketile*, 12). His robotic instincts direct him into the river: "he is 'pulled' to the river" (*Kinjeketile*, 12). He has no control over himself. This also happens in the spirit as he confesses (about his possession by Hongo): "When I let him possess me he robs me of my thinking power. I don't know a thing when he possesses me" (*Kinjeketile*, 30). First Man and Second Old Man confirm these positing respectively: "The man has certainly been taken by Chunusi"

(another god) (*Kinjeketile*, 13) and “Hongo does not take people away. He merely possesses them” (*Kinjeketile*, 14).

Kinjeketile’s possession and under-the-river journey produce two gifts for the people: a small pot filled with water and a fly-whisk. According to him, these mystic instruments would help the people attain freedom. It follows that they have the support of the gods. Kinjeketile elucidates:

These are the gifts given us by our ancestors and our spirits.
Hear from me who comes from Bokelo, the land of our ancestors,
the message from our fore fathers: “Destroy the Red Earth!” And
these are the instruments. (*Kinjeketile*,16)

The aura of a seer-prophet supported by the gods is created when Kinjeketile appears dry to the people straight from the river. He has powers over ferocious animals and nature. A mystic aura and belief in and around Kinjeketile arises. In most myths, the characters are mystified not only by their actions but also by the support they appropriate from the gods.

People with differing languages but related customs and origins are usually divided over the nomenclature attributed to their pantheons. Hussein preaches the sameness of all the gods, no matter where situated, though they might have differing names. In the text, Kolelo and Hongo become the same. Different tribes suffering under the same whip are able to fight a common cause of freedom under one banner, as “Hongo is merely another name for Kolelo” (*Kinjeketile*, 32).

Kinjeketile moves the people towards a symbolic thanksgiving: an African and world-wide belief and action. The gods have provided a way out of their dilemma with liberating instruments. They, therefore, deserve the people’s deep and heartfelt thanks:

Let us now go to the river and worship.
Let us appease the ancestors, the spirits,
Let us offer our thanks to Hongo. (*Kinjeketile*, 19)

The various accusations did not stop Kitunda and Kinjeketile from doubting the intentions of the ancestors and the gods towards their worshippers. Confronted with

the accusation of condemning his people to another oppressor, Seyyid Said, Kinjeketile withdraws from possession by Hongo. He prefers to “wait for a revelation – from God” (*Kinjeketile*, 30). This, in most traditional African religious beliefs, is impossible. Expressing a general African idea, Kitunda lashes at Kinjeketile, “You blaspheme! You can only reach God through Hongo. It is impossible otherwise” (*Kinjeketile*, 30). Grillo (2006) expresses the same idea. In the Yoruba mytho-religious belief, approaching God is meant for “prayers of last resort”. He is approached through one of the lesser gods. In this case, this ascending hierarchical arrangement from the people to Kinjeketile to Hongo to the mizimu to the miungu to Mungu (God) is supposed to suffice. Not hearing from God and doubting the lower gods foreground the fact that man can be self-sufficient, to an extent. He must, therefore, take his destiny in his own hands.

d. Supernatural Gifts

The two gifts given Kinjeketile for the people are supposedly spiritually (gods and ancestors’) anointed. The water and the flywhisk are, therefore, not only representative of the supernatural forces but also symbolic in the people’s fight against German oppression.

The flywhisk, depicting Kinjeketile’s spiritual connection, is an impartative tool of blessings on the people. In his work on Yoruba culture, Apter (1992: 59, 96) posits that the horsetail / fly-whisk marks the continuity of royal lineage and the cultural position of “chieftaincy”. Kinjeketile’s royal and spiritual lineages are confirmed, symbolizing him as a spiritually anointed leader and chief amongst his people. It is also “the whisk of power” (*Kinjeketile*, 16). With it comes his recognition as a holder of supernatural powers with the ability of blessing the people and transferring the ancestors’ felicitation, protection and goodwill to those who participate in the struggle (*Kinjeketile*, 17).

Unifying the people, the water is assumed to have the power of conferring invincibility on the people from the German bullets. It depicts the ancestors’ support for the people’s freedom struggle. Due to the people’s faith in its potency, they flock

to Kinjeketile and Kitunda. On the other hand, unknown to the unwary populace, both characters have their doubts about it. Kinjeketile, the 'bringer' of the water loses interest the moment he knows that a new oppressor, Seyyid Said, waits to take over the moment the Germans are thrown out. Kitunda believes that the people should rely more on their physical prowess, knowledge and armoury.

The impotency of the water is attributed to the breaking of its taboos. To sustain not only the water myth but also the freedom struggle, Kinjeketile refuses to recant. For the generality, therefore, the water did not fail but its power was misused and abused. At the end, the myth of the gifts is upheld not only for their spiritual powers and effects but for the sociological and psychological influences they would have on generations of people to come. Kinjeketile comments on his own refusal to recant:

Do you know what they will say tomorrow? The officer will say that we were wrong. He will tell our children that we were wrong in fighting him. ... That to fight him is wrong! *That to fight for one's country is wrong!* And he wants me to help him by retracting all that I said. He wants me to say that the water was a lie. Do you know what that means? The moment I say that, people in the north, south, east and west will stop fighting. They will fall into hopeless despair – they will fall into hopeless despair – they will give up. I will not say that! (*Kinjeketile*, 53)

e. Kinjeketile, the Seer

The process of creating a mythical character encompasses the physical and spiritual modes. Usually, his / her physical actions and inactions, though physical, become attributable to metaphysical supports and sources: the ancestors, spirits and gods (Ngumoha 1988, Okeama 2005). This process plays itself out in the creation of Kinjeketile, the seer. According to Hussein (1970: vi), Kinjeketile, the man, had lived near Ngarambe before becoming known in 1904. This would have been when the spirit, Hongo, who dwelt in a pool in the tributary of the River Rufiji in Southern Tanzania, possessed him. From that moment, he became a demigod like Ezeulu in *Arrow of God*, "who is half man and half spirit" (Duerden, 1975:30) as "One half of

him was man, the other half *mmo* – the half that was painted over with white chalk at important functions” (Achebe, 1964: 241).

The first metaphysical inference to Kinjeketile comes from the discussion between Chausiku and her mother, Bibi Kitunda. He is unconsciously symbolized with the snake that chases Chausiku from approaching his house. Bilocative ability ascribed to him is also referred to by the men: he is simultaneously on the field and at home. His mythical characterization peaks after spending about two days under the river and emerging dry. In his goings and comings, para-spiritual characteristics are exhibited: he speaks in tongue, “some strange Swahili – like Arabic” (*Kinjeketile*, 21); he controls wild animals like lions; his physical appearance and expressions change for according to Kitunda: “your face is smooth, not dry ... you have somehow shrunk” (*Kinjeketile*, 20). All these, amongst other characteristics, set him out from others. The people, confronted with all these, see no reason in not following him: it is obeying their ancestors and gods.

His transmutation and change in focus occur when informed that he might unwittingly be selling his people into another world of slavery. He refuses to be possessed by the spirit, Hongo, again and decides to wait on God to highlight the way. He transfers his belief from the magic water to the inner strength and unity of the people. It is already too late: the total belief in the water contributes to the immediate loss of the struggle.

He becomes a permanent mythical hero in his refusal to recant and retract all his avowed prophecies not only about the water but also on the freedom struggle. This is succinctly exemplified in Okeama’s (2005) article, “Maji Maji: Yesterday’s Criminals, Today’s Heroes.” His position in the mytho-historical and political landscape of his people becomes assured. He develops into a mythical figure larger than life. His individuality of sacrifice, termed “political voluntarism” by Alain (2000), cements his mythic image and the future freedom of his people (Duerden 1975, Apter 1992). A fitting epitaph, though written in a general tone by Izevbaye (1979: 19-20), can be ascribed to this hero:

Generally, it is the traditional epic which glorifies the collective achievement of a human group by embodying this in the actions of heroes ... who best embody the group's most valued ideals... . The epic hero ... that man of uncommon abilities who combines in himself the most highly rated values of his race.

f. Modern Revolution and Demystification of the Supernatural Forces

Hussein establishes that though there can be spiritual help and assistance in any struggle, the people themselves must be the vanguard and arrowhead of the struggle – armed or not. The spiritual and ancestral gifts of the magic water and the flywhisk are only to assist and not be the main paraphernalia of the struggle.

The doubts that trouble Kinjeketile and which he passes on to Kitunda are meant to help the people focus on their struggle. The rhetorical question he faces is the same Ezeulu encounters in *Arrow of God* (1964:229): could a god lead his people into the thick of battle and desert them before or after a defeat (by handing them over to another oppressor)? Kinjeketile's inner thoughts flow in line with Ezeulu's:

Had he not divined the god's will and obeyed it? When was it ever heard that a child was scalded by the piece of yam its own mother put in its palm? What man would send his son with a potsherd to bring fire from a neighbour's hut and then unleash rain on him? Whoever sent his son up the palm to gather nuts and then took an axe and felled the tree? But today such a thing had happened before the eyes of all. What could it point to but the collapse and ruin of all things? Then a god, finding himself powerless, might take flight and in one final, backward glance at his abandoned worshippers cry:

If the rat cannot flee fast enough
Let him make way for the tortoise!

From these limitations and doubts, Kinjeketile tries convincing, to an extent, Kitunda. His idea is that a god who would not stay by his worshippers should not be followed dogmatically. This elicits his change in policy direction culminating in the demystification of the powers of the ancestors, the gods, their gifts and influence in the

affairs of men. The people's strength and valour should come from within. According to him: "We will be strong, but not by being strengthened by some dubious aid from the outside. We will be strong because this strength comes from us – our own strength" (*Kinjeketile*, 29).

This situation forces Kitunda to insist that the men be trained in warfare techniques. He takes them through the *Likida* (war dance) practice. In the war game, he is a technically sound general as he distributes his men well. His techniques are defeated because of his warriors' total but fatal belief in the power of the water. The water is supposed to achieve unity of all the various tribes jointly oppressed by the Germans. Writing on the necessity and effectiveness of Art in the socio-political world of any nation, Osofisan (2005:30) touches on the issue of unity and what man can do:

Our nation is divided; but art can create the sense of a common identity by assembling and building upon our common cultural traits, our common practices and our common beliefs. And where the differences must exist, the artist can help smoothen the harshness out of our necessary encounters, by exploiting and explaining the uniqueness of these differences. For even if everybody is well-fed, we cannot live together in harmony, or make progress if we continue to suspect or misunderstand one another, if we insist on regarding the other citizen as the stranger or the enemy.

Hussein uses *Kinjeketile*, the character, and *Kinjeketile*, the text, as portrayals of the next level of socio-religious and political struggle. Help and assistance are not outside the man who wants to achieve but within him. He must achieve based on his capabilities and limitations. This perspective is explored in works like *Red is the Freedom Road* and *Morountodun* by Femi Osofisan, *Farewell to Babylon* by Bode Sowande amongst others. According to Okpewho (1983:3), the old mythology no longer

provides sufficient answers for the problems of contemporary African society ... Consequently an energy

directed at creating a new mythology that would offer ... a firmer road to self-realization

should be the focus. This demystifies the old gods and reduces reliance on them; paving ways and means for new methods of fighting socio-political, religious and economic ills.

Athol Fugard *et al's* *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and Mythotypes

a. Industrialization and Civilization

In this 'modern' world of South Africa, the words 'Serf', 'Lord' and 'Serfdom' are anomalies but are synonymised in blacks ('boys'), whites ('baas') and industries (like Ford Motor plant) respectively. This is a mythical cover-up of the everlasting subjugation of the ordinary man, the conquered and the subjugated. This is an anachronistic feudal world in a supposedly industrialized and civilized country!

The car plant, an avenue of socio-economic exploitation, negates any development the blacks might ever seek for in a world controlled by the whites. With its expansion, the black workers would still not benefit. Styles states:

'Car plant expansion, 1.5 million rand plan'. *Ja*. I'll tell you what *that* means ... more machines, bigger buildings ... never any expansion to the pay-pocket. Make me fed-up.
(*Sizwe Bansi*, 3)

It is only when those in charge pay visits that life, temporarily, change for the over-worked but underpaid servile workers. These sorts of visits are usually fun-fares and nothing comes out of them. The visit of "Mr. Henry Ford Junior Number two or whatever the hell he is" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 4) catches the headlines. He is "... going to see to it that the conditions of their non-white workers in Southern Africa were substantially improved" but "The talk ended in the bloody newspaper. Never in the pay-pocket." Again, these type of visits demand superficial changes that do not affect the lives of the workers. At Ford's car plant, in anticipation of the visit, surface and

ordinary factory changes are implemented: general cleaning, writing and painting of alert notifications, new overalls and new tools etc. Not only do the visitors not look at the workers, the workers are worked to make up for lost time:

One... two... three... OUT! Into the Galaxie and gone!
That's all. Didn't talk to me, Mr. 'Baas' Bradley, Line
Supervisor, or anybody. He didn't even look at the plant!
And what did I see when those three Galaxies disappeared?
The white staff at the main switchboard.
'Double speed on the line! Make up for production lost!' It
ended up with us working harder that bloody day than ever
before. Just because that big ... (*Sizwe Bansi*, 8-9)

The myth of servility and economic-deprivation, which is as ancient as man, continues to be propagated even in the 'modern' South Africa: a world of exploiters and the exploited, the haves and have-nots.

This situation and others of its ilk are built on social deceit emanating from the lack of education of the blacks. The government, through its various apartheid policies, enforces this. Though the blacks are forced to learn the language of the whites, the latter do not speak, write or understand those of the blacks. This portrays the myth of superiority of not only of language but also of race. To converse with their conquered, therefore, translators, like Styles are needed by the whites, even on a temporary basis. This gives the impotent blacks, through Styles, a temporary superiority edge.

The myth of subjugation is propagated by keeping the blacks out of work. Without earning power, they are de-humanized, easily toyed with and geographically restricted to wherever the government deems fit. According to Man (*Sizwe*), who has run out of time of staying in Port Elizabeth and is 'endorsed' to be deported to King William's Town:

Port Elizabeth is a big place, a very big place with lots of
factories but also lots of people looking for a job like me.
There are so many men, Nowetu, who have left their places

because they are dry and have come here to find work.
(*Sizwe Bansi*, 22).

The women are not left out of this economic disenfranchisement. Buntu's wife "is a domestic ... sleep-in at Kabega Park ... only comes home weekends" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 23). In answer to Buntu's statement "Your wife is not working" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 27), Man (Sizwe) gives a desultory answer:

The place where we stay is fifteen miles from town. There is only one shop there. Baas van Wyk. He has already got a woman working for him. King William's Town is a dry place Mr. Buntu ... very small and too many people.
(*Sizwe Bansi*, 27)

Only the conquerors have the economic power to employ. If the black men and the women are not employed, then they become non-persons. This is the main aim of the apartheid policies and system. It is only a façade for under-developing and under-industrializing the blacks and their civilization. The myth of suppression and oppression, perpetrated through the system, is iconized through various encoded economic symbols.

b. Absurdities

This political dramatic text is a concretized illusion that realizes itself through the lives of the concerned blacks. In all mythical stories, the absurd becomes employable in the storyteller's hand. This creates a larger-than-life scenario authenticating the cosmogonic inference and reference to the lives of the people. The absurd hero, Styles, not only encounters other absurdist characters, he demonstrates absurdist tendencies and actions. All these are in the guise of portraying the irrationality of and the inherent failure embedded in the apartheid system just as all xenophobic philosophies from eternity had failed.

The general absurdities cut across the characters (abstract and concrete), the scenes, the actions, the surreal thematic focus and the sparse setting. This situation starts with Styles' struggle to get control of his shop by attacking the Cockroaches

with the insecticide, Doom. To escape this, the Cockroaches, who have a 'leader' - Old Professor - organize a meeting and are inoculated:

Brothers, we face a problem of serious pollution ... contamination! The menace appears to be called Doom! I have recommended a general inoculation of the whole community. (*Sizwe Bansi*, 11)

The insecticide does not kill them as "The old bastard on the floor just waved his feelers in the air as if he was enjoying air-conditioning" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 12). The improbable did the job: a little cat, Blackie, as in South African "township, cats are insect-eaters" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 12). Before all these, Styles had heard the cockroaches conversing and relegating his actions, against them, into the dustbin of time. They are outwitted just like in any mythic story: heroes, like Styles, use unethical and unconventional avenues and means to win their adversaries and wars.

All the other characters are imaginary but concrete: they are dredged from the memories of Buntu, Sizwe and Styles (especially). Thus, the concrete illusion theory in the text is established. This extends to the different cards and movies that are taken. The audience knows, sees and understands majority of the events through Styles' imaginary pictorial anecdotes and descriptions. These imagery are painted and concretised: the audience 'feels' these card and movie characters. Through the movie, Man (Sizwe) brings the second cycle of the play alive. The movie becomes a reality and Sizwe walks out of it (through the instrumentality of Man) to dictate a letter to his wife, Nowetu. At the end, his movie-picture becomes still and is taken. The more incongruous the actions and scenes, the more effective the thematic focus and direction become.

In death, Outa Jacob fulfils his "terms of his contract with God" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 28). Death and dying, a contract between the living and God, is only fulfilled when the human dies. The human cannot escape because "wherever Man is, or whatever he does, he is never without his faithful companion, Death" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 28). This is likened to the Native Identity Card falsely forced on the blacks. It must always be on them: dead or alive. Freedom is achieved only when they are dead having

reached Home The only time we'll find peace is when they dig a hole for us and press our face into the earth. (*Sizwe Bansi*, 28).

c. Apartheid: Loss and Acquisition of Identity

(Dream of Reality and Freedom)

The system of Apartheid is configured to achieve the depersonalization, deprivation and dehumanization of the black and minority populace. To achieve this, the policy attacks different levels of the people's consciousness and psyche.

In the first instance, the languages of the blacks become anathema. It is not to be spoken in official and educational environments. With this stroke, the blacks are deprived of their hereditary communicative medium. Therefore, the only time Styles is 'employed' a translator becomes for him a time of avenging what he and his people had lost. But it is an impotent strike at the policy. The whites neither speak nor write the language(s) of the blacks. On the other hand, the blacks must speak and write the language of the whites. This situation is vividly captured in the writing scene between Styles and Baas Bradley. The language imposition is mythical, as it tends to suppress the culture and traditions of the conquered. Therefore, for Styles, getting Baas Bradley in a kneeling position while he stands gives him his own pound of flesh.

At the economic level, the dictum is that of 'he who pays the piper dictates the tune'. The whites own, if not all, the major economic and employing avenues. The blacks are at their mercies and caprices. Baas Bradley says that Mr. Henry Ford Junior, "the owner of this place, is going to visit us. Mr. Ford is the big Baas. He owns the plant and everything in it" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 7). In the Kafkaesque discussion between Man and Buntu about employment, it is discovered that without any white man's legal backing, hardly can any black man get any profitable job.

Buntu: Do you know any white man who's prepared to give you a job?

Man: No. I don't know any white man.

Buntu: Pity. We might have been able to work something out

then. You talk to the white man, you see, and ask him to write a letter saying he's got a job for you.

With this letter, Man will still go through a bureaucratic labyrinth before being excluded from 'raids'. Without this, the only option left are the mines where the whites "don't worry about Influx Control" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 26). According to Man, "many black men get killed when the rocks fall. You can die there" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 26). Those who work in established institutions like the Ford Motors get a "Gold-wrist watch in twenty-five years time when they sign you off because you're too old for anything any more" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 9).

The Influx Control, a repatriative policy, which limits and cuts off blacks from lucrative cities, uses the raiding system to flush them out sending them back to their original dead-ends. All the icons of servility and repression are established in mythic archetypal symbols, wrapped in a cocoon of population numeracy. First, the blacks are raided (*Sizwe Bansi*, 23) like it happens to Man (*Sizwe*). This serves to keep them pinned to specific environments: their right to movement and by extension to good jobs is denied. Dennis Brutus, the South Africa poet, in his rebellious poem, "A troubadour I traverse..." succinctly captures this:

A troubadour, I traverse all my land
exploring all her wide-flung parts with zest
probing in motion sweeter far than rest
her secret thickets with an amorous hand:
*and I have laughed, disdaining those who banned
inquiry and movement. . . (Italics mine)*

The ordinary man is immersed into the apartheid world through various documentations. As a person and to be recognized as such, he or she must have a number: a social number on his Native Identification Card: "It's more important than your name" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 29). It must always be on the black wherever he goes or else he is arrested. Without it, he is a non-person as the "white man at the Labour Bureau takes the book, looks at it - doesn't look at you!" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 25). The passbook allows him to stay in any specific place the government deems fit: "But if that book

says go, you go” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 24). His pink card is his record card at the Labour Bureau. According to Buntu, “Your whole bloody life is written down on that” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 24). To become a trader, a Hawker’s License must be acquired. A Residence permit, which allows one to stay in a place and escape raids, must be signed. Buntu elaborates the torturous, if not impossible, process of getting this (*Sizwe Bansi*, 25-26). Styles had to get official permission before opening and operating his photographic studio! The black man must do all these to stay out of trouble. Man elaborates upon the impossibility of not falling into trouble: “A Blackman stay out of trouble? Impossible, Buntu. Our skin is trouble” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 43).

The blacks become depersonalized, debased, de-organized and de-humanized. Their personalities become that of the slave and they must always “hide your feelings” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 7); “clean your face” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 42); “adopt a fawning, servile pose in front of the white man” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 43). The whites, on the hand, see all blacks as thieves: “the old Security Guard ... who every time he saw a black man walk past with his hands in his pocket ... saw another spark-plug walk out of the plant” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 8). In his mocking and satirical translation for Baas Bradley, Styles captures it all:

Gentlemen, he says that when the door opens and his grandmother walks in you must see to it that you are wearing a mask of smiles. Hide your true feelings, brothers. You must sing. The joyous songs of the days of old before we had fools like this one next to me to worry about.
(*Sizwe Bansi*, 7)

To achieve racial, national, group and individual identity, the blacks and the other minority groups, at different levels and with different results, attack and attempt to alleviate the effect of the apartheid system on their communal life. These are the way(s) their dream for and of freedom could be achieved either in the long or short term. Styles breaks from the ordinary track, becomes self-employed making his studio “a story-room of dreams” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 12) for himself and his people. He becomes the mythic hero serving as a conduit for people’s dreams and achievements (personal or group). An example of this achievement is the academic man who gets a standard

six certificate at the age of forty-eight after seven years of study (he would become a boss-boy) and who tells Styles:

But I am not finished. I'm going to take up for the Junior Certificate, then Matric ... and you watch, Mr. Styles. One day I walk out of my house, graduate, *self-made*. (*Sizwe Bansi*, 14) (Italics mine)

Styles helps keep history alive through the family cards he takes. One of the photos consists of "my father, my mother, my brothers and sisters, their wives and husbands, our children. Twenty-seven of us" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 15), captures, through the grandfather, the past, present and future of the African world. It is through Styles that Man as Sizwe dies and resurrects as Robert achieving a temporary psycho-cultural and traditional freedom for himself and his family. Buntu, who understands the policy, meets Sizwe through and in the picture, helps in refocusing Sizwe's consciousness and ego to living within and accepting the system. Styles' father, one of the few who take the armed way, fights for South Africa in the Second World War "So that this country and all the others could stay Free" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 17). On returning, he is denied the freedom he risked his life for but got for others. In an ironic compensation, he is given a scoff-tin and a bicycle. His freedom ends "in a rotten old suitcase amongst some of his old rags" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 19) when he dies.

Politically, the struggle leads to the independence of a part of the country. This is farcical and of no use as explained by Man:

when a car passes or the wind blows up the dust, Ciskeian Independence makes you cough put a man in a pondok and call that independence? ... Ciskeian independence is shit! (*Sizwe Bansi*, 31)

This type of pseudo neo-colonialism was practiced by colonial governments which ruled the various Africa countries. Kenya got her 'majimboism' and Nigeria, her regional governments. This policy of getting independence region-by-region, district by district, or in piecemeal is meant to swindle the people into believing that

independence has being given. It implants separation and tribal segregation among the people. Reacting to this type of situation, Kimathi, the hero in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Githae Mugo (1976:46), exclaims:

Would you too call the war for national liberation a regional movement? What has colonialism done to your thinking? Hear me. Kenya is one indivisible whole. The cause we fight for is larger than provinces: it shatters ethnic barriers. It is a whole people's cause.

The text advocates ways out of the imbroglio. The cat that eats cockroaches depicts a struggle, a fight unlike those of the past. This is exemplified in how Sizwe becomes Robert. Returning from Sky's place in the night, Sizwe and Buntu get lost. After debating on how to move, they took

An appropriate change in direction. They continue walking and eventually arrive at a square, with roads, leading off in many directions. Sizwe is lost. He wanders around, uncertain of the direction to take.
(*Sizwe Bansi*, 31) (Bold mine)

From here, Buntu not only finds the way but he also discovers the body of Robert through which Sizwe gets his new lease of life. This portends a future of independence and freedom for the people from the ashes of their former struggles and dead lives.

d. Modern Revolution and Demystification of the Supernatural Forces

The thematic focus shows explicitly the complexity of man's ambivalence and contradiction: man as man's enemy and friend, oppressor and saviour, concurrently. Man is chained and bound by man: it is only man that can release man from these oppressive and suppressive psycho-social, political and economic bondages. The tools of unbinding himself surround him: he only needs to be creative, determined and focused.

When Styles finds cockroaches in his new shop he directly goes for the obvious solution: an insecticide. In his failure but creativeness at finding a lasting solution to

his *periplaneta americana* problem, he comes across a cat that could do the job. The cockroaches even undergo inoculation! Metaphorically, the cat is suggestive of new solutions black South Africans must look for. It is prophetic because it was not until all the military and violent struggles ended and dialogue ensued that relief came for South Africa.

To make Sizwe come alive in Robert, no ritualistic hullabaloo and religious chants are needed. The change becomes modern through a change of official identification numbers and information encompassed in an official document. The calling on the gods to effect spiritual and physical changes in both the human and spiritual environments no longer hold sway. Man must dance to the tune of his contemporary world; he must look into and outside of himself consigning the gods to the nether world. The apartheid problem, though falsely rooted in Christian doctrine, was created by men (legitimized during the tenure of the South African President Dr. Daniel Malan in 1948 and maintained by other prime ministers and presidents like Hendrik Verwoerd, B. J Vorster and Pieter Botha). It was, therefore, pertinent for it to be resolved by men (through the instrumentalities of leaders like Frederik Willem de Klerk, Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and Thabo Mbeki). No spiritual aids were needed.

Tewfik al-Hakim's *Fate of a Cockroach* and Mythotypes

a. Battles of the Sexes and Species

(Feminism and Masculinism / Specie Superiority)

According to the online comment at theatre-tix@osu.edu., the play is a “riotously comic and dark political allegory with marital force”. From the world of the cockroaches to the one of the humans, it is a battle for gender and specie superiority. While the sexes (King and Adil, Queen and Samia) fight for superiority, the different species (Ants, Cockroaches, Humans) debate and proffer reasons for species superior.

These myths have been with man since immemorial and have caused continuous conflicts and distractions in the overall development of the world.

