

DEATH, NATIONALISM, LANGUAGE
AND REVOLT IN J. M. SYNGE AND
WOLE SOYINKA - A THEMATIC STUDY

REUBEN ADELEYE ABATI

UNIVERSITY OF BADAGRY LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN




THIS THESIS SUBMITTED BY
MR. ABANI, Reuben Afolayo

.....
WAS ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN THE FACULTY OF ARTS
OF THIS UNIVERSITY
THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE AWARD IS

12th October, 1990
.....

10/12/91
.....

DATE


.....
SECRETARY
POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN



DEATH, NATIONALISM, LANGUAGE AND REVOLT IN
J. M. SYNGE AND WOLE SOYINKA - A THEMATIC STUDY

BY

REUBEN ADELEYE ABATI
B. A. Hons (Calabar), M. A. (Ibadan)

A thesis in the Department of Theatre Arts
Submitted to the Faculty of Arts
In partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

MARCH, 1990.

IBADAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

AC. NO. 91-02327

LC. 7H
DN
45
A2x
1991

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines four themes in the plays of J.M. Synge and Wole Soyinka - namely, death, nationalism, language and revolt - to represent the multiple aspects of convergence and divergence which a combined reading of their works reveals, and to appreciate the sensibilities, the social contexts and the significance (local and universal) of both writers. It is divided into six chapters: Chapter One: Introduction; Chapter Two: Death in J.M. Synge and Wole Soyinka (Thanatomimesis and Thanatodicea Examined); Chapter Three: J.M. Synge, Wole Soyinka and the National Question; Chapter Four: Language: The Synge and Soyinka Experience; Chapter Five: Modernism and the Theatre of Revolt: J. M. Synge and Wole Soyinka; Chapter Six: Conclusion.

The thesis advances four main propositions, viz:

- (a) Synge and Soyinka express an abiding concern about the centrality of death in human experience; man, both writers contend, is, in the midst of life, in death; hence they paint an artistic landscape in which the individual urge to assert itself is often subverted by the reality or the threat of death, thus giving vent to

the idea that death is the ultimatum of life.

- (b) Both writers have been dismissed as a-national in their respective countries, not just because they are incapable of political thought, as has been alleged in Synge's case, or unpatriotic, as alleged in both cases, but because of their refusal to embrace the reductionist and exclusivist literary dogma preached by the ultra-nationalists in their societies. Both of them advocate the freedom of the creative instinct from ideological fetters and assign themselves the task of desecrating the sacred gods of their time with the belief that truth, as opposed to flattery, should be the oyster of art; and it is perhaps this critical detachment and objectivity that constitutes true nationalist writing.
- (c) Synge and Soyinka, like many writers, accord language a pre-eminence in their scale of artistic tools; of particular interest is their foregrounding of language; that is, the fluency with which their language attains performative dimensions and generates visual and aural impulses, and the implications of this for the theatrical communication of their plays.

- (d) A search for the root of both writers' sensibility must be traced, in part, to the modernist temperament of their works manifest not only in their 'avant-garde' utilisation of language but more contextually in their revolt against preconceived existential and social notions and ethos.

In sum, this thesis attempts to give intimations of the individual genius of both writers, situate them within their social and historical contexts, and assess their universal value; the parallels between them are highlighted but their differences are not overlooked. On the whole, however, this exercise can represent only the beginning of a more complex discussion of both writers, particularly with regards to their backgrounds: the Anglo-Irish National Theatre Movement and the Modern Nigerian Theatre of the pre-Independence and post-Independence eras.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to express my gratitude to the various people whose kindness and goodwill helped to make the writing of this thesis a less tedious experience than it would otherwise have been.

Professor Dapo Adelugba supervised me patiently and methodically and gave me free access to his academic resources. He introduced me to the subject area investigated in this thesis and also linked me up with other researchers in the field. Under him, I also received instruction in research methods, hard work and the fundamental tenets of the pedagogical faith. I wish to thank him for his kindness and I hope that my post-doctoral work would justify all the efforts he has made to give me a good foundation as a scholar and student of theatre arts theory and criticism.

I also wish to thank my parents for silently enduring the hardships which the cost of my long stay in school has imposed on them and the entire family.

Throughout the period of my research, Tejumola Olaniyan of Cornell University, New York and Mr. Dipo Kalejaiye of Oakland, California, U.S.A. sent me many useful documents;

Oludele Akinboade, a D.Phil. student at the University of Oxford, shared his own experiences with me; Mr Dipò Irele, Dr. Femi Fatoba and Mr. Sola Fosudo of the University of Ibadan lent me some of their books; Professor Michael O'Neill of Cheekpoint, Waterford, Ireland, whose acquaintance I made in 1987 during his visit to the University of Ibadan at the invitation of Professor Adelugba, has given me much encouragement since his return to Ireland, Dr. (Mrs.) Dany Lyndersay of Hilversum, Holland, my former tutor at the University of Calabar, whose final year on the Ph.D. programme, coincided with my first year on the programme, gave me a fore-knowledge of the demands of the doctoral programme; Mr. Adeyemi Adeogun of Stockwell, London subscribed to journals on my behalf and also sent me a copy of J.M. Synge's Plays, Poems and Prose - I am grateful to them all.

I should also like to thank the University of Ibadan for considering me worthy of appointment as College Scholar during the entire period of my doctoral studies.

I am also grateful to my undergraduate tutor, Mr. Abimbola Ojomo, who, at the time of this research, was also working on his own doctoral thesis. At every stage of our

research, we compared notes and shared experiences. Research could be very lonely if one were alone; in Mr. Ojomo, I found a confidant and an adviser, and hence, my research experience was far from being lonely.

Kayode Dwolabi, Moji Akinkoye, Subuola Oguntokun, Peju Olowu, Tade Adekunle, Atabo Oko, Albert Egbejiele, Kayode Oshin, Kate Righi, Femi Shaka, Barclays Ayakoroma, Marcellinus Okhakhu, Andrew Offeh, Simon Utih and Mr Femi Olude must also be thanked for their kindness and companionship during the period of this research.

This thesis would be incomplete if I do not record my indebtedness to the THA 401 students of 1987/88 session in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan. THA 401, that year, was divided into two parts: Period Studies and Special Author, and, under the latter, the students studied J.M. Synge. As a teaching assistant under Professor Adelugba, who was the tutor in charge of the course, I had the opportunity of trying out my views about Synge and his plays and, in the process, I came to know Synge more intimately than before. When eventually I started writing my thesis, I discovered, to my pleasure, that the sections on Synge had

already been partly written in my notes for THA 401. I wish to thank the students for being so responsive and Professor Adelugba for giving me that great opportunity.

Finally, I remember, now as always, all my friends who, through letters and words of encouragement, expressed their confidence in my abilities and constantly checked on my progress. Space constraints would not permit me to list them all but I must not fail to mention Sina Junaid, Yemi Adeogun, Lanre Babalola, Mr. and Mrs. Korede Oke, Jimi Oloyede, Lekan Opeyemi, Moye Obasa, Kayode Adeyinka, Muyiwa Olusa, Ayo Elebute, Tunde Aremu, Lanre Olatunde, Jare Ajayi, Sesan Ajayi, Uche Nduka, Sunday Ododo, Bioye Soyinka, Kayode Ajala, Bola Ogunyemi, Bunmi Babarinsa, Djebah Ovikuruoma, Kunle Sanni, Dapo Payne, Lekan Oguntayo, Matthew Odusanya, Sola Oyefeso, Akin Oribiyi and Kunle Smith.

Mrs T.O. Ogunyemi of the Department of Guidance and Counselling, and Mr Okechukwu Nwaru of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan typed my manuscripts. For their patience and concern, I am very grateful.

Reuben Abati
University of Ibadan
March, 1990.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this study was carried out by
Reuben Adeleye Abati in the Department of Theatre Arts,
University of Ibadan, under my supervision.

Dapo Adelugba
SUPERVISOR

Professor Dapo Adelugba
Professor in the Department of Theatre Arts
and
Dean, Faculty of Arts,
University of Ibadan,
Ibadan, Nigeria.

MARCH, 1990.

DEDICATION

To my parents and all my teachers,
past and present.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
TITLE PAGE	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
CERTIFICATION	ix
DEDICATION	x
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xi
CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION	
Preamble	1
Methodology	3
Synge and Soyinka	13
Purpose of Study	45
Notes	47
CHAPTER TWO - DEATH IN J. M. SYNGE AND WOLE SOYINKA (THANATOMIMESIS AND THANATODICEA EXAMINED)	
Introduction	58
Theoretical Framework/Literature Review	59
Death in Synge and Soyinka	91
Conclusion	156
Notes	160

CHAPTER THREE - J. M. SYNGE, WOLE SOYINKA AND
THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Introduction	...	...	...	174
Theoretical Framework/Literature Review			...	174
Syngé and Nationalism	...	...	...	221
Soyinka and Nationalism	...	...	...	276
Conclusion	...	...	...	320
Notes	...	...	...	324

CHAPTER FOUR - LANGUAGE: THE SYNGE AND SOYINKA
EXPERIENCE

Introduction	...	...	...	356
Theoretical Framework/Literature Review			...	357
Language in Syngé and Soyinka		...	...	378
Conclusion	...	...	...	421
Notes	...	...	...	430

CHAPTER FIVE - MODERNISM AND THE THEATRE OF REVOLT:
J. M. SYNGE AND WOLE SOYINKA

Introduction	...	...	...	444
Theoretical Framework/Literature Review			...	449
Syngé and the Theatre of Revolt		...	...	476
Soyinka and the Theatre of Revolt		...	...	482

				PAGE
Messianic Revolt	...	...	...	486
Social Revolt	...	...	...	492
Existential Revolt	...	...	...	527
Conclusion	...	...	...	572
Notes	...	...	...	574
CHAPTER SIX				
Conclusion	...	...	...	592
Notes	...	...	...	617
BIBLIOGRAPHY	...	...	...	619

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Preamble

This thesis is sequel to an earlier Project Essay entitled "J. M. Synge and Wole Soyinka: A Comparative Study" written by the present researcher in 1987 in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the M.A. (Theatre Arts) degree of the University of Ibadan. In that Project Essay, we arrived, inter alia, at the conclusion that Synge and Soyinka are kindred spirits as explained by the copious similarities in their biographies and in the historical, social, literary and cultural backgrounds of their individual careers.

We also argued that Synge and Soyinka are indebted to folk imagination; their art, to use a Syngean commonplace, has "strong roots among the clay and worms"¹ but both writers do not display a servile indebtedness to this background; instead, they subject it to a creative alchemy and transmute it into an integral aspect of their artistry. As a discussion of The Aran Islands/Riders to the Sea and "The Fourth Stage"/Death and the King's Horseman further evidenced, they use it to evolve a personal aesthetics and

idiom whose validity derives from their own personal ingenuity. It was also observed that The Aran Islands and "The Fourth Stage" are useful for an understanding of the plays of both writers; they contain, in reasonable proportions, the thread of the fabric out of which their plays are woven.

The Project Essay was brought to a tentative close with the assertion that no single study can exhaust the various possibilities of examining the areas of divergence and intersection between the oeuvres of Synge and Soyinka. A study of both writers and the theatre traditions which constitute the base of their creativity promises to be rich and enduring; hence, it deserves the attention of future scholars.

Beyond its overtly exploratory posture and its tendency to exegetise where programmatisation seems ideal, our M.A. Project Essay served a useful purpose. It afforded us the opportunity to become familiar with our subject matter, to chart the main outlines of our analysis, to identify the pitfalls of our endeavour and to create guidelines for further explorations in the field. It is a forerunner to the present thesis. In it, we lighted a flame and started a discussion; the present thesis is designed to feed the flame

and extend the discussion in other directions. More importantly, it must be noted that there is no overlap in content between our M.A. Project Essay and the present thesis. Whereas the former concentrated on the broad similarities and dissimilarities between Synge and Soyinka, the latter discusses four central themes in the works of both writers.

Methodology

This thesis falls within the ambit of comparative drama and literature. The significance of comparatism as the antidote for literary hegemony, intellectual provincialism, separatism and "temporocentricism"² requires no elaborate explanation but it is important to clarify the methodology which the comparatist critic elects to use. This is necessary in order to lessen the latent ambiguity of the comparatist exercise and prevent the tendency towards misinterpretation which often attends its reception. Two methodologies are traditionally available to the comparatist critic - the influence approach and the tradition approach. The definition of these two approaches and the delineation of their attributes appear to be submerged by polemics and counter-polemics.

The influence approach is a "critique d'influence",³ it delineates the causal relations and influences between one writer and another and portrays causality as the first principle of creativity. Its premise is empirically verifiable. Instances of direct influences between two writers abound in literary history. To name a few, consider the examples of Strindberg and Kafka, Nietzsche and Strindberg, Laforgue and Eliot, Ibsen and Shaw, Wordsworth and Shelley, Beaumont and Fletcher and Cervantes and Fielding.

This approach examines a writer's cultural and artistic background and also, the sacred zones of his personal life. It exhumes several hitherto unknown literary and extraliterary details which enhance the understanding of the architectonics of a writer's creativity and defines the scope of his originality, and the source of his skill and vision. Because of these advantages, it is regarded as "a basic technique in comparative literature."⁴

But causality, which it parades as a first principle, "has repeatedly shown itself to be the scholar's Gordian Knot";⁵ it has shown itself, for example, to be the main cause of the various objections that are raised against the approach.

It is alleged, in the first instance, that influence studies lose sight of the fact that literary creativity is not a linear, causal and automatic phenomenon. A writer may resemble another writer in terms of art, craft and vision but such resemblances are not always the product of influence. In most cases, they are indexes of a universal principle which states that life is full of coincidences and the human instinct repeats itself in similar fashions in different places. In other words, writers treat similar themes, adopt similar styles and arrive at the same conclusions not necessarily because of any direct cross-influencing between them but because the human mind functions, universally, in analogous, coincidental patterns.

Besides, a writer is a product of a myriad of influences which are so complex and wide-ranging that they defy precise definition. This undefinability of the creative spirit accounts for the perenniality of the critical enterprise. The more a critic attempts to unravel the soul of a writer's work and adduce to it a specific source, the more he discovers that there are other portals of inquiry which need to be knocked upon and opened; and, as he opens these

portals, other portals reveal themselves, and the critic finds himself, as post-structuralist literary theories affirm, in a territory where signifiers have limitless capabilities for signification. The influence approach ignores this fact and seeks to contextualise literature but, essentially, literature involves a dual process of contextualisation and decontextualisation.

The influence approach thus limits the scope of literature; hence, Rene Wellek insists that the approach "militates against (a) meaningful understanding of the nature of literature itself".⁶ He says it concentrates unduly on external details; it is, he concludes, an expression of "rapports de fait".⁷ Thinking along the same lines, Harry Levin accuses influence studies of concentrating on "rapports exterieurs".⁸

In the hands of its less imaginative users, the approach degenerates into a concerted attempt to accuse a writer, who is said to have been influenced by another, of plagiarism, intellectual poverty and failure of craft. The approach raises ethical issues that are at odds with critical inquiry and confesses a predilection for acrimony and malice.

Its attempt to parade extra-literary facts and undertake an expedition into the private life of a writer reveals a penchant for anecdotes, back-stage gossip and front-of-house rumours. Its attempt to trace a writer's creativity to a source other than the writer himself often appears presumptive and reductionist; completely unmasked, it emerges as a quasi-literary exercise. In its worst specie, it manifests in the form of a "literary talk which would ramble comfortably from the texture of Tennyson's language to the length of his beard".⁹

The tradition approach also seeks to establish literary genealogy but, unlike its counterpart, it dispenses with causality and situates a writer within established literary traditions with the aim of determining the writer's significance and achievement. It circumvents the pitfalls of the influence approach and diverts attention from biographical, genetic, anthropological and sociological data to a close interrogation of the text and the author. If the influence approach indulges, as Levin claims, in "rapports exterieurs",¹⁰ the tradition approach attempts "rapports interieurs". T.S. Eliot provides an apt summary of it in his "Tradition and the Individual Talent" :

No poet, no artist of any sort has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone, you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism. The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not one-sided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the super-vention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are re-adjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. 11

Briefly stated, Eliot's position is that a writer is best appreciated when compared with the corpus of earlier writers but such comparisons should not be attempted with the aim of establishing conformity or causality. More germane and fruitful is the acknowledgement and examination of the self-evident but often neglected tradition within which the writer and his texts exist and the assertion that this tradition is moved forward by genuinely new works. This tradition, Eliot continues, is informed by "a perception,

not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence".¹²

In other words, literary history is a spatial continuum in which the past and the present are interfused and within this continuum, literary works exist in an intertextual context and a writer's significance derives from his relation with other writers. Further, a writer is compelled

to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order.¹³

The tradition approach receives further amplification in the hands of Ihab Hassan,¹⁴ Claudio Gullen¹⁵ and Terry Eagleton.¹⁶ Hassan and Gullen both argue that literature is not a product of causal circumstances but of the interrelationship between text and tradition. They outline the shortcomings of the influence approach and dismiss it as superfluous and irrelevant. What is needed as an alternative, says Hassan, is an approach that is interested in "multiple correlations and multiple similarities functioning in an historical sequence".¹⁷ Writing on a slightly different subject, namely literary theory, Terry Eagleton comments

parenthetically on the tradition approach in a tone that is reminiscent of Eliot:

All literary texts are woven out of other literary texts, not in the conventional sense that they bear the traces of 'influence' but in the more radical sense that every word, phrase or segment is a reworking of other writings which precede or surround the individual work. There is no such thing as literary 'originality', no such thing as the 'first' literary work: all literature is 'intertextual'. A specific piece of writing thus has no clearly defined boundaries: it spills over constantly into the works around it, generating a hundred different perspectives which dwindle to vanishing point. The work cannot be sprung shut, rendered determinate, by an appeal to the author, for 'the death of the author' is a slogan that modern criticism is now confidently able to proclaim. 18
(emphasis mine)

In sum, the tradition approach jettisons influence and causality and insists that no literary text exists ex nihilo; all texts are products of a historical context and a dialectical tradition and an understanding of this context and tradition enhances aesthetic and literary appreciation. This approach views a writer as a unit within a larger system and removes the racial, geographical and artificial barriers which fragment the literary community into micro-interest groups. Beneath it is Goethe's principle of Weltliteratur;

it portrays literature as an all-embracing phenomenon which cuts across nations and literary frontiers.

Utilised with caution and commonsense, the tradition approach illuminates literature and criticism; applied dogmatically, it appears restrictive and parochial. Its exclusive interest in tradition and intertextuality may lead to the erection of a hegemony of the text and tradition with a lip-service treatment, if not a complete neglect, of the author as author. This tendency is apparent in the deconstructionist and post-deconstructionist literary theories proposed, for example, by Barthes, Foucault and Kristeva. The theories announce the death of the author and concentrate exclusively on the text. Useful in this regard is the underlined portion of Eagleton's statement above: "the death of the author," Eagleton explains, "is a slogan that modern criticism is now confidently able to proclaim".¹⁹

In addition, post-structuralist literary theories tend to ignore the political and economic bases of literature. But really, can an effect exist without its cause? The text may be important but equally so is the author and the general context within which he operates. Surrounding the author

are several influences and circumstances which inform the character of the text. Without these extra-literary details, the text would seem to lose part of its humanist value. And what is literature without its humanist base?

The influence approach and the tradition approach are greatly flawed, and neither of them is necessarily better than the other. What they both require is a re-definition and a precise understanding of their scope and limits. Examined closely, both approaches appear to be complementary; and perhaps most useful for literary criticism is a mean approach which harnesses their individual advantages. In other words, literary criticism stands to benefit a lot from the "rappports extérieurs" of the influence approach and the "rappports intérieurs" of the tradition approach. Literature is essentially a product of internal and external impulses, of textual and extra-textual details, and only an acknowledgement of both levels of activity can lead the critic towards a full appreciation of the joys of literature.

Hence, this thesis utilises both approaches. Synge and Soyinka are studied hereinafter with an awareness and acknowledgement of the biographical, genetic, historical

and sociological details which define the contexts within which they function(ed) as individuals and as artists. No attempt is made to establish any causality or literary genealogy between them; but we have endeavoured to situate both of them within the literary traditions, indigenous and universal, which inform their writings and define their significance and achievements as artists.

Synge and Soyinka

It would be enough, for the purpose of introduction, to attempt a discussion of some of the mythologies which surround John Millington Synge and Wole Soyinka and to make brief comments on their skills, significance and achievements.

First, it is ironic that Synge is widely described and accepted today as one of Ireland's most important dramatists and one of the most innovative Irish writers since the Renaissance; the circumstances which informed his career at personal and professional levels did not favour the attainment of such preeminence; indeed, if art and the creative muse were faithful to the rules of logic and the drift of

circumstances, Synge would have been a marginal writer and he would not have received half the critical attention which he enjoys.

Synge suffered ill-health; his family was indifferent to his chosen vocation, and his colleagues at the Abbey Theatre, particularly the celebrated duo of Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats, secretly resented his seemingly selfish disposition. But the greatest challenges to his career arose from the general condemnation which his mode of thinking and writing received from many of his contemporaries. His triumph in the midst of the hostile attacks that were launched against his talent from different directions is indeed one of the ironies of literary history and a testimony to the deep-rootedness of his creativity.

Sometime in 1775, Samuel Johnson remarked: "The Irish are an unfair people, they never speak well of one another".²⁰ Similarly, Brendan Behan tells us, and we need not doubt him, that

if there were only three Irishmen left in the world you'd find two of them in a corner talking about the other. We're a backbiting race. 21

Running through Irish literary and political history, particularly the moments when the country was struggling for sovereignty, are instances of this native maliciousness and penchant for hypocrisy and unwarranted selfrighteousness. Synge was a victim of this national trait. He was backbitten by his contemporaries; they questioned his talents and never spoke well of him.