The myth of gender superiority is perpetrated but debated among the cockroaches through King and Queen. The idea of equality and feminism belongs to Queen who asserts that King is not her superior (maybe except with his long whiskers!). In nullifying all King's gender superiority reasons, she opines: "I'm exactly the same as you - there's no difference between us at all" (*Cockroach*, 2). Though overwhelmed by the number of males in the royal council, Queen holds her own in all arguments serving as an impetus and a stabilizing factor among and for the cockroaches. In frustration, she condemns all the men: "Shut up, you effete weakling! Leave the matter in my hands!" (*Cockroach*, 19). The leaders, in her opinion, apart from being regarded socially as males, are cowards dodging responsibilities. She sees herself as not only their equal but someone fit to usurp their traditional socio-political and cultural roles. She states:

That's better! Husbands like you are submissive only to a woman who maintains her rights (*Cockroach*, 6)

Were it not that I am at his side, what would he do? Deep down inside he feels this. I am a stronger personality than he, but he's always trying to fool himself, to make himself out as superior (*Cockroach*, 23).

In the human world, the gender superiority struggle is between Adil and Samia. Adil is the hen-pecked husband, while Samia is the amazon. She is the ultimate liberated woman at her aristocratic and authoritative height. In all aspects of their matrimonial life, she lords it over her husband giving him no breathing space. He is so stifled that he psychologically aligns himself and his life's struggle for freedom to that of the cockroach fighting for life and escape in the bathtub. This inverted world is refracted and set to implode on Egypt's socio-cultural environment. Power to rule is delegated to the wrong hands and the people continue to suffer until things are righted. Adil's struggle for freedom, regarded by his wife as "rebellious", creates a false myth

of masculinism. This sort of situation creates the “playful misogynist” picture of Al-Hakim. The on-line comment at theatre-trix@osu.edu suffices:

In the juxtaposition of fantastic and realistic settings, Hakim creates a searing indictment that extends from Egyptian leaders to the general populace.

This myth of freedom usurpation and freedom retrieval takes Adil on a mythic sojourn through the process of understanding and freedom attainment (*Cockroach*, 30-31). External forces (radio announcer and song) enlighten him in his matrimonial relationship with his wife. This is when he could self-question himself:

Why am I so weak with you? But - but is it really weakness? No, it's impossible - it's merely that I spoil you. I spoil you because you're a woman, a weak woman, the weaker sex. (*Cockroach*, 29)

In response, Samia surmises: “I ... I believe his personality to be weaker than mine” (*Cockroach*, 55) but under pressure, confesses and retracts all her negative opinions about her husband. Though she regrets all her assumptions (*Cockroach*, 67) her husband assumes that his struggle is lost as King dies. Therefore, the former state of affairs is resorted to at the end.

The myth of specie / race superiority is one that has been with man through the ages. Countries, peoples, races and nations have fought and refought wars to establish or eliminate this erroneous idea. As fast as it is set up anywhere is as fast as it crumbles. The 19th century Russian Jewish pogrom, the 20th century German Nazism and the South African apartheid policies are a few examples set up to foster racial superiority over others. In this text, the cockroaches see themselves as the most superior creatures alive and the ants as their inferior, their footstool. The humans, unaware, are regarded as the invisible and inexplicable gods. The humans and the cockroaches, ego conscious and crass in cosmological assumptions and judgments, are the most confused and lost of all the creatures examined. The most humble, who rely on themselves, are the ants. They are most unconcerned with the inane issues fought

and struggled over by other creatures. And like their kinds rejected all over the human world, the myth holds that though they always suffer, they are in the long run left standing with their erstwhile ‘conquerors’ defeated.

b. Elitism

The belief in the myth of a group of (related) people as rulers is as old as man. Overtime, this myth becomes concretized as families were chosen or chose themselves as rulers becoming royalty. In the world of the cockroaches, the position of King, Savant, Priest and Minister are self-appointed. King makes himself the head based on the length of his whiskers. Others appoint themselves into their different roles. According to King, “I didn’t appoint him. I told you so a thousand times - I never appointed anyone. It’s he who appointed himself. I accepted because he had no rival” (*Cockroach*, 9).

In history, few sets of royalties have ever served the interest of the whole. The cockroaches’ elite is not different. It is self-serving, pompous, cowardly and full of inanities. To the main problem of the ants, it has no solutions. It is composed of extreme bureaucrats who renounce responsibilities, abdicating duties with nobody held responsible. Nothing is achieved because the power to rule is not derived from the ruled. This is epitomized in the instance of the singing cockroach who could not be bothered with his leaders: “And who asked you to think for me? I think for myself” (*Cockroach*, 24). This is amplified in the philosophical introspection of Savant: “If the king can’t order ten cockroaches to assemble together, then what authority has the king got?” (*Cockroach*, 11). The mythic but very relevant issue Al-Hakim attempts to put cross here is the justification for and the derivative source of power either from self or the people. This becomes appropriate not only for Egypt’s political and economic cosmology but the whole political world. On the other hand, the ants have a communal derivative power. This allows them do things in common for the whole good:

Adil: Yes, ants carrying off the corpse of the cockroach
Adil: Take note of that ant in the front. Do you see it?

Doctor: Yes, it's dragging the cockroach by its whiskers.

Adil: As through it were a ship's tow rope.

Doctor: And this group of ants in the rear, they're pushing it from the back. Do you see?

Adil: The work's distributed amongst them with extraordinary discipline (*Cockroach*, 72-73)

Al-Hakim, from this work, shows his disappointment with Egypt's government of the day. He condemns how it derived power and utilized it over the ruled. To him, power lies in and with the people. According to the Al-Ahram Online Magazine (1998) in a review of Al-Hakim's *In the Tavern of life and Other Stories*:

Again, in all Al-Hakim's works, one can perceive his antagonistic stand vis-à-vis the state. Although, or possibly because he worked as a civil servant in different areas, he criticized what he called 'state interference in the field of arts'.

c. Absurdities

This bizarre drama is written for the theatre of the absurd. In this world, there is the primal terror of the unknown and the unfathomable. According to Wheelwright (1982: 163):

Man encounters also, and develops a readiness to encounter the strange; and this readiness in turn has a double aspect. For the strange can alarm and it can fascinate; it is likely to do both at once, although in different degrees, and the two emotions in combination - terror subdued by wonder-produce awe. Where the effect is more intriguing than frightening, men see fetishes in pebbles, spirits in rocks and rivers, totem-brothers in beasts, and gods in the sun and mountain tops.

In this Al-Hakimian world, cockroaches discuss, have opinions, get married, and are Kings and Queens. They are Kings because of the length of their whiskers and Queens are made "By commonsense logic. As I was King and you were the female I loved and lived with, so you were of necessity Queen" (*Cockroach*, 5). In extension, all state

officials are self-appointed. None of the ruled has any say in the appointments. The royal council is, therefore, constituted on

Necessity. I found no one but them wanting to be close to me. They are in need of someone to whom they can pour out their absurdities, whereas I am in need of close companions who will call me 'Your Majesty'.
(*Cockroach*, 5-6)

The rulers of this world are selfish and self-opinionated cockroaches. They are so individualistic that the Minister could not fight for the corpse of his son carted away by the ants. The only unifying force is their greed: wherever there is tomato or sugar, they congregate. They do not produce but look for food as destroying parasites. In this, they glorify their system and world calling the phenomenon "an instinctive defence mechanism" (*Cockroach*, 13).

On the other hand are the ants: the base creatures of the cosmos. From eternity, they have been a continual threat to the cockroaches despite their small size. They kill and transport any cockroach that falls on his/her back to their towns and villages. According to the absurd summation of the cockroaches, the ants have Ministers of War and Supply, troops and armies, towns, villages and stores. The cockroaches are at their mercies because no solution could be found for their menace. This connotatively laughable situation is deeply symbolical of and reflective of the human cosmology. The cockroaches and the ants represent part of the hierarchical structure of the human world. They are disturbed and influenced by external forces they neither understand nor comprehend. These come as phenomena especially for the cockroaches: dazzling light, moving mountains, choking rains and others. From a holistic perspective, these are after-effects of human actions as they are reflected in the cockroaches' world: humans squashing mosquitoes underfoot, using insecticides and mop to terminate cockroaches.

The fear of these phenomena and their terminative effects discourage the cockroaches from general assemblage. As an extension, it becomes the foundation for the establishment of prayers, supplications and sacrifices leading to a formal religious

institution fraught with and based on the fears of the unknown. Most of the human actions, which are coincidental to happenings in the world of the cockroaches, become answers to prayers. According to Priest, to sacrifice and pray to these 'gods' one must have something tangible at hand:

Priest: There is no stipulation or volunteering, but anyone who asks something of someone should aim to tempt him ... Describe it how you will but I cannot make a request of the gods while I am empty-handed. (*Cockroach*, 16)

and

The result is not in my hands - I offer the sacrifices and the gods are free to accept or refuse them. (*Cockroach*, 15)

The text delves also into the world of the ants. The audience sees them talking, singing and working in a communal setting. As small as they are, they are a great threat to the big cockroaches. Theirs is to work and make themselves happy like the proletariats in the human world. They are unconcerned about others as long as food is available in the shape and size of a dead cockroach.

In this world of diversities, the humans, regarded as gods, are also striving for attainment. Adil, the husband, is lost psychologically but finds a temporary solace in the struggle of King. His association with the cockroach's struggle is both pathological and allegorical. He is in love with the ideal of the cockroach's struggle but not the cockroach itself. Like the cockroach, he becomes a scapegoat: the repressed and oppressed who must struggle to escape his limiting world. Al-Hakim depicts this situation in his relationship with his father:

Had my father been able to find an outlet for his literary tendencies and wishes, he would have spared me and freed me from this pull of literature, and I could have turned unfettered to something My father therefore cast upon

my shoulders what his circumstances did not allow him to carry. I am the prisoner of the wish he did not fulfil, and indeed the prisoner of many things I have inherited from him; some good, some bad. (*Online Al-Ahram*, 2000)

Like Al-Hakim, Adil fails to escape the physical and psychological trap of a world he encouraged the creation of just as the cockroach King acquires the personality of a mythic hero. Adil becomes a mildly courageous character through the expression of his opinions. He also wins the Doctor to his side in his struggle for freedom. It is germane to talk of the heroism of the cockroach, the genius of the ants and the courage of Adil though only the ants are successful in their demands from life and their environment.

d. Modern Revolution and Demystification of the Supernatural Forces

The text juxtaposes individualism and communalism portraying the effects they have on the psyche and socio-cultural cosmology of the concerned species. These reflect on their (ir)religious beliefs.

The individualism of the cockroaches allows the individual to live and fend for himself alone. In this is created the fear of everything unknown: the ants, the phenomena and other mirages. This altruistic tendency endangers the foundation of the cockroaches' cosmology. It encourages even a laissez-faire attitude among the rulers as there is no obligation whatsoever either to the ruled or the nation and none from the ruled to the rulers:

Queen: Let me be then. It is I who will decide when I shall work
and when be lazy, when to sleep and when to get up.
(*Cockroach*, 3)

King: Seeing that you know all that, why do you today assign me
the task of solving it? Why should it be my bad luck that I,
out of all those fathers and grandfathers who came before
me, should alone be asked to find the solution?
(*Cockroach*, 8)

Al-Hakim preaches the myth of unity and its concomitant results. It is only in unity that any ideological foundation and sociological development can be attained.

The philosophy and interest of the whole is practiced and enjoyed by the ants. They hunt and transport their food home together. According to the cockroaches, the 'leaders' of the ants (the Ministers of War and Supply) are up and doing. Al-Hakim preaches the dicta of safety and development in the world of many. Among the ants, none will suffer because each works for the whole and the whole is for the individual.

Femi Osofisan's *Morountodun* and Mythotypes

In *Morountodun*, there is the general admixture and utility of the dynamics of social and religious relationship coupled with a direct, informative reading and portrayal of history. The following mythic issues are fallouts of the playwright's objective examination vis-a-vis the old and new myths, the old and new worlds, and the old and new but very relevant socio-cultural, political, economic and religious issues.

a. Social Class Struggle

From time immemorial, there have always been intra-social wars of freedom of one group against the other. Usually, it is believed that the society is divided into two: the haves and the have-nots, the bourgeois and the proletariat, the rich and the poor. The bourgeois become rich and influential from the sweat and labour of the proletariats who stay permanently oppressed unless they struggle for freedom.

The text graphically exhibits the bourgeois class' idiosyncrasies of corrupt and biased leadership displayed by its characters' representatives. According to Titubi, her class, even as individuals can do and undo. She tells the Police Officer who attempts to arrest her, "Dare to put your filthy hand on me and all your wretched family will never finish paying for it" (*Morountodun*, 13). Her class believes that money can do anything. So, to confuse Director, she asks, "You want to say you don't like money abi? If I offer you cash now, hard glowing cash, you won't dance for me? Ehn? Look

at it” (*Morountodun*, 9). She goes on to do as she says and “There begins a furious scramble for the money, in which the Director finally joins” (*Morountodun*, 9).

The myth of the superiority of the bourgeois class presupposes that the proletariat must be totally suppressed. In the words of Marshal “The rulers in the city will not rest till they’ve wiped us out completely or brought us down, cringing on our knees” (*Morountodun*, 45). The bourgeois have no iota of respect for the proletariat, either as individuals or as a group. During his trial, Buraimoh spurns, relegates and demeans the pedigree of his accusers and judges:

A trial! Ha ha. This one here, this common thing, his father came here almost in the nude. We took the wretched man in from the open roads to save him from starvation. We even married a wife for him. And now their son dares, dares to look me in the face ...

Lawyer, ... Stop shivering man! That’s what inspires these ants.

Just look at who’s going to try you. Kokondi, who drives your mammy wagon. (*Morountodun*, 50-51)

In this light, the Governor visits the farmers as a ‘leader’ above their problems, not tainted or touched by its odium. Unable to take the bad road, he gets to them in a helicopter, “a giant iron hawk, from the sky” (*Morountodun*, 64). Another aristocrat, Oronmiyon, the King, expresses this same mindlessness and lack of regard for the common people: “I say do not worry. I, Oronmiyon, I am the public opinion. Subjects only echo the ruler’s caprices” (*Morountodun*, 37).

Faced with these situations, the proletariats have no option than to fight back. In this arises the myth of freedom or class struggle. According to Karl Marx, while arousing the workers or the common people in *The Communist Manifesto*: “The workers have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to gain. WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE”. Following this injunction through democratic processes, the farmers find themselves in a cul-de-sac. It is the government’s prerogative to fire the first salvo. The police, the law-enforcement arm of the government, wound,

torture, maim and kill the farmers in a bid to suppress the revolt. They are unsuccessful as the farmers retaliate, holding their ground. Always on the retreat and moving from one place to another to preserve life and limbs, they did not give up.

Marshal becomes the depiction of the struggle as the war leader. In him is seen the sufferings, indecisions, actions and doubts of the farmers. For him, it is a struggle unto death: "We'll fight with our bare hands. Till death" (*Morountodun*, 45). Titubi, who sets out to defend her bourgeois class through betrayal, is caught in her own web. She becomes a fighting tool on behalf of the farmers. Through her action, a turn-around finally occurs in the struggle paving way for justice.

The myths of social class superiority and social class struggle have been with man since it became possible to differentiate between a man and another and between a social class and another based on financial acumen. It will continue until a classless society is achieved as propagated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The latest proponent is Osofisan and his predictive suggestion is reflected in the text *Morountodun*: a world of class unity devoid of injustice and oppression.

b. The Individual as Sacrificial Mythic Hero

In various societies, from the ancient to the modern, saviours - as individuals and in groups - have always surfaced to save their people from perils (Appiah 1992). In most situations, he or she serves as the arrowhead and in not a few cases, he or she becomes the scapegoat, paying the ultimate price for the freedom of his or her people. This is evidenced in the text through its characterization, setting, themes and language.

A few saviours are community chosen or spiritually ordained. In this text, the feminine saviours are self-appointed after seeing the needs of their societies. Titubi gives herself without any outside persuasion albeit to become a betrayer of the farmers on one hand and a defender of her class on the other. But when she decides to fight on behalf of the farmers, she questions their untrusting attitude of her:

A stranger! That's all I keep hearing. How much must one do to qualify to be one of you? (*Morountodun*, 47)

She finally requests:

... Tell me. Teach me. (*Morountodun*, 65)

Moremi, on her own part, also volunteers as she claims to her husband:

No! Nobody sacrifices Moremi. Nobody! I have chosen all by myself. Neither by the gods' cajoling, nor by your designing. Moremi chose and carries the burden upon herself. (*Morountodun*, 38)

Their joy is that their different lands and people would be reborn and the shackles with which they are bound would be broken (*Morountodun*, 15, 34). The power these individuals are endowed with is near supernatural. For Titubi, this is reflected in her dialogues with Salami before and after her adventure. She becomes an equivalent to the whole police force:

Superintendent: What the entire Police force failed to -
Titubi: Is that why you're afraid? That I might succeed?
(*Morountodun*, 15)

Titubi: I said I would do it, didn't I?
Superintendent: You did it! By God! You're Moremi!
Titubi: I went and I returned triumphant. Like a legend. You didn't believe me, did you? (*Morountodun*, 60)

On the other hand, Moremi is compared to the gods: an individual who can achieve where the gods fail:

Niniola: Now you must step in even where the gods have failed.
You must be godhead itself! (*Morountodun*, 33)

And based on her husband's promise of to be remembered, if she succeeds, she becomes a member of the Yoruba pantheon.

Osofisan uses the text as a portrayal of feminist mythic achievement. In most African myths, the male is idolized while the female is reduced to second fiddle (Olaghere 2007). In contrast to this general perspective, the female is glamorized and

eulogized in this text. Two major characters who strive for and attain mythic status are females: Titubi and Moremi. Director acknowledges their actions and bravery. He pays them the following tribute (the first part for Titubi and the later for Moremi):

There she goes then, my friends, bravely walking into
danger. Stepping carelessly into the unknown. Ah women!
My friends, the world is strange and women reign over it.
Let us salute their courage. Their capacity for love.
Moremi, I remember you and I celebrate you ...
(*Morountodun*, 40)

For these unquantifiable achievements and sacrificial losses (on the part of Moremi: her royal personage, the loss of her husband's and child's love and Titubi her near death experience and early widowhood), both are recompensed. Moremi becomes a goddess to be worshipped and a mythic figure never to be forgotten by her people. Titubi gets herself renamed, re-commissioned and dedicated to the gods by the man after her heart in the presence of the farmers. She becomes 'Morountodun' ('I have seen something sweet'): a name which mythically denotes peace and the desire for love, beauty and the good things of life. According to Marshal:

I pluck her name like this, all ripe and golden, not from the
laden shelf of our violent heroes, but from the storehouse of
our beauty and tenderness. (*Morountodun*, 75)

c. **Cosmic Irruption (Past and Present)**

Heroes and mythic characters are not drawn to situations unless their personal or general world is tampered with (Long 1998). This cosmic irruption can be at any level or stratum of life. In *Morountodun*, this irruption affects the lives of Titubi and Moremi, the heroines.

The conquering Igbo warriors upturn Moremi and her society. This historic-mythical allusion refers to a developmental stage in the communal lives of the Yorubas and the Igbos. For the Yorubas, it portrays one of the limitations they had to overcome in establishing themselves as a nation. The expansionist tendency of the

Igbos is recorded here. Moremi sets out to find out the makeup of the Igbos. Through her and her action, the Yoruba race came to stay as an antidote was later found according to the myth. Out of this myth of origin came the myth of Moremi, which righted the cosmic world of her people.

The modern and current myth of Titubi (Morountodun) is precipitated by the irruption in her own world too. As part of the elite, she feels threatened with the uprising of the farmers, which could upturn all that her class had worked for. To set right the situation, she volunteers to bring in the leader of the revolt. She is re-convinced later on that the defence of her class was wrong. She changes sides on seeing the ruptured cosmic world among the farmers. With her participation, changes occur.

Osofisan juxtaposes fiction and faction. The mythic problem between the Yorubas and the Igbos is likened to that between the farmers and the government. The fact is that the farmers' revolt christened Agbekoya Uprising of September 1967 is well documented. Again, there is the Nigerian civil war of 1967 alluded to as reality by Director. These social irruptions, as real or as related by the playwright, are the foundation for the relevance of the text to modern realities and issues. In the exercise of his literary power and freedom, Osofisan plays, alludes to and re-engineers the myth of Moremi to fit his modern day realistic situation. This mytho-historical based drama is, therefore, foregrounded in the reality of a modern Nigerian world vis-à-vis its politics, economics, social and cultural materials.

A basic fact established by the playwright is that to right a cosmic irruption, taboos must be broken (Long 1998). In the text, therefore, Oronmiyon, the King, leaves the palace unattended and unprotected. Moremi lies that she had had an affair and incurs a curse on herself. It is a taboo for a queen to indulge in adultery. Mosun sits on the panel that passes death penalty on her father. These irruptions will need to negate other irruptions before the cosmogony is righted. They become the sacrifices to be performed before peace can return (Awolalu 1979).

d. Modern Revolution and Demystification of the Supernatural Forces

According to the text, man must fight for his freedom. Osofisan, like Tewfik al-Hakim, posits that the life and destiny of a man lies in his hands through his actions and inactions. Problems are caused by humans and must, therefore, be solved by humans.

According to Superintendent, the police is paid to instil order in the society. In this situation, though the fighting is tough, they would attempt to bring about order and stop the farmers. His position is that it would take more than the barrel of the gun and the intimidation of the police:

We will stop them, Alhaja, only when everybody concerned decides to cooperate. When those who are threatened are brave enough to offer their services. Otherwise - finish! For we are no miracle workers. (*Morountodun*, 24)

Harping on this, he states that Allah is on the side of revolutionaries who start the struggle and fight it by themselves.

In themselves, according to Moremi, the gods are powerless and unresponsive. They are consumed by their own problems and do not really care for their worshippers. According to the musings of Moremi:

We fall on our knees, we multiply our supplications, we pile up the sacrifices. But suppose, Niniola, just suppose the gods are indifferent to us? (*Morountodun*, 33)

Most of the supplications become useless as the gods expect that each individual or nation should fight for himself, herself or itself. Moremi succinctly portrays this:

No, no! Nini, it is time for us to rise, to stand, and square up our shoulders by our own courage and stop leaning on the gods
Niniola: The gods are with us -
Moremi: With their backs turned to us - (*Morountodun*, 33)

Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere G. Mugo's *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* and Mythotypes

a. Oppression and Suppression through Imperialism and the Fight for Freedom

The major mythic issues discussed in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* revolve round colonialism, imperialism and its concomitant effects on the individual, group and national lives of the people of Kenya (and to a great extent, Africa). The major resultant effect is depicted in the struggle for freedom in its different facets. There are also the portrayal of the attendant consequences on Kenyans and their colonizers. These issues become mythic as they are enmeshed in the history of Kenyans and people all over the world who have at one time or the other been subjected to external rule, through suppression and oppression.

Imperialism, as exemplified in the text, comes in different cloaks. According to the playwrights in the Preface, it is the enemy of all working people. Conquered people are oppressed through different levels and aspects of their lives with residue of dehumanization and depersonalization in its wake. The people are exploited socially, economically, spiritually and psycho-culturally. These oppressive tendencies are perpetrated through very insidious means: subtleness that fools the common man. This accounts for why the generality of a conquered nation are always in the dark about their lives until their eyes are un-woolled and imperialistic propaganda shown for what it is.

In his trials in the prison, Kimathi faces the various tentacles of imperialism, sees them for what they are and rejects them in their entirety. All revolve round exploitation and exploitative applications to the lives of the suppressed in the self-interest of the colonizers. Exclaiming, Woman explodes:

Ngai! It is the same old story. Everywhere. Mombasa. Nakuru. Kisumu. Eldoret. The same old story. Our people... tearing one another ... and all because of the crumbs thrown at them by the exploiting foreigners. Our own food eaten and leftovers thrown to us - in our own

land, where we should have the whole share. We buy wood from our own forests; sweat on our own soil for the profit of our oppressors. (*Trial*, 18)

The various individuals who approach Kimathi mythically represent different tentacles in the oppressive process of the people. These are avenues through which mythic oppression, and opinions are formulated and institutionalized. The second trial, consisting of “*a Banker’s delegation - or a Trade-cum-businessman’s delegation*” (*Trial*, 38), has a White, an Indian and “*an African who does not speak at all, but keeps on nodding his head in agreement*” (*Trial*, 38). These economic leaders are the reason for imperialism: the oppressor must gain while the oppressed suffer. The few ‘fortunate’ oppressed become so because of the crumbs they get through their betrayal of their class, docility and submissiveness. Their self interest is confirmed by both Banker and Henderson:

Henderson: Look, between the two of us, we don’t need to pretend. Nations live by strength and self-interest. You challenged our interests: we had to defend them. It is to our mutual interest and for your own good that we should end this ugly war. (*Trial*, 34)

Banker: We are your true friends. At first we were a little apprehensive about a black man’s government ... We thought that it might, well, be a danger to investment assets, and all that ... (*Trial*, 39)

The oppressed become political pawns in the hands of their imperialist rulers. Mythically, the oppressed are never the equals of the oppressors. With this, class stratification based on racial, language and tribal segregation occurs. It, therefore, becomes easy for the imperialists, who have wittingly stolen the land from the owners to talk of giving independence to the owners! In Kenya, this becomes the policy of ‘Majimboism’ (regional independence) and the process of “receiving Uhuru”. These policies, demeaning and reeking of arrogance, are vehemently rejected by Kimathi while talking to Politician:

Would you too call the war for national liberation a regional movement? What has colonization done to your thinking? Hear me. Kenya is one indivisible whole. The cause we fight for is larger than provinces: it shatters ethnic barriers. It is a whole people's cause ... Receive uhuru! And since when did our people become beggars? Who are you? How can you decide for the people? Have they released our people from concentration camps? ...
(*Trial*, 46)

The imperialist is also of the opinion that his religion is usually *the* religion: that of the oppressed is backward, animalistic and uncivilized. It is expected that the oppressed will jettison his and take up the oppressors' hook, line and sinker. This also is mythic in the sense that when a society's spiritual consciousness is caught, it becomes lost in the religious histrionics of another people's. Priest comes to re-align Kimathi to a Christian past already jettisoned. According to Kimathi, religion is only useful if it allows freedom for its practitioners. The enslavement Kimathi rejects is embodied in his dialogue with Indian:

Indian: ... Leaves your custom alone. You can pray Budha, pray Confucius, pray under the trees, pray rocks, wear sari ..., your culture ... songs ... dances ... we don't mind ... propided ... we make money ... friend ... friend. (*Trial*, 39)

and

Indian: True! True! Ewen in holy religion ... there are vorkers ... Brahmins and untouchables

Kimathi: The religion of enslavement! Like colonialism which makes the colonized sweat and bleed while master comes to harvest. (*Trial*, 40)

Priest would love Kimathi, like a lost soul, to stick to the parts of the Bible which encourage enslavement. According to Priest, the oppressed should continue the suffering as:

These verses are not talking about earthly things, earthly struggle. It is a spiritual struggle. God and Satan locked in an immortal struggle for the domination of our souls. (*Trial*, 49)

And the revolutionary in Kimathi retorts rightly:

I only read those sections necessary to our struggle. (*Trial*, 48)

Religion should save and not oppress. He refuses the ideology of religion as the opium of the people and as a confusing theology which preaches the particular history of an oppressive people as developers while the oppressed are hewers of wood and fetchers of water. He says:

I have spoken with the God of my ancestors in dreams and on the mountain and not once did he counsel me to barter for my soul. (*Trial*, 49)

Imperialism, which affects the people in different forms, is thoroughly explored as a major issue. One of the foremost disaffections created is disunity especially among the various indigenous tribes. This mythic suppressive tendency is as ancient as tribal and national oppressions. This division makes sure that the nation under oppression is kept divided. This self-created in-fighting allows the colonizing force to perpetrate and perpetuate its self-interest to the highest level at the expense of the colonized. In the text, the British start with the common people along tribal lines. According to Woman:

What was it one of those soldiers said? 'The way the enemy makes us thirsty to kill one another.' How right he was! ... Take the case of us peasants, for one. We are told you are Luo, you are Kalenjin, you are Kamba, you are Masai, you are Kikuyu. You are a woman, you are a man, you are this, you are that, you are the other. Yes. We are only ants trodden upon by heavy merciless elephants. (*Trial*, 14)

This division extends to the political field. The British colonizers suggest giving independence to Kenyan not as one but on regional basis. Politician re-echoes his White masters: “We can get independence, province by province. Majimboism” (*Trial*, 46). This mythic political imposition of tribal and national division to score a political point and delay independence is rejected by Kimathi with his political ideological understanding of the situation and the underlying effects. He is forced to question Politician in exasperation with his own knowledge that if and when the leaders are confused, the people are lost: “What has colonialism done to your thinking?” (*Trial*, 46).