In Synge's time, the nationalists insisted that all Irish citizens must devote their time, talent and resources to the glorification of the Irish heritage and personality. Furthermore, they must repudiate Britain and British imperialism. These "zealots of the republic",²² as F.S.L. Lyons calls them, sought to liberate Ireland from the derogatory myths which centuries of colonialism had imposed on her. Their aim, briefly stated, was to add dignity to Ireland.

Organisations like the Sinn Fein and the Gaelic League and patriots like Thomas Davis, Steward Parnell, Maud Gonne, Douglas Hyde, Arthur Griffiths and Charles Mackiewicz were the proselytizers of this conviction and, they were able to win many converts and, gradually, the nationalist fever gripped the whole nation and the bestowal of dignity upon

Ireland became a national assignment.

This aspiration was beset by various problems engendered by the dilemmas of class, language and religion which racked the Irish society and fragmented it into two irreconcilably opposed classes, that is, the Irish-Irish and the Anglo-Irish or the peasant class and the Landlord class or the Catholics and the Protestants. The nationalists fought these problems with Spartan resolve and frowned upon any opposition to their programmes. In doing so, it was easy for them to intimidate and convince the rank and file but they received their greatest opposition from the artists of the Irish literary movement.

Yeats, Synge and John Eglinton decried the concerted efforts of the nationalists to limit and imprison the creative instinct inside political goals. Yeats said, "fight that rancour I must";²³ Synge complained of "complete insanity" and "what is senile and slobbering in the doctrine of the Gaelic League";²⁴ John Eglinton demanded the

de-Davisation of Irish national literature, that is to say, the getting rid of the notion that in Ireland a writer is to think first and foremost of interpreting the nationality of his country and not simply of the burden he has to deliver. 25

James Joyce, in his usual rebellious manner, and Sean O'Casey, after him, also could not stand the suffocating air of indignation and "Irelandlatry" which accompanied the nationalist ebullience. Joyce fled Dublin in 1912, tagging it "the centre of paralysis".²⁶ Sean O'Casey also retired to London.

In return, the nationalists treated the Irish National Literary Movement with contempt and the ultra-patriotic among them looked upon the writers as traitors; everywhere evident in the history of the Irish National Theatre Movement, in particular, are instances of direct conflict between the nationalists and the Abbey Theatre dramatists. The most charitable explanation by the former was that the latter were indifferent to the nationalist question because they were members of the Anglo-Irish class and the dominance of English blood in their veins necessarily compelled them to seek the perpetuation of British imperialism and the repudiation of Irish values.

Accordingly, the efforts of Lady Gregory, W.B. Yeats, Edward Martyn (A.E.) and J.M. Synge to take theatre to the people and "bring everything down to that sole test again/

Dream of the noble and the beggar-man"²⁷ were dismissed as sheer pretense. Only writers like Padraic Colum, William Boyle and T.C. Murray, who participated in the Anglo-Irish renaissance but remained essentially Irish-Irish, were tolerated.

With the benefit of hindsight it would be fair to say that both the Gaelicists and the Anglo-Irish writers helped, in their different ways, to advance the cause of Irish literature and culture. What interests us here, however, is the fact that the nationalists were most intolerant of Synge. They organised public demonstrations against his plays and paraded him as a literary mercenary whose sole aim was to perpetuate the image of "the stage Irishman"²⁸ and defend imperialist interests. Apart from Daniel Corkery who concedes that Synge is not entirely unpatriotic, most nationalists were unsympathetic towards him. Maud Gonne, Duddley Digges and Arthur Griffith walked out on the first performance of In the Shadow of the Glen. Storm Jameson, Robert Lynd and St. John Ervine insist that Synge "has been very much overrated as a dramatist."²⁹ The following statement by Ervine is fairly representative of the collective position of the "zealots of the republic":

Synge was a faker of peasant speech ... It is high time that all the tosh that was formerly spouted about Synge, and still is by sentimentalists late for the fair was stopped.' As a man Synge was weak, 'spiritually ineffective and totally unable to stand up to life' and although he brought a desirable element of bitterness and acrid beauty into the sticky mess of self-satisfaction and sentimentalism which is known as Irish literature,' he lacked staying power and 'died of sheer inability to assert himself'. He was a man of 'small twisted talent, an odd intruder into the realm of letters whose work smelt too strongly of the medicine bottle. 30

Even death did not rescue Synge from the ire of these zealots. Clearly evident in the Irish weekly papers which reported his death is the suggestion that he would not be missed:

The Irish weekly papers notice Synge's death with short and for the most part grudging notices. There was an obscure Gaelic League singer who was a leader of the demonstration against the Playboy. He died on the same day. Sinn Fein notices both deaths in the same article and gives three-fourths of it to the rioter. For Synge it has but grudging words, as was to be expected. 31

In a letter to Lady Gregory on 16th January, 1912, Yeats further reported that

One of the curious things is the lying rumours that have been put in circulation everywhere, one of which seems to be believed as a matter of course, that Synge died of disease contracted by living an immoral life. I was told the other day that everyone knew that the story about cancer has been invented to hide this. 32

Synge's unpardonable crime was his insistence on truth in a society that glorified chicanery and fraud.

The great difference between England and Ireland is that in England you can say what you like as long as you do the right thing, in Ireland you can do what you like as long as you say the right thing. 33

Synge's crime was his refusal to behave like the Irish in Ireland, that is, his failure to "say the right thing". "His work, like that of Burns," Yeats observes, "was to say all the people did not want to have said."³⁴ Even Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats occasionally said "the right thing"; they used their art to pamper the national ego and reassure the average Irishman of the invincibility and inviolability of the Irish heritage. But Synge differed; he chose instead to subject the Irish personality to a close cross-questioning; he swept Ireland with a broom and revealed those lurid aspects

of the Irish personality which no one dared admit publicly.

His contemporaries condemned his audacity and threatened to crucify him but he was refractory till the end. He lacked the sentimentality which the nationalists required and he was neither ingratiating nor gifted with a politician's sophism. Synge avoided the "slackjaw blackguardism"³⁵ in which his contemporaries drivelled and remained true to his own convictions and, like all geniuses, he suffered for being more perspicacious than his peers.

If we seek the explanation of his pre-eminence and why he is regarded today as one of Ireland's most important dramatists since the Renaissance, one decisive factor is his innovativeness, his ingenuity and his originality. Synge extended the frontiers of Irish and European drama. At a time when European drama derived its gusto from the portrayal of the city and its board-room tales, Synge chose to concentrate on the rural imagination. In addition, he adopted a language that is peasant in conception and is "fully flavoured as a nut or apple".³⁶ He introduced a lustrous mode of perception and revealed other methods of doing the dramatist's job; he became a model, and other dramatists,

including Yeats, began to learn from him.

Synge's originality is as shocking as it was unusual and it is justly appreciated for its novelty and candour. His centralisation of hitherto marginalised circumstances, his use of peculiar speech patterns and the tight, almost flawless architectonics of his plays all combine to make him a dramatist of the first rank. He has had many imitators but his genius is so genuine and irreproducible that no one has been able to imitate him effectively.

Synge's personal habits are also responsible for his excellence as a writer. He was very meticulous with his scripts and he delighted in revising them for as long as possible. Riders to the Sea was written thrice, The Tinker's Wedding underwent six drafts, the writing of The Playboy took three years (September 1904 - January 1907) and Deirdre of the Sorrows was undergoing a fourth draft before Synge died. He did not possess the finicalness of Pater who wrote every sentence on a sheet of paper and worked on his phrases until they pleaded for respite but he paid enough attention to his scripts to ensure that the right words were used and that the right chords of thought and feeling were struck.

Synge "had his fingers upon the life-pulse of Ireland,"³⁷

He felt this pulse with great sensitivity and even though the public objected to the readings on his artistic thermometer, very few critics can deny his perspicacity and the fact that he succeeded, by extension, in feeling the pulse of Europe and the world. Though Irish, Synge's real constituency is the universe; though a dramatist, the rules which inform his art are those of philosophy and psychology.

"Complaint of present days", concludes Byron in Don Juan, "is not the certain path to future praise".³⁸ The reverse has proved to be the case with Synge. The strong complaints that were lodged against his plays, particularly during the Playboy riots, made him famous and compelled critics to notice him. The critical inquiry that followed has revealed the truth which his contemporaries chose to ignore; Synge is a superb dramatist, a lyrical poet without rival and a profound philosopher hollidaying as an artist. He is dead but he is still living; for the past century or so, several generations have been looking at nature through his eyes.

Let us add that, in Synge, we also encounter a genius that is so rich and broad-based that it invites comparison with the masters of modern drama. Many critics have discussed the senses in which this is so by noting parallels between Synge and Shakespeare, Synge and Ibsen, and also between Synge and Chekhov. When such comparative discussions of Synge are extended to Africa, the African writer who seems most readily to invite comparison with Synge, in our view, is the Nigerian writer, Wole Soyinka, winner of the 1986 Nobel Prize in Literature. Like Synge, Soyinka boasts of a highly distinguished career.

Wole Soyinka

Born on July 13, 1934 in Abeokuta, Nigeria's Soyinka grew up under favourable circumstances which enriched his imagination and moulded the infinitely politic, witty and humorous personality which runs through his writings. It is a commonplace of literary criticism to state that a writer's background influences his creativity but, in Soyinka's instance, this commonplace assumes a wider significance for the source of his talent, particularly his flair

for paradigmatic insights, his colourful sense of character, his unique grasp of language and his vivid sense of event and action are certainly traceable to the eventful family and cultural background which informs his personality.

At the risk of sounding hyperbolic, we could assume that Soyinka was already a writer before the age of ten: by then, the essential elements of his genius had taken root; what remained were the skill and the experience with which he could transform them. These he acquired as he grew up, attended various schools and played his own parts in the drama of life. Soyinka is simultaneously an academic, a social critic, politician, musician, writer, belle lettrist and theatrician, but it is as a writer that he is best known and, in this respect, he is widely acknowledged as Africa's most eminent dramatist.

Soyinka gives classic expression to the image of the writer as the voice of reason in his society. He has consistently criticised the excesses of governments and the shortcomings of social machineries and, in so doing, he has always demanded the establishment of an impeccable society where truth, honesty and humanism triumph over their opposites.

Among his colleagues, he has been a torch-bearer and a pace-maker. . But incidentally, his quixotic interventions in the political, cultural and literary life of Nigeria and Africa have often been thankless. Governments have condemned him, and some of his own colleagues have dramatised what they consider his imperfections.

In the early sixties, for example, many of his colleagues condemned his refusal to join the negritude movement and labelled him a traitor; but what Soyinka sought to avoid was the narrow-mindedness, the hermeticism and the self-seeking propaganda which constituted the trademark of the negritude movement. Instead of the idyllic romanticization of the African heritage and personality which the negritudists demanded, Soyinka called for a more engaging interrogation of contemporary realities and the jettisoning of provincialism, racism and bold-faced chicanery - the main pitfalls of negritude.³⁹

Negritude, defined by Leopold Senghor as "the totality of civilisation values - cultural, social and political - which characterises the black people,"⁴⁰ was without doubt a legitimate and positive phenomenon concerned as it was with a search for black dignity and an assertion of self-pride but

where this important philosophical and cultural movement exposed its own contradictions and hence invited criticism was in its latter-day emotionalism. This emotionalism is summarised in Senghor's argument that the black man is differentiated from the whites by his intuitive reasoning: "I feel therefore I am".⁴¹

This emphasis on intuition led in Jean Paul Sartre's view to a kind of "anti-racist racism"⁴² and as Gerhard Grohs observes, it also led to several ambiguities.⁴³ Soyinka's indifference towards negritude emerges from an awareness of these ambiguities. Equally responsible perhaps is the fact that he is from an Anglophone country. While Francophone countries were overtaken by negritude, their Anglophone counterparts were less enthusiastic. Ezekiel Mphahlele explains:

It is significant that it is not the African in British-settled territories - a product of 'indirect rule' and one that has been left in his cultural habitat - who readily reaches out for his traditional past. It is rather the assimilated African, who has absorbed French culture, who is now passionately wanting to recapture his past ... he clearly feels he has come to a dead-end in European culture.⁴⁴

Ṣoyinka may not have embraced his cultural past with desperation yet he demonstrated a strong awareness of it. In his actions and utterances, he was also very critical of socio-political arrangements. For example, in October 1965, he was detained by the Western Nigerian government for allegedly holding up the Western Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (WNBC). It was said that he sabotaged the post-election victory speech of Chief S.L. Akintola, the then Premier of Western Nigeria; he "went to the studio, seized the tape of the recorded speech and broadcast his own substitute speech condemning the rigging of the election and calling on the people to fight for justice and fairplay".⁴⁵ The case received court hearing in December 1965 and, even though Ṣoyinka was discharged and acquitted, it seems such a romantic intervention in the politics of the period is not beyond his character.

From August 1967 to October 1969, Ṣoyinka was again detained by the Nigerian Federal Government for allegedly collaborating with the secessionist leader, Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu, to fragment the Nigerian body politic. Those who are familiar with Ṣoyinka's role during the Nigerian civil war

and his blunt condemnation of the dictatorial temperament of the Gowon administration, before and during the civil war, would easily admit that the treason charge which was slapped on him was merely a diversionary stratagem. The truth is that the Gowon administration capitalised on Soyinka's unsolicited interventions in the political chess-game of that period and used the detention as a means of reminding him that there were limits to his Prometheanisms in a near-fascist political context.

Nevertheless, Soyinka has remained critical of dictatorship wherever it manifests. After his release in 1969, he re-affirmed his belief in the supremacy of humanism. "The man", he said, "dies in all who keep silent in the face of tyranny",⁴⁶ and since then, he has maintained this credo with impressive consistency. In Africa, his indictments of tyrants like Kamuzu Banda of Malawi, Macias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea, Jean-Baptiste Bokassa of the Central African Republic, Mobutu Sese Seko of Congo Kinshasa and Idi Amin of Uganda, have been particularly unsparing and unwavering.

In A Play of Giants, as in Opera Wonyosi and Kongi's Harvest, he paints these tyrants in unflattering colours and describes them contemptuously as "supermen", "grotesqueries",

"certified psychopath" and "a parade of Miracle men ... Giants, Dwarfs, Zombies, the Incredible Anthropophagi, the original Genus Survivanticus (alive and well in defiance of all scientific explanations)".⁴⁷ To state that these tyrants have been indifferent to Soyinka's criticisms is to misconceive the tyrant's mode of operation which essentially involves either the censorship or the murder of those who express dissatisfaction with him and his programmes.

Soyinka narrowly escaped death during his detention, but he has not always been completely lucky with censorship. In 1988, for example, three of his plays - The Trials of Brother Jero, The Lion and the Jewel and Kongi's Harvest - were banned in Malawi. The plays, it was alleged, "fell foul of the political, cultural and religious tastes of the East African country". The chairman of the Malawi censor board was reported to have stated, in addition, that "Soyinka was a bad man who has been chased out in his own country".⁴⁸ Need we repeat the obvious and state that the reason for this censorship lied elsewhere, precisely in Kamuzu Banda's hatred of free expression and critical realism? Twenty-one years earlier, Soyinka had written that

At no stage was a level of suppression reached comparable to what existed in Ghana before Nkrumah's fall or exists now in Malawi, where a paranoid has successfully muzzled any hope of expression. 49

Is it not likely that the censorship of Soyinka's plays in Malawi is also, at bottom, a reaction to his condemnation of the Malawian government, even though the reaction seems to be coming twenty-one years after the event?

If governments and ideological cabals have been intolerant of Soyinka, some of his own colleagues and contemporaries have even been more so. Chief among them is Chinweizu, a famous Nigerian literary critic. In several publications,⁵⁰ this critic assails Soyinka on nationalist grounds and argues that he is a prodigal and an impostor, that is, a Euro-modernist writer parading as a Pan-African. Chinweizu says Soyinka, to worsen his case, writes in recondite, abstractionist images which render him inaccessible and therefore irrelevant to the African context. Chinweizu was, instructively, the leading voice of dissent in Africa when the Nobel Prize in literature was awarded to Soyinka in 1986.⁵¹

Equally noteworthy is J.P. Clark's purported malicious treatment of Soyinka in the late sixties. In The Man Died,

Soyinka alleges that while he was in prison, Clark went about circulating the rumour that he was suffering from chronic syphilis, besides; Clark informed his public that

Soyinka is the perpetual dramatist who insists on a starring role in every drama of his own manufacture. 52

The delineation of the foregoing has become necessary in order to reveal the extent to which Soyinka, in the discharge of his self-assigned duty as the conscience of his society, has had to contend with several censorious attempts to impugn his integrity. By and large, Soyinka has always managed to circumvent the dangers of envy and jealousy; through the adoption of a combative stance, luck, hardwork and the redoubtable goodwill of his admirers, he has always managed to emerge unscathed and his reputation has remained as stable as a trivet.

Two events have been particularly momentous in his career - his detention between 1967 and 1969, and the Nobel Prize in Literature which he won in 1986.

Before his detention, Soyinka was already known as a writer but the incident enhanced his popularity and focussed

greater literary attention on him. Critics, scholars and journalists all over the world decried his incarceration and demanded his immediate release. His works were re-considered and the world became more aware of his genius but the overriding importance of the experience lies in its impact on Soyinka's career and creativity. Instead of overwhelming him, it sharpened his sensibility and rendered him more critical and more unsparing of histo-political configurations. "Whatever I believed in before I was locked up", he told journalists on his release, "I came out a fanatic in those things".⁵³

Soyinka's detention may have sharpened his sensitivity but even more crucial, perhaps, is his own native iconoclasm. Like Synge before him, Soyinka is unable to tolerate human folly of whatever kind, like him, too, he desecrates the orthodoxies of his age and subjects them to an intensive diagnosis; underlying his plays is the moral that if man does not overhaul his systems and reevaluate his ways, he may never succeed in his attempts to become the master of his own fate. But, like all artists whose sensibilities are far above the collective intelligence of their age, Soyinka is not heeded in his warnings.

Any discussion of Soyinka, since 1986, would be incomplete without a reference to the Nobel Prize in Literature which he won that year. Equally germane is the effect which the prize has had on him and his career.

Apart from a few voices of dissent, typified by a certain anonymous Iranian and the Nigerian Chinweizu, the award of the Nobel Prize to Soyinka was generally endorsed and this latter reaction seems, in our view, to be judicious. An examination of the claims of the dissenters reveal the influence of an infamous fallacy namely the fallacy of arguing to the wrong point. They do not seem to advance any cogent reason why the Nobel Prize should not have been awarded to Soyinka beyond the dramatisation of the spleen and the prejudices of their authors.

In the December 1986 issue of Kayhan-e-Farhangi, an Iranian journal, the Iranian mentioned above wrote the following in the form of a letter to the editor:

Let us not forget that the Nobel Prize has traditionally been awarded to a select group of people—certainly not those who have distanced themselves from Western imperialism. Need I remind your readers that Soyinka is a Protestant who sided against his Muslim brothers during the Biafran war? He was also imprisoned during the same period as a traitor. Moreover, as a writer

he has turned away from the traditions of his own people: instead of Yoruba or Arabic, a language accessible to a larger segment of the population of the African continent, he has chosen to write in English. 54

Chinweizu is even more contemptuous. Commenting on Soyinka and the Nobel Prize, he says;

I thought that his works and the Nobel Prize deserve each other and for those of us who hold that the Nobel Prize is an undesirable prize in Africa and who also find most of Wole's works unreadable I thought from that position that his getting the Nobel would be a case of the undesirable honoring the unreadable. 55

The fallacy in the foregoing claims is patent enough and it is representative, at a broader level, of the usual treatment which Soyinka receives from his less sympathetic critics. In the hands of these critics, Soyinka has always been a victim of misdirected ardour and sadism but in the specific case of the Nobel, their spleen did not detract from the significance of the prize.

The prize brought Soyinka unprecedented publicity. Several journals, periodicals and newspapers devoted special editions to him and the prize.⁵⁶ The Nobel Prize has certainly

conferred a celebrity status on him but, examined closely, the prize turns out to be a Janus-phenomenon, a self-contradicting event which at once promises good and its opposite. Granted that it has brought Soyinka popularity and honour, it has also, on the contrary, turned out to be a source of embarrassment and, in certain instances, it tends to subvert the importance which it conferred on Soyinka and prove deleterious to his dignity as a writer and as an individual. Hence, Soyinka complained that

In a sense the prize has been a nuisance because it's created far more exposure and far more demand than I'm prepared to handle. 57

The prize has been a nuisance in more senses than one. Beyond exposing Soyinka and imposing great demands on him, it has made critics more exacting towards him, they are now less sympathetic and more unlikely to overlook his shortcomings. Commenting on the uncomplimentary reviews which Soyinka's production of Death and the King's Horseman, in New York, in 1967, received from New York critics, Obafemi Ilesanmi explains:

... the Nobel (sic) Prize he won has exalted the way critics chose to look at Soyinka's work. With the prize, the critics tend to be more demanding and less forgiving towards him. The criticisms he got away with as a new playwright when his plays The Strong Breed and The Trials of Brother Jero were produced at Greenwich Mews Theatre, New York in 1964, would not be overlooked now that he has won the greatest literary prize in the world. He would be expected now to break a new ground in every new work of his own manufacture. William Golding, the British Novelist and also a Nobel Prize winner also went through this experience. His new novel, "The Papermen" published shortly after he won Nobel Prize (sic) was unfairly described by Newsweek magazine as "cracks in the Nobel House" 58

The emergent less forgiving attitude of many literary critics towards Soyinka is extended at a popular level by an equally less sympathetic assessment of him by the public. Notable in this regard is Chinua Achebe's complaint in 1989, about those he described as Soyinka's "hangers-on". He complained that Soyinka is surrounded by too many hangers-on and praise-singers who parade him as the leader of Nigerian literature; but, as far as he knows, the winning of the Nobel Prize does not make anyone the "Ashiwaju of Nigerian Literature". 59

But more largely responsible for the public criticisms of Soyinka since he won the Nobel Prize is his acceptance of

the national award that was conferred on him by the Babangida administration and his subsequent appointment by the same administration as the Chairman of the Nigerian Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC). Public reactions to these two incidents are, as expected, polarised.