Another disaffection which is also permanent among suppressed people is poverty which results into many negative effects. Boy and Girl grow up in this poverty-ridden world where they are “dogs” in their own country. Boy’s father suffered until he died and handed the baton of suffering over to Boy who states:

I have fought with dogs and cats in the rubbish bin, for food. And I also remember this bakery. It belonged to an Indian. Periodically, he would throw away the rotten bread. We all ran for it. This pit is mine. This pipa is mine. Dogs, cats, girls, boys, all. (*Trial*, 19)

This situation is caused by nationally-infected and colonially-encouraged famine to keep the people in check. This famine is attested to by Woman: “I am only a poor woman carrying food to save my dying children” (*Trial*, 11).

To reduce the chance of the people unifying or organizing armed resistance against the colonizers, the colonized are usually moved round within their country individually or in groups. The South African apartheid system operated this policy. The British in Kenya made use of the same policy. Boy, who is moved from Nairobi to Nyeri states bitterly:

And then came the madness mzungu called Operation Anvil and I was brought here. (*Trial*, 17)

This 'redistribution' and rearrangement detach the people from their land which is held very dear. This mother archetype icon (Jung 1972) imbues people with a nationalist zest as a man without a parcel of land becomes a no-man. The policy, therefore, seeks to unman the men and reduce the populace to a landless lot without the power and backing of their land to fight back. The Kenyan land is besotted by the British as individuals, groups and nation. This is epitomized in Settler and Henderson. Henderson posits:

I love your country and your people ...

We too have a right to struggle, to persevere, conserve, maintain healthy standards: Christianity, civilization. I am a Kenyan. By might and right. Right is might, believe me.... I'm only fighting for my own, spoils of war if you like. (*Trial*, 35)

To cap it all, the colonizers impose

Two laws. Two justices. One law and one justice protects the man of property, the man of wealth, the foreign exploiter. Another law, another justice, silences the poor, the hungry, our people. (*Trial*, 25-26)

The judiciary becomes prejudiced, serving the interest of the colonizers. It represses the colonized, upholding all that is of the colonizers. In the case of Kimathi, the already prejudiced judge, in the person of Henderson, is also one of his tormentors. He shows his hand when he unwittingly states that the case had already been determined (*Trial*, 54). Kimathi calls the court an imperialist court of law presided over by a colonial judge. He questions its power and right to sit in judgment of him (*Trial*, 25).

He sums up:

To a criminal judge, in a criminal court, set up by criminal law: the law of oppression. I have no words. (*Trial*, 25)

Due to the myth of deceit and its propaganda exploited by the colonizers, a few of the people become betrayers. This is achieved through the deceitful magnanimity of the British, the personal greed of the concerned and tortures carried out by the British police officers in conjunction with black turncoats like Gatotia. According to Kimathi, the British are known for stealing people's lands through deceitful pacts and deals (*Trial*, 33). They become magnanimous when they 'agree' to give back the people's land through independence (and to crown the insult, they call it provincial independence) (*Trial*, 46). According to the British, this partial and subjective type of independence would eliminate racism. Business Executive senselessly declares:

But there have been two important announcements. They have said: No more racialism. No more colour bar. In public places. In administration. In business. In the allocation of loans. In the grabbing, well, in the acquisition of land. (*Trial*, 45)

Gaining out of this deceit, betrayers, "internal enemies of our cause" (*Trial*, 68), sprout among the common people, the educated and even the guerrillas. They are meant to undermine the struggle and bring the fight - political and armed - to naught. The betraying is not limited to outsiders as even Kimathi's blood brother, Wambararia, is involved. The educated elites are involved because of selfish interest in "the grabbing, well, in the acquisition of land" (*Trial*, 45) and all that it entails. This situation affects the struggle's organizational structure as Kimathi and Woman are fingered and betrayed: Kimathi is sentenced to death and Woman is imprisoned. The saving grace for the struggle's continuity are Boy and Girl newly indoctrinated and recruited by Woman.

b. Modern Revolution and Demystification of the Supernatural Forces

Reduced to a mental, psycho-economical and socio-spiritual degradation and enslavement by another people and race, the Kenyans had no choice but to fight for freedom. They, therefore, imbibe and follow Kimathi's school of thought and teachings on freedom struggle as postulated by Woman:

unite, drive out the enemy and control your own riches,
enjoy the fruit of your sweat. (*Trial*, 18)

When the historical Kimathi, regarded as 'Field Leader', was hanged in February 1957, Kenyan population estimate had Africans (Kenyans) as 5,729,000, Asians 136,000 and Europeans 46,500. In that year, the Mau Mau membership had "30,000 still detained and 10,000 imprisoned; 15,000 had been released during the year" (Collier's Year Book 1957).

Defiance becomes an ingrained virtue in the people who did not look towards any god or external spiritual force to bail them out of their problem. The playwrights create defiant Kenyans in and out of the court starting from the recreation of Black people history to when Boy and Girl attempt rescuing Kimathi (*Trial*, 5, 7, 23, 27, 84). Kimathi emphasizes this when he rejects the court and the judge trying him by positing:

I recognize only one law, one court: the court and the law
of those who fight against exploitation. (*Trial*, 27)

This defiance and rejection of external rule and oppression led to the formation of the guerilla army called the Kenya People's Freedom Army overseen by the Kenya People's Defence Council. Its Generals (*Trial*, 63), along with Kimathi, conduct the running of the war machine. In the pursuance of this onerous task, most are killed along with their foot soldiers. For Kimathi, the struggle and its culmination into freedom are seen as an attainable dream while the exploiters regard it as just a mirage. These positions are stated in the following dialogue between the two cultural representatives, Kimathi and Henderson:

Kimathi: This time we shall bleed for our soil, for our freedom,
until you let go

Henderson: You are dreaming again

Kimathi: Yes. And I will keep on dreaming till my visions come
true and our people are free. (*Trial*, 34-35)

Henderson: Wake up Kimathi. Stop dreaming. (*Trial*, 54)

The struggle, without any divine intervention, sees Kimathi, as an individual, paying a great price. He serves as the scapegoat in this carrier ritual sacrifice. During his torture, he is asked to recant. He refuses, knowing the full and long term effects it would have on the struggle (*Trial*, 34, 40). It is shown that he comes from a family of warriors dedicated to the struggle which had consumed his father, his older brother and his mother (who becomes mad). Only his younger brother turns a betrayer (*Trial*, 75, 77). On a lighter level, Kimathi organizes a drama group, 'Gichamu' which

devised new dances
Talking of the struggle before us
Readying ourselves for the war. (*Trial*, 37)

In this individualistic struggle, which encompasses the likes of Woman, Boy, Girl and Kimathi, the road is lonely and filled with self-doubts. Under torture and psychological introspection, Kimathi reflects:

Who are friends and who enemies?
Oh, the agony of a lone battle!
But I will fight on to the end
Alone ...
Alone, did I say?
No. Cast out these doubts! (*Trial*, 51)

Woman, in her own way, made of herself a sacrifice in the rescue operation of Kimathi. Boy and Girl, during their own process of initiation, are also plagued with doubts but overcome, delivering the gun and bread to Fruitseller. They become members of the struggle and carry out the Kimathi rescue operation.

Apart from an individualistic approach to the struggle, the playwrights also advocate the group touch. No one man can do it all. As the oppression is that of a people, then it is the cumulative power and unity of the people that will unshackle them. This is why Kimathi continually talk to and from (deriving support and power from) the people's group consciousness:

We demand our freedom. (*Trial*, 27)

With the British, we have been losers all the way – yes - but this is a new era ... We have bled for you. We have fought your wars for you ... This time, we shall bleed for our soil, for our freedom, until you let go. (*Trial*, 34)

We shall win the war. For, let me tell the fainthearted that this our struggle will continue until we seize back the right and the ability to make ourselves new men and women in our land. (*Trial*, 44-45)

For four hundred years the oppressor
has exploited and tortured our people.
For four hundred years we have risen
and fought against oppression,
against humiliation,
against enslavement of body
Mind and soul
Our people will never surrender. (*Trial*, 58)

He rejects any external aid pointing out: “We must rely on our strength” (*Trial*, 67).

The above are concretized in the initiations and initiating rites fighters and non-fighters are taken through. This instils courage, support, loyalty and love of the struggle and country in each initiate (fighter and non-fighter alike). Acting on this, the fighters overrun Settler’s farm and Kimathi upholds his loyalty in the face of torture and intimidation. Initiation creates brotherhood and unity among the initiates. They become focused on the achievement of their aims and goals. The Mau Mau initiation, therefore, wedges the people into one in the face of external aggression. Through it, betrayers – common people, politicians and military - are easily known and dealt with.

’Zulu Sofola’s *Wedlock of the Gods* and Mythotypes

a. Honour and Shame

The text replays the eternal mythic issue and question that revolve round and instigate human actions: “What will people say?”, “Where does shame stop and honour start?”

Mythically, each hero (Kinjeketile, Ulysses, Sizwe Bansi, Sango and others) has at one time or the other fought to correct or overcome the above and other related questions. Ogwoma loves and for her there is no shame in it. This honour encompasses even her pregnancy during her period of mourning. To others in the community, this is a shame, a disgraceful thing that had never happened. It is ascribed a personal shame. According to Anwasia:

Look, a woman's honour lies in her name and her sense of shame. (*Wedlock*, 8)

No matter how much a woman loves a man, the gods forbid what you have done. You seem to forget that you are still in mourning. (*Wedlock*, 9)

Her family is tainted by this shame and it strives to cleanse itself and Ogwoma. This attempt fails as there are intra-familial wrangles. The community, as a whole, feels disturbed at the broken taboo. It assumes that the gods are offended but at no time are the gods allowed a say. Only the personally driven and selfish avenging hands of Odibei can be seen. In fighting shame and looking for honour, the families, especially the parents, play into her hands.

The personal, familial and communal shame accruable from the actions of the taboo-breakers is honour, joy and a release of pent-up emotions to the lovers. The lovers do not see anything wrong in their actions. And if perchance any negativity is recorded, they readily swear to face it. Speaking for both of them, Uloko says:

Let whatever will come, come. I am ready for anything. I waited three years for this day and I am ready to face anything. (*Wedlock*, 14)

b. Patriarchal Social Set-up and Feminism

Apter (1992) posits that nearly all traditional African societies are patrilineal in structure. This situation favours the males more than the females. Most of the laws are

masculine-friendly and feminine-unfriendly. This structure, therefore, encourages the suppression and oppression of the feminine gender. It reduces the females in their entirety to the background.

The respect for the male child and adult is exemplified in the actions of Uloko and Ibekwe. On hearing that his lover, Ogwoma, is pregnant, Uloko jumps to the conclusion that the baby must be a boy which according to him signifies a sign of blessing on the tortured relationship (*Wedlock*, 12-13). And for emphasis sake, he reiterates and tells his mother:

I planted my son in Ogwoma's womb and I don't regret it. I don't regret it at all. (*Wedlock*, 43)

Ibekwe, on his part, sacrifices his child-daughter to save his child-son. He does this by 'hawking' his daughter to the 'highest bidder'. He throws all necessary cautions to the wind and follows Anwasia's statement:

... our people say that a man's daughter is a source of wealth to him. (*Wedlock*, 9)

He needs not have done this. He could have found other ways and means of getting the money. The patriarchal belief of using women as means of achieving material wealth for their families spurs him on. To the extent that he refuses totally to consider any of his daughter's feelings, Okolie reflects:

Ibekwe had not enough money for all this. But rather than lean on our back, he decided to give his daughter away. It is true that a man's daughter is his source of wealth, but never have our people supported such action when there is another way to solve the problem. (*Wedlock*, 28)

The woes of such a woman "tied like a goat and whipped along the road to a man" she hates does not end there as shown in Ogwoma's case. When the husband dies, she is required by the society to mourn, in the ashes with a shaven head, for three

months. And as she is married to the family, she becomes its property. She becomes eligible for an intra-familial transfer and marriage by the brother(s) of her late husband. Nneka, Ogwoma's mother, states:

You are a man's wife, dead or alive. Adigwe has a brother and you are his wife. (*Wedlock*, 20)

She is supported by Anwasia and even Ogoli:

It is a common thing that when a man dies his brother takes his wife and makes her his wife. This is what our people do. Everyone knows that. (*Wedlock*, 21)

Ogwoma was his wife and is still his wife. (*Wedlock*, 42)

Of course, the woman can be given a choice between her brother-in-law and someone else but Ogwoma's case is different. Adigwe had no child by her. Therefore, she remains tied to the family. She must fulfil her biological responsibility - as long as her bride price was paid for - and give the family a child.

In dying, Ogwoma requests her man to "meet me there" (*Wedlock*, 54) and this he does. Sofola demystifies this myth as man invented and planted for his society to grow at a particular time in the hoary past. The myth needs to give way, in the present, to a new one as espoused in the lives and love struggles of the lovers.

c. **Divinities and Human Actions**

Gods are supposed to play their parts in the lives of humans especially those who believe in and serve them. Due to this, the worshippers or believers ascribe the formation of laws, institutions and happenings that affect their everyday lives to them.

Throughout the text, Ogwoma continually refers to her 'God' as having the power to protect and get her out of her problems (*Wedlock*, 9, 10, 16). And Uloko prophesies for the gods: they had made both "husband and wife" years ago. Only the devil upset the situation. In the long run, the incantatory power of Odibei catches up

with Ogwoma. In breaking the taboo, Anwasia tells Ogwoma that “the gods forbid” her action.

These same gods, through the oracle, demand a sacrifice from Ibekwe in relation to his dying son. The sacrifice is so expensive that he ‘hawks’ his daughter to get financial resources for it. These are the gods that become devils that stopped Uloko marrying Ogwoma. And they are the same Ogwoma appeals to for protection. They also sanctioned her relationship but allowed Odibei to have the upper hand. Odibei, who allows herself to be used in avenging, is also cut down. This confusion becomes assigned to the devil

Uloko: It was only the devil that spoilt things. (*Wedlock*, 14)

Uloko: She was my wife before the devil gave her to your son. (*Wedlock*, 16)

The main and only place the gods’ action and presence is felt is in the healing of Ogwoma’s brother. And this escape from death comes with a price.

Sofola demystifies, to a lot of extent, the assumed presence and actions of the ‘gods’ in all that humans do. She opines that majority of human actions are dictated by human reactions to their environments, issues and situations. When the feedback is negative, it is ‘the devil’ and when positive, it is ‘the God’ or ‘the gods’. She avers through the actions that the destiny of each man, woman or community basically lies in his, her or its hands. The gods only add the icing.

d. Rites, Rituals and Taboos

Rites and rituals are processes and actions through which an end is achieved. They encompass the socio-cultural and religious life of any community especially a traditional African one.

The text is firmly rooted in the rites of a widow mourning her dead husband. The ritual serves the community and the woman at various levels. The widow mourns for three months, sleeping beside the fire with ashes on her body and her head shaven. According to the traditional characters, this ritual cleanses and purifies both the

woman and her womb. She becomes ready to have another husband and a new child. It also helps the dead husband find his way to the world of the gods and to stop roaming in the bush (*Wedlock*, 42). Ogoli and Odibei's comments suffice:

Ogoli: You planted a poisonous snake in the womb that has not been purified. You have touched what belongs to a man whose spirit is still finding its way back to the world of the gods. (*Wedlock*, 42)

Odibei: My son's steps are unsure. (*Wedlock*, 42)

This ritual process is broken midway and the cosmogony of the community is ruptured. Accordingly, negative deeds are to follow the desecrated taboo. What is done is "the worst taboo in the land" (*Wedlock*, 19). Nneka reads the riot act that serves as the punishment (*Wedlock*, 19). Though this did not materialize, the lovers pay with their lives at the hands of a vengeful Odibei. For the Onowu family, it is "fury with splinters flying in every direction" (*Wedlock*, 35). The family, unable to withstand the social and intra-familial pressure, breaks without any cogent decision being reached. More acrimony is unearthed.

Finally, the denouement comes with the use of magic and incantation by Odibei. She tries spiritually to get a hold of Ogwoma succeeding on the third attempt. Ogwoma is put under a spell of hallucination. Forced against her psychical will, she drinks the poisoned water and dies. Sofola plays on the mystical and African meaning ascribed to the number three. Odibei tries everything thrice to get Ogwoma: the real attempts are thrice; the medicinal gourd is shaken thrice. In succumbing, Ogwoma also sneezes thrice. In the body of the incantation, Odibei appeals for physical and spiritual help. Ogwoma is asked to judge, condemn and sentence herself. Her psyche accepts all these and her (suicidal) murder becomes easy.

Nneka, who tries limiting Odibei's second attempt with what the Yorubas in Nigeria refer to as 'ero' (coolant) (Awolalu 1979), fails. She attempts to ameliorate and cancel all that she assumes Odibei must have done in Ogwoma's house. The

“string and certain objects that look medicinal” strung across Ogwoma’s door become also a sign for people to stay away: a warning that the place is compromised.

Through the various mythic issues dramatized in the text, one comes to the same conclusion with Olaghere (2007: 1) that Sofola

intended to address gender oppression rooted in tradition by teaching traditional customs to her audience first in order for audiences to make informed and progressive decisions about what to change within traditional practices; and thus, her traditionalist approach to change requires cognizance and recognition of tradition as an initial step. Sofola argues against the influences of westernization that shift the focus of change from confronting customs through tradition to confronting customs through western ideology.

Wole Soyinka’s *Death and the King’s Horseman* and Mythotypes

According to Eliot (1976: 49) Soyinka, in *Death and the King’s Horseman*, demonstrates through the examination of the mythic issues that

The historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write (read too) not merely with his own generation on his bone ...

a. Life in Death

(The Individual as Sacrificial Mythic Hero)

Soyinka demonstrates the mythic beliefs of the Yoruba people of Nigeria in relation to death and the sacrifices (personal and communal) that uphold their cosmogony. The main character, the conduit, is the carrier-hero in the person of Elesin. In the Yoruba mythic world, death is a translation and transition to the world of the ancestors or the gods. It is not a finality. Elesin, apart from fulfilling his duty, sees his sacrificial suicide as joining his king and continuing a friendship:

When friendship
summons
Is when the true comrade goes ...

I go to keep my friend and master company (*Death*, 14)

He confesses, like all humans will agree with: "Life has an end ..." (*Death*, 15). While alive, he lived a full life filled with all the enjoyments that he could muster. Therefore, he could not hesitate in fulfilling his hereditary self sacrifice. He would only leave his world of journey (market - 'oja') and go home (heaven - 'ile') (as earth and heaven are referred to in Yoruba mythology). He becomes the 'arugba' (the calabash carrier) comparable to the female 'calabash' carrier of the Osun-Osogbo festival celebration of the Osun goddess in Osun State, Nigeria. He must not be offended as he embarks on the onerous and arduous journey. Iyaloja confesses:

It does not bear thinking. If we offend you now we have
mortified the gods. We offend heaven itself. Father of us all,
tell us where we went astray. (*Death*, 16)

After the slight had been resolved, she, along with the other women, happily sings:

He forgives us. He forgives us.
What a fearful thing it is when
The voyager sets forth
But a curse remains behind. (*Death*, 16)

In this myth of death or the sacrifice of the self, the voyager must be happy to leave: he goes with a message to the gods and the ancestors. If he leaves unhappy then "Our hands had wrenched the world adrift / In emptiness" (*Death*, 17).

The voyager is human and is affected by human frailties and doubts. Elesin, though ready to fulfil his duty, acknowledges the fear of death:

... my mind was raised to horizons
Even the boldest man lowers his gaze

In thinking of ... (*Death*, 16)

In these doubts come the voyager's powers and protection: he must trust in the gods and the effectiveness of his sacrifice. From this and in death he is rewarded: in his dying, comes life. Olunde, the son of Elesin, confesses this to Jane Pilkings:

How can I make you understand? He *has* protection. No one can undertake what he does tonight without the deepest protection the mind can conceive. What can you offer him in place of his peace of mind, in place of the honour and veneration of his people? (*Death*, 53)

To showcase the pervasiveness of the belief in the myths of life in death and that of death of the self, Soyinka utilizes Iyaloja, a traditional believer, and Olunde, one believed to have lost his traditional background (because of his professional training and immersion in the European culture). Iyaloja preaches the tradition seeking to realize it. She forgoes her son's betrothed for Elesin as a death-bridal gift. When other women warn her against "the curse of a dispossessed husband" (*Death*, 21) she adjudges that there is something higher at stake: service and sacrifice to the whole:

My son's wish is mine. I did the asking for him, the loss can be remedied. But who will remedy the blight of closed hands on the day when all should be openness and light? Tell him, you say! You wish that I burden him with knowledge that sour his wish and lay regrets on the last moments of his mind. You pray to him who is your intercessor to the other world - don't set this world adrift in your own time: would you rather it was my hand whose sacrilege wrenched it loose? (*Death*, 21)

Only the curses of the departed are to be feared. The claims of one whose foot is on the threshold of their abode surpasses even the claims of blood. It is impiety even to place hindrances in their ways (*Death*, 21)

Olunde's exposure to western civilization is supposed to ameliorate or eradicate his belief in his own tradition. On the other hand, it reinforces his resolve that his tradition must be enforced. His returning to Oyo is to perform the traditional rites

on his father's corpse. In his mind, his father was already dead. This is why he is shocked to meet his father alive. This situation he condemns: "I have no father, eater of left-overs" (*Death*, 61). Olunde understands the myth behind this sacrifice: he knows it is meant to keep the cosmogony unified and safe under the auspices of the gods and the ancestors. According to him:

I didn't want to do anything wrong, something which might jeopardize the welfare of my people. (*Death*, 57)

He, therefore, takes it upon himself to right the wrong done the community by his father's failure to carry out the ritual sacrifice. He willingly becomes the voyager. He becomes another individual fulfilling the myth of the death of the self and allowing himself and his community to find life through his death.

b. Traditional Yoruba Mythical World-View

The Yoruba people live in the South-Western part of Nigeria. Soyinka, the playwright, is a member of the group. He uses *Death and the King's Horseman* as an explorative text to appraise his people's world-view and beliefs. According to the text,

Soyinka is concerned with more than just a "clash of cultures", however devastating. His triumph in this play is in evoking the mystery and ritual of Yoruba life, a world of the living, the dead and the unborn and in giving it palpable and breath-taking theatrical form. (*Death*, 1)

The Yorubas believe in the interconnectivity of their physical and spiritual worlds. This myth divides their cosmogony into four realms: all superimposed one on the other and all co-existing simultaneously irrespective of time and space. These are the realms of the Living, the Unborn, the Dead/Ancestors/Gods and the Void. There is an intermingling of communication (goings and comings) between these worlds. Ritual sacrifices (Elesin's and other types) help cement these worlds and keep them in consonance to each other and on the right course. According to Elesin

I was born to keep it so. A hive
Is never known to wander ...
... We cannot see
The still great womb of the world -
No man beholds his mother's womb -
Yet who denies it's there? Coiled
To the navel of the world is that
Endless cord that links us all
To the great origin. If I lose my way
The trailing cord will bring me to the roots. (*Death*, 17-18)

The realm of the Living consists of the people in the physical world. It is a place referred to as “*oja*” (market) in Yoruba myth. This is where Elesin prefers to start his journey to the next realm. The Yoruba believe that they have only come to the ‘market’ (earth) on a journey and they must return home. Home or Heaven (*‘ile / orun’*) is the realm of the Dead/Ancestors/Gods. All the physically dead return here and become part of the ancestors. Here also, the Yoruba gods – *orisa* – live. It is believed that the dead who become ancestors can also live again on the earth world. Therefore, from the realm of the Dead, those who need to return to the earth move to the realm of the Unborn. These souls are given individual attributes, fates and destinies to work on in the realm of the Living. They must cross the realm of the Void or Abyss and arrive in the realm of the Living to be able to realize these (Katrak, 2009:6). The realm of the Void is the most dangerous realm of all: daemons, devils, disincarnated bodies, ghosts, wandering and lost spirits and other negatively minded spirits abode here. They try at all times to create a disconnect between the different realms. The sacrifices performed by those in the realm of the Living keep these negatives, their thoughts and actions, at bay and all the worlds (realms) on course and aligned. With these sacrifices, the ancestors and the dead are invited and empowered to keep watch over the living.

Soyinka’s success in the metaphysical and mythical exploration of the Yoruba traditional world-view lies in letting the audience understand the mythical belief that encourages Elesin, ensnares Olunde and causes distaste in Pilkings.

c. **Cosmic Irruption and Rebirth**

(Failure, Redemption, Regeneration and Healing)

Elesin's failure is not because he is unwilling to perform his duty as he sees it fit. It is due to his human frailty related to his lust for the 'earth' as represented in women (especially his new bride). He recognizes this like all failed mythic characters. They were powerful enough but in their mythicness and power, they were still humans ruled by human desires. Elesin professes:

... In all my life
As Horseman of the King, the juiciest
Fruit on every tree was mine (*Death*, 18)

Most mythic characters, humans and animals alike, profess the ability to overcome their known weaknesses. Usually, they are warned, like Elesin, to be careful and desist from succumbing. Praise-Singer and Iyaloja play this part:

Iyaloja: Not because we dare give you offence Elesin.
Today is your day and the whole world is yours.
Still, even those who leave town to make a new
dwelling elsewhere like to be remembered by what
they leave behind. (*Death*, 20)

At the crucial stage, the heroes not only let themselves down (as their weaknesses do overcome them), they disappoint their over-trusting communities and friends.