On one hand are those who condemn Soyinka and argue that his friendship with the government signals the end of his radicalism and also casts doubts on his much-avowed anti-establishmentarianism; strongly opposed to this view are those who insist that the acceptance of a national honour and a national assignment is not enough to convert Soyinka into a sycophant. The ire of the former category was further provoked when Soyinka publicly declared his support for the Babangida administration.⁶⁰ The result is a series of aggressive and counter-aggressive articles in Nigerian newspapers and campus magazines.

Bode Sowande articulates the thoughts of the aggressors in an "Open Letter to Wole Soyinka" in the Vanguard of May 5, 1988. He tells Soyinka, inter alia, that

In the 'Wonyosi' social circles that you now frequent, wining and dining, they are making you wear the Nobel Award like a chieftaincy title. And those of us who hold you dear feel disgusted as you are translating yourself through the opulence of the system into a common partisan politician. Is the poet in you dying? Is the partisan politician in you rising? 61.

Gani Fawehinmi, a frontline Nigerian lawyer, makes similar allegations in a more indignant and blunt manner:

I have always had a lot of respect for Soyinka but on this, I disagree with him. The way he fraternized with this government. In the first place, even this government did not recognize Wole Soyinka until he was internationally recognized. And I am sad that Wole Soyinka should be with this government ... This is a government that is being accused of murder and yet it is comfortable to Soyinka. I cannot understand. I have had a great respect for Soyinka. But because of his involvement in the affairs of this government, I am sorry Soyinka has lost a substantial part of that respect. 62

Several sympathisers have written in defence of Soyinka. Writing in the National Concord of Tuesday, April 26, 1988, Abdu Aliyu congratulates Wole Soyinka on his appointment as Chairman of the Federal Road Safety Corps. He also defends him against some of his critics. Says he,

the great concern you have all along been showing over the situation of our road transport is consoling enough for us to know that somebody of your calibre keenly appreciates the tragedy of our road transportation which has reached a calamity proportion... 63

Otuka Anyasi, described as a Trustee of the Automobile Club of Nigeria, complains that the "nibbling" over Soyinka's acceptance of the chairmanship of the FRSC "seems to be going to a ridiculous extent". He argues that

Soyinka deserves a pat on the back for seizing the opportunity to further an unselfish cause that has been dearest to his heart for decades.

We don't know what the fuss is all about. 64

Soyinka himself has upbraided his critics and reaffirmed his freedom to lead his life precisely the way he deems fit without capitulating to the whims and caprices of any interest group be they political, literary or religious.⁶⁵ It would be pointless to rehash the entire controversy here⁶⁶ but it appears to the present writer that the various anxieties that have been expressed about Soyinka's position and attitudes since he won the Nobel Prize, in spite of their phosphorescent and abusive temperament, are not totally unreasonable.

They indicate the scope of Soyinka's popularity and further reveal the fact that the public has a fixed conception of what his role and personality is and/or should be; a sudden change in behaviour is therefore immediately considered heretical. These anxieties and the issues which they generate are largely ethical and, though they grant the critic a fuller understanding of his subject-matter, the critical assessment of the writer and his works does not depend entirely on them. It would be necessary, however, to examine an ancillary observation which holds sway in back-door discussions of Soyinka and the Nobel Prize. It is assumed in this respect that the prize may render Soyinka complacent and besides, at fifty plus, he may have already reached his literary menopause.

These assumptions are suspect. Our suspicion is that the Nobel Prize may not make Soyinka complacent and besides, the question of age should not arise. Available statistics on the phenomenology of creativity confirm that creativity is not a function of age. Conrad, Shaw and Housman wrote for as long as they lived. Hardy was still active at eighty-five. Doughty was already sixty before he started writing

poetry. Sophocles and Lady Gregory wrote their first major works at the age of fifty. Any reason why Soyinka should become senile at fifty plus? None, to the best of our knowledge. The truth, as Dapo Adelugba puts it, is that "Wole Soyinka has yet a lot to create, to write, to do."⁶⁷

The allegation that the Nobel Prize has compromised Soyinka's radical stance is also unfounded. Witness some of his recent writings. In such essays as "At the touch of a button",⁶⁸ "Power and Creative Strategies",⁶⁹ "Mad dogs and Peppersoup",⁷⁰ "Proscription and Dialogue: A simple choice"⁷¹ and "The Fifth Horseman",⁷² it is evident that Soyinka is still active as a writer. Also noteworthy are other post-Nobel publications by Soyinka such as Isara, Mandela's Earth and other Poems and The Search.

In conclusion, it must be stated that, even if Soyinka had not won the Nobel Prize, his place in the literary pantheon would still have been assured. With his gift for words, his mastery of the fine points of literature, and the fathomlessness of his mind, he is bound to hold his own as a writer at all times. "And it is more striking when you take into consideration the fact that when he started he had no models".⁷³

When he returned to Nigeria in 1960 after a six-year sojourn in Leeds (where he studied at the University of Leeds and obtained a B.A. (Honours) degree in 1957) and in London, where he lived variously as a teacher, bartender, cook, singer, actor, playreader and writer, what existed on the Nigerian literary scene were the plays of James Ene Henshaw. While these plays are commendable at the level of effort, they leave much to be desired at the level of achievement; largely imitative of European models as they are, they could not serve as true models for the establishment of an indigenous literary tradition, but Soyinka, with the collaboration of his colleagues in "The 1960 Masks" and later, the Orisun Theatre, succeeded in creating a foundation even if a modest one, for the Nigerian theatre of the future.

He deserves comparison, in this respect, with J.M. Synge who is justly regarded as one of Ireland's most accomplished dramatists. Taken together, both of them are kindred spirits, They share similar traits as individuals and as writers; they are products of similar cultural and literary backgrounds and they are further unified by a sameness of purpose. At the heart of their works is a concern with

the destiny of man in a world that seems to be shot through with nihilistic affirmations and the dread of impending apocalypse. They both deploy cultural and mytho-historical codes for the re-affirmation of humanism and the delineation of the means through which man can lessen the heavy burdens which fate seems to have imposed on him.

C.G. Jung writes that

The man who speaks with primordial images speaks with a thousand tongues; he entrances and overpowers, while at the same time he raises the idea he is trying to express above the occasional and the transitory into the sphere of the ever-existing. He transmutes personal destiny into the destiny of mankind, thus evoking all those beneficent forces that have enabled mankind to find a rescue from every hazard and to outlive the strongest night. That is the secret of effective art. 74

That also is the secret of Synge's and Soyinka's significance. Yeats has written, in addition, that "Synge is invaluable to us because he has that kind of intense narrow personality which necessarily raises the whole issue".⁷⁵

Something similar may be said of Soyinka.

Purpose of Study

In the chapters that follow, we propose to examine four of the issues that are thrown up by the personalities and the works of both writers - death, nationalism, language and revolt. It is assumed that these themes would provide a sure platform for a convenient, comparative appreciation of Synge and Soyinka; and that they would, by extension, provide us better insights into the sensibilities, achievements and significance of both writers.

These themes do not in any way exhaust the various possibilities of discussing Synge and Soyinka insofar as they are merely representative. We have chosen them, out of the many themes which presented themselves for consideration, only out of the belief that our study would achieve a sharpness of focus if it concentrates on those areas in which the coincidences between Synge and Soyinka are most striking.

Existing comparative studies of Synge and Soyinka are of the one-perspective variety. In 1972, for example, James Gibbs submitted an M.Litt. dissertation entitled "Drama and Nationalism: A Study of Ibsen, Synge and Soyinka" to the

University of Bristol; eight years later, Atabo Oko submitted a similar kind of dissertation entitled "A Study of Nationalism in the Plays of Wole Soyinka, Derek Walcott and J.M. Synge" to the University of Ibadan in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the M.A. (Theatre Arts) degree. Part of the aim of the present thesis is to show that Synge and Soyinka are similar in more ways than scholars tend to realise.

The four themes under investigation offer insights into Synge's and Soyinka's vision of the human circumstance. Both writers have a broad vision of life which entails an interrogation of man as he contends with the dual circumstances of life and death. This interrogation may lead to an affirmation of values, an act of rebellion or an ambivalent attitude but beneath it all is a humanist resolve.

NOTES

1. See Synge's Preface to his Poems and Translations. John Millington Synge, Plays, Poems and Prose (London and Melbourne: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1988), p. 219.

2. Robert Bierstedt defines "temporocentricism" as the unexamined and largely unconscious acceptance of one's own century, one's own era, one's own lifetime, as the focus to which all other periods of historical time are related, and as the criterion by which they are judged. It is thus the temporal analogue of ethnocentrism. See Robert Bierstedt, "The Limitations of Anthropological Methods in Sociology", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 54, 1948/49, pp.27-28; for a detailed discussion of comparatism see

Isidore Okpewho, "Comparatism and Separatism in African Literature", World Literature Today, Vol. 55, No. 1, Winter 1981, pp. 10-33.

Willfried Feuser, "The Emergence of Comparative Literature in Nigeria", Research in African Literatures, Vol. 11, No.1, Spring 1980, pp. 100-107.

D.S. Izevbaye, "The African Experience of Comparative Literature" S.O. Asein (ed.) Comparative Approaches to Modern African Literature, (Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, 1982), pp. 1-8.

Chukwudi T. Maduka, "Comparative Literature: Concept and Scope", *ibid.*, pp. 9-23.

S. S. Prawer, Comparative Literary Studies: An Introduction (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1973).

Claude Pichois and Andre-M. Rousseau, La Littérature Comparée (Paris: Librairie Armand Collin, 1967), Troisième Edition.

Frederic Loliee, A Short History of Comparative Literature: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day (Translated by M. Douglas Power) (New York/London: Kennikat Press, 1970).

³ Gustave Rudler, Les Techniques de la critique et de l'histoire Litteraires (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923), p. 160.

⁴ D.S. Izevbaye, p. 7.

⁵ Ihab H. Hassan, "The Problem of Influence in Literary History: Notes Towards a Definition", Ronald Primeau (ed.) INFLUX: Essays on Literary Influence (Port Washington, N.Y./ London: Kennikat Press, 1977), p. 36.

⁶ Rene Wellek, "The Concept of Comparative Literature", Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature, II, 1953, pp. 1-2 quoted in Haskell M. Block, "The Concept of Influence in Comparative Literature", Ronald Primeau (ed.) p. 76.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Harry Levin, "La Littérature Comparée: Point de vue d'Outre-Atlantique", Revue de Littérature Comparée, XXVII, 1953, p. 25.

⁹ The expression is borrowed from Eagleton; see Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory: An Introduction (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1986), p. 44.

¹⁰ See note 8.

¹¹ T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent", Ronald Primeau (ed.) pp. 16-17. cf. Harold Bloom, A Map of Misreading (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980). Equally relevant is Bloom's earlier book, The Anxiety of Influence.

¹² Ibid., p. 16.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ See note 5.

¹⁵ Claudio Gullen, "The Aesthetics of literary Influence", Primeau (ed.) pp. 49-73.

¹⁶ See note 9.

¹⁷ Ihab Hassan in Primeau (ed.) p. 42.

¹⁸ Eagleton, p. 138.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ See Martin Wallace, The Irish: How They Live and Work (Great Britain: David and Charles Publishers Ltd., 1972), p. 19.

²¹ See Sean McCann (compiler), The Wit of the Irish (London: Sphere Books Ltd., 1970), p. 93.

²² F.S.L. Lyons, "James Joyce's Dublin", Twentieth Century Studies, No. 4, Nov., 1970: Ireland, p. 16.

²³ W.B. Yeats, Autobiographies (London: Macmillan, 1955), p. 206.

²⁴ J.M. Synge, "Can We Go Back Into Our Mother's Womb?" (1907) quoted in L.P. Curtis Jr., "The Anglo-Irish Predicament", Twentieth Century Studies, No. 4, Nov. 1970, p. 50.

²⁵ Quoted in F.S.L. Lyons, p. 17.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ W.B. Yeats, "In the Municipal Gallery Revisited", quoted in Alan Price, Synge and Anglo-Irish Drama (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1961), pp. 61-62.

²⁸ The phrase is used to describe the derisory image of the Irishman that was prevalent in European and American Literatures and even in some Irish Literature. Examples include:

- (i) Captain MacMorris in Shakespeare's Henry V, ii, 2.
- (ii) Sir Lucius O'Trigger in Sheridan's The Rivals.
- (iii) Tim Haffigan in Shaw's John Bull's Other Island.

The Nationalists also used the term to describe Synge's characters particularly Christy Mahon in Synge's The Playboy of the Western World. For a full description of the image, see Maurice Bourgeois, John Millington Synge and the Irish Theatre (London: Benjamin Blom, 1965), pp. 107-113.

²⁹ Andrew E. Malone, The Irish Drama (Dublin: Benjamin Blom, 1965), p. 302.

³⁰ St. John G. Ervine, Some Impressions of my Elders (New York: Macmillan, 1922), pp. 116, 198-200; quoted in Alan Price, p. 7. Ervine further attacks Synge in his How to Write a Play (London: Allen and Unwin, 1928); here, he says Synge's dialogue is "contrived stuff, withdrawn from reality and made into a pattern, pretty enough, but after a time, tiresome and tedious" (p. 20).

³¹ W.B. Yeats, "The Death of Synge", Dramatis Personae (Great Britain: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1936), p. 128.

³² See Colin Smythe (ed.), Seventy Years: Being the Autobiography of Lady Gregory (Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe Ltd., 1974), p. 484.

³³ The statement is credited to a certain anonymous politician. See Sean McCann, p. 122.

³⁴ W.B. Yeats, Dramatis Personae, p. 138.

³⁵The expression is borrowed from George Bernard Shaw. Commenting on his native Dublin, Shaw said he left Dublin at the age of twenty; "and forty years later (I) have learned from the books of Mr. Joyce that Dublin is still what it was, and young men are still drivelling in slackjawed blackguardism just as they were in 1870." (see "George Bernard Shaw: 1856-1950", Harold Bloom, Martin Price et.al., The Oxford Anthology of English Literature, Vol.1. (New York/London/Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 1539.

³⁶See Synge's Preface to The Playboy of the Western World, J.M. Synge, Plays, Poems and Prose, p. 108.

³⁷Anthony S. Woods, "Synge, J.M.", Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft (eds.) Twentieth Century Authors (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1942), p. 1380.

³⁸Lord Byron, "Don Juan", Harold Bloom, Martin Price et.al. (eds.), p. 318.

³⁹See Wole Soyinka, "The Future of African Writing", The Horn, 4, No 1, 1960, pp. 10-16.

_____, "And After the Narcissist?" African Forum, Vol. 1, No.4, 1966, pp. 53-64.

_____, "The Writer in a Modern African State", L'Afrique Actuelle, 19, June 1967, pp. 5-7; also in Transition, Vol. 6, No.31, June-July 1976, pp. 11-13; Martin Kilson and Wilfred Carley (eds.), The African Reader (New York: Vintage Press, 1970), pp. 135-142; and in Wole Soyinka, Art, Dialogue and Outrage (Ibadan: New Horn Press, 1988). pp. 15-20.

⁴⁰quoted in Walter A.E. Skurnik, "Léopold Sédar Senghor and African Socialism" The Journal of Modern African Studies, vol. 3, No.3, 1965, pp. 350-351.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid, p. 352.

⁴³Gerhard Grohs, "Difficulties of Cultural Emancipation in Africa" The Journal of Modern African Studies Vol. 14, No.1, 1976, pp. 65-78 cf. Abiola Irele, "Negritude or Black Cultural Nationalism" The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 3, No.3, 1965, pp. 321-348.

⁴⁴Ezekiel Mphahlele, The African Image 2nd ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), p. 25.

⁴⁵Oyin Ogunba, The Movement of Transition: A Study of the Plays of Wole Soyinka (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1975), p. 7.

⁴⁶See Wole Soyinka, The Man Died (London: Rex Collings, 1975), p. 13.

⁴⁷_____, A Play of Giants (London and New York: Methuen, 1984), pp. v-x.

⁴⁸Chris Mammah, "Soyinka, Achebe's books banned ... in Malawi", ANA Review, Vol. 4, No. 5, Nov. 1988, p. 24.

⁴⁹Wole Soyinka, "The Writer in a Modern African State" Art, Dialogue and Outrage, p. 19.

⁵⁰See Chinweizu, "Prodigals, Come Home", Okike, 4, 1973, Chinweizu et.al., "Towards the Decolonization of African Literature", Okike 6: 11-27; 7: 65-81; Transition, 48: 29-37, 54-57, 1974-1975.

Chinweizu et al., Towards the Decolonization of African of African Literature, Vol. 1 (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Ltd., 1980).

⁵¹ See for example, Chinweizu, "Afrocentrism and the Perception of the African Literary Heritage", Sunday Vanguard, Lagos, June 5, 1988, pp. 7 and 15.

⁵² Quoted in Wole Soyinka, The Man Died, pp. 290-291.

⁵³ Quoted in Ademola Adedoyin and Innocent Eke, "Rebels Ready to Die; Nigeria's men of conscience", Newswave, Lagos, Sept. 1988, Vol. 2, No. 7, pp. 11-12.

⁵⁴ See Nasrin Rahimieh, "Iranian Reflection on Soyinka", ALA Bulletin, Vol. 13, No. 2, Spring 1987.

⁵⁵ Chinweizu in interview with Alex Tetteh - Larley, "Soyinka on BBC", ALA Bulletin, Vol. 13, No.1, Winter 1987, p.21.

⁵⁶ A few examples would suffice, see:

ALA Bulletin, Vol. 13, No. 2 Spring 1987. This edition contains tributes to Wole Soyinka by Mildred Hill-Lubin (p.2); Edris Makward, "Why not an African Prize?" (pp. 9-10); and a review of "Iranian Reflections on Soyinka" by Nasrin Rahimieh (pp. 10-11).

ALA Bulletin, Vol. 13, No.1, Winter 1987, see "Tributes to Wole Soyinka", pp. 18-26.

ALA Bulletin, Vol. 13, No.1 Winter 1987, see pp. 18-21 for tributes to Soyinka by Henry Louis Gates Jr., George Lang and Tijan M. Sallah.

ALA Bulletin, Vol. 13, No. 3, Summer 1987, see Peter Nazareth, "From Nobel Prize to Noble Challenge", pp. 8-10.

New York Times, Oct. 17, 1986 - reports on Soyinka's Nobel Prize.

Union of African Performing Artists/Union Africaine Des Artistes de Spectacle, Nos. 11-12, Sept. - Dec., 1986: Special Issue on Wole Soyinka.

Nouvelles du Sud, No. 2, 1986: A Special issue on "Wole Soyinka et le theatre africaine.

African Theatre Review, Vol. 1, No. 3, April, 1987: Special issue on Wole Soyinka.

Theatre Forum, No. 1, March, 1987: Special Tribute to Wole Soyinka.

The African Guardian, Lagos, October 30, 1986: "Jewel for the Lion".

West Africa, London, October 27, 1986: "Soyinka's Nobel Prize".

African Concord, London, December, 1986, No. 121: "Exclusive from Stockholm - Wole's moment of honour".

Newswatch, Lagos, December 22, 1986: "Soyinka's finest hour".

Special Conferences have also been organised to celebrate Soyinka's Nobel Prize. A good example is the International Symposium on African Literature co-sponsored by the Federal Government of Nigeria, the French Government, Unesco, and the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) in Lagos, May 1-7, 1988; for commentaries on the conference see

- (i) "Editorial", National Concord, Lagos, May 14, 1988.
- (ii) "Editorial", The Republic, Lagos, May 14, 1988, p. 5.
- (iii) Hugo Odiogor, "Kongi's Harvest of Ideas" Newswave, Lagos, Vol. 2, No. 7, Sept., 1988, pp. 26-27.
- (iv) Michael Awoyinfa, "African Writers Storm Lagos Today to Honour Soyinka" National Concord, Lagos, May 2, 1988, p.5.

From 24th-27th Jan. 1987, KAPO, a Lagos-based performing company produced Soyinka's Kongi's Harvest, in collaboration with the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), "in commemoration", the programme booklet for the production states, "of 1986

Nobel Literature Laureate, Wole Soyinka". The University of Ibadan also organised "A Soyinka Festival" from June 30 - July 4, 1987 and staged Soyinka's Death and the King's Horseman, under the direction of Bayo Oduneye, to mark the occasion.

⁵⁷ Wole Soyinka, in an interview with an American Magazine, Ebony Man, quoted in Obafemi Ilesanmi, "Soyinka and the Broadway critics", The Guardian, Lagos, March 8, 1988, p.11.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Soyinka is said to have replied that he would prefer to be the "Ogbuefi of Nigerian Literature"; for commentaries on the Ashiwaju-Ogbuefi controversy, see Obafemi Ilesanmi, "African literature and the Asiwaju factor", The Guardian, March 6, 1989, p. 8; also see Adebayo Williams, "Alfred Nobel Dismembered," Newswatch, March 20, 1989, p. 38.

⁶⁰ For a broad view of the ensuing controversy, see: Yakubu Mohammed, "Soyinka and Solarin" Newswatch, March 28, 1988, p. 4.

Anthony Orji, "Soyinka, Solarin are in order" The Guardian, March 28, 1988.

Adebayo Williams, "The Autumn of Patriots?" Newswatch, March 28, 1988, p. 54.

Dozie Arinze, "Silencing the Critics" The Guardian, March 21, 1988, p. 8.

Adelani Ogunrinade "Rebels with a Cause" Sunday Sketch, March 20, 1988, p. 11.

Major S.E. Ebhabha (rtd.) "Letter to Wole Soyinka" The Guardian, March 14, 1988, p. 8.

Kole Omotoso, "Working for IBB", The Punch, Feb. 28, 1988, p.13.

Tunde Thompson, "Before the Men Die" The Guardian, March 6, 1988, p. 7.

Abdu Aliyu, "An Open Letter to Wole Soyinka" National Concord, April 26, 1988, p. 3.

Victor Oladokun, "Critics should leave Solarin and Soyinka alone" Sunday Concord, May 1, 1988, p. 8.

Ogonna Agu, "Soyinka won't be left alone" The Guardian, July 6, 1988, p. 13.

Otuka Anyasi, "Soyinka wants to save lives" The Guardian, Sept. 13, 1988, p. 10.

⁶¹ Bode Sowande, "Open Letter to Wole Soyinka", Vanguard May 5, 1988, also in ANA Review, Vol.4, No.5, Nov., 1988, p.18.

⁶² See Gani Fawehinmi, "I am Disappointed in Wole Soyinka" Megastar, Vol. 2, No.6, Lagos, August, 1988, pp. 24-25.

⁶³ Abdu Aliyu, "An Open Letter to Wole Soyinka". National Concord, April 26, 1988, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Otuka Anyasi, "Soyinka wants to save lives" The Guardian, Sept., 13, 1988, p. 10.

⁶⁵ For example, see Wole Soyinka, "The wasted generation: the real wasters", Vanguard, August 15, 22 1988, pp. 8-9; also in ANA Review, Vol. 4, No. 5, November, 1988, p. 19.

⁶⁶ For a comprehensive coverage of the controversy, Times International Vol. 10, No. 49, Lagos, Sept. 13, 1988: "Soyinka - A Harvest of Controversy," pp. 8-14.

⁶⁷ Dapo Adelugba (ed.), Before Our Very Eyes: Tribute to Wole Soyinka (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 1987), p. 5.

⁶⁸ See The Guardian, July 7, 1988, p. 12.

⁶⁹The Punch, May 4, 1988, p. 10.

⁷⁰The Guardian, Jan. 31, 1988, p. 7.

⁷¹The Punch, July 27, 1988, p. 7.

⁷²The Guardian, Feb. 23, 1989, p. 7.

⁷³See Ben Okri, "Soyinka: a personal view", West Africa, 27 October, 1986, p. 2250.

⁷⁴C.G. Jung, Psychological Reflections (Jolande Jacobi (ed.), (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), p. 181.

⁷⁵Quoted in David H. Greene and Edward M. Stephens, J.M. Synge 1871-1909 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), p, 302.

CHAPTER TWO

DEATH IN J. M. SYNGE AND WOLE SOYINKA (THANATOMIMESIS AND THANATODICEA EXAMINED)

Introduction

In this chapter, we propose to show that death, although largely feared and oftentimes ignored, is one of the central issues, and perhaps the most central issue in human experience. All attempts by man to ignore, tame, control and de-emphasize it have always failed and man has had to accept and accommodate the ubiquitous presence of death, both as a concept and as a physical reality, in all aspects of his life.

Death, in spite of, or because of, man's fear of it, has emerged as one of the most discussed subjects in all fields of human endeavour. The arts, for example, confess a long-standing concern with the subject and, in particular, they seem to be interested in the confrontation between man and the humiliating fate of death which seems to hang over his head like the curse of Tantalus.

This concern and interest dates back to the classical period but it has gained greater currency and articulation during the modern period, perhaps because it is during this period, more than before, that the spectacle of death looms

large in the horizon and threatens, more daringly, to inflict pain and anguish on the pages of human history. Most modern writers capture this spectacle and the pathos which is its trademark and turn them into veritable materials of art and, by so doing, they produce a literature whose focus is the opposition between, as Freud would say, thanatos and eros.

Synge and Soyinka are two modern writers whose works express an abiding and unrelenting concern with this opposition and the agony which usually results from it. This chapter, after attempting a general review of death as a concept and as a literary phenomenon, discusses the manifestation of the opposition between thanatos and eros and the character of death-images in the works of both writers.

Theoretical Framework/Literature Review

It would seem appropriate to begin our discussion with a definition of the concept of death but such a task we must state is immensely problematic. The failure of the various attempts which have been made to define death bears witness to this fact. What exists despite all these attempts are a

variety of definitions which tend to contradict themselves, confuse the researcher and produce fresh complications. The point, put bluntly, is that no comprehensive and generally accepted definition of death exists.

This is due, in part, to the general capriciousness of words, a fact which has always rendered the definition of any word inadequate and which, in addition, has compelled several scholars to base their discourse on the convenient but barely adequate definitions that are offered by the dictionary. It has also been difficult to define death because of the word's own peculiar enigmatism.

This is perhaps why Georg Feuerstein asserts with a pontifical touch that "death cannot be truly met with meaning or any of man's symbol systems. Death defies meaning".¹ Robert Kastenbaum and Ruth Aisenberg throw more light on the problem when they opine that "Death has more than one meaning, context is important".² Kastenbaum and Aisenberg's position seem to be more circumspect than Feuerstein's; the point needs to be made, however, that context as it relates to meaning is usually varied and mutable. Even though it may enhance our understanding of the concept of death, it may not solve all

the semantic problems which the concept may generate from one context to another.

In all, it seems logical to argue, as C.S. Jones has done, that

it would be foolhardy in our present state of knowledge to attempt (and futile to expect) a simple, precise, adequate definition of death or of life as biological phenomena.³

It would not be foolhardy, however, to state that the definitions of death, though numerous and contradictory like the voices of Babel, have always followed two prominent, oppositional directions which seem to be well-articulated in Kenneth Burke's "Thanaptosis for Critics: A Brief Thesaurus of Deaths and Dying".⁴ The thrust of Burke's essay is that death could be conceived either as a positive value or as a negative value.

This interpretation runs through most of the writings on the subject. Interpreted as a negative value, death appears as an ill-intentioned force whose primary aim is to destroy man, decimate nature and make a mockery of the whole business of living. It is regarded as anti-human and retrogressive and as irrational and unfeeling, in fact, so irrational and unfeeling that it can neither be persuaded by reason nor passion. Death, inso facto, is one aspect of reality

over which man has been unable to assert his much-avowed supremacy. It is the ever-active extinguisher which has and will perpetually snuff life out of man. As Kastenbaum and Aisenberg put it, "death is what it always has been and will be: the final, inevitable cessation of life".⁵ As Douglas C. Kimmel states, "death is the final point on an individual's lifeline";⁶ for M.H. Nagy, it is the final destiny of every living being,⁷ and as Edwin S. Schneidman concludes, death is the autocratic Fuhrer who "orders a stop to (the) fascinating conversation-within-the self".⁸

Implicit in all the statements above is the conclusion that death is a negation of life. Kastenbaum and Aisenberg, Douglas C. Kimmel, M.H. Nagy and Edwin S. Schneidman all seem to agree that death is the heavy burden which man has been carrying around like the load of Sisyphus and which, to all intents and purposes, has turned his life into a lachrymose joke.

As "the final, inevitable cessation of life", death puts a limit to man's epicurean and heroic drives and reminds him of the futility of his attempts to establish himself and get as much from life as his greed can permit, as "the final destiny of every living being", death is one debt which man

cannot fail to pay. As the end of "the fascinating conversation-within-the self", death redefines man's conception of time and futurity and shows him that he is not the invincible superman he has always considered himself to be. By reducing man to dust, death humiliates man and reminds him of the common fate which he shares with all living things. To worsen the matter, death is no respecter of persons and it has absolutely no regard for degrees, class, sex or any of the patterns of decorum which man has erected in a bid to assert the power of his intelligence. As Kastenbaum and Aisenberg readily add, "death tends to level the distinctions between specialists and everybody else".⁹

The negative conception of death, as broadly defined up to this point, is no doubt popular as evidenced by the fact that man generally tends to receive news of death not with joy and satisfaction but with grief, deprivation, anguish and lamentation.

Equally popular, on the contrary, is the conception of death as a positive force in human experience. Death, in this respect, is regarded not as the cessation of life but as a continuation of life. It is seen as a force which complements existence and which deserves to be received not with

grief but with joy. Interpreted thus, death is assumed to be the mid-wife of life; without it, life would have been deprived of one of its most vital aspects. This is the position that is maintained and enthusiastically promoted, albeit in different ways, by Da Free John,¹⁰ Abd-ru-shin,¹¹ Douglas Kimmel,¹² Franz Rozenzweig,¹³ Sigmund Freud,¹⁴ C.S. Jones,¹⁵ and W.E.D. Evans.¹⁶

Da Free John argues that death is an inevitable aspect of life and it is certain that man would die no matter how well he struggles to avoid death. Instead of wasting his resources on a futile attempt to escape death, man, Da Free John opines, should try to "understand" death and this understanding, he says, would lead man to liberation, perfect self-transcendence and God-realization. Da Free John upholds this hypothesis in three separate books, namely: The Knee of Listening, The Enlightenment of the whole Body and Easy Death. He summarises his position in the last one where he concludes, very tersely, that "Death is a human need".¹⁷

The importance of death to human life also engages the attention of Abd-ru-shin in In the Light of Truth, The GRAIL MESSAGE. Abd-ru-shin notes that death, except for birth, is

perhaps the most important event in life. He argues further that birth and death are two closely related phenomena and death is not a termination of life, as many people tend to think; instead, it is a form of birth and a new beginning. Abd-ru-shin explains:

The process of dying in itself is nothing but birth into the Ethereal world, similar to the process of birth into the Gross Material world.¹⁸

And because death is "nothing but birth", it is improper to weep whenever someone dies. If people would not rejoice at the onslaught of death, they should at least refrain from weeping and wailing. Complete silence, Abd-ru-shin instructs, should reign in the chamber of death; any form of noise, he says, would hinder the "birth into the Ethereal world".

Abd-ru-shin's position seems to be representative of the position of most mystical organisations. Most, if not all, mystical organisations see death not as the end of life but as a new beginning in which the human soul travels to higher planes and undergoes the processes of transmigration, purification and eventual reincarnation. At the base of this mystical principle, upheld, for example, by the Eckankar, AMORC, Hare Krishna and the Johannine Daist Communion is the

principle of metempsychosis which, in a layman's term, emphasizes the imortality of the human soul.

A similar principle informs the African notion of death. In Africa, it is assumed that the dead do not really die; rather, they are regarded as felt presences and consequently, the living relate to them as if they were still alive. This is the reasoning behind ancestral worship as in masquerade rituals and also, behind the pouring of libations for the dead. Put differently, Africans see death not as a termination of life but merely as a transition to another realm. Death, in their views then, is part of the process of being. Commenting on this, J.S. Mbiti observes that the dead in Africa is a "living dead":

The living dead is a person who is physically dead but alive in the memory of those who knew him in his life as well as being alive in the world of spirits. So long as the living dead is thus remembered, he is in the state of personal immortality. This personal imortality is externalized in the physical continuation of the individual through procreation, so that the children bear the traits of their parents or progenitors. From the point of view of the survivors, personal immortality is expressed or externalized in acts like respecting the departed, giving bits of food to them, pouring out libation and carrying out instructions given by them while they lived or when they appear. 19

Thus, Africans see death not as the termination of life but as its continuation. Writing on death among the Yorubas, for example, Sola Adebajo and Bolaji Idowu observe that "death to the Yoruba is a debt which must be paid".²⁰ A similar conclusion, though cast in a different light, is arrived at by Sigmund Freud in his own contributions to the discussion of death.

In such essays as "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death", "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" and "Civilization and its Discontents", Freud argues that death is crucial to life. In an epigrammatic statement quoted by Lawrence Langer, for example, he says:

To endure life remains, when all is said,
the first duty of all living beings
If you would endure life, be prepared for
death. 21

This view receives further expansion in Freud's "Civilization and its Discontents" where he explains that the human personality is composed of two instincts, namely, thanatos and eros. These instincts, Freud reveals, are crucial for the survival of the individual and the society. Thanatos is the instinct of death and destruction; it represents man's unconscious craving for oblivion and

extinction. Eros is the instinct of life; it refers to man's life-promoting sensibilities, his epicurean tendencies and his desire to live and assert himself.

The human personality is sustained by the continuous interaction and tension between these two fundamental instincts and, in the final analysis, it is the death instinct that dominates because man, Freud says, has an abiding urge to return to the old, pristine state of inaction and oblivion - the state, as it were, of death.²²

The views of C.S. Jones and W.E.D. Evans, situated as they are within scientific contexts, complement the points that have already been made by Da Free John, Abd-ru-shin, Kimmel, J.S. Mbiti, Sola Adebajo, Bolaji Idowu, Rozenzweig and Freud. C. S. Jones explains that death, from a biological point of view, is not a cessation of the metabolic process; it is, instead, an essential part of metabolism. Life involves a continuous process of dying; for an individual to live, several aspects of his body must die. The life of an organism depends on this continuous symbiosis of life and death. The human skin, for example, has an outer layer of dead cells which protect the body against anti-bodies. Without all these death processes, man, C.S. Jones affirms, cannot live.

W.E.D. Evans adds that, even when a person dies, life does not stop. The dead body, he says, is involved in a series of chemical processes of alteration and decomposition and this indicates that death, indeed, is not the cessation of activity.

From a compendium of the various views on death reviewed above, it seems evident that the attitude of man to death all through the ages has been ambivalent. Man has never been sure in his mind whether to see death as a friend or as an enemy, as a gain or as a loss and this ambivalence derives largely from the inability, as earlier stated, to understand the actual meaning of death.

This, at least, is the conclusion that emerges from an academic interrogation of the subject; but a slight adjustment of the academic lens and a peep at the reality that exists outside the library and tomes should reveal that the negative conception of death has been more dominant in human societies. Man may be puzzled by the enigmatic personality of death but he seems to be certain, in his mind, that death, which signals the disintegration of his body and the end of his dreams, is not a value that he should willingly seek. Man, therefore, sees death as an intruder and an enemy; and because death

insists on intruding without any invitation and because it has the unqualified strength of imposing itself, man fears it.

This is the argument that is advanced by Gregory Zilboorg,²³ C.H. Wahl,²⁴ David Lester,²⁵ Herman Feifel,²⁶ and Herbert Marcuse.²⁷ These scholars argue that man, right from the time when he was a mere homo faber (a tool-maker) up till the present when he seems to have become so sensationally technologized, has always been afraid of death. He has always lacked the courage to confront death with a bold face and a steel heart. Instead, the spectacle of death has always intimidated him and he has always fled in mortified terror. The fear of death cuts across human societies and no race or class may assume immunity to it. Gregory Zilboorg writes, in a tone that is fairly representative, that "No one is free of the fear of death".²⁸

This is true, although there have been attempts to assert the contrary. Johannes Meringer,²⁹ Phillipe Aries,³⁰ Georg Feuerstein³¹ and Jacques Choron³² have tried, for example, to show that primitive and medieval men were fascinated by the idea of death. They observe that the cultural history of the ancients reveals an indifference to the much

advertised terror of death. Arnold Gessel and F.L. Ilg,³³ Irving Alexander and Arthur M. Adlerstein,³⁴ Sylvia Anthony,³⁵ Gregory Rochlin,³⁶ and M. Nagy³⁷ disclose that children are insulated from the fear of death while J.M.A. Munnich,³⁸ Wendell Swenson³⁹ and Simone de Beauvoir⁴⁰ insist that old people, at least a larger percentage of them, do not entertain the fear of death. They tend, as Munnich's study of one hundred Dutch elders reveals, to receive death with Socratic stoicism;⁴¹ they see it as an "anticipated farewell",⁴² as an acceptable alternative to a life that is fast losing its significance.

The findings of these scholars should be received with caution. Their discovery of indifference to death among certain classes of the society may be valid within its own limits, but it is doubtful whether it can be applied at a universal level. The indifference of children is understandable on the grounds that a child may not be old enough, as Gessel and Ilg admit, to understand the implications of death. But for the primitive and the medieval man and the aged, the indifference to death seems in our view, to be a mere defense mechanism, a psychological reaction which has little or no impact on outside reality apart from the false confidence which it gives its

authors. When subjected to a close interrogation and threatened by empiricism, this smug attitude is likely to collapse and crumble.

The point that is being urged, then, is that the fear of death is universal. Man, it seems, has never found any use for the wisdom of Plato and Epicurus and the injunction of Caesar. Plato⁴³ argues that true reality exists only in the extra-sensual context and since death is a trip to this context and a meeting with true reality, man should not fear death. Epicurus, a typical materialist,⁴⁴ opines that death should be de-ethicalized; it is simply the end of all sensations and man should not fear it. Caesar, in a dialogue with Calphurnia in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, equates the fear of death with cowardice. He says

Cowards die many times before their deaths:
 The valiant never taste of death but once
 Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
 It seems to me most strange that man should fear,
 Seeing that death, a necessary end,
 Will come when it will come. 45

Man, contrary to these recommendations, fears death and it is indeed very instructive that Philippe Aries, one of the scholars who outline instances of familiarity with death among

the ancients, eventually admits, a few pages after his initial statement, that

despite their familiarity with death, the Ancients feared being near the dead and kept them at a distance The world of the living had to be kept separate from that of the dead. 46

If the ancients were pathologically thanatophobic, the moderns are doubly so; if the ancients made death and its associative values a taboo, modern man has gone a few steps further. Modern man seems to fear death with schizophrenic obsession. He has also expressed the most frantic exasperation at the prospect of death perhaps because he, more than any of his predecessors, has invested his best resources to ensure a continuous, peaceful, uninterrupted life.

The subject of death remains as before a taboo topic. Feuerstein and Kimmel summarise the situation when they write respectively that

Like sex in Victorian times, death ranks as one of the "unmentionables" of the twentieth century. 47

and

Perhaps the topic of death is an even more sensitive and avoided topic than sexuality is today; in that sense, death may have replaced sex as the taboo topic in our culture. 48

Indeed, the fear of death has been universal and it has pushed man, all through history; to an extreme psychological position which Ernest Becker has aptly summarised as "the denial of death".⁴⁹ Man all through history has designed a series of counterphobic actions with which he seeks to deny and tame death, soften its impact, and reassert his confidence in himself as God's most supreme creation.

This yearning for immortality or the perpetuation of what Gerald Gruman calls the "prolongevity tradition"⁵⁰ could be found among the Taoists of ancient China, the medieval Latin alchemists and among the sixth century esoteric alchemists of Tantrism and Hatha Yoga in India. Perhaps the most concrete example in history has been "the Epic of Gilgamesh"⁵¹ which originated from the Sumerian civilization around 3000 B.C. Gilgamesh, a young Sumerian king, was forced by the death of his comrade to realise the limits of his own mortality. In a desperate attempt to extend those limits, Gilgamesh devised several schemes with which he hoped to evade death but each scheme turned out to be ineffectual and he eventually had to submit to the universal human destiny. The epic illustrates the invincibility of death and man's dogged, albeit futile

attempt to circumvent and reverse that quality.

The Egyptians, like their Sumerian counterparts, engaged in elaborate rituals of embalment and mummification; at bottom, these rituals are nothing more than orchestrated attempts to tame death. Popular among the Americans is the practice of hypothermia or suspended animation or cryonics. Kawada explains the nature and the significance of this practice:

There are reports about Americans who, upon contracting an incurable disease, make provisions for having their still living bodies deep frozen and placed in cold storage in the hope that someday, when a cure for their disease is found, they can be revived and cured. This attempt known as cryonics, is a strong expression of man's longing for immortality. 52

Other forms of man's counterphobic actions include his foisting of a gerontophagic interpretation on death, that is, his assumption that only the aged deserve to die. Further, man tries to avoid contact with death and, to ensure this, he has shifted the responsibility for taking care of the dead to a team of professionals comprising the physician, the nurse, the clergyman and the funeral director or undertakers. The interesting point is that these professionals promote man's self-imposed illusions by adopting hypocritical attitudes and

codes in the discharge of their duties. For example, funeral directors, whom Jessica Mitford has accused of turning the funeral industry into a racketeering operation,⁵³ have invented some euphemistic terms - corpses are called "the loved ones", coffins are "caskets"; hearses become "coaches", the grave is now a "space" and people no longer die, they "expire".

Through the use of these euphemisms and general bureaucratic methodology, funeral directors, like the Sumerians and the Egyptians before them, seek to make death appear less dreadful. But all these counterphobic measures, as in the Epic of Gilgamesh, have always failed and man has discovered that his world is, and would perpetually be ruled by the second law of thermodynamics which, Brillouin says, "points toward death and annihilation".⁵⁴

This probably explains why man, from time immemorial, has, in addition, devoted his entire epistemological structures to an interrogation of the phenomenon of death. Religion, the pristine root of epistemology, originated from thoughts about death. In his Death and its Mysteries, Ignace Lepp argues, for example, that "the whole of christianity is

founded on the mysterious bond that its founder established between death and love".⁵⁵ Philosophy and Psychology, like religion, are also in part, enquiries into the mysteries of death. Socrates once asked: "Is philosophy not the study of death?"⁵⁶ This question can be answered in the affirmative as the careers and the writings of Montaigne, Heidegger and Schopenhauer⁵⁷ eloquently testify. Kastenbaum and Aisenberg opine that "psychology originated in thoughts about death".⁵⁸ This is also true as the writings of Otto Rank and Sigmund Freud⁵⁹ easily reveal.