In failing, mythic characters like Elesin open their personal and communal worlds to dangerous and destructive cosmic, psychic and physical agents. In Elesin's world things turned awry. Though the physical world looks quiet, cosmic peace for the community's cosmogony is already endangered. Elesin sorrowfully confesses to Pilkings:

The night is not at peace ghostly one. The world is not at
peace. You have shattered the peace of the world for ever.
There is no sleep in the world tonight. (*Death*, 62)

Part of this cosmic rupture allows Olunde, the son, to become the father of his father. It is in this upturned world and situation that the son could take up the mantle of responsibility meant for his father and carry it out successfully with the support of all the Yoruba mythic realms' dwellers. Iyaloja pictures the result of this situation of father-son relationship succinctly: "His son will feast on the meat and throw him bones" (*Death*, 76). Elesin, in his failure, could no longer be traditionally called and respected as the holder of the title – Chief Horseman of the King. He is disrobed as his son performs his father's role.

Praise-Singer: Elesin Oba! I call you by
That name only this last time (*Death*, 74)

Inbuilt in mythic traditions are safe-guards to ward off and salvage failures because their occurrences are usually monumental in destructive effects. The moment Elesin fails, his son comes in to rectify the situation. Sacred and secret words that must be said by Elesin are known by his son as he had been taught by Elesin himself. Provisioned for also is a situation where the Elesin consciously decide not to follow his King. Tradition provides that he sends the King's horse and dog with a message:

Praise Singer: If you cannot come, I said, swear
You'll tell my favourite horse. I shall
Ride on through the gate alone . . .

If you cannot come, Elesin, tell my dog
(*Death*, 42)

To show that nothing has been left amiss in the closure of all doors against failure, Pilkings' refusal to let Elesin out from the prison did not deter the salvaging team. Elesin posits knowing that the message must be sent:

I cannot approach. Take off the cloth. I shall speak my
message from heart to heart of silence (*Death*, 75)

Through all these failures and redemptive mythic processes, the cathartic healing of the communal cosmogony comes sorrowfully and regrettably in the sacrificial death of Olunde. According to Iyaloja, Olunde returns honour and peace to his people's world by his death. The healing closes the ruptured realms of the community and sends back all the negative forces that would have been unleashed upon the people. Though this is not what tradition demands it is what the situation throws up. Iyaloja reprimands Pilkings, the all-assuming colonialist:

Iyaloja: The gods demanded only the old expired plantain
but you cut down the sap-laden shoot to feed your
pride. There is your board, filled to overflowing.
Feast on it. (*Death*, 76)

Soyinka shows that due to human frailties mythic characters can also fail in their duties but safe-guards are always provided in cultural and traditional mythologies. An irrupted mythic world cannot be left open as it portends negatively on the people. A healing, rebirth and ritual process must be embarked upon to amend the situation. Most myths have this palliative ritual embedded in them like the one portrayed in *Death and the King's Horseman*.

d. Modern Revolution and Demystification of the Supernatural Forces

In this very mythical text, Soyinka makes the case for humans to take their situations, fates and lives in their own hands. According to him, the gods are fallible and susceptible to situations and circumstances. In the analogy of the Not-I-Bird, Praise-Singer praises Elesin but demeans a god:

Elesin Oba! Are you not that man who
Looked out of doors that stormy day
The god of Luck limped by, drenched
To the very lice that held
His rags together? You took pity upon
His sores and wished him fortune (*Italics mine*) (*Death*, 15)

Humans can even take pity on the gods! This shows that humans can disown the gods and handle their problems themselves. If the god of Luck can be unlucky, then what happens to his worshippers? Ezeulu, the priest and Ulu, his god, in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* (1964) become relevant here.

When Elesin fails to uphold the tradition of following his friend and master, the late King, into the Void, the world becomes tilted. Olunde, who seeks to right the wrong and reset the world on its rightful course, did not wait for any god or supernatural force to prod him into doing what he considered to be right. He commits the sacrificial suicide:

Because he could not bear to let honour fly out of doors,
he stopped it with his life. (*Death*, 75)

His father, who had held on to life in Pilkings' prison, takes his own life on seeing the corpse of his son. In the face of tradition and the gods, he could not carry out what is demanded of him. Instigated as a human affronted with an unthought-of personal tragedy, he commits suicide. What he should have done earlier is done after situations had become skewed.

The incursion and intrusion of the European culture vis-à-vis the British imperial and colonial imposition on the people is seen as circumstantial and not god-appointed or supernaturally enforced on the people. It is a human endeavour of imposition and treachery. This is premised on the discussion and opinions expressed by two of the main characters in the text:

Pilkings: Your son honours you. If he didn't he would not ask your blessing.

Elesin: No. Even a thoroughbred is not without pity for the turf he strikes with his hoof. When is he coming?

Pilkings: As soon as the town is a little quieter. I *advised it*.

Elesin: Yes white man, I am sure you advised it. *You advise all our lives although on the authority of what gods, I do not know.* (Italics mine) (*Death*, 64)

Elesin: You have my honour already. It is locked up in that desk in which you will put away your report of this night's events. *Even the honour of my people you have taken already, it is tied together with those papers of treachery which make you masters in this land* (Italics mine) (*Death*, 67)

To effect this imbalance the conquerors impose their own myths on the conquered. Olunde subtly infers that the conquered should also create their own new freedom myths that can achieve sovereignty for them:

Don't think it was just the war. Before that even started I had plenty of time to study your people. I saw nothing, finally, that gave you the right to pass judgment on other peoples and their ways. Nothing at all. (*Death*, 54)

This myth of freedom should not rely on the gods but on the people themselves as exemplified in *Kinjeketile* and *Morountodun* by Ebrahim N. Hussein and Femi Osofisan respectively.

Brett Bailey's *Ipi Zombi?* and Mythotypes

Bailey is the director of a South African performing company and drama school called Third World Bunfight which he founded in 1996. Through this stage, he writes and produces plays using a mixture of songs, dances and traditional sangoma chants, mixing new and modern repertoire with ritualistic and old traditional life approaches.

a. Universality of the Presence of 'Fear' (Witchcraft and Witches)

Bailey's major thematic focus is the examination of the old but ever-present mythic fear that propels man to act in the irrational: a destructiveness which can have a hold on individuals, groups and societies (Otten, 2006:4). This blind fear is exhibited through the instrumentality of the hounding of witches and witchcraft. The textual

reason for the deaths of the school boys is the assumed action of the fifty witches said to have been seen at the accident site. Bailey sees the aftermath action of the dead students' colleagues as

... something bigger than that, something that brings a fear inside people, like a dirty thing so they look at their neighbours and say to each other: "she is the one" or "he is the one". This is a story about this thing, this thing that is all around us, just waiting to come inside. (*Zombi?*, 208)

In allowing this 'thing' to occur, man reverts to his primal origin of believing in non-factual, non-scientific and non-evidenced psyche. Nothing is concrete in all the evidences brought against the accused but they are condoned because of man's primal and mythic fears of the unknown. Most of the evidences are of the hysterical and hyperbolic coming from the stressed and convoluted environment and people. They include:

Doctor: the bodies were all there on the side of the road covered in those blankets but there was no blood - twelve dead boys and no blood - and then I felt the pulse of one but it was dead, but when I lifted up the blanket, the face it was shaking like this shaking like this ... (*Zombi?*, 206)

Gogo: Durban! Durban, they were coming from Durban, and as they reached that that sharp curve, the kombi just fell, and they saw Mambamba flying on a loaf of bread with the other witches – fifty of them! (*Zombi?*, 206)

Krotch: And one of them cried: "Xolani! Xolani! I want to kill you" (*Zombi?*, 206)

Boys: Even us too – we saw them – washing her taxies – our dead brothers (*Zombi?*, 213).

And with the same hysterical and fearful mood of being accused of witchcraft, Mambamba turns to the audience and calls all of them witches (*Zombi?*, 207).

This fear stems from the assumed negative and evil actions of witches on their victims. Again, these women's accusations are rooted on flimsy sociological and folkloric reasons which bother on xenophobia (the witches are called "cockroaches" (*Zombi?*, 217) just like the Tutsis were called in the Rwandan genocide), revenge, suspicion, envy and poverty. According to the text, the women are killed based on these hidden but germane reasons:

Boys: She hates us because we are young - and she is too old - and we love her daughter! (*Zombi?*, 213)

Boys: She lives alone in a big house. (*Zombi?*, 214)

Steve: She has a big cat, a big cat, a big black cat!
(*Zombi?*, 214)

Boys: She has *uhili* - a dwarf - a *tikoloshe!*
(*Zombi?*, 214)

When Krotch calls for order in the forms of a meeting's minute, provision of evidence against the women and invitation of law enforcement agents, he is crowded into silence:

Boys: No need for evidence! No need for evidence!
Boys: We are the law! We are the law! (*Zombi?*, 215)

Bailey balances his neutrality with the presentation of the zomboic boys and the relaying of their sufferings - both done through Intombi 'Nyama. This character, originally a twelve year old girl, is role-played by a superstar. The words and actions of this twelve year old do not match the magnitude of her accusations and repercussions.

Bailey showcases a situation, which in reality, happened in post-apartheid South Africa where xenophobia took over the psyche of the people: all centered on insubstantial excuses and accusations. In the accusations against witchcraft and witches, one can only like Bailey and Awolalu (1979:88) maintain a neutral ground as

...not every case of witchcraft accusation is a genuine one. Witchcraft, viewed in this way, looks like an African way of projecting a philosophy of life, an attempt to explain the problem of failure, sorrow, pain or death. While we share the view that the people sometimes 'cry wolf' when there is no wolf, we want to underline the essential fact that there are genuine cases of witchcraft practice in Yorubaland and in Africa as a whole.

The examination of this 'thing', this 'fear' - epitomized in witchcraft and witches and the killings of the underprivileged and innocent by Senti's group - is for humanity to be able to look the fear in the face, conquer it and move into a realm of consideration, unity and love. If this is not adhered to Bailey paints a bleak future for humanity:

Narrator: We build our fences up and up and up, even with thorns and with aloes. In the morning they are broken and the mielies are gone. There is something bigger than all of us - something worse than you can imagine. There in the river. There in the veld ... You lock your doors at night and close the windows, but it creeps inside, in through the keyhole ... in while you sleep, in while you breathe. You wake up in the morning and this thing has been inside you and then you are so empty. You wake up too quickly - it is still inside you, and then you are lost ...
(*Zombi?*, 219)

b. Modern Revolution and Demystification of the Supernatural Forces

According to Bailey, the gods exist in the lives of the people. They come in traditional and modern garbs: the amaXhosa religion and Christianity. To a great extent, these religions impact on the people. When the problem of witches and witchcraft start, representatives of both religions are called in. According to the text,

Sangomas came, . . . they were saying "no, there are too many witches in this place, the witches eat holes in our power. This thing is too strong!" And what can our

ancestors do and what can even Jesus do when this thing is eating a community? (*Zombi?*, 218)

At a fell swoop both religions become ineffectual in solving the recurring problem of fear, witches and witchcraft in the society.

The boys, led by Senti, capitalize on this religious vacuum. They become the law unto themselves – the accuser, the judge and the executioner. They rescind their loyalties and obligations to the gods, preferring to take their destinies in their own hands. According to Senti, instead of waiting for the gods, they decide to clean the town by themselves. With this, the boys become revolutionaries, ‘comrades’, fighting for the restoration of their dead colleagues’ souls (and that of their society).

One of their first acts is to argue with Priests: heretical behaviour that draws the err of Priests and Women. They go on to open the coffins and Women admonish them

Oh no my son, listen to your mother
your brothers work in the house of God
A mother suffers, yes a mother’s crying
Let your brothers sleep six foot underground.
Hosanna – hosanna ... (*Zombi?*, 213)

This action, which goes against the general cultural belief, becomes an eye-opener and an encouragement to the boys as the corpses are not in the coffin. With this, they question the presence and effects of the gods in their suffering lives:

Senti: And did the witches pray to God when they killed our brothers? Where was Jesus that night on the side of the road and where is God now when our brothers are made into zombies? (*Zombi?*, 212)

They, therefore, take the law into their hands, pushing the gods to the backstage. They are able to avenge their colleagues where the gods could effect no change. And like all mythic heroes, Senti knows that a price must be paid: he goes into prison for twenty-five years promising to come back and finish the job.

The action of the boys agrees with the submission of Duerden (1975:85) when he considers the impact of the younger generation in trying to sanitize the society through accusing and killing members of the older generation based on an issue like the presence of witches in the society. He opines that this is not a new occurrence:

An example of fission working in the opposite direction, while the younger generation accuse the elders of witchcraft as an excuse for breaking away, are Middleton's Lugbara living on both sides of the border of Uganda and Zaire.

(Note: Middleton, J. 1960 in *Lugbara Religion* carried out research works on the Lugbara people)

The gods become demystified as the boys take on the issue by themselves: cleaning and sanitizing the town; killing the witches and making a future for their society.

CHAPTER FIVE

Archetypal Models, Totems and Technical Applications in African Drama

5.1 Archetypes

Archetype has been described as the original model from which all other similar and related objects, ideas, persons are derived, created, produced or patterned (Eliade 1965, Ngumoha 1998). It has been established variously that archetypes are repeated symbols of the original idea and are present in nearly all facets of life (Jung 1972, Frye 1973, Ngumoha 1988).

This is relevant to Ananse and his icon, the spider: its web-spinning efficacy and the utilization of the web-screen in *The Marriage of Anansewa*. The spider, an arachnid, spins and traps with its web. Ananse 'spins' webs of lies, deceits and confusion to entrap not only the four royal suitors but also Aya, Ekuwa, Anansewa and even Christie. He confuses, convinces and influences every other character that comes in touch with him. The original spider, after entwining its victims in its web, squeezes life out of them. Ananse does this also by squeezing sense and creativity out of his victims, turning them into the living-dead (at least without their conscious knowledge).

Sutherland employs the web-screen to represent the spider spinning its webs as a covert shield from outsiders. With this, Ananse (the Spider) withdraws into himself, rethinks his plans, gets rejuvenated, traces the effect(s) of his actions on his victims and comes out blazing with new thoughts and plans.

In *Kinjeketile*, a few of the archetypes Jung explains in his work, *Four Archetypes* (1972), are present. There is water which serves as a rebirth archetype. It is supposed to instil in the drinker an invincibility power against the German bullets: "This water will make your bodies unassailable by bullets" (*Kinjeketile*, 19). The drinker also becomes purified as *Kinjeketile* posits: "This is the water of life" (*Kinjeketile*, 16). Its use reinvigorates the spiritual and physical essence of the drinker who gains a rebirth status into the power of the spirits and the ancestors. In the eyes of

Kinjeketile, it serves as a unifier of the various disunited ethnic groups. The people are reborn in unity and are able to face, as a body, their oppressors.

Another type of archetype exploited is the mother archetype in which redemptive and salvation processes are embedded. The relationship between Ozidi and his grandmother, Oreama, in *The Ozidi Saga* (Clark 1977) exemplifies this. When Kinjeketile returns from his under-river exploit, he tells the people: “Hear from me who comes from Bokelo, the land of our ancestors”. He gives the people “the message from our forefathers” (*Kinjeketile*, 16). Kinjeketile appeals to the emotional psyche of the people with a link to their origin tying in the support of their ancestors. With these established facts, the people have no reasoning option to go against his suppositions. He tells them emphatically: “Do not be afraid. Do not fear, for our ancestors support and are behind us. This water is their witness” (*Kinjeketile*, 19). This becomes their fatal undoing, as their belief in the ancestors’ support through the water is total: a spiritually based but unproveable belief.

The trickster archetype comes in the shape of Seyyid Said and Hongo. Hongo is the spirit that reveals a course of action “above his domain”. Embedded in the vision are possible bloodshed and the handing over of his worshippers to another oppressor, Seyyid Said, an Arab. When reminded of these and of his also speaking in ‘tongue’, - “some strange Swahili - like Arabic”, Kinjeketile nearly runs mad:

I’ve been cheated! They have killed me – no, I have killed myself! It was a dream, yes, I was dreaming! No, no, no! I have been cheated! No! (*Kinjeketile*, 21)

This discovery of Hongo’s trick elicits doubts in the mind of Kinjeketile. It pushes him to shift focus and belief from the magic water he brought from the spirits to the collective power of the people resident in individual embodiments. According to Hussein in Alain’s (2000:12) interview with him, Seyyid Said represents an internal oppressor (from the African continent) as differentiated from the external (the Germans). He states:

it is not only the invaders from overseas who are the murderers, the enemies of emancipation- ruling strata from nearby, from within the African realm - are perhaps, as formidable oppressive forces as Germans

Hongo and the ancestors typify the spirit archetype. According to Balogun (Year Unstated: 155), Hongo's possession of Kinjeketile shows "the perspective of the unseen force consulted by man and whose influence he is subjected to". Man, therefore, takes his sustenance from the supernatural forces he consults. In the African metaphysical world, it is a normal occurrence to contact and be contacted by and from the spiritual world. The spiritual possessions of Kinjeketile and his staying under the river presuppose his own initiatory process. This archetype foregrounds his mysticism and confirms him a spiritual leader. With this, he becomes a 'sharer' and 'partaker' of the secrets of the spirits and the ancestors. This is why he could categorically state that the spirits and the ancestors are behind their struggle. It also gives him power which he imparts on others like Kitunda and the four young men who volunteer for the *nywiywila* (the whispering campaign).

In all suppressed environments, the oppressed have always been nicknamed. In a recent event on the Africa continent in Rwanda in 1994, the oppressed, the Tutsis were called 'Cockroaches' while the Jews in medieval times were 'Christ-killers'. These nomenclatures supposedly undermine the humanity of the oppressed giving allowance for the atrocities committed against them. In *Sizwe Bansi*, while the South African and American blacks are 'monkeys', the former are better than the latter according to Baas Bradley:

Say to them, Styles, that they must try to impress Mr. Henry Ford that they are better than those monkeys in his own country, those niggers in Harlem who know nothing but strike, strike. (*Sizwe Bansi*, 7)

Styles translates this ironically but realistically:

Gentlemen, he says we must remember, when Mr. Ford walks in, that we are South African monkeys, not American monkeys. South African monkeys are much better trained ... (*Sizwe Bansi*, 7)

This monkey nomenclature presupposes that the oppressed cannot and will not think or act over and above the oppressors. The mythic tendency foregrounds that all oppressed people, from time immemorial, have always been oppressed either because they needed to be 'civilized', 'educated' or 'modernized' by the oppressors who already assume that they are at these levels. These propaganda allow for the oppression of the people at different levels; psycho-religious, socio-economic, traditional and cultural. The oppressed are alienated from their environment and all that are theirs. Their lives run on auto-control as opined by Styles while responding to his own loss of individual psyche:

Styles, you're a monkey, man, and you know it. Run up and down the whole bloody day! Your life doesn't belong to you. You've sold it. For what, Styles? Gold wrist-watch in twenty-five years time when they sign you off because you're too old for anything any more?
I was right. I took a good look at my life. What did I see? A bloody circus monkey! Selling most of his time on this earth to another man. Out of every twenty-four hours I could only properly call mine the six when I was sleeping. What the hell is the use of that? (*Sizwe Bansi*, 9)

On the other hand, the oppressors symbolically become cockroaches occupying, infecting and destroying the environment. They infect all levels of life in South Africa. The normal destroying instrument, the insecticide, does not over power them. Allocating vocal powers to themselves, they take inoculations against the ravages of the insecticide misnamed 'Doom' (it is powerless against the cockroaches). They come in all shapes and sizes; 'little things', 'big bastards' and 'paratroopers'. Due to their mythic abnormalities, Styles resorts to the not-too-normal medium of a cat, Blackie, to conquer them. This situation presupposes that with the use of unconventional means, the blacks will overcome their oppressive environment. The

whites become 'Baas' – an archetype signifying, in their mentality, a permanent and personal superiority over the blacks who are called 'boys' not minding the individual's age or socio-economic attainments.

In the African cosmogony, the crossroad is a point or place of decision taking and making and where sacrifices to the gods are made (Awolalu 1979). Buntu and Man (Sizwe) get to one: their decision to take a road lead to the dead Robert (the sacrifice) and freedom (even if temporarily, that comes the way of Sizwe). It epitomizes the different types of freedom that are opened to them.

As instruments of oppression, all forms of documentation - the Passbook, Native Identity Number, Reference Book, Hawker's License, Record Card and Permit - become tools of depersonalization and dehumanization of the blacks. These modern tools of slavery are comparable to the gang-chains of the black slavery period. Man, in frustration, lashes out:

That bloody book ... ! People, do you know? No!
Wherever you go ... it's that bloody book. You go
to school, it goes too. Go to work, it goes too. Go to church
and pray and sing lovely hymns, it sits there with you. Go
to hospital to die, it lies there too! (*Sizwe Bansi*, 35)

A form of archetypal icon ameliorative of these negative ideas is the mother myth. It is portrayed through Sizwe's wife, Nowetu. When family and national cosmogonies are ruptured and portrayed through the travails of Man (Sizwe), solutions come through an epistolatory contact with his wife, Nowetu. Though she does not physically appear on stage, her part occupies the whole second part of the text (the Sizwe Bansi's part). She is depicted as a guarantor of family cohesion and its management. Referring to Sizwe's travail, Brink (1993:10) avers:

It is his very absence from home, the family, his wife, that
has resulted in all his present troubles. Eventual restoration
and return to the absent Nowetu is the only resolution, and
it is symbolically prefigured in the act of writing her.

According to *Fate of a Cockroach*, the cockroach or black-beetle is a destroyer. It is:

a harmful insect that infests cloth, food and paper. It is often found in lavatories and has long hairy horns or whiskers. It spoils more food than it actually requires as nourishment. It can live for about a year. (*Cockroach*, 36)

This destructive and debilitating archetype has been with man from time immemorial. What it does in the human world is what happens in its own world. Apart from the Subject Cockroach and Queen, all other cockroaches are limited by their horizon and surrounding circumstances. Theirs is to live and act like parasites. In the long of it, their pathfinder becomes the ideographical representation of a scapegoat sacrificed for his world.

Conversely, through the ants, according to Duerden (1975: 127-128):

... we are reminded of the role played by the ants in eating the figures of the ancestors and thus assisting the earth in its re-creative and revivifying role. The ants are the agents of change, the destroyers of dead wood, who make sure that the full cycle of life is carried out for each individual who is born and lives a complete life and that he returns to the earth.

This is the main reason the cockroaches could not find a solution to the ants' problem. Through keeping the cockroaches in check and eating up their remains, the ants help keep a balance for their cosmogony to stay on track. Due to this duty, Al-Hakim regards them as geniuses and the cockroaches as heroic for trying to source for freedom.

The police, in *Morountodun*, symbolize a specific oppressive and intimidating arm of a suppressive government. They are used as a tool to stop the revolt. The maimings and killings they perpetrate on the farmers are returned to them in full. Marshal asks for the casualties of a specific day, and was informed: "Ten of theirs. Three of ours" (*Morountodun*, 42). In many countries and in more struggles than one,

the police is used as a tool of oppression and suppression by the governments of the day. And in this text, they are dressed to fit as represented by the “CORPORAL in full riot gear; shield, tear gas gun and canisters, etc” (*Morountodun*, 9).

The archetype of the woman as a source of life, especially a new one, is played upon in the text. Moremi, through her struggle, determines to “be the clay which the race requires to remold itself” (*Morountodun*, 34). Titubi, on her part, wants to be like Moremi, the race-saver, aspiring that “a new life begin” (*Morountodun*, 71). In most myths, the women are the link to mother earth and serve as a revitalizing force. Through these women, their different communities are reborn and given another lease of life.

Another archetype of oppression presented from the history of the Yorubas is Gaha, a former chief, in the historical Oyo Empire seen as a depiction of suppression. History paints him as an oppressor of not only the people but also of his lieges until he was done away with. His actions, according to Baba, were carried out “in the worst days of our history” (*Morountodun*, 49).

One recurring and relevant reference in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* that operates between the oppressed and the oppressors is the symbolic contrast between and the use of the ant and elephant. According to Woman, “We are only ants trodden upon by heavy merciless elephants” (*Trial*, 14). The ants become the Kenyans and all oppressed people. The elephant, which can trample to death all the ants, is a representation of the British and all oppressors. The elephant hardly sees the ant and even in situations where the presence of the ant is felt, it is trampled upon and crushed as an inconsequential.

Various holy books or scriptural books generated through different religions are usually venerated and regarded as sacred: more of the physical book than the spiritual contents. ‘Owners’ of a religion will usually use all relevant portions to oppress converts. This spiritually inclined oppression is usually said to be divinely ordained *a la* apartheid system which was theologically encouraged and supported by the South African Dutch Reformed Church (theologically an offshoot of Calvinism). Priest, in the text, opines that the people should continue their suffering and remain under

oppression: the struggle is not physical but spiritual. It is only when they get to the heaven of the religion of their earthly oppressors that they can rest and be equal to their oppressors! Religion, therefore, serves as a tool of oppression. The archetypal and recurring deceit portraitured in the iconographic reason underlying religious missionary works is nationalistic and self-centred. Priest succinctly portrays this in his dialogue with Kimathi:

Kimathi: I only read those sections necessary to our struggle
Priest: You see, Dedan. That's where you went wrong. These
verses are not talking about earthly things, earthly
struggle. It is a spiritual struggle. God and Satan locked
in an immortal struggle for the domination of our souls.
(*Trial*, 49)

Woman and land are used in the context of wombs through which new things and the future of the people are realized and concretized. Through Woman, Boy and Girl become revolutionaries. She recruits, indoctrinates, tests, initiates and commissions them into the world of fighting for freedom for their people (*Trial*, 59-62). When she and Kimathi are arrested, it becomes certain that the struggle will continue. The land, which represents the essence of the people, is in other hands. It must be recaptured or else the future of not only the present but the future generations will be mortgaged and endangered. Through the repossession of their land, the people can be reborn not only physically but also psycho-spiritually.

Initiation, over time, has been a binding tool for secrecy by groups against others: initiates against novices, initiates against oppressors. Though not explicitly stated in the text, initiation involves ritualistic processes and implications. These elicit loyalty, unity, secrecy and the achievement of goals and aims. The people are bounded for freedom and struggle against a force of occupation. Hence secrets, discipline, and loyalty must be kept, if any success would be achieved. Initiation, therefore, comes handy as one swears to the achievement of an aim and a goal as acclaimed by Kimathi:

Listen and listen well. I will fight to the bitter end. Protect our soil. Protect our people. This is what I, Kimathi wa Wachiuri, swore at initiation. (*Trial*, 54)

The play, *Wedlock of the Gods*, is based on the original archetype of mourning (rites and rituals) imposed on widows in most developing traditional societies. Sofola utilizes Ogwoma to depict what these societies and the women, themselves, impose on the woman in widowhood.

Mourning, a subset of the death archetype, comes with its different symbols, rites and rituals. In this Mid-Western Nigerian set play, mourning serves as an initiatory rite for the woman into widowhood. The initiatory rites include her sleeping by the fire and having a shaven head with her body stained with ashes. All these would last for three months. It is supposed to be a period of spiritual, physical and psychological re-engineering for the woman. It is not really a time of sober reflection but a time for repressing her emotions under psychological pressure and suffering. On the other hand, the dead husband is enabled to find his way to the spirit world at the expense of the woman's sufferings. This initiation portrays the deadness of the ashes as the dead husband, the fire as the link between the two and the shaven head as a sign of physical suffering, mourning and rite processing. The three months are assumed, traditionally and spiritually, to be enough time for the dead to find its way to the gods.