Theatre and Literature within whose ambience the present study belongs are also part of the attempt by man to grapple with the reality of death. Theatre and Literature afford man the opportunity to fictionalize the mystery of death and appraise it from a distanced perspective. From this distance, man can afford to laugh at himself and subject death to whatever designs his imagination can sprout:

It is an inevitable result of all this that we should seek in the world of fiction; of general literature and of the theatre compensation for the impoverishment of life. There we still find people who know how to die, indeed, who are even capable of killing someone else. There

alone too we can enjoy the condition which makes it possible for us to reconcile ourselves with death - namely, that behind all the vicissitudes of life we preserve our existence intact ...60

Central to theatre and literature, to the former particularly, are thanatomimetic representations of death which are fundamentally a variant of the counterphobic actions earlier discussed. Thanatomimetic representations

are those which are likely to arouse in the perceiver the false impression that he is in relationship with a dead rather than a living organism.

for example,

Every performance of Romeo and Juliet climaxes with the "actual" death of the young lovers, following directly upon the misperception of death. As members of the audience, we know that Juliet is alive while Romeo is perceiving her as dead. A moment later we know that Juliet truly is dead (and Romeo as well). But these deaths are "real" only within the framework of the performance - we do not suppose either that the actors who impersonated Romeo and Juliet have died, or that these famous lovers have died to the world of the theater. They will return for the Sunday matinee.61

To state, as we have just done, that theatre and literature imitate death may amount to sheer pettifoggery since mimesis, of which thanatomimesis is a mere genre, is a given fact of the theatrical and literary experience; but less contentious is the broad generalization that theatre and literary history reveal a general and persistent concern with death. Let us situate this statement in its proper historical contexts.

Such a situationing could begin with the Greek theatre, as a matter of convenience. The Greek theatre was an extension of the Greek cosmogonic patterns to the degree that it was concretely located within those patterns and, in its products, it portrayed those patterns for the benefit of the whole citizenry who looked upon it as one of the core elements of their communal life. Our argument is that death is one of those cosmogonic patterns which the Greek theatre mirrored and discussed. In the tragedies of Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides, death was treated as the ultima ratio of dramatic experience and, in this respect, it functioned not only as an illustration of the place of death in the Greek cosmology, it was also an illustration of the central thesis of Greek

tragedy which, in one sentence, was to establish the ability of man to suffer and endure. It is also instructive that the moment of death in Greek tragedy often coincides with anagnorisis; the moment of epiphany, during which the tragic hero re-evaluates himself, accepts his guilt and moralises about his fate.

The Roman theatre lacked the philosophical inclinations of the Greek theatre and hence, it indulged in rib-cracking ribaldry and gory display; its genius for spectacle is yet to be matched by any other theatre in history. In this theatre, death was divested of the cosmogonic garb with which the Greeks had clothed it and became an integral part of the Roman penchant for horror. Expressed differently, the Romans expressed interest in death not because they wanted to use it to further elicit meaning from their reality but because it gave them the chance to bring horror, bloodshed and grief on to the stage. These were the elements which gave the average Roman a sense of fulfilment and death supplied them in abundance.

Medieval art, in general, was preoccupied with death largely because of the singular centrality of death in the world-view of the period. The medieval world-view was

situated in the Christian philosophy that was enforced by the redoubtable medieval churches. It entailed a rigid mathematical polarisation of after-life into Heaven and Hell and its advocates, namely the priest and the laity, explained that death is either a passport to Heaven or to Hell depending on the moral integrity of the individual. They insisted that only good and Godly individuals would go to Heaven while sinners would go to Hell. Thus, they interpreted death as the wages of sin; they also used it to re-affirm Biblical doctrines.

Throughout this period, there was an increasing pre-occupation with death both as a physical image and as a theological image. Death became the dominant image of communication and the artists, Weber notes,

delighted in contrasting death and the emblems of death with the strenuous ambitions, careless indulgences, vices and follies of everyday life ... in representing the universal power of death, how it carries off rich and poor alike, kings and peasants, wise men and fools, good and bad, old and young, beautiful and ugly. 62

They were also delighted by such details as the dance of death, the triumph of death and the art of death:

Indeed, nothing was more common in artistic productions than the depiction of Death as a person. The Dance of Death was also enacted as a theater piece in a direct form, as well as thinly disguised in burlesque, whose comedy was a fusion of sex and death. 63

In its portrayal of death, the Elizabethan theatre stood mid-way between the classical and the medieval theatre. Like the Greek theatre, it used death as the final conclusion of dramatic action; like the Roman theatre, it brought physical death on to the stage but without the horror for horror's sake mentality that underscored Roman theatre practice; like the medieval theatre, it indulged in undisguised moralization but without the theological pontificality of that theatre. Death in the Elizabethan theatre was closely associated with valour. The simple logic that runs through Shakespeare's tragedies, for example, is that it is noble to die. It is even doubly noble if one dies in the process of defending one's honour. This closeness between death and character engages the attention of Theodore Spencer in her Death and Elizabethan Tragedy. She argues, and we concur, that

The most interesting use of death as part of dramatic technique (if it is correct so to classify it) is the part it plays in the exhibition of character. The brave man, the hero, dies gladly, scorning to fear; the coward dies trembling. 64

During the Italian Renaissance, there was a recurrent use of death-images in the commedia dell'arte which is, incontrovertibly, the most significant theatrical product of that period. McClelland has discussed the nature of these images and he says they are informed by "the Harlequin complex";⁶⁵ that is, death was portrayed in the commedia dell'arte as a dark, mysterious lover, as a double agent of love and death. Under scrutiny, Romantic literature as represented by the poetry of Shelley, Hood, Byron and Keats, the novels of Charles Dickens, Mark Twain and Charlotte Bronte and the plays of Schiller and Goethe also confesses a sustained engagement with the phenomena of death, with express interest in the manner in which it defines the limits of man's Eros. Romanticism was, to a large degree, a celebration of the potentialities of the human imagination and, as a result, romantic writers seem to have evolved the most fanciful personifications of death. Witness the novels of Dickens and the poetry of Shelley.

But modern writers seem to have painted a more fanciful and a more compelling picture of death; in their hands, death has become concretely centred as the central theme of

literature. Hamm in Beckett's Endgame summarises the seriousness of the situation when he states in three telling words, "Outside ... is death".⁶⁶

The main reason for this will be discussed at length in our chapter on modernism and revolt in Synge and Soyinka, but for now it would be sufficient to state that the modern writer's obsession with death is the cumulative effect of the frightening pessimism, economic debilitation and the dehumanization which surround him and which continuously seem to validate the contentions of Darwin, Freud and Nietzsche, the leading apostles of nihilism in the modern world.

The personality of death in modern literature has been discussed at length, and very competently, too, in Alfred Alvarez's The Savage God: A Study of Suicide.⁶⁷ Christian Immo Schneider's The Problem of Death in Herman Hesse,⁶⁸ Leslie Aaron Fieldler's Love and Death in the American Novel,⁶⁹ Lawrence L. Langer's The Age of Atrocity: Death in Modern Literature,⁷⁰ and Garrett Stewart's Death Sentences: Styles of Dying in British Fiction.⁷¹ The conclusion in all these works is that death has become a major song on the lips of modern writers and it is threatening to become the only song

that these writers would sing ad infinitum. In Dostoevsky, Laforgue, Tolstoy, Thomas Mann and Garcia Lorca, to use a few examples, we find good illustrations of the typical attitude of many modern writers to death.

Dostoevsky, to start with, was schizophrenically obsessed with death. He was afraid that he would one day fall into a death-like state and become a victim of premature burial. He therefore made it a practice to leave notes about him before going to sleep. His notes stated that burial should be delayed for five days. This thanatophobia informed his writings and dictated the outlook of his novels. In his widely acclaimed The Brothers Karamazov, for example, Ivan Karamazov, the hero of the novel, feels embittered by the reality of death. In annoyance, he refutes God and accuses him of imposing an unjust death sentence on humanity.

Jules Laforgue, like Dostoevsky, also used his writings to explore and reconcile himself to the invincibility of death.⁷² Throughout the second half of his life, Tolstoy was fascinated and tormented by the prospect of death. He devoted himself to a search for the meaning of life but, everywhere he turned, death presented itself as the sole conclusion to his enquiry.

Embarrassed and flustered, Tolstoy lamented:

As long as I do not know the reason 'why' I cannot do anything, I cannot live... life was meaningless ... there was nothing before me but suffering and actual death, absolute annihilation ... if death was the end, then why continue to strive, to labour, to create? How could men fail to see this and live? 73.

Tolstoy converted this personal obsession with death into art and the seriousness with which he did so is all too apparent in his The Death of Ivan Ilych where, through the experience of Ivan Ilych, he reveals man's attitude towards death. The book is a classic. In it, Tolstoy examines death with sociological and psychological codes and succeeds in producing a book that is useful as a novel and as a reference material. Thomas Mann is right, then, to have argued that

Tolstoy's strongest, most tormenting, deepest and most productive interest has to do with death. It is the thought of death that dominates his thoughts and writing, to such an extent that one may say no other great master of literature has felt and depicted death as he has felt it with such frightful penetration, depicted it so insatiably often. 74

If we substituted Tolstoy's name with Mann's in the above, the statement would remain valid. Mann, deservedly known and respected for his Death in Venice and The Magic Mountain, was also fascinated by death and it is partly for this reason that he is usually described as "the artist of disease", especially as he tends to examine the death-idea through the use of the spectacle of disease, like tuberculosis, for example, in The Magic Mountain.

Death is the pivot of Garcia Lorca's career. It is the unchallenged persona grata in his works and the only reality which his characters see, feel and understand. Pedro Salinas says this is so because death-images are everywhere evident in the Spanish culture and Lorca, a homebred Spaniard, could not have escaped the influence of this culture. The core of Salinas' essay is that Lorca cannot be fully understood without an acknowledgement of the influence of his background on his writings:

Lorca was born in a country that for centuries has been living out a special kind of culture that I call the "culture of death" ... he cannot be understood in his entirety unless we see him set in that tradition of the "culture of death".75

The core of our own argument is that the concern with death in modern literature is usually informed, as we have seen, either by the temperament of the writer or by the extra-literary, cultural reality which informs his writings but whether the concern is philosophical, as in Rainer Maria Rilke, St-Exupery, Sartre and Camus; a Christian humanistic affirmation, as in Julian Green, Graham Greene, Jean Cocteau and Jules Laforgue; an extension of the self, as in Mann, Tolstoy, Hemingway, Dostoevsky and Sylvia Plath; or a reflection of cultural reality, as in Lorca, death in modern literature seems, in our view, to elicit two reactions, namely, irony and revolt.

Charles Glicksberg has discussed the nature and the implications of the former in great detail.⁷⁶ Irony, he says, "is the heartbeat of meaning",⁷⁷ and it has been particularly so in the hands of modern writers who have used it to explain the mystery of death:

The modern literary naturalists, men like Thomas Hardy, Anatole France, Chekhov, Gorky and O'Neill, know, without reference to Freud and his death-instinct, that death must triumph in the end, that all of life in this planet will finally be reduced to inorganic

material. If this tragic sense of life drove a Unamuno into heresy, it drives them to experiment with a wide variety of the forms of irony. 78

The ironist usually concentrates on the opposition between the forces of life and death, man's attempt to establish the former, and the ironic triumph of the latter. In other words, he portrays the ineffectuality of man's attempts to evade death. The analogue of the ironist's vision is the medieval maxim: "in media vite in morte simus" (in the midst of life we are in death), but it must be noted that he neither endorses the supremacy of death nor mocks man's failure to circumvent it; instead, he protests against the pervasiveness of death and arrives at a humanistic resolution.

Revolt, which we say is the second reaction to death in modern literature, is a follow-up to the protest of the ironist. While the ironist is content to admit the ineluctability of death and then protest against it, the rebel, on the contrary, as exemplified by Caligula in Camus' Caligula, Cain, Conrad and the Barnabas Brothers in Shaw's Back to Methuselah and Ivan Karamozov in Tolstoy's The Brothers Karamazov, does not admit anything; he questions, apports blames and seeks

alternatives. He does this, sometimes quietly, oftentimes loudly, depending by and large on the temperament of the writer.

It is ironic that man struggles against death knowing fully well that he would fail. It is also ironic that although he fails, he still continues to struggle. This interplay of irony and revolt receives expression in the plays of Synge and Soyinka and it is the degree to which this is that we examine in the remaining sections of this chapter.

In the preceding pages, we have already attempted a discussion of the available literature on death and in the process, we contended with notions of death from both philosophical and biological perspectives. For the purpose of our analysis, we shall be more philosophical than biological. The biological fact of death can be found in Soyinka's Madmen and Specialists and Synge's Deirdre of the Sorrows.

The philosophical explanation refers to the terror of death, man's multiple attempts to circumvent it and the ironic futility of such attempts. The result is that life appears temporary and man's notions of mortality are re-defined. Our purpose is to investigate how Synge and Soyinka treat the inescapability of death and the statements which this compels them to make about the human fate.

Death in Synge and Soyinka

Writing on the recurrence of death-images in Sylvia Plath's poetry, Margaret Newlin concludes that "not everyone is blessed or cursed with so demonic an obsession".⁷⁹ It remains to be seen whether a writer's pre-occupation with death is a blessing or a curse, as Newlin suggests, but what is certain is that the works of Synge and Soyinka reveal a pre-occupation with "so demonic an obsession".

The central motif in their works is that of characters who, through the assertion of their will-power, seek freedom from the repressive circumstances in which they find themselves. These characters seek life and self-fulfilment, but their efforts are always frustrated by circumstances, as in Requiem for a Futurologist, Madmen and Specialists, A Dance of the Forests, Kongi's Harvest, The Tinker's Wedding, In the Shadow of the Glen and The Playboy of the Western World; by fate, as in Deirdre of the Sorrows, The Strong Breed and Death and the King's Horseman and by nature as in Riders to the Sea and The Swamp Dwellers; and the only prospect which awaits them is death. The irony is that they continue to strive and assert their life-seeking aspirations, in spite of

this prospect, but the more they strive, the closer they move towards the reality of death. Thus, the images of death loom large in the plays of Synge and Soyinka.

In Synge's plays, the characters are either dead like Deirdre and the Naisi brothers in Dierdre of the Sorrows, Uncle Colm in When the Moon Has Set, Patch Darcy in In the Shadow of the Glen, Bartley, Michael, Stephen, Patch, Shawn, "Sheamus and his father and his own father again"⁸⁰ in Riders to the Sea, or pretending to be dead like Dan Burke in In the Shadow of the Glen and Old Mahon in The Playboy of the Western World, or likely to die like Maurya in Riders to the Sea, Peggy Cavanagh and Dan Burke in In the Shadow of the Glen, Mary Byrne in The Tinker's Wedding, the Douls in The Well of the Saints; Old Mahon in The Playboy of the Western World and Conchubor in Deirdre of the Sorrows.

In Soyinka's A Dance of the Forests, the dead and the living are brought together in an epic drama which points towards gloom and death. In The Swamp Dwellers the characters live under the dark shadows of the swamp and the city, two central symbols which are at once the sources of life and death. In The Strong Breed, the community rejuvenates itself through the death of a carrier. In The Road, Professor seeks

to cheat the fear of death by "foreknowledge", and, in his search, he discovers that "the word may be found companion not to life, but Death"⁸¹ at the point "where ascent is broken and a winged secret plummets back to earth".⁸² In The Bacchae of Euripides, two contradictory forces are brought together and the opposition that arises between them is resolved only through the solution of death.

Kongi's Harvest, as Eldred Jones rightly points out, is a "representation of the clash between the life-giving forces and death-producing forces".⁸³ The philosophy of As in Madmen and Specialists embodies the concepts of life and death; it is instructive that the play ends with death - an event which, in our view, emphasizes the futility of the life-seeking aspirations of As. In Death and the King's Horseman, "the dramaturgical accent", says Femi Osofisan, is now "on the all-pervading personality of Iku, Death itself, celebrated like a primordial entity".⁸⁴ Requiem for a Futurologist derives its comedy and gusto from the boldness with which it explores the idea of death. A Play of Giants is peopled by agents of death and the play ends, perhaps appropriately, with the threat of death.

The obsession with death in the works of Synge and Soyinka is not limited to their plays, as we have shown here; it is also evident in their prose and poetry. Take Synge's The Aran Islands, for example. Explicit in the whole book, especially in Part Four, is Synge's concern about the fate of death which awaited the Aran islanders whom he visited regularly between 1898 and 1902. "Death", Synge notes, is "the fate to which they are all doomed". They are a colourful and lively set of people, capable of gaiety and desirous of "joie de vivre" but these life-seeking propensities are always interrupted by the spectre of death. Synge's preoccupation with death also stands out in his poetry. Witness "On An Anniversary", "To the Oaks of Glencree", "A Question", "I've thirty Months" and "Epitaph".⁸⁶

Soyinka's obsession with death, particularly the perpetual opposition between it and its opposite, is evident in his collections of poetry, especially in Poems from Prison, A Shuttle in the Crypt and Idanre and Other Poems, in poems like "Death in the Dawn", "In Memory of Segun Awolowo", "A First Deathday", "Abiku", "Post Mortem" and "Idanre". His novels, The Season of Anomy, The Interpreters and even the

autobiographical Aké, also alternate between the spectacles of life and death; it is not an accident, for instance, that Egbo in The Interpreters talks of being drawn to "this place of death".⁶⁷

Why the obsession with death in the writings of Synge and Soyinka? Abdalla Metwally partly provides an answer to this question when he argues that the preoccupation with death in Synge's works is a reflection of Synge's personal struggle with the reality of death.⁸⁸ This view is shared by many critics notably Roger McHugh, Sean O Suilleabhain, Eugene Benson and Maurice Bourgeois. McHugh notes that

... to mention death is to recall another factor that deepened his work, especially in his last years. Synge, like Webster, was "much impressed by death" but this consciousness, while it shared something of Webster's realisation of the cruelty of life, operated also in the direction of 'astringent joy and hardness', in the thought, reflected all through his plays, that no man can be living forever, that it is no small thing to be rid of grey hairs and of the loosening of the teeth, that even the great catastrophies of life give substance and power to the tragedy and humour which are the two poles of art.⁸⁹

Suilleabhain states that

the theme of death occurs frequently in his works and may have held a kind of fascination for him personally and as a writer.⁹⁰

And according to Eugene Benson,

Synge, like the Elizabethan dramatist, Webster, to whom he has been compared, was 'much possessed by death/And saw the skull beneath the skin'.⁹¹

David H. Greene, the famous biographer of Synge, however, disagrees.

Instead of the perpetually ill person whom critics assume Synge to be, "the fact", says Greene, "is that Synge was a physically powerful man, who spent much of his life outdoors, walked vast distances and was capable of riding a bicycle sixty miles in a day".⁹² For this reason, therefore,

The intense preoccupation with death that is characteristic of his work cannot be attributed, as it has been, to the fact that he was ill. His morbidity had its source in something deeper. One of his ancestors in the seventeenth century was described by Ware, in his account of the Irish bishops, as "vir gravis admodum et doctus". There is ample evidence that the words describe a type which persisted in the family during three centuries. Synge's description of the fear of death planted in him as a child by his mother's religious teaching, which he recoiled from as soon as he was old enough, is a better explanation for his persistent morbidity.

David Greene's argument is useful to the degree that it reveals other reasons which could be advanced for Synge's morbidity but his submission that Synge's morbidity cannot

be attributed to his ill-health seems to be tenuous; even moreso is his attempt to tone down the degree of Synge's illness. What Greene fails to realise is that the overall evidence in his justly popular biography of Synge contradicts his argument. Explicit in the book is the evidence that Synge's robustness was always truncated by illness.⁹⁴

Synge's writings - pace Greene - reflect this illness. When Synge died on March 24, 1909, his last words were, "it is no use fighting death any longer", and in that terse statement he summarised the nature of his life and his art. The latter was an extension of the battle which the former engaged in and the degree to which this is so is exemplified by Deirdre of the Sorrows. Padraic Colum reveals the biographical basis of this play in the following instructive statement:

He (Synge) was working on Deirdre of the Sorrows, and he had, in spite of his illness, got down to the third act. He began to tell me about this act: there would be an open grave on the stage. I spoke doubtfully of the impression that this would make - would it not be a too obvious heightening of the tragic feeling? But he said that he had been close to death, and that the grave was a reality to him, and it was the reality in the tragedy he was writing. 95

It is also the reality in Synge's poetry. "I've Thirty Months", "On An Anniversary", "To the Oaks of Glencree" and "A Question", for example, are personal statements in which Synge was trying to reconcile himself to the fact of his mortality. In "I've Thirty Months" Synge rejoices for having triumphed over death for thirty-seven and a half years:

I've thirty months, and that's my pride,
 Before my age's a double score,
 Though many lively men have died
 At twenty-nine or little more (p.231)

"On an Anniversary" expresses Synge's foreboding of death:

And so when all my little work is done
 They'll say I came in Eighteen-seventy-one,
 And died in Dublin ... What year will they
 write
 For my poor passage to the stall of night?
 (p.229)

In "To the Oaks of Glencree", he seems to have accepted the reality of his death:

There'll come a season when you'll stretch
 Black boards to cover me:
 Then in Mount Jerome I will lie, poor wretch,
 With worms eternally. (p.230)

"A Question" is undoubtedly directed to Molly Allgood, Synge's fiancée. How would she react to Synge's death?:

I asked if I got sick and died, would you
 With my black funeral go walking too,
 If you'd stand close to hear them talk or
 pray
 While I'm let down in that steep bank of
 clay.