The generally accepted initiatory rite into manhood is one that exposes to the new initiate the spiritual and cultural secrets of his community. It allows him to sit among the elders. Ogwoma's brother has to be initiated into manhood at the tender age of ten for his life to be saved. His life is worth the community's secrets and therefore the rite is carried out at the injunction of the oracle. He becomes a man through this life-saving ritual. This archetype is one that reinvigorates, re-establishes and remodels an individual to his society's needs and focuses (present and future).

A few archetypes, amongst others, that reside within the cosmogony of the Yoruba people, are prevalent in Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*. In his definition, Strauch (1982:98) opines that the archetype

...embody experiences of a quasi-universal nature, containing the essence of human awareness or understanding. In this sense, archetypes are centres of psychic and existential meaning. In other words, the archetype may be seen as the hiatus between one's personal consciousness of life problems and the suprapersonal consciousness of any racial group, between individual pathos and racial pathos.

The archetypes used in the text and derived from the Yoruba people, in a way, are universal in mold. The over-riding archetype is that of dying and death interposed with that of life. From the beginning, the audience is introduced to the intention of Elesin and the duty to be performed on behalf of his community and to his king. He seems to be so much in a hurry to accomplish it that Praise-Singer cautions:

Elesin o! Elesin Oba! Howu! What tryst is this the cockerel goes to keep with such haste that he must leave his tail behind? (*Death*, 9)

Elesin knows that his time to keep to his communally allotted duty of self sacrificial death had come. According to him, he will not shy away from it:

This night I'll lay my head And go to sleep ... as I go to meet my great forebears. (*Death*, 10)

In concretizing his unflinching resolve to dying, Elesin resorts to the analogy of the Not-I-Bird. Of all the characters, humans and animals, Elesin is the only one ready for death: all others cry 'Not-I' in their rejection of death and its messenger. Elesin becomes the epitome of not only death but that of a heroic sacrificial character. It is through him and his death that life can go on for his community. In and through his death can life and rebirth be for the people. This is a universal archetypal belief: in the sacrificial death of a single person chosen or imposed upon by the community can salvation, progress and unity of the community come.

There is the archetype of the earth (regarded as the mother of all). Cocooned in it is the archetype of life. Through what is planted in the earth, life is reproduced.

Elesin's idea of taking a bride on the night of his dying is to plant his man-seed so that life can continue for him:

... Let
Seed that will not serve the stomach
On the way remain behind. Let it take root
In the earth of my choice, in this earth
I leave behind. (*Death*, 21)

In the above, earth is reflected in two ways: as a child-bearing woman and as the world Elesin is leaving behind (after death). "In the earth of my choice" is the new bride through whom he desires to have his name continued. Through the sexual act, Elesin proves that the bride is a virgin. In traditional life this signifies the beginning of a new uncorrupted life and it creates unity between the two involved families. It brings honour and prestige to the new bride:

Elesin: ... (*They turn and see him, and the object in his hands. IYALOJA approaches and gently takes the cloth from him.*) Take it. It is no mere virgin stain, but the union of life and the seed of passage. My vital flow, the last from this flesh is intermingled with the promise of future life. (*Death*, 40)

There is the archetype of woman. It is a universal archetype that represents the womb, reproduction and the softer aspect of life. Soyinka plays on all these and more. For him, humans come to the world through the conduits of women. Elesin, who professes that he had lived with and through them, prefers to die amongst them. This softness is contrasted with the harshness of death. The women serve as the link between Elesin, the realms of the Living, the Unborn and the Dead. They pervade the physical world as represented by the market in the text: subtle controllers of the world. They support, comfort, warn and caution Elesin at every necessary step. At the end, because of the communal cosmic irruption, the women carry Olunde's corpse. This is untraditional as women in the Yoruba world do not carry corpses.

Soyinka's archetypes, though Yoruba in orientation and origin, are universal in coverage and meanings. They portray holistic usages that reflect world-wide effects.

Birds, in *Ipi Zombi?* by Brett Bailey, are harbingers of witches, witchcraft and the presence of evil and therefore, fear. According to Intombi 'Nyama

The day the birds came, it started. I watched them and I knew it was coming. They came over from the forest in flocks, flock after flock after flock, black birds like I'd never seen before flying so quietly and blocking the stars ... They came from the forest, all night they came - flying, flying The old man said there would be great feasting, but me - I knew it was the end of the world. (*Zombi?*, 203)

From the antediluvian period, birds have been venerated and feared depending on the myth ascribed to the particular bird and the region concerned. Basically, they are seen as messengers of the gods – negative and or positive - and harbingers of impending events. The same Intombi 'Nyama also sees the birds as divining tools for her. Through a bird she comes into the 'knowledge' of what happened to the dead boys:

Intombi 'Nyama: And then a bird says to me:
Women: "*Yiza sisi, yiza* (Come, sister, come) - I'll show you everything"
Intombi 'Nyama: A little bird, so I go
Men: Boys in the cupboard calling her name, boys in the cupboard calling her name (*Zombi?*, 209).

The other archetypal figure - the snake - represents evil and witchcraft as it eats "his children with his big snake mouth" (*Zombi?*, 209). It depicts the witches accused of killing their own children. Aligned with this, Mr Magudu professes the innocence of his mother because, "I ... never saw a snake or even a bird living insider her room ..."
(*Zombi?*, 215).

Traditional doctors, diviners and witch doctors existed in pre-industrial societies (and even in present societies where the environment and the peoples' psyche still allows for it). Witch-doctors, in the play, act as diviners who according to Duerden (1975:111)

are responsible for discovering when people are hiding dangerous or valuable secrets. It is clear that a diviner can exercise great power in a society because he is the individual who decides whether a member of a particular group is of a mind to preserve the group by his behaviour or whether he is more concerned with the profitability of his own self-seeking.

Three Sangomas find evidence of witchcraft in the environment as they retrieve “evil talismans - a goat skull bristling with pins, a bottle of oily liquid” (Zombi?, 207). These are neutralized but in the long run, the Sangomas could not eliminate the witches.

In a recreation of the Biblical Pilate washing his hands off the condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, Boys wash their hands in a bucket after killing some of the witches. They intend, with this, to portray their innocence in the killings of the women as

Witches are held responsible for misfortune or death by using their mystical powers and they are capable of an infinite amount of trickery in hiding deceptions. (Duerden, 1975:83)

Bailey infuses and juxtaposes Xhosa rituals, folklores and mythic beliefs into this play which reflect as universal icons through the thematic focus.

5.2 Totems

Humans in antiquity had respect for animals, plants and other lower creatures. From their studies of these creatures, they accorded and transferred the animals' attributes to themselves. They saw themselves as 'related' to the creatures. According to Ngumoha (1998: 63):

When a creature is chosen, therefore, to symbolize to the concrete human mind some concealed abstract principle, it

is because its characteristics demonstrate this invisible principle in visible action

and he sees totemism as

the intimate association of natural beings and forces both with a transcendental world of spirit and with specific social group (1988; 85).

Sutherland typifies this with an exploratory examination of the Akan (Ghanaian) socio-religious beliefs with reference to some totemic figures. From the attributes ascribed to the four royal suitors, their totemic references can be inferred. Chief of Sapa is “Mighty-Tree-Of-Ancient-Origin” (*The Marriage*, 7) which is rooted in tradition and gives shelter to all. Togbe Klu IV is the “Prickly-pear! / Cactus keeping guard” (*The Marriage*, 7) who keeps all enemies at bay from his territory making “The enemy bleeds” but giving love to “whom you love” (*The Marriage*, 7). There is also Chief of the Mines, the “driver ant”, who does not give anybody any breathing or sitting space. The most favoured of them, Chief-Who-Is-Chief, is the “fire-extinguisher ... fire extinguishing victor” (*The Marriage*, 7). His abilities include causing “flame flashes to darken / You have caused ‘I’m irreversible / To come to a full stop” (*The Marriage*, 7). These totemic representations in themselves come to naught if their characteristics are not brought to bear on their human subjects.

To the derogatory level, totems become useful. Aya calls her family’s cocoa farm destroyers “off-spring of vipers” (*The Marriage*, 54) alluding to the venom and negativity of this snake. They are “the wicked ones” who must not be allowed “to sleep in peace” (*The Marriage* 54).

There is also the use of the clan staff, which can be referred to as the totem pole bearing the shape or carving of the family or clan totem. It is used during official ceremonies: joyous or sorrowful like the lying-in-state of Anansewa. According to the text, it is “a staff mounted by the identifying totemic symbol of a clan: in this case it is the staff of the Nsona clan whose totemic symbol is the crow” (*The Marriage*, 62).

Kinjeketile’s spirit in *Kinjeketile* is represented in the physical. The major totemic inference, therefore, is the snake. During the conversation between Bibi

Kitunda and her daughter, Chausiku, the latter is encouraged to find out what was emitting smoke from Kinjeketile's hut. A snake that could only be seen by her chases her. Apart from protecting Kinjeketile, it also represents the guarding and guiding presence of the ancestors and the spirits. It becomes his spiritual and official totem: one that elicits fear just as the spirit, Hongo, did in the end to Kinjeketile.

Fugard, on the other hand in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, limits his totemic symbolic exploration to the metaphoric contrast prevalent among apartheid group characters: the whites, the blacks and the non-humans. Textually, Apartheid is shown, through the cockroaches, to be pervasive and deeply rooted in South Africa:

What do I see on the walls? Cockroaches. *Ja*, cockroaches in *my* place. I don't mean those little things that run all over the place when you pull out the kitchen drawer. I'm talking about the big bastards, the paratroopers as we call them On the floors, the walls. (*Sizwe Bansi*, 11)

Against the cockroaches, a destructive totemic icon representing white South Africans, Styles finds another icon. The first one he finds is the insecticide, Doom. This, to his chagrin, is outdated. It could neither solve nor destroy the apartheid problem. The whites, nay the cockroaches, have developed a thick skin to its effects: they regard it as "a problem of serious pollution ... contamination!" only. The solution to this intrusion to waste the powers of Styles and Doom and also reduce the continuous freedom struggle of the blacks is "a general inoculation of the whole community" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 11). An effective totem to defeat this limitation is given by Dhlamini: "Doom? You're wasting your time, Styles. You want to solve your problem, get a cat" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 12). Styles gets a cat symbolically named Blackie: a cat (a black oriented solution) that could fight for itself eliminating the cockroaches, suggestive of the beginning of the end to the policy of Apartheid. To end Apartheid, a new system of struggle, peaceful or not, must be propagated and effected. This situation is prophetic of present-day South Africa: a free country devoid of Apartheid as all races live as equals.

In his alignment with and diffusion into the cockroach, Adil in *Fate of a Cockroach* creates for himself a totemic figure and representation. He saw the struggle for life and freedom of the cockroach as his. The courage exhibited by the insect becomes his and he strives to emulate this characteristic but fails. His own personal struggle and agitation disappear the moment the cockroach is killed by Umm Attiya in the bath. Therefore, faced with his own real situation, he withdraws, gives up and shouts: “Umm Attiya, bring the bucket and rag and wipe me out of existence!” (*Cockroach*, 76). The doctor, who is convinced to side with him, gives up immediately also when he discovers the death of the cockroach (representation of the death of his new found adventure towards freedom).

In line with the African belief, a few animals along with their attributes are alluded to in relation to the behaviour and actions of some characters in *Morountodun*. Titubi alludes to the stupidity and docility of the donkey in her class’ acceptance of harassment by the proletariat:

We have respect for the law, even though the law is a donkey. These beggars have been riding it with glee down our spine all these days. (*Morountodun*, 8)

Titubi, while fighting for her social class, utilizes the locust, a destroyer, as another subject matter and allusion. She rhetorically asks: “Did we send locusts to anybody’s farm?” (*Morountodun*, 9).

The picture and action of the vulture as a scavenger is a universal one. The Superintendent, Marshal and Bogunde make allusions to this scavenger and its effects on the struggle depending on their individual stance. Superintendent refers to the bourgeois class represented by Alhaja as scavengers:

You should know, Alhaja. After all, these rebels are of your own creation, you who are used to feeding on others (*Morountodun*, 24).

The police, the tool of oppression, is also seen as a scavenger in the guise of the vulture. In the betrayal case of Alhaja Buraimoh and Lawyer Isaac, Marshal accuses the two: "They led the vultures here" (*Morountodun*, 44). As attackers and 'poisoners' of the people's drinking water the police become scavengers. Bogunde states: "The vultures had poisoned our stream before they retreated" (*Morountodun*, 48). These are in line with Eliade's (1960:125) injunction:

saved stones or trees are not adorned in their natural capacity, but only because they are hierophanies, because they show forth something which is no longer mineral or vegetable but sacred 'wholly other'.

Totems are not limited to animals or non-living things. Kimathi, in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, is revered through his characteristics and links to other living and non-living objects. He becomes a totemic reference to his people. According to Boy and Girl, Kimathi is regaled by the people with some powers:

- Omniscient ability: he should "have known of his arrest and escape in time."
(*Trial*, 61)
- Omnipotent metamorphosis: he could turn himself into different objects like an aeroplane, a bugle blower, a 100 miles "belly-walker" and other things.

With all these 'powers', it becomes hard to believe that he could be arrested. It is resolved:

They have caught his shadow (*Trial*, 62)

The reverence accorded Kimathi is brought into reality by Woman who proceeds to explain the psychical and physical necessities that create the above totemic myths. Kimathi is many things to different people but all cumulate into the struggle. Woman states in explanation:

He had to be strong - for us - because of us Kenyan people.

Faith in a cause can work miracles. (*Trial*, 21)

Wedlock of the Gods shows that in the African world, the 'head' (not just the ordinary human head) encapsulates the human essence (Awolalu 1979). While it is supposed to inhabit its physical human representation and *is* the person, it is assumed to be predestined. In some situations and environments, it is worshipped and propitiated. It can be good or evil, poor or rich. Sofola brings this archetype to the fore through Ogoli when she refers to the act of Ogwoma and what its negative effects would be on not only the individuals involved but also on the community at large:

Ogoli: Carry your evil head to someone else and leave my son alone. (*Wedlock*, 24)

The major totemic figure in Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* is the Not-I-Bird. Its death related totemic implications are even unknown to Praise-Singer who is educated by Elesin. According to Ngumoha (1998:64):

Birds were included in religious and philosophic symbolism as appropriate emblems of various human and divine attributes. This is found among the pagans as well as the Christians.

The Not-I-Bird is an announcer of the imminence of death. Its announcements are rejected by diverse humans (the farmer, the hunter, the courtesan, the Mallam and Ifawomi) and animals (the hyena and the civet). Everyone runs from this harbinger of death: its acceptance means that one is ready for death as exemplified in the situation of the farmer:

Death came calling
Who does not know his rasp of reeds?
... Did you hear it?
Not I! swears the farmer. He snaps
His fingers round his head, abandons
A hard-worn harvest and begins
A rapid dialogue with his legs. (*Death*, 11-12)

Only Elesin welcomes it as the epitome of death. He is ready for dying and “unrolled / my welcome mat for him” (*Death*, 14) as an acceptance of the message of death.

5.3 The Mythic Hero

Usually, heroes are made by their actions and not by their lineage or pedigree. According to Dasylva (1994:2), “The hero has always been the major link that holds together the many episodes that constitute the entire narrative.” Ananse, in *The Marriage of Anansewa*, becomes a mythical hero by his various actions. Through his covert cunningness he strives, plans and succeeds in changing the social status of his family. Anansewa, in commending her father, says: “Oh father, there’s cunning in your head. You are to be feared” (*The Marriage*, 11). When Ananse starts his plans, Storyteller alludes to his mythical cunningness:

it is possible for Ananse to profit from the gifts his daughter’s suitors bring and not be bound by any obligation at all.

What craftiness. Also he has been careful to explain what his daughter Anansewa stands to gain from his design but nobody has heard him making any direct hints about what he personally will gain. Ananse! (*The Marriage*, 19)

Ananse webs the royal personages playing on their traditional intelligence and gullibility. It is as if he understands tradition more than the custodians of tradition. What he takes from them, through playing on tradition and custom, he uses to enrich his family purse. When it comes to payback time, instead of reneging, he again resorts to tradition. He puts his daughter in a pretentious dead situation knowing full well, according to Storyteller:

No-sale-no-payment
Obliges no one.

The point about head-drink is
That it’s paid for the living.
Therefore, Chief-of-Sapase e!
Don’t bother to come,

Oh, don't bother to come,
Because the object of your interest
Did not survive for you,
Did not survive for you. (*The Marriage*, 63)

She did not survive for others too until it is proved that only Chief-Who-In-Chief is worthy of her.

Mythic heroes have mythical tools and weaponry either for war or peace situations. There were Chaka the Zulu with his short battle-axe (the *assegai*); Achilles with his spear of ashwood; Silamaka with his charmed belt; Lianja with his spear and Beowulf with his sword. Ananse has his web screen. The tools serve, to an extent, as their magical armours for invincibility and protection. When Ananse undergoes a self-withdrawal syndrome for self-protection and re-analysis, he utilizes the web-screen as a guard and protection between himself and the outside world. It was his double-edged sword against the world: protecting himself but smiting his adversaries.

Like most mythic heroes, Ananse has 'spiritual contact'. He portrays this through the invocation of the ancestors and the gods at the 'resurrection' of his daughter. The situation depicts his 'spiritual power' and the part the divine plays in the realization and power of love. He invokes:

Ancestors, I am pleading with you,
If it is your desire
As it is ours
That Chief-Who-Is-Chief
Should marry Anansewa
See to it that she returns to life

Love is calling you, return,
Wake, oh wake!

Chief-who-is-Chief loves you true
Wake, oh wake!

Oh, she is waking. Are there such wonders in the world?
My child is waking.

Does love have such powers? Christie, open the doors and let
everybody in to see the power of amazing love

Love has awakened my child. (*The Marriage*, 80)

Kinjeketile, the prophet and seer, becomes mythical in *Kinjeketile* by his various actions that are seen by the people as extra-ordinary, extra-physical and spirit-induced and supported. His first introduction to the audience, *in absentia*, shows him already unconsciously regarded as a priest set apart. In this process, he is misunderstood and regarded as weird. A few textual extracts suffice:

Bibi Kinjeketile: Oh that smoke ... that is Kinjeketile performing his ritual He's locked himself in for many days now.

Bibi Kitunda: Some time ago, I met him at the river – alone. I went near him – very near, but he didn't see me. He was looking at the water, very strangely; as if he had never seen it before.

Bibi Kinjeketile: He's changed a lot. I don't understand what he says any more. (*Kinjeketile*, 2)

Unknown to many but felt as something wrong Kinjeketile is already, at this period, going through a gestational spiritual initiatory process. Chausiku sees this in a snake (a protective and guarding totem) chasing her from Kinjeketile's house while his omnipresence and bilocative abilities are confirmed by Kitunda.

The first public demonstration of his spiritual link is during his Hongoic possession: his trance-like appearance and under-water experience. His staying under the water with his baffling and mystifying re-appearance confirms his priesthood and completes his initiation procedure. He becomes, especially, when possessed by Hongo, a mouthpiece of the spirits and the ancestors. At his initial appearance, the support of the gods and the ancestors is felt in the mystical change in the weather:

Second man: True, it is hot. This is strange. We never have had such heat before.

Third man: I have never known such blinding heat before.
(*Kinjeketile*, 14)

Kinjeketile confirms to the people that his powers and message are not ordinary. He tells them of his visit to the world of the ancestors and the spirits: “Hear from me who comes from Bokelo, the land of our ancestors / the message from our forefathers” (*Kinjeketile*, 16). He shows the two spiritual gifts he claims are given him by the spirits to enhance the people’s freedom struggle against the Germans. His powers become manifest in various ways. He controls wild and dangerous animals (*Kinjeketile*, 19) and his physical structure undergoes great changes. He speaks in a ‘tongue’ different from his native language while in communication with the spirit world through his possession by Hongo.

Finally, when caught, he neither recants nor retracts all he had said about the water and the struggle. For him and the people, this becomes the height of his mythical personality. His death turns him into a mythic and mystic hero. His mythical sacrifice encourages the people to continue with the struggle (Okeama 2005). Commenting on the qualities of a hero, which Kinjeketile fulfils, Maduakor (1986) agrees with Dasylva (1994: 63) who writes:

Whether divine, semi-divine, or human, the fundamental factors that mark the hero out are his unique and charismatic personality, unqualified courage and his proven ability to expand the horizon of human possibilities. Heroes are achievers and also those who make equal or greater achievement possible.

The hero, (un)consciously chosen and consolidated from a group, serves and upgrades his or her consciousness. Sometimes, the supreme sacrifice is expected and is extracted from him or her. In *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, the heroes contribute their quota to the development of their society. Through their lives, the audience is privileged to see the rise in the consciousness of their people, at least at metaphorical and symbolic levels.

Styles is a run of the mill unknown individual within the social system. He had worked six years at Ford’s until his eyes and consciousness are opened. He succinctly shows this in his unofficial position as a translator for Baas Bradley. He not only

twists Bradley's words, he challenges the servile psyche of the other black workers and by extension the black populace:

Gentlemen, he says that when the door opens and his grandmother walks in you must see to it that you are wearing a mask of smiles. Hide your true feelings, brothers. You must sing. The joyous songs of the days of old before we had fools like this one next to me to worry about.
(*Sizwe Bansi*, 7)

Extricating himself, psychologically and physically, from the stifling and suppressive world of Bradley and Ford, he pursues his freedom dream. He establishes a photographic studio through which he becomes a destroyer (of the apartheid policies) and a restorer ("of the days of old" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 7)). Through ingenuity and creativity, he destroys the cockroaches (the whites) and the apartheid system. He establishes the fact that the system is destroyable and only a hero can do this. In conquering his own personal limitations, he opens a way for others, his people, to achieve self and national freedom dreams. He becomes a way-shower, a motivator and an encouragement. People capture, in photos, cards and movies, their dreams through his camera. In inspiring them into all these, he assuages their fears by spurring them onto conquering their dreams' limitations. He captures the past, showing it as it used to be and compares it to the present through the family-generation cards.

Usually, mythic heroes are made of characters that are not stationary. They have the ability of movement either in the physical, metaphysical or spiritual worlds (Dasylyva 1994, Okeama 2005). Their movements are usually forced either by sudden change in their personal or general world outlook. They seek, consciously or unconsciously, to make and effect drastic but long-lasting socio-religious, cultural and scientific changes in the psyche of their immediate and general worlds. The Cockroach King in *Fate of a Cockroach* is a mythic hero albeit an unconscious and unprepared one. His movement to explore the new world of the basin confers on him the adventurous spirit. His courage in trying to escape his predicament depicts a new level

in the fighting spirit of the cockroaches. His death is a movement from the mundane to the height of a mythic hero.

Adil, the human character, who is de-cruised from his position and roused to examine his own world and part in it, refers to the cockroach as a “hero”. This human character, lacking the courage to surmount his own social and matrimonial limitations, is enabled by the actions of the cockroach. His heroism and transcendental movement for freedom collapse the moment the cockroach loses out. On the contrary, this ‘assumed’ failure of the cockroach, caused by forces outside of its world, should have been a step in the rung of his own ladder towards self and psychical emancipation.

Nearly all the characters in *Morountodun* undergo specific but differing processes of achieving mythic status. A movement from the ordinary to the special position of a mythic hero demands that changes occur in and around the to-be-hero(ines). These changes can be internal and psychological.

Titubi desires to be a mythic hero in the line of Moremi: a woman who sacrificed all to help her race survive. She has to come down from her high social rung, become a common war prisoner and then a fighter suffering with the farmers. To live among the farmers, her psyche undergoes changes (this is achieved through her indoctrination by the Superintendent). Her necklace, called Moremi, which bears a dagger, symbolizes her sacrifice. To her and others, she finally achieves mythichood with her capture of Marshal.

For Moremi, another woman, who transplants herself into the Yoruba pantheon, the process is nearly the same. She unsheaths her humanity, taking on new but invigorating spiritual and psychical characteristics. She tackles the gods, stepping into the situation they had failed to correct. To achieve mythichood, she loses the love of her husband and son, her queenship, becomes a war-prisoner and finally saves her race from extinction.

Both characters undergo rites of passage. These allow their full transformation from the ordinary to psychologically prepared personalities with the psyche and ability of accepting all that comes with their sacrifice of scape-goatism. Titubi undergoes hers in the prison at the hands of Alhaja, Superintendent and through self-introspection. On

the other hand, Moremi's is spiritual, physical and emotional. She goes through ritual ceremonies conducted by priests, denies her husband and rebuffs the entreaties of her age-grade group. In the words of Superintendent, both women are comparable to "the Amazon going to war!" (*Morountodun*, 13).

Marshal, the farmers' war-leader is "a phantom leader" (*Morountodun*, 14). He leads the warriors with an iron hand that bespeaks love, dedication and purpose. Superintendent reasons that if he is caught, the uprising would fall apart. Titubi, therefore, sets out to capture him. His mysticness lies in his ability to escape capture and finally in dying for the cause. He leaves, still in the embryo, the whiff of aroma of a classless society where all can live as one through his extremely short-lived marriage to Titubi (*Morountodun*). Through him also, the farmers, to an extent and as a group, touch the helm of heroism. It is herculean standing vigorously against the military machinery of government. According to the Governor:

It is senseless for anybody to shoot guns against the government. That person will be crushed.
(*Morountodun*, 64)

They withstand the onslaught of government forces for months losing lives and limbs but finally force the latter to a round table conference. In desperation, these characters move to alter their destinies and consciousness as exemplified in Moremi's hyperbolic soliloquy:

Futile prayers! How many times already we've watched our festivals change into periods of mourning when the Igbos set on us. Yet we have made sacrifices upon sacrifices till the earth is glutted with blood. Our priests have scraped their throats hoarse on incantations and their latest ploy is to try and make us accept defeat as fate. Tell me, my friend, what more shall we do to learn that the gods will not help us? I have decided. Moremi shall be the clay which the race requires to remould itself. (*Morountodun*, 34)

To be a hero *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* states that a person should be willing to offer self especially in a modern revolutionary movement which demands

dedication and selfless service. Woman calls this situation 'hearing the call' (*Trial*, 19). With this, the hero takes the first step of becoming a man having undergone the tests and initiatory rites. Manhood comes:

The day you understand why your father died: the day you ask yourself whether it was right for him to die so; the day you ask yourself: 'What can I do that another shall not be made to die under such grisly circumstances?' (*Trial*, 19)

Initiation follows the test of manhood. Boy and Girl are taken through this process by Woman. And they show their heroism and commitment in their rescue attempt of Kimathi. This rubs off Woman who is encouraged heroically to sacrifice herself knowing that the next generation of revolutionaries will act in her stead.