And, No, you said, for if you saw a crew
 Of living idiots pressing round that new
 Oak coffin—they alive, I dead beneath
 That board - you'd rave and rend them with
 your teeth (p.230)

The self-centredness of these poems is unmistakable. David Greene's retort, "But what young poet at the turn of the century was not similarly preoccupied with death?"⁹⁶ is diversionary; all young poets at the turn of the century may have been obsessed with death because of the foreboding of gloom which engulfed the whole of Europe at that time, but the point to be urged is that this obsession, in the specific case of J.M. Synge as in the cases of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky,

is part of an attempt to resolve a personal mortality - crisis.

It is difficult to advance a similar argument in relation to Soyinka. Soyinka does not seem to write under the weight of a disease, as did Chekhov and Synge, nor does he express a psychotic fear of death, as did Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. This, however, does not rule out the possibility that the death-images in some of his works may have been informed by personal encounters with death or the spectres of death. "Live Burial" and "Flowers for my Land",⁹⁷ for example, reveal Soyinka's anxiety about his survival during his incarceration; "Death in the Dawn" was inspired by an encounter with death on his way to Lagos. Introducing this poem, he says:

Driving to Lagos one morning a white cockerel
flew out of the dusk and smashed itself against
my windscreen. A mile further I came across a
motor accident and a freshly dead man in the
smash. 98

"A First Deathday" is about the death of Folasade, his sister. "Last Turning" is a comment on the death of Christopher Okigbo, a Nigerian poet who died during the Nigerian civil war. "In Memory of Segun Awolowo" is as the title states, on the death

of Segun Awolowo, the eldest son of the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a Nigerian politician and statesman. Nevertheless, Soyinka, unlike Synge, cannot be accused of using his works to resolve a personal mortality-crisis; his concern is essentially with other people's deaths and with death as a phenomenon.

It is proper, then, that commentaries on death - images in Soyinka's work do not advance biographical explanations. Apart from Rufai Olusegun's essay⁹⁹ which attempts a semantic discussion of death in Death and the King's Horseman, the usual direction has been to situate Soyinka's concern with death in Yoruba culture, specifically within the Ogunnian concept which he articulates in "The Fourth Stage".¹⁰⁰

Death, as earlier argued is "a major event among the Yorubas"¹⁰¹ and it is regarded not as the termination of existence but as a transitory phase or as a movement to a higher realm of existence. Within the Yoruba world-view, the dead live in the extra-terrestrial plane and exist, simultaneously, as felt presences in the human realm. Thus, the dead, the living and the unborn exist in a continuum and relate with other. Beneath this fluid relationship is an animistic philosophy which seems to be central to the Yoruba

world-view. Soyinka's A Dance of the Forests, Death and the King's Horseman and The Strong Breed are informed by this philosophy and the Yoruba concept of death in general; also evident in these plays, particularly in Death and the King's Horseman, is the ritual ethos and the celebrative sense of event which defines the relationship between the dead and the living in the Yoruba community.

Soyinka's portrayal of death, situated as it is in Yoruba anthropology, is patterned after the drama of Ogun. Ogun, it would be remembered, is the "first actor", in Yoruba mythology, "the first suffering deity, first creative energy, the first challenger and conqueror of transition".¹⁰² It was Ogun who reversed the handiwork of Atunda who had brought disjunction, chaos and death into the Yoruba cosmogony. Through a singular act of will, Ogun re-united the one thousand and one fragments into which Atunda had shattered the primordial entity; he cleared a path through the impenetrable primordial jungle and led the gods to the human realm. The gods and man were reunited; the thousand and one fragments became whole again; the peace, balance and concord which characterised pristine existence returned. Thus, Ogun became a life-giving deity and the essence of creativity.

Irony, the core ambivalence in human experience, eventually caught up with Ogun, and he became the antithesis of his own essence. Ogun, who had taken man beyond the Atunda phase also, ironically, returned him to that phase. This drama of reversal took place at Irè.

Ogún, in spite of his refusal, was made the king of Ire. He led his people to several victorious battles. But one day at the battle front, irony and tragedy, its parent, came calling:

During a lull in the battle Esu the trickster god left a gourd of palmwine for the thirsty deity. Ogun found it exceptionally delicious and drained the gourd to the dregé. In that battle the enemy was routed even faster than usual, the carnage was greater than ever before. But by now, to the drunken god, friend and foe had become confused; he turned on his men and slaughtered them. 103

The tragedy was complete and with this, "Ogun came to symbolise the creative - destructive principle"¹⁰⁴ he became the essence, simultaneously, of life and death. His experience is archetypal in Soyinka's plays. Like Ogun, their primogenitor, Soyinka's heroes are adventurous and innovative but, more significantly, they symbolise the

creative - destructive principle. They always set out to assert life but their well-meaning effort is always frustrated by death. Witness the drama of Elesin Oba in Death and the King's Horseman, Kongi in Kongi's Harvest, Eman in The Strong Breed and Professor in The Road.

Synge's characters do not emulate any mythical, euhemeristic and anthropomorphic paradigm like Ogun but, like Soyinka's characters, they exist within a thanatocosmos that is informed by the author's traditional background. Death in the Irish society, as in the Yoruba society, is regarded as a major event and the dead are also regarded as living entities but while the Yorubas seem to enjoy a close relationship with the dead, the Irish assume that the dead can harm the living and, as such, they avoid death-situations and death-images.¹⁰⁵ This attitude runs through early Irish literature¹⁰⁶ and Irish folklore and it is instructively present in Synge's plays. All the characters in Synge's plays, with the probable exception of Deirdre, express an abiding fear of death. This is not quite the case in Soyinka's plays. This difference is obviously accounted for by the differences in Yoruba and Irish attitudes towards death and

by the differences between the two authors in terms of world-views and temperaments.

In retrospect, the point can be made that Synge's pre-occupation with death is informed by personal and cultural elements. At a personal level, his illness, his congenital morbidity and his upbringing by a mother who delighted in terrorising her children with the Biblical injunction that "the wages of sin is death" coalesce to sharpen his sensitivity to the subject of death. The same is true at a cultural level of the general thanatophobia which is present in Irish cosmology and of the spectre of death which haunted Europe and its writers at the turn of the century. Synge, in our view, therefore, stands midway between Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Laforgue whose preoccupation with death is an extension of a personal mortality-crisis and Federico Garcia Lorca whose portrayal of death is informed by the "culture of death" which he perceived in his Spanish background.

The main difference between Synge and Soyinka vis-a-vis their obsession with death is now clear - while the former uses his writings in part to resolve a personal mortality-crisis, the latter does not. But common to both of them is a situating of their obsessions with death in the traditional

contexts even if these contexts produce different death-orientations. It must also be stated that their obsession with death is, as in Maria Rainer Rilke, a form of thanatodicea; that is, an artistic philosophy which is predicated on death-images and which, in the final analysis, is a fraction of the artist's integral vision. The personality of this thanatodicea and its function in biographical (in the case of Synge) and anthropological (in the case of both Synge and Soyinka) contexts has already been discussed.¹⁰⁷

But there is a need to concentrate a bit more exclusively on the thanatodicea itself without decking it with biographical and anthropological allusions. We are writing here with a privileged awareness and understanding of these allusions but our goal henceforth is to concentrate on Synge's and Soyinka's thanatodicea. This thanatodicea has already been described at the beginning of this section. A repetition and expansion of it would seem necessary.

Synge's and Soyinka's characters always seek life. In Synge's case, this search emanates from a desperate need to liberate themselves from the rebarbative compressionist circumstances, loneliness,¹⁰⁸ frustration and rootlessness

which surround them and which impose a sinister angst on their psyche. The angst that is expressed by Soyinka's characters may not be as pronounced as that of Synge's characters but it is also inspired by a desire for self-preservation or communal rejuvenation. But the irony is that these life-seeking aspirations are nearly always frustrated and, instead of life or Utopia, it is death that confronts these characters.

By implication, the spectacle of death in the plays of Synge and Soyinka is situated within the dream-actuality principle. The characters in these plays are driven by a romantic dream which is fuelled by boundless zeal, will-power and imagination but their dream is always shattered by an actuality which is completely at odds with their aspirations. This duality of values brings Synge and Soyinka very close to Kafka, Pirandello and Nietzsche whose philosophical outlooks are similarly perched on the ironic marriage of opposites. For Synge and Soyinka, this marriage is aptly summarised in the following verse from Idanre:

... growth is greener where
 Rich blood has split, brain and marrow
 make
 Fat manure with sheep's excrement. 109

In sum, the thrust of Synge and Soyinka's thanatodicea is that life is ambivalent and enigmatic. It is futile to control it and even more futile to attempt to reduce it to man's usual frames of apprehension. Life is a double-faced Janus promising two dialectical opposites: life and death, hope and pessimism, illusion and disillusion, joy and sadness, growth and decay. These opposites assert themselves in an unending cataclysmic manner, as evident in the following representative plays: Synge's In the Shadow of the Glen and The Well of the Saints; Soyinka's The Swamp Dwellers and A Dance of the Forests.

Clearly evident in In the Shadow of the Glen is the shadow of Nora's melancholy and thanatophobia, two attitudes which are induced by the repressive circumstances under which she lives. She is a lonely woman, harassed by nature, burdened by a cold husband and isolated in "the last cottage at the head of a long glen". She hardly sees people to relate with and the two companions which she can easily boast of, namely, nature and her husband, Dan Burke, are disappointing.

Instead of the solace which Nora seeks in nature, she is confronted by a monotonous pattern which threatens to

compound her anguish. Most of the time she sees nothing

but the mists rolling down the bog,
and the mists again and they rolling up
the bog, and hearing nothing but the wind
crying out in the bits of broken trees were
left from the great storm, and the streams
roaring with the rain. 110

Nature "rolls, cries and roars" interminably and with complete indifference to Nora's desires. Not even her marriage could rescue her from this unthinking harshness of nature. Her marriage offers her material security in the form of "a bit of a farm and cows on it, and sheep on the back hills" (p.90) but beyond this, the marriage is loveless and uneventful. Dan Burke is old and unable to provide her either the warmth she requires or the children whose company she desires.

She sees the likes of Mary Brien "who wasn't that height ... and I a fine girl growing up, and there she is now with two children, and another coming on her in three months or four" (p.90), and she suddenly realises that her life has been almost purposeless, time seems to be leaving her behind and her marriage has been nothing but a mercenary contract.

Harassed by nature, lonely, melancholic, and burdened by a cold husband, Nora begins to realise the limits of her

mortality. Peggy Cavanagh, who used to be pretty and is now the reverse of her former self, exists in her mind as an empirical illustration of those limits and out of a desperate need to avoid these limits, she begins to seek alternative modes of survival. This is the most logical explanation for her flirtation with men. She flirts because she needs to assert her Eros-instinct and escape from the loneliness and the prospect of death which the harshness of nature and the coldness of Dan have imposed on her.

The play is full of concrete indications of her infidelity and it is reasonable to interpret her, as some critics have done, as a sex-starved woman. Before the play opens, she already had a relationship with Patch Darcy, and when he died, she says, "it's very lonesome I was after him a long while" (p.85) but "I got happy again - if it's ever happy we are, stranger - for I got used to being lonesome" (p.85). This is not true. Nora is lying here perhaps out of a desire not to make a negative impression on the Tramp whom she is just meeting for the first time. The reason why she becomes happy soon after Darcy's death is because she gets another young man to keep her company, "a young man with a drift of

mountain ewes" (p.85) called Michael Dara.

Nora certainly cherishes the company of men. Her actions are coloured by undisguised coquetry, and underlying her speech and actions is the unmistakable scent of a libido that needs attention. Nora's excessive kindness to the Tramp is worth noting.

She offers him "a glass of whisky" (p.83) and "a pipe of tobacco" (p. 83) and her dialogue with him is marked throughout by open flirtation. She repeatedly complains to him about her loneliness and, on more than one occasion, she lowers her voice while speaking to him. In the first instance, "she looks towards the window and lowers her voice" (p.84); on another occasion "she looks over at the bed and lowers her voice, speaking very slowly" (p. 85). These are the antics of a seducer and Nora seems to have great confidence in her abilities to attract male attention. For example, when the Tramp suggests that she is probably afraid of him, she quickly rebuffs him and flaunts her credentials:

I'm thinking many would be afeard, but
I never knew what way I'd be afeard of a
beggar or bishop or any man of you at
all ...

At this point, "she looks towards the window and lowers her voice (p. 84) and after this seductive prank, she tells the Tramp, somewhat confidentially, that

It's other things than the like of you, Stranger, would make a person afraid (p.84).

Nora may not be afraid of men but she is certainly afraid of death and her actions are indeed motivated by this fear. The games which she plays with men are part of an attempt to avoid the prospect of Thanatos and strive for Eros, its opposite. Eugene Benson gives an apt summary of her psychological state when he notes that her

melancholy arises from her morbidly acute awareness of temporality, she is as mortality-ridden as Deirdre in Synge's last play.¹¹¹

Other characters in the play are no less mortality-ridden and their actions are equally informed by a desire to assert the eros-instinct. Take the Tramp, for example. His first reaction on seeing Dan's corpse is very revealing: "The Lord have mercy on us all" (p.83) he shouts; and when Nora suggests that he should lay his hand on the corpse, he retorts:

Is it getting the curse on me you'd be, woman of the house? I wouldn't lay my hand on him for the Lough Nahanagan and it filled with gold. (p.83)

Later, his thanatophobia is revealed again when Nora asks him to stay alone with Dan's corpse. To ensure his safety, during Nora's absence, he asks for a superstitious accompaniment: a needle and thread. Then he starts saying the "De Profundis", perhaps in order to be doubly sure of his safety. The play at this point reaches its most comic height as Dan, the corpse, suddenly resurrects. The Tramp "springs to his feet with a movement of terror" (p.86) and if Dan had not quickly allayed his fears, it seems certain that he would have taken to his heels. The Tramp clearly demonstrates the typical Irish belief that the main business of the dead is to harm the living. He is eloquent and confident but this is merely a false facade beneath which is a lily-heart which shrinks at the mention of death, death-images and death-situations.

Dan, in spite of "playing possum",¹¹² is equally afraid of death. Like Nora and the Tramp, his actions, as exemplified by his reconciliation with Michael at the end of the

play, are directed towards the affirmation of life.

Augustine Martin reports that

More than one critic has complained that the end of The Shadow of the Glen is unconvincing. The reconciliation between Daniel Burke and Michael Dara - who after all had been planning to supplant him as Nora's husband - has been seen as too sudden, too much of a volte-face.¹¹³

The ending of the play may be sudden and unconvincing but it is logical, at least within the context of the play. It is an index of Dan's own thanatophobia. With Patch Darcy dead and Nora gone with the Tramp, the population of the glen, by the end of play, is about four people: Mary Brien, Peggy Cavanagh, Michael Dara and Dan Burke. Michael Dara is obviously the only person out of the lot with whom Dan could relate and, if he does not, Nora's earlier prediction may come true. Before her departure, Nora tells Dan:

And what way will yourself live from this day, with none to care you? What is it you'll have now but a black life, Daniel Burke, and it's not long, I'm telling you, till you'll be lying again under the sheet and you dead surely. (p.94)

Without her company and assistance, Dan, Nora insists, would become lonely and his loneliness would certainly lead

to death. Dan himself seems to be secretly aware of this prospect and, in order to delay it, he reconciles with Michael Dara, the only available person whose company could lessen the agony of his loneliness. The ending of this play highlights the irony which thanatophobia can impose on human situations. As a result of it, Dan, as we have seen, is forced to forgo his pride and re-order his sense of decorum.

The point to be urged is that the attempts by all the characters in In the Shadow of the Glen to avoid death and seek life eventually fails; death is the only certainty at the end of their various enactments. Dan seeks freedom from Nora and her hypocrisy and he eventually succeeds in gaining his freedom; but instead of the peace which he assumed the freedom would bring, he discovers that he has unwittingly brought himself closer to the prospect of death and he has pushed himself to a more problematic extreme in which he is compelled, contrary to common sense and decorum, to court the friendship of the very man who had been cuckolding him.

All attempts by Nora to fulfil herself and seek life are equally futile. Her marriage which should have given her the warmth she requires as a woman is cold and dull and, though she tries to escape from this condition, her efforts

lead to death. As she leaves with the Tramp at the end of the play, the Tramp boasts of the security which nature will offer both of them:

... it's not my blather you'll be hearing only but you'll be hearing the herons crying out over the black lakes, and you'll be hearing the grouse and the owls with them, and the larks and the big thrushes when the days are warm; and it's not from the like of them you'll be hearing a tale of getting old like Peggy Cavanagh, and losing the hair off you, and the light of your eyes, but it's fine songs you'll be hearing when the sun goes up, and there'll be no old fellow wheezing, the like of a sick sheep, close to your ear. (p.94)

The irony is that nature is not likely to obey the Tramp's prescription. It may continue to "roll, cry and roar" without offering any sympathetic ear to either him or Nora. Eventually, he may discover that he has nothing to offer Nora but his "blather only" and their exit may end up as an exit into death, brought about perhaps by the same nature which he romanticizes so brazenly.

Similarly, Dan and Michael may also die sooner or later. Both of them drink at the end of the play but their toast to a "long life and a quiet life and good health with it" (p.94) as Michael claims, may in sober fact be a toast to

loneliness and death. Death seems to be the only reality which awaits them the moment they finish their drink; and it is ironic that, instead of preparing for this, "They drink". (p. 94)

A similar reality awaits Mary and Martin Doull in The Well of the Saints.¹¹⁴ In this play, Synge juxtaposes several contradictory values: truth and falsehood; illusion and reality; life and death; joy and sorrow. The conflict between these opposites is so intense that the characters in the play, who are perpetually tossed from one extreme to the other, end up being harsh and bad-tempered. The ending of the play is instructively a two-pronged exit into life and death. Witness the Saint's speech:

They have chosen their lot, and the Lord have mercy on their souls. (He rings his bell.)
 And let the two of you come up now into the church, Molly Byrne and Timmy the Smith, till I make your marriage and put my blessing on you all. (p.103)

"They", in the above excerpt, refers to Mary and Martin Doull and the Lord is asked to "have mercy on their souls" because of the prospect of death which awaits them; directly juxtaposed with this "nunc dimittis" is a celebration of life,

that is, the marriage of Molly Byrne and Timmy the Smith. This is the picture of the world that exists in The Well of the Saints: it is a world of contrasts and ever-conflicting values.

Mary and Martin Doul, the main protagonists of the play, oscillate between two contrasting poles of dramatic action and their experience seems, accordingly, to encapsulate the thematic directions of the play. They are a blind, weather-beaten, ugly and poor couple in the townland of Grianan in Eastern Ireland who

do be always sitting here at the crossing of the roads, asking a bit of copper from them that do pass, or stripping rushes for lights. (p.141)

But in spite of their poverty and handicap, they are a lively couple

and they not mournful at all, but talking out with a full voice, and making game with them that passes. (p.141.)

They behave as if their handicap is normal and their countenance throughout the first movement of the play, up to the point where the saint restores their sight, is gay and the

conviviality between them and supposedly more fortunate characters like Mat Simon, Patch Ruadh, Timmy the Smith and Molly Byrne is entirely without the kind of inferiority complex which one would have expected their condition to generate.

Their behaviour is obviously at odds with their condition; under close scrutiny, it reveals itself as a counterphobic action, a defence mechanism or a safety valve which they have adopted in order to cope with their death like status. They talk and engage in games in order to cushion the prospect of death, gloom and loneliness which accompanies their condition. "If I didn't talk", says Martin Doul, "I'd be destroyed in a short while ..." (p. 132)

It is this urge to avoid destruction that informs all their actions. It is precisely why they choose to discountenance their suspicions of "those that have their sight" (p.133) and believe Molly Byrne, Patch Ruadh, Mat Simon and Timmy the Smith who repeatedly tell them that they are "the finest man and the finest woman of the seven counties of the East" (p.133). They believe this quartet because their talks and games reassure them that their life is not entirely without its own significance.

Beneath their ebullience, therefore, is a resolve to survive and remain sane under circumstances which point towards insanity and annihilation. Throughout the play, they maintain this eros-instinct and strive to assert it. This instinct is expressed, again, through their acceptance of the Saint's offer to restore their sight. They see the offer as a passport to a better life and greater self-fulfilment just as they see the talk and the games which they engaged in with "those that have their sight" as a means of avoiding destruction. Martin, in his usual extrovert and demonstrative manner, explains that sight would "show us the big women and the young girls, and all the fine things is walking the world" (p.139). They eventually regain their sight and their joy knows no bounds. Martin cries out in the church, "Oh, glory be to God," and "he runs out half foolish with joy ..." (p.143) and Mary receives her new status with a "silly, simpering smile". (p.145)

Having regained their sight, it may be stated that the Douls have successfully freed themselves from the repressive circumstances under which they live; a new life, a better and more colourful one now awaits them. But to tender such an interpretation is to misread the play because it is

precisely at their most joyous moment that irony, the usual stuff of which Synge's plays are made, rears its head and reverses their fortune.

Instead of bringing them in contact with "all the fine things is walking the world", sight brings them in contact with ugliness, not just the ugliness of the world around them but of themselves. They realise that "they're a pair of pitiful shows", (p.146) and not "the finest man and the finest woman," (p.133) which they have always thought themselves to be. This reality is so rebarbative that husband and wife disown each other and after confirming their identities, they are so dumbfounded that "(they stare at each other blankly)". (p. 145)

What follows is a realisation of the hollowness of the dream-world in which they have been living and the futility of their life-seeking aspirations. Like Nora and Dan Burke in In the Shadow of the Glen and Maurya in Riders to the Sea, they realise the inhumanity of nature to man and particularly, of man to man. Disappointed and embittered, they turn against each other and the people of Grianaan and they harangue each other with words that are shot through with pathos and macabre humour. The first act of The Well of the Saints ends on this

note of reversal; beginning with joy, optimism and trust, the act ends with sorrow, pessimism and disappointment.

These latter values are dramatised in the second act of the play. In this act, the Douls are confronted by a harsh reality which compels them to express a nostalgia for their former condition. Their new status imposes certain responsibilities on them and generates a different climate of feeling and thought which forces them to view blindness as a preferable alternative. Both of them now work for a living: Mary picks nettles for Widow O'Flinn; Martin is an apprentice under Timmy the Smith. Their conditions of service are so difficult that Martin laments:

... it's more I got a while since, and I sitting blinded in Grianan, than I get in this place, working hard and destroying myself, the length of the day. (p.148.)

In this act, the Douls avoid each other; their relationship is hindered by the shadow of the harsh words which they traded with each other towards the end of the first act. The reversal of fortune and the oscillation between two extremes of action which dominate the whole play as a central motif emerge most concretely in this act. The ebullience and the infectious panache which the Douls displayed at the beginning

of the play has now given way to sullenness and self-pity. The talk and the games which gave them hope earlier on, are now marked with the threat of violence. They no longer enjoy the camaraderie of "those that have their sight" (p. 133). Timmy and Molly who used to indulge them, for example, are no longer genial and affable. Referring to them, Martin now complains of "the villainy of a woman and the bloody strength of a man" (p.158) and instead of "praying the Lord to bless" (p.134) them, as he used to do, he now prays that they should end up in hell where they would be "twisting and roaring again, one day and the next day, and each day always and ever". (p.158.) Further, the Douls now regret the day the Saint restored their sight. For Martin, it is no longer "the grand day of my life" (p. 144) but "a bad black day".

The reversal is complete and the accompanying gloom is overwhelming. Consequently, the Douls express a nostalgia for their former condition. This is ironic; but they do so because blindness seems to offer them greater psychological security and physical comfort. Analysed closely, their nostalgia is merely an instance of their continuous search for eros and its associative values. Just as they thought that talking, games and the restoration of their sight would

improve their lot, they now see a return to blindness as a better alternative to the sheer cruelty of man and nature which their sight has confronted them with. By the end of Act Two, their wish to become blind again is fulfilled by sheer accident and as Martin "turns to grope out" (p. 158), it becomes evident that the Douls are mere pendulums swinging between two opposite poles of experience and, if Synge were Greek, we would have described them as playthings of fate.

Like the first act, the second act of The Well of the Saints ends on a note of reversal; it reverses the pattern in the first act and moves from light to darkness, that is, from sight to blindness. The third act again invites parallels with the first.

In this act, as in the first, the Douls are blind and they complain of being destroyed in a short while. The prospect of their destruction is attributed, as before, to loneliness. Mary says, "it's destroyed I'll be now, and hard set to get my living working alone" (p.158). "It's lonesome I'll be from this day ..." says Martin (p. 159). Again, they express the urge to avoid destruction and it is this urge that compels them to reconcile with each other so early in the act.

It also compels them to talk, play games, erect a new set of illusions and return to the dream-world in which they lived before they regained their sight. Mary dreams of becoming "a beautiful white-haired woman" who would be "a grand thing to see" without any parallel in "the seven counties of the east" (p. 161); Martin talks of growing "a beautiful, long, white, silken, streamy beard, you wouldn't see the like of in the eastern world" (p. 162). These talks and dreams imbue the Douls with optimism and a new sense of importance and enable them to withstand the dreariness of their existence.

Their return to their former state is indeed total and, as seen in Act Two, it is informed by the moral that blindness offers greater peace and security than sight. Act Three validates this moral. The Douls are no longer the sulky and argumentative pair that they are in Act Two; they are now romantic, lively, confident and appreciative of the rhythms of nature, as they were in Act One. Thus, the play revolves on its own axis and repeats itself.

It is worth noting that the Douls' joyful reunion is again spoilt, as in Act One, by the intervention of "those that have their sight" (p.133). But having encountered "the

villainy of a woman and the bloody strength of a man" (p.58) and the negative values that are associated with sight, they resist this intervention when they hear the "faint sound of a bell" (p. 162), "the bell sounds" (p. 163) and the "trampling in the wood" (p.163) which announce the return of the Saint and the people of Grianaan. They flee and hide and Mary is "nearly in tears" (p.163). When the Saint offers to restore their sight a second time, they bluntly refuse his offer:

We're not asking our sight, holy father,
and let you be walking on and leaving us
in our peace at the crossing roads, for
it's best we are this way, and we're not
asking to see (p.166)

and when the Saint insists on curing Mary, Martin "strikes the can from the Saint's hand and sends it rocketing across stage" (p.170) thus putting a final stop to the Saint's unsolicited act of charity.

As in all other instances in the play, this life-seeking and self-assertive gesture produces an opposite result and pushes the Douls nearer the prospect of death. Afraid that Martin's action could "bring down a curse upon (them) from the heavens of God" (p. 170) the people drive the Douls out of Grianaan and, as they leave, their exit,

as in the cases of Nora and the Tramp in In the Shadow of the Glen, seems to be an exit into death. Martin says, "they'll be walking to the South" (p.171) hoping that they will find joy and peace. But again, this aspiration would eventually be shattered by death because

There's a power of deep rivers with flood
in them where you do have to be lepping the
stones and you going to the South ... (p.171).

It is not likely that Mary and Martin would be able to cross "a power of deep rivers with floods in them" or "lep the stones"; "so I'm thinking the two of them will be drowned together in a short while surely".(p.171.) The Douls, it seems, would surely die. Death is the mythical Argus in The Well of the Saints. It is not certain that they would escape it.

The play is dominated by a repetitive cyclical pattern which is woven round the subjects of life and death. Two morals are explicit in it: dream and actuality are rendered vulnerable by the same set of contradictions; and man's attempts to assert his eros-instinct are always futile. These, at the risk of stating the obvious, are the morals which underlie the experience of Mary and Martin Douls.

A similar situation obtains in Soyinka's A Dance of the Forests.¹¹⁵ In this play, a community seeks life and its associative values of freedom, unity, peace and balance but all its efforts lead to death and chaos. The leaders of the community plan to celebrate a feast called the Gathering of the Tribes which would obviously involve all the disparate tribes which make up the community. A programme of activities is therefore prepared with emphasis on two activities: the carving of a totem and the invitation of ancestors, as Aroni states, of "illustrious ancestors" (p.5).

These two activities are, needless to state, part of the community's attempt to achieve peace and unity but ironically, they produce a result that is completely at variance with the intentions of the community. Instead of enhancing life and peace, these two activities engender death and discord. Consequently, they turn the Gathering of the Tribes into a dance of regrets and counter-accusations, simultaneously underlined by the foreboding of gloom. Instead of gathering the tribes together, they emerge as disruptive forces and threaten to disperse the tribes, fragment them and nurture a seed of discord that would keep the community permanently dismembered. Thus the reversal of fortune and expectations

and the opposition between two contradictory values which we discovered in Synge's In the Shadow of the Glen and The Well of the Saints re-emerge in A Dance of the Forests and, interestingly, with similar prominence.

The ancestors are invited to the Gathering of the Tribes out of the conviction that they represent the glory of the past. They are expected to imbue the living with a sense of tradition, dignity and importance. They are also expected to reconcile them to their heritage and reality and encourage them to eschew noble values which future generations would also be proud of. In A Dance of the Forests, the living regard the ancestors as heroes and, accordingly, they speak highly of them and crave their company:

... We must bring home the descendants of our great forebears. Find them. Find the scattered sons of our proud ancestors. The builders of empires. The descendants of our great nobility. Find them. Bring them here. If they are half-way across the world, trace them. If they are in hell, ransom them. Let them symbolize all that is noble in our nation. Let them be our historical link for the season of rejoicing. Warriors. Sages. Conquerors. Builders. Philosophers. Mystics. Let us assemble them round the totem of the nation and we will drink from their resurrected glory. (p.31.)

The people are disappointed when the ancestors eventually arrive. Instead of illustrious ancestors, what they get are uninspiring ancestors who remind them of sordidness and imperfections. Old man, therefore, complains that

These people who have come to claim our hospitality do not wish us well. We were sent the wrong people. We asked for statesmen and we were sent executioners. (p.29.)

Speaking further he maintains that

The guests we were sent are slaves and lackeys. They have only come to undermine our strength. To preach to us how ignoble we are. They are disgruntled creatures who have come to accuse their tormentors as if this were a court of law. We have courts for the oppressed. Let them go somewhere else (p.31).

Adenebi, confused and unable to understand why the guests whose arrival they had anticipated with great enthusiasm should "go somewhere else", asks old man for clarification:

Adenebi: Mali. Songhai. Lisabi, Chaka ... but who did we get? (p.32.)

Old man's response confirms the worst:

Old man: Nonentities without a doubt ... (p.32.)

Harassed by these "slaves, lackeys, disgruntled creatures, tormentors and nonentities", the council finds it imperative to drive them off and the Chimney of Ereko, an "old decrepit wagon" (p.29) which smokes "like a perpetual volcano" (p.17) and spews poisonous petrol fumes, is contracted to execute the task. By the time the Chimney completes its assignment, the forest where the re-union between the living and the dead is supposed to take place is thrown into confusion; nature is disturbed, men and matter are forced to flee and "the whole forest", as Eshuoro later observes, "stinks. Stinks of human obscenities" (p. 41).

Thus, the community's search for life and joy ends in its opposites, death and sorrow. Adenebi, the Council orator, who had recommended the invitation of the dead ancestors in high-falutin rhetoric and enthusiasm suddenly realises that no amount of verbal histrionics can transform a sordid past into a glorious one. Adenebi dreamt of "Purple Robes. White horses dressed in gold. Processions through the town with communion and service around our symbol ..." (p.31) but on the contrary, the community is confronted with two mouldy obscenities in the form of Dead Man and Dead Woman. Old Man

who had supported Adenebi at the council and further recommended the carving of a totem, "a totem that would reach to the sky" (p. 30) now discovers, in spite of himself, that these ancestors would disrupt the feast and they must be expelled.

The expulsion of these undesirable guests is informed by the community's need to ignore the shameful aspects of its history and highlight its glorious aspects. Dead Man and Dead Woman represent the former and the occasion of the Gathering of the Tribes is considered inappropriate for a confrontation with the ugliness which they represent and wear like a trademark. At bottom, then, their expulsion is borne out of the urge to maintain communal sanity and ensure a smooth celebration of the Gathering of the Tribes. But this search for eros fails due to the machinations of Aroni and Forest Head and it is established that the living "cannot get rid of ancestors with the little toys of children..." (p. 38).

The reference to dead ancestors in A Dance of the Forests is very much apropos. It illustrates the fluid movement which exists between the terrestrial and extra-

terrestrial planes within the Yoruba cosmology. By bringing the dead and the living together, Soyinka confesses his indebtedness to Yoruba anthropology. But the point to be noted is that the ancestors in this play - Dead Man and Dead Woman - are not the beneficial spirits which the Yorubas regard the dead to be; they are malevolent forces which, instead of inspiring the living, question, accuse and threaten them by their surreal countenance to disrupt the Gathering of the Tribes, and it is precisely because their behaviour contradicts conventional Yoruba expectations that they are expelled.

This inversion of the traditional function of the dead reveals Soyinka's ingenious ability to transmute given facts and subject mythology to the whims of the creative muse. His concern with myth and culture is not one of servile indebtedness but a critical rethinking and re-evaluation. This attribute, as demonstrated in A Dance of the Forests, invites parallels with Synge's use of the Deirdre saga in Deirdre of the Sorrows. For Synge and Soyinka, all materials for the creation of art, irrespective of their origin, are subsumed under the artist's vision which, to them, is the kernel of art. The vision dominates the material and not vice-versa.

Like the ancestors, the totem, the second central item on the programme for the Gathering of the Tribes, also results in death and chaos and it may be described, in terms of its functionality, as the analogue of the ancestors. It is intended to be the rallying point for the feast and symbolise, in an imagic form, the glory of the tribes. The totem, Eshuoro tells us, albeit sarcastically, is "the beacon for the gathering of the tribes" (p. 43); hence, Adenebi congratulates Demoke, the carver of the totem:

Today is your day of triumph, sir. Every neck is creaking with looking up at the totem (p.10).

But the totem is an embodiment of irony; it is another index of the contradictory duality which runs through the whole play. Beneath its arresting luminosity, which suggests life, is a dark shadow which bears the fingerprints of death and impending tumult. The totem shares this quality with the Chimney of Ereko and the Incinerator, together, these three symbols reinforce at an imagic level the perpetual conflict between the forces of life and death which, we repeat, is the central motif in A Dance of the Forests.

The totem assumed its Janus-like personality by accident. Demoke, "son and son to carvers; master of wood, shaper of iron; servant of Ogun, slave, alas, to height" (p. 26); justly famous for his expertise, was commissioned to carve the totem. This assignment is beneficial to the community and Demoke may be appropriately seen as an agent of life. The assignment, Obaneji confirms, is "the kind of action that redeems mankind" (p.10). But ironically, this action turns out to be destructive and Demoke becomes an agent of death.

In the process of carving the totem, Demoke picked on Oro's sacred tree, "araba" and beheaded it.

Even this might have passed unnoticed by Oro if Demoke had left araba's height undiminished. But Demoke is a victim of giddiness and cannot gain araba's heights. He would shorten the tree, but apprentice to him is one OREMOLÉ, a follower of Oro who fought against this sacrilege to his god. And Oremole won support with his mockery of the carver who was tied to earth. The apprentice began to work above his master's head; Demoke reached a hand and plucked him down ... the final link was complete (p.6)

The carving of the totem ceases to be a redemptive action, it becomes a crime, stained as it is by the blood of Oremole and the desecration of Oro's tree. Eshuoro, angered by this double sacrilege, comes howling for vengeance.

His aim is to ensure the failure of the Gathering of the Tribes. "Aroni's little ceremony", he insists, "must be made into a bloody sentence" (p. 41) and Demoke, who dared to destroy his favourite tree and murder Oremole, his devotee, must be punished for his sacrilege.

But Demoke's actions are not the products of his own volition. He was teleguided in all he did by Ogun, his patron god, and Ogun enters to protect him from Eshuoro's wrath:

Face to face at last Eshuoro. Do you come here with your loud words and empty boasts? Soulless one, Demoke is no empty nut that fell, motherless from the sky. In all that he did, he followed my bidding. I will speak for him (p. 58).

The link between Ogun and Demoke empirically illustrates the closeness between Ogun and Soyinka's heroes and further demonstrates Soyinka's indebtedness to his cultural background. Like Ogun, Demoke is a creative-destructive essence, his life-giving aspiration (the carving of a totem) results in death (the murder of Oremole) and confusion (the annoyance of Eshuoro). For the rest of the play, the feast is turned into an arena for the clash of Ogun and Eshuoro; both gods embody the forces of life and death and the conflict

between them has a decided effect on the fate of the community.

The point that is being persistently urged here is that A Dance of the Forests, like Synge's The Well of the Saints, is full of images of life and death and its characters grapple continuously with these images. Death is the ironic ghost which tails their efforts and subverts them.

Ogunba explains that

A Dance of the Forests was written to celebrate the occasion of Nigeria's independence on 1st October, 1960. It is this occasion that is referred to as the feast of the Gathering of the Tribes in the play. 116

It may be stated, by implication, that the play is a parable for the new nation. It teaches that the new nation should be wary about its programmes; what it considers life-giving may surprisingly lead to death and destruction. This irony is a given fact of human experience and it is valid for all times - the past, the present and the future.

In A Dance of the Forests, this is the lesson which the community strives to ignore. Old man and other councillors expel the ancestors because they do not want to be reminded of an inglorious past, that is, a past whose glorious aspects

are overshadowed and overtaken by the images of death. Their action is therefore a game of deception and an attempt to evade the basic truth which underscores human experience. But Soyinka, speaking and acting through Aroni and Forest Head, does not allow this "folie de grandeur" to succeed.

Aroni and Forest Head are the voices of truth in the play. Aroni, Agboreko states, "is wisdom itself" (p. 33) and according to Ogunba,

Aroni is not a kill-joy and his action is not merely a sadistic relish in tormenting mankind; rather his divine nature enables him to see man in a timeless context and thereby fully appreciate the fact that this new community, however much it may wish otherwise, cannot avoid the grim consequence of its background of crime and suffering Thus when he represents the past and the present and looks ahead to the future he does so as a being to whom the whole of human history has been divinely revealed. We can rely on the accuracy of this knowledge, especially the part which relates to the future. 117

Forest Head shares Aroni's attributes and both of them collaborate throughout the play to bring the human community "to judgement" (p.28) and "expose the weaknesses of human lives" (p.33). The basic import of their actions is that the human community can only fulfil itself if it stops

pretending and admits the truth that its past is sordid, its present is soiled, its future is gloomy and history as a whole is a continuous cycle of ugliness and ineffectuality.

To teach this lesson, Aroni who in the first place sent the "two spirits of the restless dead" (p.5), conspires with Forest Head and ensures that the living do not succeed in expelling them. The dead eventually participate in the feast of the Gathering of the Tribes and the living are compelled to confront the ugly truth of their existence. Two incidents deserve close analysis in this respect: the unveiling of the court of Mata Kharibu and the welcome of the dead.

At the instance of Forest Head, Aroni unveils "the phantasmagoria of protagonists from the dead" (p.45) and the living are brought in contact with the court of Mata Kharibu. The Court represents the past of the present human community and, contrary to the popular assumption that the past is noble and glorious, the court reveals a grotesque and repellent past that is peopled by dictators, lackeys, hypocrites and human scavengers. Beneath the splendour and glamour of Mata Kharibu's court are images of death: cannibalism, treachery, tyranny and utter inhumanity and to establish the continuity of this contradiction, it is revealed that some

members of the present generation helped in their former lives to engender and perpetuate the barbaric cruelty of Mata Kharibu's court.

Rola was Madame Tortoise, the unrepentant barracuda who masqueraded as Mata Kharibu's queen, Demoke was the court poet who pushed down his pupil from the roof in order to claim the credit for retrieving Madame Tortoise's canary. Agboreko, in the present, was Kharibu's hypocritical soothsayer in the past. Adenebi, now the Council Orator, was the corrupt and rhetorical historian in Kharibu's court. The lives of these characters remain essentially the same in the past and in the present. The goal of the flashback to Kharibu's court, therefore, is to reveal the link between the past and the present and the common base of treachery and corruption which unites both levels of experience.

The Dance of the Half-child enacted during the welcoming of the dead further reinforces this goal and reveals that the future, symbolised by the Half-child, is in no way different from the past and the present. The Half-child, like his ancestors, is doomed to wallow in a pool of death-images; he embodies the contradictory forces of life and death and

seems, in our view, to anticipate Murano in The Road. The significance of his personality emerges during the games of sesan and ampe towards the end of the play.

In the sesan game, the Half-child plays with the Figure in the Red (Eshuoro) and loses. This game symbolises the death-aspect of his personality and it is this aspect that is expressed when the Half-child announces immediately after the game that "I'll be born dead, I'll be born dead" (p.64). The ampe game reveals the converse aspect of his personality. In this game, he is thrown between his mother, Ogun and Demoke (the forces of life) and Eshuoro and his Jester (the forces of death). Ogun eventually catches him and passes him to Demoke, thus reversing the conclusion of the sesan game. But this act of redemption, like all other acts of redemption in the play (the carving of the totem, the invitation and subsequent expulsion of the ancestors), fails.

The ampe game ends in an impasse. Ogun and Eshuoro therefore appeal to Forest Head to intervene but he refuses:

Trouble me no further. The fooleries of beings whom I have fashioned closer to me weary and distress me. Yet I must persist, knowing that nothing is ever altered. My secret is my eternal burden - to pierce the encrustations

of soul-deadening habit, and bare the mirror of original nakedness - knowing fully well, it is all futility. Yet I must do this alone, and no more, since to intervene is to be guilty of contradiction and yet to remain altogether unfelt is to make my long-rumoured ineffectuality complete, hoping that when I have tortured awareness from their souls, that perhaps, only perhaps, in new beginnings ... (p.71).

As usual, Forest Head asks Aroni, "wisdom itself" to unravel the meaning of the situation:

... Aroni, does Demoke know the meaning of his act?

ARONI: Demoke, you hold a doomed thing in your hand. It is no light matter to reverse the deed that was begun many lives ago. The forest will not let you pass. (p.71)

In other words, the Half-child cannot be redeemed from the path of destruction. Man's continuous attempt to assert his eros-instinct is futile; life is a perpetual struggle between life and death; neither the past nor the present nor the future is free from this ironic contradiction and man himself cannot escape it. Consequently, Demoke gives the child to the Dead Woman, its mother, thus leaving him free for another round of sesan and ampe games which would be played again by the same forces of life and death, using the

Half-child as their pawn, again and again ad infinitum. At this point, Eshuoro, whose goal is to disrupt the feast and frustrate its redemptive aspects, "gives a loud yell of triumph" and "rushes offstage" (p.72).

Thus, it is death that triumphs at the end of the play not life. This point is later driven home by the burning of the totem and it is instructive that as the play draws to a close, the village people are seen, dancing, completely unaware of the death-struggle that has been going on in the forest:

A silhouette of Demoke's totem is seen. The village people dancing round it, also in silhouette, in silence. There is no contact between them and the Forest ones. The former in fact are not aware of the other beings. (p.72).