Kimathi, the man, is a mythic and symbolic character to the people. All his actions are regarded as such. First Soldier remarks:

Kimathi is a hero to the people. They love him like anything, say what you will. (*Trial*, 13)

And Woman agrees that he is the

Leader of the landless. Leader of them that toil. (*Trial*, 61)

He passes through all the mythic rites enunciated above to become a hero. He has the exceptional privilege of also undergoing torture, psychological and physical, at both the hands of his betrayers and torturers. There are also the personal, introspective reassessments and reassurances. His ability to overcome all these and still be a hero is summed up in Woman's assessment of him:

He was a wonderful teacher: with a laugh that was truly infectious. He could also act and mimic any character in the world: a story teller too, and many were the nights he would calm his men and make their hearts light and gay with humourous anecdotes. But above all, he loved people,

and he loved his country. He so hated the sight of Africans killing one another that he sometimes became a little soft with our enemies. (*Trial*, 62)

And even with these mythic and heroic achievements and attainments, Woman laments:

He, Great commander that he was, Great organizer that he was, Great fearless fighter that he was, he was human! Too human at times. (*Trial*, 62)

The main characters in *Wedlock of the Gods*, Ogwoma and Uloko, through their travails and sojourn in the world of troubled and endangered love coupled with their taboo infringement move from the level of ordinary day-to-day lovers to that which generations will always refer to (positively and or negatively). According to what both profess at different times, it is preferable to suffer physically and then move on to a place of bliss, happiness, love and peace. Both consciously break the community's avowed traditional laws concerning the period of mourning and the rites of widowhood to achieve these. In their mythic resolve, they are happy with the result: a pregnancy. Both did not flinch from what they know would be the societal repugnance and irruption at their action and the rejection they would face from friends and foes.

Throughout the situation, they made God - personal, group and community - their mainstay. Their belief is that he would see them through the evil plans of detractors like Odibei. In the final analysis both pay for their transgression. They become mythic through their actions and in the new personalities they embody in their deaths. Their love and marriage are no longer ordinary but consigned to the spiritual and the world of the gods. Uloko, in his death throes, prophesies stating symbolically:

Your love will now come with you
Ours is the wedlock of the gods
Together we shall forever be lighting
And thunder – inseparable!
Our love shall live forever;
Your light to keep it aglow;
My thunder to demolish all obstacles. (*Wedlock*, 56)

From the moment Elesin, in Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*, embarks on his death journey, he becomes a mythic hero. To fulfil his communal duty, he willingly goes into the market, amongst the women to die. This willingness and acceptance is depicted in the totemic analogy of the Not-I-Bird.

All he asks for are obliged him in this process of becoming a mythic hero. He has become partly an ancestor and a full messenger for the people. He must neither be angered nor refused. His voyaging must be with happiness. In his failure, all privileges are withdrawn and he becomes a "eater of left-overs" (*Death*, 61). On the retrieval of his family honour through the self sacrifice of his son, Olunde, Iyaloja refers to Elesin's corpse:

However sunk he was in debt he is no pauper's carrion
abandoned on the road. (*Death*, 76)

His son takes up his rights even if these will be in the realms of the Void and the Dead (Ancestors). Elesin will only eat crumbs that fall from the table: he fails in setting the world aright. His son, who takes over the sacrificial voyage, becomes the mythic hero.

The play, *Ipi Zombi?* by Brett Bailey, depicts Senti and his group walking the mythic heroes' road albeit on the blood of the innocents. In deciding to avenge their dead colleagues, who according to them have become zomboic, they become heroes fighting also for their society. The aim of cleansing the society and taking it to a higher level has always been a mythic problem to mythic heroes. Their struggles - personal or group - have always impacted on their societies. Like most heroes, Boys break away from the norms existing in their society to write another mythic song and story - of discovering, fighting and killing witches and eradicating witchcraft from their society.

Mythic heroes always pay certain prices or forgo some aspects of their life's full enjoyment to achieve their aims. Therefore, Senti is sentenced to twenty-five years imprisonment while some of the boys are arrested. This is a prevailing mythic lesson that nearly all mythic heroes undergo: to gain something, something must be given or

lost in return (In the Greek mythology of the dead crossing the river into the underworld, the dead must pay the canoe man a coin to be ferried across).

5.4 Technical Applications

In the use and relevance of Storyteller as the Director in the *Anansegoro* tradition, Sutherland in *The Marriage of Anansewa* (1975: Foreword, iv) posits:

The Storyteller in *Anansesem* tells the whole story himself ... Here, the narrator is still seen as the owner of the story with a conventional right to know everything, to have a right to be personally involved in the action and to be capable of inducing his audience to believe they are there with him and similarly involved.

Storyteller belongs, at the same time, to both the technical and acting crews. As an omniscient narrator, he knows the story from the beginning to the end. He comments, "I was present when all this happened" (*The Marriage*, 15). He is also a freelance commentator on the actions of the different characters especially Ananse. On the 'death' of Anansewa, he tells but admonishes the audience: "Ananse is lying, he is really, and so relax" (*The Marriage*, 60). More examples of his commentaries are on pages 16, 19, 56 and 59. As a Director, he could stop and start the play as exemplified in this dialogue:

Songleader: Storyteller, hold your story for a while
Storyteller: It's held for you brother. (*The Marriage*, 16)

As an actor, he comes in between Akosua and Akwasi in the headdress issue (*The Marriage*, 17-19). Part of his duties is to diffuse emotions and soothe frayed nerves. When Anansewa is reported dead, he is the first to assuage the audience's feelings. Finally, he participates also as a singer (*The Marriage*, 61, 63-65) using the songs as commentaries.

His technically inclined counterpart, Property Man, distributes, in the full glare of the audience, needed properties on stage. This de-emotionalizes the audience from

the actions on stage (a Brechtian stage philosophy). His stage services are portrayed on pages 22, 23, 29, 39 and 52. As part of his duties, he holds the clan staff at Ananewa's wake-keep (*The Marriage*, 66). He is even a priest in the mime of the song, "Those Born on Sunday" (*The Marriage*, 25).

Multifunctional characters are prevalent in the text. This usage demystifies parts and actions showing that in life a person can be multi-charactered. The parts include those of Players who are "grouped together as a unified pool of music-makers, dancers, actors and as a participatory audience" (*The Marriage*, ix). This structural stage demystification, based on Acts without Scenes, compresses the play allowing for fast-paced action.

The use of humour enlivens the play. During the Akwasi and Akosua issue, the audience finds it easy laughing at the cultural misunderstanding of Akwasi. The postman's questioning of Storyteller, "Are you house No. AW/6615?" and Storyteller's sarcastic and rhetoric reply, "Do I look like a house?" (*The Marriage*, 19) relieves the audience from the seriousness of the play. There is also the carpenter, mason and painter scene (*The Marriage*, 25-26) which elicits laughter.

The employment of the web as a medium of disguise by Ananse mystifies his animal attributes. His link to the Spider is established and brought to bear on the play. The daughter becomes webbed also during the process of convincing her to toe his line.

Panegyrics - appellations, traditional name greetings and extravagant praises - are used to symbolize the bearer's physical and socio-economic characteristics and lineage's attributes. Praise names abound in the text. Chief of Sapa is the "Mighty-Tree-Of-Ancient-Origin! ... / Rooted in the shrine of deity! ..." (*The Marriage*, 6). Countless branches and different birds representing people take shelter under him. His open-handedness is eulogized. Togbe Klu IV is a warrior. He is the "Prickly-Pear! / Cactus keeping guard / On your territory's border /.... Tough and vigilant one ..." (*The Marriage*, 7). Chief-who-is-Chief is the ultimate destroyer as he is able to 'consume' fire (*The Marriage*, 8). He protects and defends those he loves.

Day names are given those born on specific days of the week (masculine and feminine differentiated). Lamenting his poverty status, Ananse elucidates:

They call out: ‘Those born on Sunday.’ Those born on Sunday, the Kwesis and Esis, walk up ... ‘Those born on Monday.’ The Kodwos and Adwowas ... those born on Wednesday ... the Kwekus and Ekuwas. (*The Marriage*, 4)

In accordance with this tradition, Ananse is named Kweku as he was born on Wednesday. His appellation is, “Ananse Ekuamoa / Man-is-cunning Ananse!” (*The Marriage*, 33).

In the storytelling tradition of *Anansesem*, musical contributions and performances led by Storyteller are referred to as *Mboguo*. They are performed in context with even the stoppage of the play. According to *The Marriage* (Foreword, vi-vii), they

may be reflective of a mood or aimed at quickening the pace of the performance or inspiring the general assembly ... can be used to develop action and characterization or to acquaint the audience with shifts of time or place.

In the text, a perfect symbiotic relationship is laid in the use of drama, music and dance. The songs are derivatives and made functional by mood, characters and situations. Songs of sorrow, death, poverty, religion, joy and life are utilized. They help build and untangle most of the strings of web strung by Ananse. There are about twenty different *Mboguo* in the text. Each fulfils a specific purpose of explaining, commenting or helping ongoing action in the play. The text opens with Ananse’s lamentation about his poverty (*The Marriage*, 1) and ends with the song, “Is Love’s power so strong?” (*The Marriage*, 81). At the end, Ananse effects a change in his family’s social status. The songs are structured into verses usually of not more than five or six at the most. The language is simple, straightforward and easy to assimilate. The songs encapsulate and comment on the on-going actions on stage. An example is the song, “My heart, my heart” (*The Marriage*, 49) with three stanzas and lyrics

explaining the on-going discussion between Anansewa and her father. The songs, through great reliance on repetitions, create wonderful and beautiful lyrics that are captivating. A very relevant one is the song “Who is knocking?” (*The Marriage*, 33). Each of the lines is repeated twice not only for emphasis but also for easy lyrics and thematic relevance.

The source of these songs is not limited to the major characters on stage. Players, Storyteller and the girls are also providers. The girls present “Stay away from that town” (*The Marriage*, 43) while Players and Storyteller initiate and participate (as accompaniments) in most of the songs (*The Marriage*, 28-29, 33, 63). A few of these songs like “Oh, some time ago” (*The Marriage*, 28) and “Who doesn’t like work” (*The Marriage*, 27-28) are dance oriented and sung as such on the stage especially with Players as dancers and musicians using castanets, gongs and other musical instruments. Only one song is rendered in the traditional language. It is “*Zoxome mele du yom lo!*” (*The Marriage*, 72) sung during the ‘death’ of Anansewa by Akate messengers. The scene is situated in its traditional context of mourning.

The mimes, exemplified in the following extracts, move the play at a very fast pace. Actions are also physically realized.

Commentary: (PROPERTY MAN *mimes telephoning vigorously*) (*The Marriage*, 34)

Commentary: (PLAYERS *start the song, ‘I’m Down in a Pit’*. ANANSE, AYA, EKWUWA, CHRISTIE and PROPERTY MAN *mime a hurried carting out of luggage by chain service*) (*The Marriage*, 54-55)

Commentary: (CHRISTIE and PROPERTY MAN *mime opening up the house, and beckon people in*) (*The Marriage*, 80)

Dance-steps are relevant to the freedom warfare examined in *Kinjeketile*. There is the *likida* war dance (*Kinjeketile*, 22, 37, 47). It is not just a dance but one that prepares the men for the war against the Germans through the inculcation, planning and teaching of warfare tactics and strategies. The *likida* war dance, realized through

miming, is a conglomeration of war tactics used in prosecuting wars. It shows the warriors' physical and psychological readiness for the war.

Hussein, in the Introductory Note to the text, submits that there is a difference between Kinjeketile, the man who is a historical reality, and Kinjeketile, the historical evocation although "the two men closely resemble one another in their actions" (*Kinjeketile*, v). Not minding this difference, the setting and background of the actions are the same: the people of Southern Tanganyika (of then), in the Ruffi region of Ngarumbo village fighting a common enemy, the Germans. Mythic actions, though sometimes gliding into the supernatural, are grounded and sourced from within the socio-religious, economic and political psyche of the people as explanations of why situations are as they are.

The playwright uses narrative flashbacks to express the technical and unstageable actions. These are the main war actions against the Germans (*Kinjeketile*, 40, 48). Kitunda becomes the voice of the playwright running a war commentary. The unflinching belief in the magic water leads the warriors into a suicidal war where they are scythed.

Fugard, in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, did not preach apartheid overtly. He utilizes various technicalities to show his aversion to and proffer solutions to the policy of racial segregation.

The play, sprouted from and linked to the protest and struggle theatre, portrays the audience world of South African drama. The guerrilla theatre is depicted in the make-up of the text. Plays were staged spontaneously and moved around. During the workshops that added flesh to the plays in the anthology, the online Wikipedia reports:

audience used ... crying and interjecting. The plays were workshopped ... used the feedback to improve the play.... When he (Buntu) debates how Sizwe would effectively "die" and whether the sacrifice would be worth it the audience would cry out, "Go on. Do it" because they appreciated that without a pass you were effectively a non-entity.

This extends to the setting of the play which is Brechtian in orientation. It is minimal, effective and utility-oriented. This basic setting is meant for the continuous action prevalent in the text. According to the online Wikipedia, “sets and props were improvised from whatever was available which helps to explain the minimalist sets that productions of these plays utilize”. There is only one basic setting on which all the actions and dialogues are super-imposed. This is Styles’ Photographic Studio in the African township of New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. Throughout the text, the major stage description that subsists for the play runs thus:

Styles Photographic Studio in the African township of New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. Positioned prominently, the name-board: Underneath this is display of various sizes. Centre stage, a table and chair ... used for photographs because a camera on a tripod stands ready a short distance away.

There is also another table, or desk, with odds and ends of photographic equipment and an assortment of ‘props’ for photographs.

The setting ... and ... scenes should be as simple as possible so that the action can be continuous.

(Sizwe Bansi, 3)

Styles encourages his colleagues to sing in the factory. These songs promote the struggle for freedom and depict the old but free life lived by blacks in the past. On the other hand, Styles shows the secrecy embedded in singing the songs:

Hide your true feelings, brothers. You must sing. The joyous songs of the days of old before we had fools like this one next to me to worry about. (Sizwe Bansi, 7)

The factory, in its representation, becomes a plantation where blacks are taken (Ebrahim Hussein’s *Kinjeketile* refers), oppressed, made slaves, and sing songs of oppression and freedom.

In his exploration of the myth of oppression and suppression, Fugard utilizes multifarious nomenclature. They portray the oppressed and the oppressors. ‘Baas’ and

'*Makulu Baas*' are used for whites only. They demonstrate the existence and omnipresence of the Apartheid system just like in George Orwell's *1984* where Big Brother omnipresent-like straddles Oceania. The blacks are brainwashed to the extent that when Bansi is addressed as '*Mister*' (*Sizwe Bansi*, 29) he is shocked to laughter. How can a black like him be referred to as *Mister* Bansi? Generally, the black adults are called 'boys' irrespective of age by any white (also irrespective of age): "... his little child calls you 'Boy'... you a man, circumcised with a wife and four children ..." (*Sizwe Bansi*, 38).

The 'respect' for any black comes when he is promoted at work. He becomes and is called 'boss-boy' (the head of the boys!). Due to all these, Buntu advocates a non-entity, no-name situation for all blacks. Fugard agrees. This is the main reason he uses Man (without a specific name) as his tool of freedom setting and achievement. Again, the name, Styles, comes in plurality with the intention that this main character represents all the different forms of oppression and freedom the blacks undergo and can achieve respectively. All names are useless as all blacks are 'ghosts' (*Sizwe Bansi*, 38) to the whites. To Buntu, therefore, "Shit on names, man! To hell with them if in exchange you can get a piece of bread for your stomach and a blanket in winter" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 43). What is necessary and important is staying alive and achieving one's goals within the system. This, in the final analysis, is why Bansi is called 'Sizwe' translated to 'Brother'. Brother Bansi dies, loses his name but resurrects with another name becoming a ghost with the ability to live within the system. According to Buntu, "All I'm saying is be a real ghost, if that is what they want, what they've turned us into" (*Sizwe Bansi*, 38).

The achievement of this mythoclassical text is based on the various dramatic and mythical techniques and structures utilized. Structurally, it is divided into two: the part of Styles and his struggle for personal and group freedom and that of Buntu and Man realizing a temporary but universal mythic freedom for Sizwe. Time and flashback become strong dramatic techniques: interplay between the past, the present and the future. Through Styles' monologue, the audience is made aware of his life events: the past, present and plans for his future. Buntu and Sizwe expose, for the

audience, all the problems and limitations of their lives through their socio-political discourse as presented in their overtly tacit dialogue. In both instances, the characters move from the darkness of oppression to states of light and freedom. Writing in reaction to the function time is used for, Brink (1993:10) states:

The interaction of “time past” and “time present” in many respects the lifeblood of drama as a literary mode, establishes a base and a model for the further evolution of the play.

Two individuals play the three characters. With this experimentation, play-acting and role-play come in. In the mythical world, heroes and villains are usually few with a high number of supporting staff and hangers-on. Fugard utilizes this technique to portray the non-importance of independence if, and when one is still dependent on another or an external force (individual or official) apart from oneself. On the other hand, it becomes an initiatory tool in the hands of Buntu in the self-hypnotization and conviction of Sizwe. Through it, the oppressed, can for a time, become free; Styles translates for Bradley; Sizwe becomes Robert. Surmising, Brink (1993:10) posits:

It represents, in fact, the most basic function of the writer in a closed society where “normal” artistic creation is inhibited and everything is politicized: the need to record, the need to bear witness. It is the primary reaction, which precedes all resistance.

A direct connection is, therefore, established with the local and premiere audience as the realism of their situation is brought to bear on the stage. The South African audience (of then) must have become fed-up with life and the apartheid problem. Styles resorts to humour to lighten the dark side of his personal, racial and national life. He exploits this in his reference to the incoming presence of China in South West Africa (*Sizwe Bansi*, 3, 7) and during his translation for Bradley.

A full exploitation of the above technique brings in mime utilized extensively by all the characters. It portrays their lives as ghostly and waif-like (without any stronghold): they only act out what is dictated by the System. A few of the mimes occur in the following events: Styles' battle with the cockroaches; Styles taking the family card; Buntu punching out a number on the Labour Bureau computer and Sizwe receiving his salary as a resurrected Robert.

Mythical characters are usually lonesome, lonely and alone in their personal struggles. Styles is not different. He monologizes, asking personal and socio-political questions of himself. The text is replete with rhetorical questions asked by Styles and other characters of themselves but meant for the audience as self-searching questions:

Styles: Your life doesn't belong to you. You've sold it.
For what, Styles? (*Sizwe Bansi*, 9)

Styles: What's this? Cockroaches walking on the floor?
Another one on the ceiling? (*Sizwe Bansi*, 12)

Man: Are you a policeman now, Buntu? (*Sizwe Bansi*, 35)

Buntu: You mean you don't want to lose your bloody
passbook! You love it, hey? (*Sizwe Bansi*, 36)

In *Fate of a Cockroach*, there is the combination of dry but hilarious humour. The playwright examines socially relevant issues. The audience follow the unsubstantiated arguments of why the King is crowned: his whiskers are the longest. This sort of humour runs through the text's sequacious arguments like the one based on principles between Adil and Samia (*Cockroach*, 29). They enliven the seriousness of the play.

The mimes revolve round the transportation of the cockroach's corpse by the ants and the involvement of Adil in the struggle of the cockroach king. To the cockroaches watching the transportation of one of them, the ants' movement is sepulchral, silent but orderly whereas the ants are happy, singing about their victory and availability of food. According to the text, Adil is so much

engrossed in watching the cockroach. He makes gestures to it as he follows it climbing up and falling down; by sighs and miming he expresses all his emotions and concern (*Cockroach*, 40)

He follows the struggle of the cockroach at the psychological level. This is reflected in his physical demonstration and miming of the behaviour of the cockroach to escape from the bathtub.

Each of the characters bears a relevant name to the part he or she plays in the drama. Savant is the learned, scholarly and wise man. Priest comes from a religious background where all is based on faith and incomprehensibilities. The wife of the King is the Queen while in the line of effecting and legitimizing his official name the King perishes. The King succinctly defines all who surround him:

Queen: Then how was it that I became Queen?

King: By commonsense logic. As I was king and you were the female I loved and lived with, so you were of necessity Queen.

Queen: ... But what are your Minister's talents?

King: His consummate concern with proposing disconcerting problems and producing unpleasant news.

Queen: And the Priest, what are his talents?

King: The completely incomprehensible things he says.

Queen: And the learned Savant?

King: The strange information he has about things that have no existence other than in his own head. (*Cockroach*, 5)

Music comes in as a motivator to the seeking for freedom. The chant of the ants illustrates their solidarity and its advantages for the individual and the society as a whole. Through the song (*Cockroach*, 17), Al-Hakim preaches the dictum of right living and right thought as effective and advantageous to right life. The other song sensitizes Adil to seek for freedom from his prison like life:

*The attainment of desires is not by hoping;
Things of this world are gained by striving
(Cockroach, 30)*

This energizes and conscientises him to the presence of worlds beyond his limited horizon. The issue of the cockroach only exemplifies and symbolizes his inner turmoil and struggle. The last song (*Cockroach*, 23) composed by the single Subject Cockroach shows the world of the cockroaches as lackadaisical, uncreative and limited. The minute portrayal of hope, in this world of fear and song of blitheness, lies in the following lines:

*With one eye we go to sleep,
With the other we impatiently await
The breaking of the lucent dawn (Cockroach, 23)*

It is a three-act play: one for the animals and two for the humans. All are titled and seen from the abstract eyes of the narrator and the experiences of King: “The Cockroach as King”, “The Cockroach’s Struggle” and “The Fate of the Cockroach”. Act One establishes the worlds of the cockroaches and the ants. Act Two states the problems in the human world. Act Three depicts the arguments and denouement of the issues examined. The events happen in the flat of the humans which serves as the courtyard of the cockroaches, while the marching grounds of the ants is subsumed in the physical space of the humans.

Osofisan, like Brecht in *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, employs the play-in-a-play technique in *Morountodun*. The text actually brings together in a technical form about three plays that hold concurrently though fusing into one another. The plays include the original one directed by Director, Moremi’s flashback and Titubi’s (*Morountodun*) exploits. Synchronizing all these help solidify Osofisan’s mythic and revolutionary fervour through each of the thematic focus advocated in each part of the play as all coalesce into the Titubi play.

The songs and dances employed in the play bespeak of oppression, revolution, sorrow and sacrifice. Nearly all the songs are rendered in Yoruba to preserve the locale of the events. They consist of war, dirge, work and common songs. All are directed towards specific situations and actions. When Moremi leaves for Igboland, her group

sings “a solemn dirge” for her. Implied for all the songs is the use of drummers as dramatized by Titubi. This specific action depicts the Yoruba songs and drumming at their best (*Morountodun*, 79). Usually, without drumming Yoruba songs and dances are not complete. These songs portray the elite at their worst oppressive height as enunciated by Titubi.

The general and over-riding humour in the play is ironic. This befits the struggling, oppressive but revolutionary situation occasioned in the text. In the episode of the Umbrella, oppression by government officials like the Sanitary Inspector is highlighted (*Morountodun*, 62-63). Another scene captured is the dialogue between Superintendent and Alhaja where the former turns to accuse the latter of hiding her own daughter (*Morountodun*, 57-58). He encapsulates this in a fake drama:

Superintendent: This recurring question. ‘My daughter! My daughter’. It’s like a scene in a play. Do you like the theater, Alhaja? Me, I’m simply crazy about it. Ask Corple, he’s our Secretary in the Police Drama Club. I’m President (*Morountodun*, 57)

Another humorous scene plays itself out when Marshal seeks to woo Titubi among the women (*Morountodun*, 72-74). It is not until they are tickled by Bogunde, and threatened to be left alone, did the women budge. All these transmit the mythic realization and utilization Osofisan employs in the play.

Osofisan utilizes the names of the characters as symbols of the message he wishes to pass across to the audience. ‘Marshal’ symbolizes a law officer who apprehends criminals. The one in this text seeks out the elites who are assumed to be oppressive in the society. ‘Titubi’ connotes one who is reborn. In her rebirth, she becomes ‘Morountodun’- “I have seen something good or sweet”. These two names portray the role played by this character. ‘Salami’ in the Islamic parlance means “peace” and this is his brief in the play. ‘Kabirat’ (Alhaja), also an Islamic name stands for the “bigness of God” in reference to her wealth. ‘Bogunde’ is he who comes or arrives with war. Just like his name, he is a full participant in the war.

There is also extensive use of light as established in the stage directions (*Morountodun*, 10, 17, 18, 39, 41, 61 etc). It is used as spotlight and silhouette. Along this line, disguise is utilized a lot to camouflage situations and messages not only from the person(s) concerned but also from the enemy. Camouflages denote messages hidden in various forms. In attacking the prison, from where Titubi is freed, the farmers become traders (whereas they are camouflaged as warriors). The market, therefore, becomes also a camouflage for starting an attack. Titubi, in the prison, is already changed and disguised. She is no longer the high-class Titubi but a poor and demented nurse. Her camouflage extends to the story she adopts for acceptance among the farmers (*Morountodun*, 27-30). These camouflages and disguises are not limited to the lowly of the society. Oronmiyon, the Ile-Ife King, is not ready to let his wife become a sacrificial goat. He goes after her not as a King but as a warrior and an individual. When it comes to issues of the heart, the ruled and the rulers are the same.

Various situations, places and events are symbolically represented with images that connote meanings. Alhaja sees the prison in various ways:

No bed. No window. No fan or air-conditioner. The walls damp and clammy. A terrible stench which followed me all the way here from the gate. (*Morountodun*, 19)

... this latrine (*Morountodun*, 19)

The same prison, through the eyes of Mosun, is a “white college” (*Morountodun*, 63). Oronmiyon represents his besieged world negatively: “tottering roof”, “ancient rafters” (*Morountodun*, 36).

The structure of the text is not straightforward. Basically, it has sixteen acts without scenes. The actions are not lineal as there is the use of flashback to buttress points and situations. Role-play is also employed as exhibited in the Umbrella episode (*Morountodun*, 16). Molade and Mama Kayode play out the incidence of Titus and the Sanitary Inspector. The play has an omniscient director who sees and knows all. He is, therefore, able to comment on the events as they unfold. He even foresees a few (*Morountodun*, 16).

In this play, therefore, Osofisan has been able to integrate a revolutionary inclined story into a mythic expression. He has shown that out of the old mythic stories, new and very relevant ones to present day realities can be created. He establishes the fact that out of chaos, oppression and suppression, peace, tranquillity and equality can be made a reality. Titubi's statement, therefore, becomes relevant:

... our life itself is not important. Not all these glittering tinsels we use to decorate it ... for there's no way you can win a war against a people whose cause is just (*Morountodun*, 70).

The use of music is a progressive issue in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*. It starts on an aggressive note with the portrayal of black people's history and nosedives into a sad moody one enacted through a mine. This "sad music" (*Trial*, 4) is the lowest musical ebb in the play. From here, the textual music leaps in bounds denoting freedom and struggle. The Song of Struggle (*Trial*, 14) is taken by Woman. The implied meaning is reflected in the Direction: "Sound of an aeroplane overhead. Woman looks up" (*Trial*, 14). Freedom becomes the plane that cannot be limited by circumstances.

There is the Song of Kimathi (*Trial*, 62-63) which encourages the people to take heart through the process of their sufferings and pains. "The cup of courage ... pain and sorrow of tears and death and freedom ..." must not be left to Kimathi alone to sip from: other Kenyans must participate. He sings of the individual in the collective. The next song is the Freedom or Triumphant Song. This is taken by Woman on her arrest at the court trial of Dedan Kimathi after been betrayed by Gaceru, Gatotia and the Wambararia group. To her, freedom is certain and she therefore sings triumphantly. This song metamorphoses into the final "thunderous freedom song" (*Trial*, 84). Here, the forces of the workers and peasants have already won the battle. This is, therefore, the song of freedom achievement where people sing and dance.

To reflect the locale of the environment, nearly all the songs are rendered in the traditional language of Kenya. This portends the playwrights' belief in the power of this language to rouse the patriotic and fighting spirit of the people and the nation. The

songs show the people's inner feelings, agitations and the achievements they would want for their lives: individually and nationally

Onomasticism is reflected in the names of Woman, Fruitseller, Johnnie, Boy and Girl. Woman, as a name, is feminine and stands, in this text, not for any specific woman but all women through whom future generations are generated and nurtured. Fruitseller, apart from selling fruits, becomes a conduit of passing the gun-in-the-bread package to Kimathi. He is a provider of 'life' either through the fruit, the bread or the gun. Freedom is achievable through all: the food and the bullet. Johnnie, in the general English nomenclature, refers to just anyone and anybody new to an environment. In the text, therefore, any English man, especially any common one, could here stand in the stead of the soldier, Johnnie. Boy and Girl are representatives in name for all adolescents who are in need of conscientization and awareness of their environmental issues. They need to be re-guided, redirected and re-indoctrinated in the needs of their people. They represent the future of the Kenyan people like in any community. With them, through the final action they implement the future of the struggle, of the revolutionaries, of freedom and of the nation become secured.

The text, set within the pre-independence Kenyan world, is basically localised in Nyeri where nearly all the actions take place. The other environment is the Nyandarua Forest (the Guerrilla camp). The streets, forest, court and prison are the specific settings for the actions. The specificity of the locale according to the Director should help the free flow of the play. This extends to the structure of the play referred to as 'Movements'. There are three movements seen as one in this adaptable play:

The play is in three movements which should be viewed as a single movement. The action should on the whole be seen as breaking the barrier between formal and infinite time, so that past and future and present flow into one another. The scenes (street, cell, courtroom) should also flow into one another (Trial, 2)

Time flows into a specific present from the past and the future. The basic action all other events revolve round is the court trial of Kimathi. Flashbacks and mimes

become useful tools in this mythical time-spanning work. The mime and flashback of the black race history span the past and the present culminating into a freedom struggle and achievement in the future. Other mimes utilizing flashback include the followings: mimicking of the American tourist by Boy (*Trial*, 16), Dancers' mime (*Trial*, 37) and the building of the railway (*Trial*, 39).

To show the vastness and creativity of the characters, impersonation, play-acting, soliloquy and voice intrusion are utilized. When the original Fruitseller is arrested, Woman takes up his character and role. Shaw Henderson acts the role of judge and his personal, original role of Henderson. The voice intrusion (*Trial*, 22, 41, 43, 59) helps in sensitizing the receiver to his role and its demanding fulfilment. This concerns Boy mostly. Kimathi, the main character, soliloquizes (*Trial*, 31-32, 41) about his childhood, the power behind imperialism and its effects on the people and his own psychological problems.

The use of Direction, allusion and imagery are effective. The playwrights pinpoint exactly what the characters should do at specific places and time. One is left in no doubt that the play comes alive through the extensive and concise Directions. Kimathi's personality becomes alluded to through its linkage to various mythic happenings: he talks to God, changes to a bird, crawls on his belly for miles and other happenings. These only emphasize the high regard, respect and awe in which the people hold him. A very concise imagery, 'Horse and Rider' (*Trial*, 34) which exposes the inner workings and belief of the imperialists, becomes an argumentative issue between Kimathi and Henderson. The imperialists would always want to be the rider with the blacks as the horse. And on being challenged, the imperialists would scamper back home cowardly as portrayed in the following dialogue:

Henderson: ... Remember the day we played Horse and Rider?
We fell.

Kimathi: You mean I threw you off! And you wet sniffing and crying to your mother.

Henderson: You must admit you were rather nasty! (*Trial*, 34)

Wedlock of the Gods does not specifically use music. Its usage is mainly felt in the Stage Direction and in the production of the play. In the Production Note:

Slow mournful music to create a sad atmosphere may be played at the beginning and end of each scene, during intervals and in the death scene while Ibekwe and Nneka cover the corpse. (*Wedlock*, 4)

There is hardly any joyful situation: sadness radiates throughout the play. This is a tragedy and the tone of the music reflects it. Humour is far from the characters and their lives.

The play takes place in four unique places that can be subsumed into three according to the playwright. This allows for stage economy permitting easy use, light and fast action. The immediate environment is agricultural reflected in the description of the scenes and the props found on stage.

The dressing and overall costume used reflect mourning, a sombre, sober mood and tone. The female characters, especially Ogwoma, are seen in dark costumes. This reflects the mourning situation in which the audience meets the on-going action. The playwright even limits the use of modern attire as she totally situates the action, period and environment in the 19th century Mid-Western Nigeria. Her references are those she calls the Aniocha people.

The playwright employs monologue to show the internal turmoil and psychological problems the characters undergo in the various situations they find themselves. Odibei is concerned about the death of her son and how this came about. She is not satisfied that the death came naturally. To her, Ogwoma with her assumed harlotry has a hand in his death. This idea is reflected in the following monologues:

My son cannot die a shameful death. It must be somewhere

It must be somewhere (*Wedlock*, 5)

Adigwe cannot die like that. (*Wedlock*, 6)

On the other hand, Nneka is concerned with the safety of her daughter, Ogwoma. She wants her to be protected from the wrath of Odibei's revenge. She also sees the danger in the taboo breaking action of Ogwoma:

What shall I do? (*Wedlock*, 19)

He walked in without shame? (*Wedlock*, 20)

The dialogues are short, sharp and direct. The characters express specifically what they mean. In this line, a few of them use abusive register when they feel so strongly about their situations. These abuses and curses are expressed in strong words, terms and imagery through pictorial allusions. A few examples will suffice:

Odibei: You and your daughter will rot and with your eyes
you will watch the vulture pluck your body into
pieces

Odibei: Cows have tails and the blind man has his stick, but
with nothing you will walk into death swollen-
stomached leaking through both ends.

Nneka: You will be buried alive from your shoulders down
and with your mouth you will eat the flies that
swarm on your head. (*Wedlock*, 49)

In the mythic format, the play and its actions take place just within a night and a day. The only night sees the discovery of Uloko and Ogwoma as lovers. The next day combines the general actions and the denouement. With these, the structure of the play is in Acts and Scenes: three Acts with each having two scenes.

Another situative device utilized by the playwright is proverb. This plainly shows the African consciousness of the play: its themes, language and focus. In the African world, proverbs are basic to meaningful dialogue and show the in-depth understanding one has about the situation under discussion. Its use is extensive in the play. Nearly all the elders make use of it in their dialogues:

Otubo: A man who plays the flute also blows his nose.
(*Wedlock*, 6)

Ata: Our people say that the man who ignores his family is
the one who stands alone in the rain. (*Wedlock*, 25)

Ike: No one knows why the snail sighs ... (*Wedlock*, 26)

Okolie: ... It is a slave who sees the truth but ties his
tongue with silence. (*Wedlock*, 27)

Ibekwe: The tortoise says that his problems are his
problems and therefore cannot be crushed by them.
(*Wedlock*, 28)

Udo: The head says that sleep is not possible without the
arm beside it. (*Wedlock*, 34)

The playwright, a female, uses the text to extend the fight and struggle for feminine freedom within the society. Feminine suppression is so evident in the textual patriarchal Aniocha world. Through female characters like Ogwoma, Odibei, Nneka, Anwasia and Ogoli, the playwright shows the audience that females have a great part to play in the development of their societies. While the women are so concerned about their situations and try to find solutions in their own ways, the men fail to find unity in discussing the issue.

Apart from this, the issue of feminism comes through with the type of physical, psychological, spiritual and emotional trauma a widow is made to undergo at the death of her husband. The playwright wants emancipation for the feminine gender through either the alleviation or cancellation of these pseudo-religious rites which are inimical to feminine progress. She sees the rites as denigrating womanhood. She advocates a situation where a new and progressive system will be utilized to fight the established and unprogressive system. Ogwoma is the new idea fighting against the old mentality of Odibei, Nneka and Ogoli. Though she physically and temporarily fails, a precedent that will slowly but surely eat up the old system has been born and established.

Sofola successfully establishes the fact that strong attachment to old traditions that are mythic must give way to new traditions based on love. These will be created and superimposed on new myths of the likes established in the deaths and actions of Uloko and Ogwoma. A society must be flexible to dance to its current and shifting socio-cultural and physical changes in its on-going life. These changes must be based

on love established amongst the people and not on the wrangling of the unknown gods or the handed-down stories of “our ancestors”.

According to Wole Soyinka, in an interview with Gregory Bossler (2000:11), the theatre and the plays he creates are community originated and orientated:

Oh yes, the kind of theatre in which I come to life, really in a very direct and visceral way to the specific community. In other words, when I feel the theatre that I'm producing, that I'm creating has either emerged from the specific community and / or is being reintegrated into the community I get a wonderful sense of fulfilment.

In the realization of this, Soyinka utilizes varied technical applications especially in *Death and the King's Horseman*. One of the basic applications is music. This runs through the text, as about seven songs are utilized. They run the gamut of human emotions: taunting, joyous (*Death*, 11), corrective (*Death*, 17), happiness (*Death*, 23), euphoric (*Death*, 40), sorrowful, dirge (*Death*, 41, 73) and others. They are dance oriented and show two basic mythic traditions: African and Western.

During Elesin's initial self-sacrifice process, the women show the basic African belief in singing dirges for the dead as they regard him to already be: “*Ale le le, awo mi lo*” (*Death*, 41). It is also sung for Olunde's corpse when it is brought for his father to see (*Death*, 73). This is a solemn song of sorrow for the loss of a dear one. The western mythic tradition plays itself out in the tango dance of the Pilkings'. Though tango originated from Argentina and was exported into the western world, here it represents a dying colonial power (British Empire). This is why the music is “playing from an old hand-cranked gramophone” (*Death*, 23). The two dancers are also reported as “tangoing in and out of shadows” (*Death*, 23). Through music, therefore, Soyinka showcases the myths of sorrow and death in the African tradition and that of atrophy in the British (Western) tradition.

Though the events in the text revolve majorly round the unpalatable myth of death, humour still plays a part. At Elesin's bridal chamber, Amusa is made fun of by Women and Girls. He is refused entry into the bridal chamber which he mistakenly

takes for the death chamber. Girls even go through play acting and mimicry (*Death*, 37-39). The playwright shows that in life, no matter the seriousness of the issue, there is always a lighter side.

In writing about the history of his people, Soyinka alludes to their other extraneous historical and mythic beliefs. He talks of Oya (*Death*, 19), Ogun (*Death*, 19) and Olokun (*Death*, 44). These were humans who became deified in the Yoruba mythological pantheon: Oya - goddess of river and wife of Shango, the god of thunder, Ogun- god of iron and Olokun- god of the ocean. There is also the secret cult of Osugbo, the watchers and translators of the actions and movements of the moon. They intimate, through drumming, Elesin to let go of his physical human body and go into the Void at the specific time.

Nearly all the Yoruba names used in the text have inferences to their actions and parts and also to the traditional positions they hold within the society. Elesin Oba is a traditional hereditary position allotted to a family. He is the chief horseman for the king: in this life and the next. If he dies before his king, his son takes over, serves and dies with the king. Iyaloja is also a traditional post though not hereditary: it goes usually to one of the richest and most influential of all the market women. The Praise-Singer is referred to as Olohun-iyo - one with a sweet and enticing voice. His post is both traditional and hereditary. He serves as the repository of historical facts for the family and the community he serves. He warns, admonishes, praises, encourages and sings praises through word play and historical references to his immediate family or leader. Olunde, who amends the untenable situation created by his father, is a shortened form for Olohunde – the owner has come. This he proves through his selfless sacrifice. In the text, therefore, onomastic plays a great part in the mythic understanding of the characters' traditional and dramatic roles.

The text utilizes Western dramaturgy in the line of the Aristotelian convention of tragedy. Budianto and Wulander (2005:199) write:

The conventions are identified as follows: noble character (Elesin, the King's Horseman), chorus (the Praise-Singer), off-stage action (Olunde's self-sacrifice / suicide), plot:

pyramid structure, hubris (Elesin is overridden by pride as the significant subject in the ritual and delays his duty by taking a bride just before performing the ritual), anagnorisis (Elesin realizes his mistake and grieves for his son's self-sacrifice), followed by peripety (the downfall of Elesin; losing the respect of his people and his beloved son which drives him to commit suicide) and perhaps catharsis as well (by the death of both Elesin and Olunde, readers undergo purifying process).

All the actions happen in one night: within a few hours. On a time-line, this can be from the mythic infinity of the past to the present and or the future. It encompasses the totality of the cosmology of the people; past, present and future. The play has five basic Acts and each deals with a specific subject matter. Act I is in the market and deals with Elesin's temptation and the market women's actions. Act II shows the District Officer's world while Act III is about Elesin at his bridal bed and his process of self-hypnotic death. Acts IV and V illustrate the fall of Elesin, Olunde's reactions and Elesin's suicide: all at the residency.

Like in *The Marriage of Anansewa* by Efua T. Sutherland, Soyinka utilizes praise names to portray the characterology and personality of his characters especially Elesin. Praise-Singer praises Elesin:

Who would deny your reputation, snake-on-the-loose in
dark passages of the market! Bed-bug who wages war on
the mat and receives the thanks of the vanquished! ...
(*Death*, 19)

This links Elesin with the avowed characteristics of these animal-objects in a totemic form. He is portrayed as larger than life: a man who can conquer any woman sexually and emotionally.

The textual actions are set within two mythically symbolic environments: the market and the residency. The market, which traditionally represents the physical world, also stands for the African cosmology. The residency, home to the Resident but prison to Elesin, is representative of the Western world.

Soyinka's success, in this text, lies in his juxtaposition of many variables that contribute to the mythic rendering of the Yoruba worldview and cosmology.

Bailey's ability in locating the story line of the play, *Ipi Zombi?*, in the African setting is a success. The use of music is basically Xhosa with infusion of Christian and modern (pop) music. Music is intertwined with chantings portraying the seriousness of the textual issues. The traditional songs are rendered in Xhosa with translation in English. Examples like the followings abound: "Zitshathina, sifela ethongweni (we die in our dreams)" (*Zombi?*, 202, 219), "Abazali Bam, Bayalila (My parents are coming...)" (*Zombi?*, 203), "Zilila ngantoni izinyanya zam! (Why are the Spirits crying?)" (*Zombi?*, 207) and "iNceba yavelal (Mercy is coming!)" (*Zombi?*, 212). The chants are used ritualistically. Some of them are repeated to emphasize their mythic potency, effectiveness and relevance. These include: "Women: If you are afraid of the dark..." (*Zombi?*, 209, 210), "Men: Boys in the cupboard calling her name..." (*Zombi?*, 209).

There are also Christian songs and hymns rendered to show that Christianity plays a part in the lives of the people. These songs are crooned and sung using the choric format. These include traditional and English Christian songs: "Nkosi sihlangene" (*Zombi?*, 211), "Go away, Devil, go away devil go away..." (*Zombi?*, 215). Bailey crowns the songs with the inclusion of a modern day pop song as:

INTOMBI 'NYAMA ... breaks into an up-tempo and over the top lip-synch of Doris Day's "Shakin' the blues away" by Irving Berlin. The trilled zombies caper around backing her in fifties musical song and dance. (Zombi?, 217).

This is to shake off the feeling of witchcraft imposed on the people - through a modern day musical medication. Bailey uses the songs and music as both therapeutics and analgesics in the cathartic healing process of the social and religious lives of the people.

The play's title, *Ipi Zombi?*, is a great onomastic devise in the neutral position taken by the playwright. "Where are the zombies?", as the meaning of the play implies, questions some of the fallacious opinions expressed in the play: the eleven year old's accusation of her grandmother; the over-riding emotion of the boys; the

killings of the women. On the other hand, it does not foreclose the zombies' presence and effects in the community.

Unlike majority of other texts and environments examined in this work where the female is a struggling and upcoming personality, feminism here is a stifled and totally oppressed personality. The witches are all women accused and attacked mainly by males. According to Awolalu (1979:86),

It is generally believed that a woman is the head of the council of witches. Men may be present but they are always in the minority; this confirms the fact that witchcraft is the cult of women.

Women, instead of bonding against this joint masculine assault on them, help accuse and nail assumed women witches. Gogo and Fazi accuse and report Mambamba to the police on the feeble evidence put forward by Krotch and Steve.

The setting is a mythic allusion to the principle of faction. Basically, voodoo, myth, magic and ritual are the import of the play, Meersman (2007:3) posits that Bailey

has stripped away the speaking parts and the dramatic monologues Seated in a ritual circle surrounding a fire, it is remarkable how much more effective this is than character acting. We respond directly to the myth and the archetype of the story.

The stage is filled with the paraphernalia of voodoo, magic and myth: inclusive are the props, characters' costumes and the audience and cast sitting arrangements:

. . . the cast are sitting in a ring around the perimeter of the arena on mats and are wrapped in blankets facing inwards, heads down, singing softly NARRATOR tends a central fire, moves around slowly checking candles ...
(*Zombi?*, 202)

The acting arena is not just a stage, it is a space where issues are to be presented and examined.

Bailey presents the play as a reality. There is a connectedness with the past through the part played by Intombi 'Nyama in representing the eleven year old accuser, Malaska. Again, the playwright transports the audience to the exact place and time of the boys' burial ceremony. Narrator confirms:

Now, I hope you are following this story? It is 15 October 1995, and we on the sports field of Karl Malcolm High School with five thousand people and twelve coffins . . .
(*Zombi?*, 210)

This reality shows in the structure and arrangement of the plot. The play is not broken into the normal Acts and Scenes. What delineate the different parts are titles (or topics). This falls into nine parts: Introduction, Abazali Bam Bayalila (My Parents Are Crying . . .), Intlombe (Divining Ceremony), Boys in the Cupboard, The Funeral, The Fear, The Sacrifice, Shaking' The Blues Away and The Hacking. Bailey sees life as a continuum of differentiated and segmented actions and events which are interwoven.

In life, each person takes on various parts at various periods and under different situations. The text thrives on role play. According to the Stage Direction, the actors belong to an acting group, The Natives, and each "play several roles with the help of larger-than-life costumes" (*Zombi?*, 202). Parts like Chorus, Women, Men and other characters are swapped continuously between the actors.

Narrator, just like in *Morountodun* by Femi Osofisan and *The Marriage of Anansewa* by Efua T. Sutherland, is both the story-teller and an actor in the play. This story telling devise is also utilized by both Steve and Krotch. They tell the women their fantastic version of how the accident happened. The audience is not left out: it is part of the realism exhibited in the play. With this, Bailey communalises the story line: the events happen in a specific community. They affect the community and it contributes to finding solutions to the problems. Both Mambamba and Senti see the audience as *the* community: Mambamba accuses it as possessing witchcraft (*Zombi?*, 207) while Senti addresses it as representing students. Bailey presents a few of the actions as happening concurrently. This is mythic in the sense that he is able to collapse time: the past, present and future come to a point wherein they affect and

effect changes in the community. This type of situation is depicted in the interview of Mr. Madugu and during the killing of his mother, Mrs. Magudu (*Zombi?*, 205-206).

5.5 Language

In *The Marriage of Anansewa* language use is very flexible and effective. There are references to traditional lexicon and expressions to situate the actions and characters into their derived environments. The text is infused with short and sharp statements that are incisive and succinct.

There are poetic expressions (mostly from songs or the *Mboguo* and Storyteller) (*The Marriage*, 63) and prosaic statements (which run through the text). Their use depends on what the speaker wants to achieve (*The Marriage*, 38-40, 78-80). Invocations are also employed especially during the Outdooring and the “waking” of Anansewa.

There is also the intrusion of other languages mostly traditional. The followings are inclusive; “*abraw*” (a title, *The Marriage*, 8), “*colo*” (colonial, outdated, *The Marriage*, 14), “*dough*” (American slang for money, *The Marriage*, 18), “*Agoo*” (vocalized knocking, *The Marriage*, 22,69,72), “*Aba*” (“We’re on our way; here we come”, *The Marriage*, 37). Others are “*bota head*” (“one of the most famous and precious of beads, known as the Aggrey bead” in Ghana, *The Marriage*, 38), “*nyanya leaves*” (“a vine used in ritual ceremonies, believed to have the power to purge and avert evil forces, and to purify”, *The Marriage*, 39), “*sensemise*” (“a refrain word expressing a sense of joy”, *The Marriage*, 41). Africanized expressions are also utilized:

Aya: I am going into reverse for you to watch ... (*The Marriage*, 53)

Ananse: Friends who brought your compassion in to cover my nakedness in my grief, I thank you ... (*The Marriage*, 81)

(*Kinjeketile*, 11)

This situation extends to the socio-economic and political world of the men. They stagnate and lack the ability of freeing themselves from the shackles of the Germans.

Kinjeketile, in his mythic representations and presentations, is both poetic and prosaic in his delivery. The moment he is initiated into the secrets of the spirits and becomes their mouthpiece, his language becomes poetic (*Kinjeketile*, 15-19). His elevated language equates his new level of socio-religious standing. In other dialogues with the people, he is prosaic lending credence to being part of them and being their spiritual leader.

One of the basic dialogue methods used in the text is that of question and answer. Hussein uses this to show that he is dealing with and relating the story of a common people. They need facts confirmed and could express themselves in simple language formats. Some relevant examples of this can be found in the following dialogues between Chausiku and Bibi Kitunda (*Kinjeketile*, 3), Kinjeketile and Kitunda (*Kinjeketile*, 19-21, 26-27).

To situate the actions and relevance of the issues examined in the text, traditional language and expressions are utilized. Name prefixes like *Bibi* (Mrs) and *Bwana* (Mr) are used throughout the text. The message of the struggle for freedom and its spread are referred to as *nywiywila* (whispering campaign). It is kept from the Germans and their stooges but made known to the people. Another reference in this struggle is the *Likida* (war dance) which Kitunda insists must be done. It prepares the men for the war through military trainings and exercises. The text is based on the power of the magical water called *Maji*. “*Hodi, Hodi*” (*Kinjeketile*, 9) is a directive to open the door while “*Bokelo*” (*Kinjeketile*, 16) is the abode of the ancestors.

According to Brink (1993:3), *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*:

In the narrowest sense of the word ... can be read as the response by a group of artists to the challenge to elicit a response from the audience.

In the language use, diction is succinct especially with the usage of taboo and swear words and expressions. This runs through the text showing the socio-linguistic degradation the people are reduced to in their reaction towards their socio-economic limitations. The followings are examples:

- “whatever the hell” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 4)
- “cunt” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 6)
- “Don’t bloody fool me ... big bastard(s)” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 7, 11)
- “bloody day” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 9)
- “bloody circus monkey” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 9)
- “six years a bloody fool” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 9)
- “bloody monkey” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 9)
- “bloody survivors” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 11)
- “fuck” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 34)
- “bloody book” (*Sizwe sBansi*, 35)
- “bloody passbook” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 36)
- “bloody name” (*Sizwe Bansi*, 37)

Styles helps Baas Bradley translate the oppressor’s language and meaning into his’ (the oppressed’s language). The little time he has is turned into preaching a ‘freedom sermon.’ He plays on Bradley’s words and expressions twisting them to fit his own message. It is only in this act that the oppressed, temporarily, take on the rein of freedom.

Again, apart from the straightforward English employed, there is the intrusion of Afrikaner and Xhosa, both South African: the former that of the oppressors and the latter that of the oppressed. The intrusive words and expressions include some of the followings:

- “Baas” - Mr. (*Sizwe Bansi*, 4, 43)
- “Mukulu Baas” - Very Important Personality (*Sizwe Bansi*, 7)
- “Ja” - Yes (German) (*Sizwe Bansi*, 9, 11)
- “Dankie, my baast” - Thank you, sir (*Sizwe Bansi*, 38)
- “Hier is ek, my baas” - Here I am, Sir
- “Gqokra Izi Khuselo Zamehlo Kule Ndawo” - Eye Protection Area (*Sizwe Bansi*, 5)

This buttresses the background and environment from which the play and its characters are derived. The different aspects of language used in the text are disguises to find and utilize socio-artistic, thematic values and dimensions. John Kani quoted in Brink (1993:6) agrees with this idea: “Find a simpler statement. Disguise this statement. That is politics. Try and find the artistic value of the piece.”

Al-Hakim was a lover of animals. This is reflected in his use of two major types in *Fate of a Cockroach*. His favourite animal was a donkey. He was reported as saying that he always had “conversations with my donkey.” It becomes easy for him to imagine that ants and cockroaches could talk and reason logically though limited by their worldview.

The cockroaches use royal embellishments and honorific terms for their royalties. King uses it for himself too: “...We are waiting” (*Cockroach*, 10). King is referred to as “Your Majesty”. The Queen, to show her level of learning, resorts to Shakespearean English: “And what, *prithie*, might this difference be?” (*Cockroach*, 2). The ants, on their part, use plural nouns and pronouns in reference to themselves as they see themselves in the collectives. The humans utilize colloquial expressions that reduce their assumed godhood status. Throughout the text, Al-Hakim uses language as a tool of reaching out to the audience. His choice of words is succinct, direct and extremely effective. They express and expose situations and events.

The playwright’s language in *Morountodun* is acerbic but succinct and expressive: more traditional than modern in his figurative and technical usage. One of the major traditionally related usages is the applicability of proverbs to the various textual situations. A most concise and glaring one occur in the dialogue between Superintendent and Titubi, in the supremacy struggle for word superiority (*Morountodun*, 13). This is when Superintendent attempts to arrest Titubi. It is a word duel:

Superintendent: Wait (*Sniggers*). Words are cheap, eh?

Titubi: Words can break the likes of you. (*Morountodun*, 13)

This symbolic exchange of words shows that the word-combatants are versed in the Yoruba linguistic repertoire. Fighting is not only physical; it can be extended to the world of words.

Basic traditional terminologies and words are utilized to concretize the setting of the events and the text itself. These external word intrusions involve some of the followings:

- “*shi-oooh!*” - Onomatopoeic sound for hissing (*Morountodun*, 14)
- “*alaaru*” - Porter (*Morountodun*, 27)
- “*Eewo!*” - Taboo! (*Morountodun*, 33)
- “*majele*” - Poison (*Morountodun*, 37)
- “*Ase*” - Amen (*Morountodun*, 49)
- “*Ori mi o*” - My head oh (Exclamation) (*Morountodun*, 63)

A word like “corple”, through its transference into Yoruba, becomes corrupted. This extends to the use of Pidgin English exemplified in Marshal and Bogunde’s dialogue (*Morountodun*, 17-18). The market scene shows the farmers using normal diction that befits their academic status. The text symbolically, therefore, cuts across all sectors of the social strata. At another level, Osofisan utilizes words and expressions from different environments. The American slang and swear language contribute “fat-arsed” (*Morountodun*, 13), “shit” (*Morountodun*, 14) and “not bloody likely” (*Morountodun*, 11). From the Islamic register comes “allah-akbar” (*Morountodun*, 50). These reflect the universality of the message preached by the playwright.

General use of word is colloquial depicting the normal life portrayed in the text. Among the farmers, the simplicity of life exhibited in words is discovered. In a few places (*Morountodun*, 67) they upgrade to poetic expressions. Marshal and his men use revolutionary expressions suitable for their roles. In acclimatizing Titubi to the farmers’ world, Superintendent uses interrogative and forceful words and expressions.

There is the mythic love riddle embarked and played upon by the women as a way of unwrapping and solving the mystery surrounding the blossoming relationship between Titubi and Marshal. It is rooted on a question and answer basis, which on a

continuous exchange unravels the situation just like in this case. The questions are symbolic while the answers are simple and direct (*Morountodun*, 67-70).

The language of *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* is simple, depicting the locale and characterization involved. The locale is peasantry and rural while the characters are simple, everyday people of the country. Generally, the dialogues are short, sharp, terse but very expressive of the intentions of the speakers.

There is a mixture of languages. Usage is made of British English, the traditional Kenyan language and a smattering, mimicry of American English. British English is the building block of the text. This is juxtaposed with the Kenyan traditional language in which most of the liberation songs are rendered (*Trial*, 4, 5, 6). It is also used by a few of the traditional characters and even by the whites like Waitina (police officer or district officer). A mimicking of the American English is utilized to represent tourists from whose tables a few common Kenyans get their crumbs (*Trial*, 17).

Poetic and oratorical language usage is employed by a few of the characters like Kimathi, Woman and even Settler. These are characters that are symbolic and therefore representative of their allotted groups: Kimathi, the revolutionaries; Woman, the feminine group and Settler, the white settlers. The oratorical is majorly limited to Kimathi who uses the opportunity to espouse his philosophy and denounce imperialism and all its representations. He uses it as reflections of his past and present life events (*Trial*, 31-32).

Abusive and taboo expressions are also utilized especially from the oppressors to the oppressed. It portrays the power of language in its deployment as a tool of oppression. As a tool of abuse, the following extracts will suffice:

Settler: "... lunatic and his pack of bandits ... mad,
Bushwog ... bush communist ..." (*Trial*, 28)

Old Whitemaid: "wild savages" (*Trial*, 29)

These are directed at Kimathi, the revolutionaries and the blacks in general. Kimathi in turn calls them "imperialist cannibal" (*Trial*, 35). The use of taboo words shows power

as expressed through language. This power the whites have over the blacks who, in their oppressed position, cannot respond. The following extracts will do:

Waitina: “black bastard!” (*Trial*, 7)

Second Soldier: “bloody Kimathi” (*Trial*, 12)
“Bloody buggers” (*Trial*, 13)

Settler: “bloody bastard” (*Trial*, 28)
“fucking black monkey” (*Trial*, 28)

Henderson: “Bastard black native” (*Trial*, 56)

The expression and diction of the text, *Wedlock of the Gods*, is simply African in orientation and thought. It delineates the characters into two: the poetic and the prosaic. The two basic mythic characters speak in poetic language; in the expression of love for one another. Love, to them, can only be verbalized in poetry. Even in death, Uloko addresses his love poetically. (*Wedlock* 10, 55-56) The playwright submits that the mythic, the heroic, the royalty and the divine poetize. All the other characters speak and operate at the prosaic level. The expressions of the general characters, though prosaic, are also beautiful to the ears as exemplified in Anwasia’s statement to Uloko:

It is true that when the sweetness of a man touches the heart of a woman, nothing else matters. (*Wedlock*, 10)

The beauty of the text’s language is captured in the direct African expressions verbalized in English. African imagery, symbolisms and connotations come into play. These localize the play as African with the beauty of African expressions in words. Words are not abstract but concrete expressions seen and felt. The imagery is full of African colours and meanings. This beauty can be found in the following expressions:

- i. Anwasia: “Uloko has done it to you ...” (*Wedlock*, 10)
- ii. Nneka: “What has he seen in you that he must disgrace me and make the

ground difficult for me to walk on? (*Wedlock*, 20)

iii. Nneka: “If Uloko has worked medicine on you his head will carry it”

(*Wedlock*, 20)

iv. Ogwoma: “They will see fire from me” (*Wedlock*, 22)

v. Ogoli: “Carry your evil head to someone else ...” (*Wedlock*, 24)

vi. Ata: “Diokpa Okolie, your mouth has wisdom” (*Wedlock*, 27)

vii. Okolie: “But rather than lean on our backs ...” (*Wedlock*, 28)

viii. Ibekwe: “It was I who invited you here today to see what my eyes are seeing and to hear what my ears are hearing. I did not wake up this morning, slap my buttocks ...” (*Wedlock*, 28)

A few Mid-Western / Igbo words are utilized by the playwright: they situate the play.

A few examples include:

“Chineke”	-	God (<i>Wedlock</i> , 46)
“Adamma”	-	Good / Beautiful Daughter (<i>Wedlock</i> , 55)

The playwright utilizes onomasticism to situate the locale of the play and to express meanings through the names of the characters. The names are backgrounded in the eastern and mid-western parts of Nigeria. The names express the role each character plays in the overall theme and plot of the play. ‘Ibekwe’ meaning ‘If my relatives agree’ shows why he does not rely on his family in the situations he finds himself. ‘Ogwoma’ is ‘medicine/ beauty/ someone that is good.’ Her name explores her outer and inner beauty that Uloko sees. It overrides the effects of the taboo she breaks. The love and care of ‘Nneka’ as expressed in her name “mother is supreme” is shown throughout the text. ‘Diokpo Ata’s name symbolizes “elder” and he acts in this position. ‘Udo’, another elder, whose name means ‘peace’ shows his characteristic behaviour in how he tries to douse the various disagreements either at the family meeting or between Ogoli, Nneka and Uloko. ‘Ike’, who intrudes vehemently and continuously in the family discussion, depicts the meaning of his name ‘power’. This situation runs through the text africanizing it. African names have meanings and situate characters within their behaviours.

Language use in *Death and the King's Horseman* is all encompassing and in-depth. It is depicted in and through the individual characters. Prose and poetry in dialogues are intertwined in usage. The utilization of prose is general. At the beginning, Elesin, Praise-Singer and Iyaloja speak in prose. The Pilkings' are not left out of this everyday manner of conversing: theirs is the educated British English. The audience empathise with them all as ordinary humans. Elesin, Praise-Singer and Iyaloja graduate to the poetic: a mythic symbol of their dealing with and being part of the self-sacrifice heroic effort. Both the prosaic and the poetic are infused with African manners, attitudes and expressions. Immediately Elesin fails in his avowed duty, his manner of speaking reverts to the prosaic: he is no longer the mythic hero as he has fallen from his high societal pedestal.

At least two languages, Yoruba and American English, intrude in the text's language use. Yoruba expressions are utilized by the major traditional characters:

Praise-Singer: "Howu" (*Death*, 9) - Exclamation
 "gbedu" (*Death*, 44) - a type of royal drum

Elesin: "Olohun-iyo" (*Death*, 9, 10) - one with a sweet voice

"opele" (*Death*, 12) - string of beads use in Ifa divination process

"etutu" (*Death*, 12) - placatory rituals or medication

"house of osugbo" (*Death*, 62) - the place of meeting and or worship of the moon by the secret cult called Osugbo.

"robo" (*Death*, 12) - food made from fried crushed melon seeds

"Elegbara" (*Death*, 13) - Yoruba Satan. Also called Esu (differentiated from the English one in concept)

Iyaloja: "sanyan", "alari" (*Death*, 17) - high quality types of traditional clothing

Jane: "egungun" (*Death*, 25) - the secret cult of ancestral spirits (masquerades).

The followings are African expressions composed of African imagery and symbolisms.

Praise-Singer: Speak now in plain words and let us pursue
the ailment to the home of remedies
(*Death*, 16)

Iyaloja: The voice I hear is already touched by the waiting
fingers of our departed (*Death*, 21)

The American English intrusion is from a British who ought to be speaking plain British English. In his attitude of seeing the conquered as less-than-nothing the Aide-de-Camp refers to Olunde with the derogatory slang of “nigger” (*Death*, 55).

Soyinka utilizes proverbs to authenticate the source of his work as African. These become the spice with which the dialogues are conducted. The use is not limited to the Africans as Pilkings participates in the tradition. A few examples suffice:

Pilkings: the elder grimly approaches heaven and you ask
him to bear your greetings yonder: do you really
think he makes the journey willingly? (*Death*, 64)

Elesin: When the horse sniffs the stable does he not strain at
the bridle? (*Death*, 9)
: What elder takes his tongue to his plate / Licks it
clean of every crumb? / He will encounter / Silence
when he calls on children to fulfil / The smallest
errand! (*Death*, 15)

Praise-Singer: The strictest father unbends his brow when
the child is penitent (*Death*, 16)

Iyaloja: Dada may be weak, but he has a younger sibling
who is truly fearless (*Death*, 40)
: What we have no intention of eating should not be
held to the nose (*Death*, 68)

The language of *Ipi Zombi?* by Brett Bailey is an admixture of the complexity and simplicity inherent in the South African environment and the world-at-large. There is a combination of the educated and uneducated language structures. It is also a

reflection of the prevailing different societal strata. Narrator, along with some other characters, speaks a free-style grammatical language depicting basically the intrinsic speaking habit of the South African on the street. On the other hand, Mr Magudu and T.V Reporter speak educated English.

The universality of the textual myth and the multi-racial world of South Africa are portrayed in the use of Xhosa (African language) which is indigenous to the country. Examples include:

Xhosa - "*imoto iyawe*" (*Zombi?* 204)

"*Hayi*" (*Zombi?* 204), "*wena*" (*Zombi?* 205)

"*Thixo wam*" (my God), "*bhuti*" (*Zombi?* 205)

"*Hawu 'madoda*" (Oh man!), "*Thyini*" (*Zombi?* 206)

It can be posited that the unstableness and fear permeating the environment instigate the people majorly to speak in staccato prose, unfinished sentences, clauses and phrases. These show the volatility of their psyche in relation to the societal fear of witches and witchcraft. There is no room for elevated dialogue employing poetry (only Intombi 'Nyama exhibits this in a scene where she talks about the "Boys in the cupboard" (*Zombi?*, 208- 209)).

Language, therefore, plays a great part in the success of these mythic related texts. One cannot but agree with Hodgkin (1963: 278) who succinctly summarizes the thematic focus of African art and literature (and this is especially true of all the texts under examination):

African art is essentially a collective art done for everyone with the participation of everyone. It is a practical art It is a committed art: the artist mirrors his people, his time, his history, but he mirrors them from a definite personal point of view. And it is an art which virtually goes on all the time.

CHAPTER SIX

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

6.1 Summary of Findings

The various mythic variants found in the different texts become related and intertwined as they are played out by different characters in dissimilar environments and under a variety of situations (all under the African geo-political and psycho-religious umbrella). Running through all the myths, which are mostly foregrounded in past beliefs, actions of ancestors and the pantheon is the idea that new myths can be and must be created. Only this will enable the society to develop and meet its daily needs to the people. As much as the gods have their parts to play in the communal lives of the people, total reliance must not be placed on them. The gods have their own problems and if care is not taken, one becomes a pun on their chess-board. Man must, therefore, learn to play his parts. Most of his problems are man-made; therefore, they must be predisposed to human solutions.

The myth of recanting runs through nearly all the texts. This calls on the hero to forfeit all that he had avowed to protect and fight for. His life and freedom (from prison and or death) will be his reward while the oppressors continue with his people's suppression. In no text did the hero recant; a few paid with their lives (Kinjeketile, Kimathi, Ogwoma and Uloko). Others found new ways out of the imbroglio like in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *Morountodun*. In their refusal, the word of rebellion and freedom struggle is born and will affect and encourage other generations to continue the fight (*Kinjeketile, The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*).

Linked to this is the basic struggle over land. This myth is one that has stayed with man from time immemorial. Usually the conqueror wants the land of the oppressed by all means. This is done through deceitful pacts, deals, wars and nefarious activities as pointed out by Kimathi in reference to the activities of the British in Kenya (as an example). In a few of the texts, it is shown that land is not only the physical geographical entity that is fought over. It extends to the religious, psyche and socio-cultural lives of the people. He who owns the land owns the people. The major

heroic characters fought for their people to have their stolen and appropriated lands back and for them to have a say on that which was once theirs (*Morountodun, Kinjeketile, The Trial of Dedan Kimathi, Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and others).

The oppressors come into the lives of the people through various avenues: religion, culture, diplomatic pacts and deals, deceit, trade, propaganda, defeat in war, witchcraft and witches and other ways. This myth of oppression has stayed with man. In the developing African world, the oppressors have been internal and external. The internals have been Africans especially after the different countries got independence from their colonial rulers; a sort of self imposed neo-colonialism. The externals have been colonizers of different types and from different countries of other continents. They use all oppressive tools to suppress the people: all based on false propaganda and double talk. The attempt is to break and fragmentise the various societies. The people are even juggled and displaced; they are moved from one area to another within their countries (*Morountodun, Sizwe Bansi is Dead, The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*). The societies become polarized based on betrayers, the unconcerned and the fighters (the politicians and the armed fighters). This division extends to all facets of life and is portrayed in the farmers, lovers, guerrilla fighters and land owners fighting for their 'rights'. This fight for freedom from oppressors is mythically from eons past, with no time-span: from the beginning of man to his present and even into his future. Eventually, through all the pains, wars and struggles, the oppressed always come out victorious. This result is portrayed in nearly all the texts examined (*Morountodun, The Trial of Dedan Kimathi, Ipi Zombi?*). In other results, it is assumed that the present is pregnant with a future success (*Kinjeketile, Wedlock of the Gods*).

From these oppression and suppression, the myths of betrayal and trust come in to play. In all the texts, the issue of betrayal comes in various forms. In the armed freedom struggle, betrayers are rampant because a few of the people see the individual and not the group. They look out for themselves. And usually they pay for this either in the present or in the future. (*Morountodun, Kinjeketile, The Trial Dedan Kimathi, Death and the King's Horseman*). Another type of betrayal is been untrue to one's promise and words. In *The Marriage of Anansewa*, Ananse fails to keep his promise to

the suitors. *Wedlock of the Gods* shows the effect of Ogwoma's failure in not keeping in line with the tradition of widowhood. The betrayers bring down their society, reduce the power and number of the fighters and cause more societal irruptions. Usually, all the betrayers, in one way or the other, in the present or the future, physical or spiritually, pay for their negative actions. Elesin in *Death and the King's Horseman* is not left out of this.

Instead of betraying themselves, their people, their nations and the struggles, a few other characters prefer to undergo metamorphosis and transformation. All the texts show the heroic and mythic characters and sometimes the common people undergoing changes in their psychological make-up. This change is mythic as all mythic heroes must undergo self changes before attempting to effect changes in their societal and communal lives. In all the texts examined, all the characters transformed maintained their new psycho-sociological profiles effecting the necessary changes crucial in their communal lives. Only Adil in *Fate of a Cockroach* has a relapse because of lack of confidence in his new personality.

To become altered, characters in the various texts experience initiations at various levels and through different circumstances. In the African world, undergoing initiation turns a young man or woman into an adult able to stand and speak for his community. All the texts, in one way or the other, show that the characters undertake initiations to solidify their fighting resolutions whether on the battle field, at home or in the society. Morountodun becomes initiated both in the prison and on the battlefield; Kinjeketile under the river while the commoners through drinking the magic water; Ananse through his journeys over the land and Anansewa through her supposed death; Uloko and Ogwoma through their resolve and deaths; Sizwe through his reincarnation in Robert; Adil in his symbolic unification with the Cockroach; and Kimathi in his normal initiatory rite. Olunde undergoes initiation into the world and realm of the gods and the ancestors through his sacrificial death in *Death and the King's Horseman*. Senti and his group become 'comrades' fighting for their people. The only character that denies his initiation is Adil due to the death of his symbolic totem, the Cockroach. After initiations, all become hardened and face their situations

squarely. It makes them become aware of their limitations and successes. Failure to them becomes unthinkable. With it, their resolves are usually total, resulting in stupendous successes, sometimes not only for the present but also for the future and not only for themselves as individuals, but also for the family, the group and the nation.

Another mythic issue treated by a few of the texts is feminism. It is posited that the female, over time, has been relegated to the background; to play the second fiddle even in matters that concern her. This has come about because nearly all African societies - traditional and modern - are patriarchal. African playwrights play on this myth rewriting it whenever possible and repainting and reappointing new roles to the woman. In *Morountodun*, *Wedlock of the Gods*, *Fate of a Cockroach*, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* and *Death and the King's Horseman* the woman takes the front seat fighting like the man for what she believes in. She becomes a guerrilla fighter, a lover who dies for her man, the feminist fighting for her personal freedom and birthing future revolutionaries and a traditionalist fighting for tradition and the future of her people. The concerned playwrights advocate the freeing of the woman from long-imposed and tradition-encouraged enslavement which is inimical to the growth of womanhood. Apart from the debilitating and degrading rites of womanhood preached against by 'Zulu Sofola, there is also the myth of the superiority of the father over the girl-child; he can do as he wills with her. This usually results into 'selling' and 'hawking' her to the best suitor not minding her feelings (*Kinjeketile*, *The Marriage of Anansewa* and *Wedlock of the Gods*). And even where the father and daughter gain like in *The Marriage of Anansewa*, the daughter still suffers at the psycho-emotional, religious and cultural levels. In *Ipi Zombi?* the woman is the witch that must be killed without any evidence.

One basic fact established in all the texts is the demystification of the power and presence of the gods in the actions and life of man. While they are not ridiculed, all the playwrights show that man must take up his mantle of problems by himself and look for solutions. The solutions are within him and not without. His problems are created by him and should be (re)solved by him. The gods, it seems, have their own problems.

Man must therefore face his. In *Morountodun* and *Ipi Zombi?*, Titubi and Moremi, Senti and his group dare where the gods fail. The gods and their gifts become rejected in *Kinjeketile*. Ananse did not wait for them to solve his problems in *The Marriage of Anansewa*. The two lovers look into themselves for solutions and encouragement in the face of tribulations over their love in *Wedlock of the Gods*. Sizwe personally seeks a way out for himself and his people in the apartheid world in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*. In *Fate of a Cockroach* the gods become phony as those regarded as such, the humans, are mere mortals fighting their own battles. In *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, religion is made to serve man and not the other way. The gods become demystified; man must face himself. In *Death and the King's Horseman*, man through Olunde did not wait for the gods to effect changes in the failure and dangerous situation created by Elesin. Olunde takes up the mantle of responsibility and gives his life in place of that of his father. Senti and his group in *Ipi Zombi?* come to the understanding that the gods, modern and traditional, have failed them. They take up the tool of struggling against witchcraft and witches.

All the texts under examination have shown that myths exist and operate in the lives of the Africans to a very high level. They permeate all levels and aspects of their lives sometimes even without their knowledge and acknowledgement. The playwrights, though recording what operated and still operate in the African environments, proffer new solutions to the problem of underdevelopment. Myths should not be consigned to the hoary past but should be allowed to develop everyday (as it does) and be recognized along with their effects. Therefore, they must serve and meet the people at their daily and immediate points of need. They must be seen to be progressive in nature, flexible in usage and relevant in applicability. Myths are necessary. Myths must become relevant to present day and lives.

6.2 Conclusion

Sutherland, in *The Marriage of Anansewa*, proves to be interested in the folklore and myths of her people. The text uses a mythic pattern of examining human foibles through the utilization of a mythic character. With the application of mythographic

tools and the employment of the archetype, it is established that myth and the mythographic exist in not only the dramatic text but also in the tradition of the Akan people of Ghana. She becomes one of those Irele (1977: 15-16) writes about as very African in their writings:

Our writers are recognizably African only in the sense in which they give an African character to their works and conversely, we who are Africans, will only accept them as speaking about us and for us in so far as they take our voice and speak with our accent What I have called the integrity and specificity of an African work can only be brought to light, therefore, if the work itself is situated within its African perspective and related to its African references.

The myth of the ordinary man, who can vouch and fight for himself without any major external spiritual help, is thus created and sustained with the exploits of the characters of Ananse and his daughter, Anansewa. One cannot but agree with Armah's protagonist in *Fragments* (1970:151) when he replies to a query on the old traditional ties:

the hero idea itself is something very old. It is the myth of the extraordinary man who brings about a complete turnabout in terrible circumstances. We have the old heroes who turned defeat into victory for the whole community. But these days the community has disappeared from the story. Instead, there is the family and the hero comes and turns its poverty into sudden wealth. And the external enemy isn't the one at whose expense the hero gets his victory; he's supposed to get rich, mainly at the expense of the community.

The play, *Kinjeketile*, is set in such a way that the actions flow one into the other. This, according to the playwright, is "to make the transition from one scene to another quick and smooth" (*Kinjeketile*, viii). He directs that there should be no breakage(s) within the flow of actions. Again, it is discovered that each Act and Scene flows into the other sensibly. There is, therefore, a build-up of actions culminating in

Kinjeketile's message delivery and the final battle against the Germans. The Acts and Scenes can, thus, be lineally explained.

Hussein successfully utilizes myth and mythography in *Kinjeketile* to explain the whole gamut of what represents Kinjeketile and the Maji Maji revolution. In this work, he is able to encode mythographic icons in narrating the fascinating story of the Tanzanian people's struggle, at least, from the oppressed people's point of view. Decoding these will help generations understand what the fighters fought and died for as prophesied in these words of Kinjeketile; "One day the word will cease to be a dream, it will be a reality" (*Kinjeketile*, 53).

Fugard intertwines the characters and the thematic focus of *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* with mythical techniques and icons. He succeeds in exploiting the mythical within an oppressive society resulting in a condemnation of apartheid without mentioning it. One can agree with Rich (2002: 4) that the text is "lyrical in design, shattering in impact." Fugard examines the various aspects of the political imbroglio of his society with penetrative and in-depth analytical dramatic scenes and icons with and through different archetypes.

Styles becomes a griot telling the story of his people. It is through him, his actions and life that acquaintance is made with all facets of apartheid. The future is also predicated on him. He, therefore, represents not only for himself but also for his race and nation an achievable future; free of racial prejudice and suppression. This, in the practical, agrees with Brink (1993:6): "Inasmuch as individual action can make a difference, *Sizwe Bansi* is far more hopeful and optimistic ..." The text prophesies on the future of apartheid, optimistically professing new ways and methods of achieving freedom. These in reality have happened.

The success of *Fate of a Cockroach* is alluded to by Al-Hakim's friend of forty years (1947- 1987) and a Nobel winner, Naguib Mahfouz (1998):

I realized that Al-Hakim's true accomplishment was as a playwright rather than as a novelist . . .

Al-Hakim succeeds in utilizing *Fate of a Cockroach* as an examination tool on the lot of humans. He examines the animal world with a microscopic eye as reflective and refractive of the human environment. At this lower level, he expands the absurdities prevalent in the human world: human follies, foible, struggles and limitations (socio-religious, psychological, scientific and cultural). His solutions revolve round the unity of humans working with a unified voice and focus through the absorption of new attitudes.

Through various initiatory avenues, symbolic and representative connotations, Al-Hakim establishes the fact that myth and the mythic are relevant to everyday life of not only humans but also of other creatures. He points out the banes of the foundation of religion and its effects on both the worshippers and the worshipped. He establishes the fact that myths are daily creations and happenings not limited to the ancient past. The ones in this text are created through the mythic actions and struggles of King (cockroach), Adil (human) and the ants.

According to Al-Hakim, the myth of the gods is an on-going and everyday issue. Their myths, which metamorphose into formal religion, need continuous re-examination as they relate to present day realities. If the communal ants do not live with prayers, supplications, superstitions and sacrifices, why do the individualistic cockroaches need external spiritual stabilizing force? Al-Hakim's belief lies in the communal life of the ants. The whole can save the individual. On the other hand, the individual, on his own, might not be able to save himself and the group. The myth of the whole is advocated. The individual, like the King, can perish alone if the whole does not support him. The individual must seek for the inner power from and of the whole. This ought not to be from any external spiritual force. When the King is left to his own devices, he fails: "Only he can save himself, only by his own efforts - or a miracle from the skies" (*Cockroach*, 25). In the world of the ants, on the other hand, it is a communal salvation:

The Ants (*chanting*): None of us will hunger know,
Because we all lend a hand,
We're members of a single body.

There is amongst us no one sad,
There is amongst us none who's lonesome,
There is amongst us none who says
'I am not concerned with others'
(*Cockroach*, 17)

In *Morountodun*, Osofisan utilizes all available icons to reach into the past and to create a new myth for the present. This is to effect changes in the ongoing dispensation of justice, oppression and political rascality as exhibited by governments, their officials and the so-called elite. Each individual must strive to become "the clay" with which the future of his or her destiny or that of his community would be remodeled for no god would fight on anyone's behalf.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Githae Mugo in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* successfully create a mythic text utilizing various mythic tools with the infusion of the mythic characterology of Kimathi. One can concur with the opinion of Egharevba (1986:35) that the text portrays the

gradual realization of that radical spirit, the confrontational power, a volcanic strength of self-assertion within the protagonist as the necessary instrument for man to free himself and the masses from an unjust social order. Thus, self-assertion and confrontation, not the blood of the fore doomed (for there is no one that is fore doomed) becomes the pragmatic instrument for societal salvation.

Sofola, in *Wedlock of the Gods*, utilizes a lot of imagery, symbolisms, characterology coupled with setting and time frame to put across her aversion to social limitations which inhibit the development of the womenfolk and the society at large. She writes against the background of patriarchal and societal suppression of the feminine gender. She uses the system to unearth the systemic problems drawing inferences and thereby encouraging the same system to heal itself. She prefers an egalitarian society where Ogwoma calls on Uloko:

To come and let us go to live where no one can reach us.
Let us go where there is peace. (*Wedlock*, 21)

Soyinka, in *Death and the King's Horseman*, brings to the fore the travails of a single man who is willing to fulfil his traditional and communal delegated vows but is limited by his human frailties. Soyinka preaches the dictum that any man, no matter his situation and social status, can fail himself and his society. It is the society that must be ready to amend the circumstances as it occurs in the text. The gods are jettisoned as it becomes the problems of the concerned humans to find solutions to their communal and individual problems.

It can be posited that Bailey in *Ipi Zombi?* has been successful in his examination of the mythic issues of death, witches, witchcraft and the concomitant fear in consonance with the effects they have on the concerned society. His ability to infuse traditionalism with modernism along with socio-religious beliefs stand the play out as one that examines mythic-related concerns of South Africans and beyond.

In conclusion, the various playwrights' mythological ideologies for their works are foregrounded in their belief that freedom in all spheres of life is important and must be sought and fought for. Each man or creature, according to them, to an extent, is in and under chains. This can be at any level of life: physical, spiritual, psychological, emotional or otherwise. These texts are their examining tools in unravelling these issues. As absurd as some of the settings, actions and characters are, the reality of the issues to every-day life all over the world (and not to only Africa) cannot be denied. Carlyle's (1973: 820) comment in reference to "Sartor Resartus" sums it all:

In every wisest soul lies a whole world of internal madness, an authentic Demon Empire out of which, indeed, his world of wisdom has been creatively built together, and now rests there, as on its dark foundation a habitable flowery Earth-rind.

6.3 Recommendation

This work has highlighted the fact that myth and mythography have a lot to do with the average life of any group of people, especially Africans: whether they are conscious of it or not. It shows some of the icons, totems and archetypal models as generally African playing differing but aptly specific purposes amongst the various peoples. It examines and exposes the mythic types that exist among the Africans through the issues of life that affect them with textual examples from different regions of Africa.

It is hereby suggested that other critical and holistic works into the world of African drama, myths and mythography be conducted and subjected to other appropriate theories. This would enable other relevant views, from different angles, to be recorded.

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