The irony which underlines human experience is again established. In the midst of life man is in death and most of the time, he is ignorant of this fact. This is the core of the lesson which Aroni and Forest Head conspire to teach the living and the lesson seems to reach its target.

For example, Agboreko says "we paid dearly for this wisdom newly acquired" (p. 73); Demoke asks:

We three who lived many lives in this one night, have we not done enough? Have we not felt enough for the memory of our remaining lives? (p.73)

and "(Rola comes forward. She looks chastened)" (p.73).

A Dance of the Forests ends on this epiphanic note. The final link is now complete; "the dance could proceed" (p.6).

Like A Dance of the Forests, The Swamp Dwellers¹¹⁸ also dramatises the opposition between the forces of life and death. All the characters in the play seek life, fulfilment, and freedom from the repressive circumstances under which they live but death is the prize which they all receive at the rendezvous of victory. Witness the experiences of Awuchike, Igwezu and the Beggar.

Awuchike left his family ten years ago, like most young men, to seek better fortunes in the city presumably with the hope of improving himself and his family. The city favoured him and he became wealthy but, beyond this life-giving appearance, the city is also a death-dealing symbol. Awuchike suddenly forgets his people back home in the village and when his twin-brother, Igwezu, came to join him in the city, he treated him as if he were a complete stranger.

Because Awuchike no longer contacts his parents, Alu, his mother, assumes that he is dead. At the beginning of the play, she repeatedly talks about Awuchike's death. She assumes that Igwezu who has just returned from the city has brought the news of his brother's death. Hence, she tells Makuri:

I wish to be here when he gives me the news.
I don't want to fall down dead out in the
open. (p. 82)

Makuri, a more optimistic person, attempts to disabuse her mind but she insists:

I know he's dead (p. 82)

The following conversation between the couple is revealing:

ALU: ... I had another son before the mire drew him into the depths. I don't want Igwezu going the same way.

MAKURI: (follows her): You haven't lost a son yet in the slough, but you will soon if you don't stop calling down calamities on their heads.

ALU: It's not what I say. The worst has happened already. Awuchike was drowned.

MAKURI: You're a blood-thirsty woman. Awuchike got sick of this place and went into the city. That's where you'll find him,

fadding it out with the gentlemen. But you'll be satisfied with nothing less than a festering corpse beneath the mire ...

ALU: It's the truth

MAKURI: It's a lie. All the youngmen go into the big town to try their hand at making money ... only some of them remember their folk and send word once in a while (p.83)

The foregoing argument between Alu and Makuri reveals and summarises Awuchike's experience. Alu and Makuri are both right in their conclusions about him, although their perceptions seem contradictory. Makuri is obviously more knowledgeable about city life. Awuchike, as he claims, is indeed "fadding it out with the gentlemen" in the city. He is also dead as Alu claims. What must be noted is that his death is symbolic and not physical as she implies; and it is in this former sense that Igwezu announces his death when he tells his parents:

Awuchike is dead to you and to this house.
Let us not raise his ghost (p. 104.)

Awuchike is dead because he ignores his parents and allows the glamour of the city to suppress his filial feelings. More important, perhaps, is the death of his ethical values.

The fact that he could snatch Desala, his own brother's wife, contradicts the ethics of his upbringing. The city is his murderer. "The city", according to Igwezu, "reared itself in the air, and with the strength of its legs of brass kicked the adventurer in the small of his back" (p. 104). Awuchike's search for life and fulfilment thus leads to death.

The tragedy is not his alone. The same fate awaits all young men who go to the city. As Makuri states,

All the youngmen go into the big town to try their hand at making money ... only some of them remember their folk and send word once in a while (p.83)

Even those who "remember their folk" do not escape the murderous hands of the city. The city kicks them from another direction and imposes death-images on their eros-instinct. Igwezu is a case in point. Like Awuchike and other young men, he went to the city to seek life and better fortunes but unlike his twin-brother, he did not allow himself to be carried away by the glamour of the city. He still remembered his obligations back in the village - to his parents and to his farm. He sent his father a barber's chair, which he had promised him before leaving for the city, and ensured that

he performed all his sacrifices to the serpent of the swamp. The city attacked him from a different direction and he felt its harshness and naked hostility. His twin-brother snatched Desala, his wife and took the harvest from his farm as a surety for the loan he gave him. Confronted by this act of betrayal, which is fundamentally fratricidal, Igwezu laments:

... I met with harshness in the city...
 I felt the nakedness of its hostility...
 I saw its knife sever the ties and the
 love of kinship, and turn brother against
 brother ... (p. 103)

in addition,

I lost everything, my savings, even my
 standing as a man. I went into debt. (p.107)

The city thus "killed" Igwezu just as it had "killed" Awuchike and several other young men who had sought security in its bosom. Igwezu's experience is particularly more grievous than that of the others; his is a cyclical experience in which he perpetually meets death and disappointment wherever he seeks life, hope and freedom. Disappointed by the city, he returns to his farm in the village hoping to find solace

but again, he meets with disappointment. Having suffered so much in the city, he says

I said to myself ... I have a place, a home, and though it lies in the middle of the slough, I will go back to it. And I have a little plot of land which has rebelled against the waste that surrounds it, and yields a little fruit for the asking. I saved this land before I went away. Now is the time for harvesting, and the cocoa-pods must be bursting with fullness .. I came back with hope, with consolation in my heart. I came back with the assurance of one who has lived with his land and tilled it faithfully... (p.104).

The land disappoints Igwezu. Instead of the bountiful harvest that he expected, he discovers that the swamp has destroyed his farm; "the beans and the corn" which he planted before going to the city, have "made an everlasting pottage with the mud" (p.101). This loss is the last straw that breaks the camel's back; hence, Igwezu laments:

It was never in my mind the thought that the farm could betray me so totally, that it could drive the final wedge into this growing loss of touch ... (p. 105).

At the end of the play, Igwezu flees to the city after insulting the Kadiye. It must be noted that he is again fleeing from death; that is, from the implications of his

sacrilegious attack on the Kadiye, hence he tells the Beggar:

I must not be here when the people call
for blood (p. 111).

But as he walks slowly off, it can be assumed that his exit is not an exit into life but into death. Two details in the play validate this assumption. As Igwezu leaves, the Beggar informs him that "the water is high" (p.111) and asks "Is it not dark outside?" (p.112). Yet Igwezu makes his exit. As he leaves, there is no hope of survival in the horizon. Without any "ferryman to be found after dark" and with the water so high, it seems certain that Igwezu would not reach the city. He would most probably drown and underlying his death is the tale of a man who is forced to commit suicide due to the failure of his well-meaning attempts to survive in a world that stubbornly promises misery and disappointments.

The Beggar shared the same fate with Awuchike and Igwezu. Like them, his search for life brings him in contact with death. The story of the drought in his village is fairly representative of the fate of the characters and the communities in Soyinka's plays. It reflects the cyclic movement between life and death, hope and disappointment,

and growth and decay, which exists in Soyinka's plays, particularly in A Dance of the Forests, The Road, The Strong Breed, Kongi's Harvest and Death and the King's Horseman.

The Beggar's story is worth re-telling:

His village, Bukanji, in the norther arid zone, is perpetually afflicted by drought. The people reconciled themselves to this fact and sought their livelihood by begging for alms. But one day, the rains began to pour and earth sprouted anew. The Beggar narrates the sudden change in the life of the people:

It is true that the land had lain barren for generations, that the fields had yielded no grain for the lifetime of the eldest in the village. We had known nothing but the dryness of the earth. Dry soil. Dry crumbs of dust. Clouds of dust even when there was no wind, but only a vulture flying low and flapping its wings over the earth... But now ... we could smell the sweetness of lemon leaves, and the feel of the fronds of desert palm was a happiness which we had never known ... The thought was no sooner born than we set to work before the soil changed its mind and released its moisture (p.99).

The Bukanji people rejoiced at this freedom which nature suddenly gave them:

And it seemed as if the heavens rejoiced in our labour, for their blessings were liberal, and their good will on our side. The rains came when we wanted it. And the sun shone and the seeds began to ripen.

Nothing could keep us from the farms from the moment that the shoots came through the surface, and all through the months of waiting. We went round the plantains and rubbed our skins against them, lightly, so that the tenderest bud could not be hurt. This was the closest that we had ever felt to one another. This was the moment that the village became a clan, and the clan a household... (p.99).

But this joy was shortlived. One day, locusts attacked the farms; "it took only an hour or two, and the village returned to normal" (p.99). Nature had merely laughed at the people of Bukanji; their search for life ended up as a romance with death.

Confronted with this harsh reality, the Beggar decided to flee just as Awuchike and Igwezu fled their village. He says

I headed away from my home, and set my face towards the river. When I said to the passing stranger, friend, set my face towards the river, he replied which river? But I only said to him, Towards any river, towards any stream; set my face towards the seas itself. But let there be water, because I am sick of the dryness. (p.100).

He no doubt associates water with life; but the irony which confronts him on his arrival at Igwezu's village is that those who have water do not necessarily have life. Indeed what he encounters is a situation in which water becomes the source of death. Thus, his search for life and escape from death leads him to another encounter with death.

It is this ironic fate that unites the Beggar, Igwezu and Awuchike. It should therefore not be surprising that the Beggar offers to serve as Igwezu's bondsman; he must have realised the similarity of fate which unites both of them. Further, Igwezu's village invites parallels with Bukanji, the Beggar's village. In the former, as in the latter, there is a persistent attempt to tame nature and assert life. Each year, the people, like Igwezu for example, offer sacrifices "from the grain to the bull, the goat and the white cockerel" (p.109) to the serpent of the swamp, through the Kadiye, the village priest, but this life-seeking gesture usually fails. Instead of offering them happiness and long life, the serpent, as in Igwezu's case, always subverts their efforts and it is not certain that this pattern would change. As Igwezu observes before making his exit,

"... the floods can come again ... the swamp will continue to laugh at our endeavours" (p. 110).

And even if this pattern can be changed at all, the people do not seem to have the courage that the task requires. They are dogmatic and superstitious; by that fact, they are not likely to engage in any action that appears to be critical of the Kadiye and the serpent of the swamp. For example, when the Beggar suggests that he "is willing to drain the filth away and make the land yield coco-yams and lettuce" (p.92); Makuri "(stares wildly)" (p.22) and rebukes him: "Mind what you are saying, son. Mind what profanities you utter in this house" (p.82). The Beggar utters profanities, in Makuri's view, because his request implies that he should be given a part of the serpent's land. Makuri's explanation that the land tenure system of the village is rigidly defined may seem valid but beneath it is an ingrained conservative sense of tradition which is representative of the attitude of the whole village.

Again, when Igwezu questions and ridicules the Kadiye, later in the play, Makuri says he must go after the Kadiye or "he'll stir up the village against us" (p.110). The village, like Makuri, does not permit any radical interrogation

of its institutions. Rebels like Igwezu have no place within this system hence, he has to flee at the end of play. "I must not be here", he says, "when the people call for blood" (p. 111). The fate of Igwezu's village, then, is partly accounted for by the intractability of nature, represented by the swamp which, like the city, stands out in the play as a symbol of life and death and partly, by the people's somewhat submissive attitude towards life.

The Swamp Dwellers, by extension, seems to give due weight to the power of death. This is true in spite of the fact that the play ends on an optimistic and revolutionary tone as follows:

BEGGAR: The swallows find their nest again when the cold is over. Even the bats desert dark holes in the trees and flap wet leaves with wings of leather. There were wings everywhere as I wiped my feet against your threshold. I heard the cricket scratch himself beneath the armpit as the old man said to me I shall be here to give account (p. 112).

This method of ending a play with an admixture of optimism and pessimism is typical of Soyinka and he adopts it in many of his plays perhaps in order to avoid the error of resolving human experience somewhat too arithmetically.

In the present instance, however, the cumulative impression of the play seems to be more pessimistic than otherwise.

A caveat needs to be added here to the effect that Soyinka's pessimism must not be taken as a deliberate, sadistic cynicism. His intention, it seems, is to highlight the contradictions in man's fortune and those ineffectualities which seem to have engendered them. The underlying suggestion is that man is the architect of his own fortune and he can change his lot for the better only if he learns to reduce the scope of his imperfections. In other words, Soyinka is urging man to take his fate in his hands. This, perhaps, is the central logic behind the oscillation between hope and despair in The Swamp Dwellers. The Beggar, for example, rejects beggary and pity and opts for a more resolute attitude to life.

Conclusion

The specific task of this chapter has been to show that the plays of Synge and Soyinka evince an abiding and unrelenting preoccupation with death.

In Synge's case, this preoccupation is a product of personal and cultural elements, in Soyinka's case, the personal

element appears to be absent. But common to both writers is a situating of their preoccupation with death within the cultural matrixes of their traditional backgrounds, although those matrixes produce different death-orientations.

Death-images abound in the works of both writers and with these images, they seem to have evolved a thanatodicea which, in the main, is a philosophical comment, imbued with the epiphanic projections that are peculiar to such comments and delivered from an artistic pulpit. This thanatodicea derives from the perpetual confrontation between the forces of life and death which runs through the plays of Synge and Soyinka as a central and decided motif. Synge and Soyinka's characters usually seek life and self-fulfilment but this well-meaning attempt to assert their eros-instinct (a la Freud) usually leads to death.

We have already discussed the manifestation of this thanatodicea in four representative plays: Synge's In the Shadow of the Glen and The Well of the Saints and Soyinka's A Dance of the Forests and The Swamp Dwellers. But at a broader level, it constitutes the substratum of Synge's and Soyinka's oeuvre.

By extension then, it is also useful for an understanding of the personality and the significance of Uncle Colm and Mary Costello in When the Moon Has Set, Deirdre and the sons of Usna in Deirdre of the Sorrows, Maurya and her sons in Riders to the Sea, Professor, Kotonu and Sergeant Burma in The Road, Danlola and Kongi in Kongi's Harvest; Eman in The Strong Breed, Elesin, Olunde, the Pilkings and the village community in Death and the King's Horseman, Isola and Reverend Erinjobi in Camwood on the Leaves, Old man and Bero in Madmen and Specialists, Gunema, Kasco, Kamini and Tuboum in A Play of Giants and Godspcak Igbehodan in Requiem for a Futurologist.

Examined closely, this thanatodicea constitutes the core of Synge and Soyinka's tragic vision¹¹⁹ and this is perhaps why it is silent, in fact almost completely absent, in their comedies; with the sole exception of Requiem for a Futurologist in the case of Soyinka. It is, at bottom, a pontification of the irony that underscores human experience namely, that in the midst of life, man is in death and this irony, Synge and Soyinka insist, is cyclical. For Soyinka, this cyclicity is illustrated by the image of the mobius strip in Idanre. As defined in Idanre, the mobius strip is

multiform

Evolution of the self-devouring snake to spatials
 New in symbol, banked loop of the mobius strip
 And interlock of re-creative rings, one surface
 Yet full comb of angles, uni-plane, yet
 sensuous with complexities of mind and motion. 120

Because of this cyclical vision, Synge and Soyinka, particularly the latter, have been accused by some critics of imposing a pessimistic interpretation on reality. On the contrary their portrayal of the universal irony is not a sadistic celebration of death or a wanton dramatization of morbidity. Both writers portray the ubiquitousness of death only as a means of re-establishing man's ability to suffer and endure.

In sum, their thanatodicea is underlined by a humanistic affirmation which is essentially a revolt against the bestiality of nature and the enigmatic countenance of life.

NOTES

¹Georg Feuerstein, "Immortal Death and Human Civilization" Da Free John (pseud.) Easy Death: Talks and Essays on the Inherent and Ultimate Transcendence of Death and Everything Else (compiled and edited with an introduction and commentary by Georg Feuerstein) (Clearlake, California: The Dawn Horse Press, 1983), p. 1.

²Robert Kastenbaum and Ruth Aisenberg, The Psychology of Death (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1974), p.15.

³C.S. Jones, "In the midst of life... Reflections on some biological aspects of death," E.A. Grollman (ed.) Explaining Death to Children (Boston: Beacon Press, 1947), p. 144.

⁴Kenneth Burke, "Thanatopsis for Critics: A Brief Thesaurus of Deaths and Dying" Essays in Criticism, 2(1952), pp.370-375.

⁵Kastenbaum and Aisenberg, p. 113.

⁶Douglas C. Kimmel, Adulthood and Aging: an interdisciplinary developmental view. Second edition. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1980), p.7

⁷M.H. Nagy, "The Child's view of death" Journal of Genetic Psychology, Vol.73, 1948, pp. 3-27.

⁸Edwin S. Schneidman, "On the deromanticization of death", University of California at Los Angeles, unpublished manuscript, quoted in Kastenbaum and Aisenberg, p. 47.

⁹Kastenbaum and Aisenberg, p. ix.

¹⁰Da Free John (pseud.), Easy Death: Talks and Essays on the Inherent and Ultimate Transcendence of Death and Everything Else (compiled and edited with an introduction and commentary by Georg Feuerstein) (Clearlake, California: The Dawn Horse Press, 1983).

¹¹Abd-ru-shin, In the Light of Truth, The GRAIL MESSAGE Vol.II, Third edition (Vomperberg: Alexander Bernhardt Publishing Co., 1979).

¹²See note 6 above.

¹³Franz Rozenzweig, Understanding the Sick and the Healthy (ed. by N.N. Glazer) (New York: Noonday Press, 1953).

¹⁴See Sigmund Freud, The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (James Strachey (ed.)) (London: Hogarth Press, 1955); in particular see Chap. XIV: "Thoughts for the Times on War Death" (1915) and Chap. XVIII: "Beyond the Pleasure Principle"; also see Sigmund Freud, An Outline of Psychoanalysis (New York: Norton, 1949) and M.D. Max Schur, Freud: Living and Dying (London: The Hogarth Press, 1972).

¹⁵See note 3.

¹⁶W.E.D. Evans, The Chemistry of Death (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1963).

¹⁷Da Free John, Easy Death..., p. 32.

¹⁸Abd-ru-shin, p. 158.

¹⁹J.S. Mbiti, African religions and philosophy (London, Ibadan, Nairobi: Heinemann, 1982), pp 25-26. cf. E.G. Parrinder, African Traditional Religion (London: S.P.C.K., 1968): Chapter XII: "The Soul and its Destiny", pp.134-141; Ulli Beier, Origin of Life and Death: African Myths (London: Heinemann, 1966);

H. Abrahamson, The Origin of Death: Studies in African Mythology (Stud. Ethnogr. Upsal.3) (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wicksells 1951), R.E.S. Tanner, Transition in African Belief (New York: Mary Knott, 1967).

²⁰ Sola Adebajo, "Oku Riro: Yoruba System for Avenging the Dead" Oye: Ogun Journal of Arts, Vol. 1 June 1988, pp.69-81; Bolaji Idowu, Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief (London: Longman, 1966), p. 187.

²¹ See Lawrence L. Langer, The Age of Atrocity: Death in Modern Literature (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), p. 1.

²² Freud says

And now, it seems to me, the meaning of the evolution of culture is no longer a riddle to us. It must present to us the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instincts of life and the instincts of destruction, as it works itself in human species. This struggle is what all life essentially consists of and so the evolution of civilization may be simply described as the struggle of human species for existence. (see Sigmund Freud, Civilization and its discontents (Transl. by Joan Riviere) (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1929), p. 103; cf. Sigmund Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle Trans. James Strachey (New York: Bantam Books, 1959), pp.67-71.

²³ Gregory Zilboorg, "Fear of Death" Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 1943, 12, pp. 465-475.

²⁴ C.H. Wahl, "The Fear of Death" Herman Feifel (ed.) The Meaning of Death (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), pp.25-26.

²⁵ David Lester, "Experimental and Correlational Studies of the fear of death" Psychological Bulletin, 1967, pp.27-36.

²⁶ Herman Feifel, "Death" Norman L. Farberow, Taboo Topics (New York: Atherton Press, 1963), pp. 8-21.

²⁷ Herbert Marcuse, "The Ideology of Death" in Herman Feifel (ed.) The Meaning of Death, Chapter 5.

²⁸ Zilboorg, p. 465.

²⁹ See Johannes Merringer, The Gods of Prehistoric Man (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1960). Merringer explains that the prehistoric man was devoted to his dead. Fear of the dead, that sinister force which has played no small part in the history of religion, seems to have been altogether foreign to him... (p. 13)

³⁰ Phillipe Aries, Western Attitudes toward DEATH: From the Middle Ages to the Present (Transl. by Patricia M. Ranum) (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1974). This book has been revised by Aries and re-titled The Hour of Our Death (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1981); unfortunately, we have not been able to lay our hands on a copy of this revised edition as at the time of this writing; hence we relied on the old edition.

³¹ See note 1.

³² Jacques Choron, Death and Western Thought (New York: Collier Books, 1963).

³³ Arnold Gessell and F.L. Ilg, The Child from Five to Ten (New York: Harper and Bros, 1946).

³⁴ Irving E. Alexander and Arthur M. Adlerstein, "Affective responses to the concept of death in a population of children and early adolescents" Journal of Genetic Psychology, No.93, 1958, pp. 167-177.

³⁵ Sylvia Anthony, The Child's discovery of death (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1940).

³⁶ Gregory Rochlin, "How younger children view death and themselves" E.A. Grollman (ed.) Explaining Death to Children (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), pp. 51-88.

³⁷ See note 7.

³⁸ J.M.A. Munnichs, Old Age and Finitude (Basel, Switzerland and New York: Karger, 1966).

³⁹ Wendell Swenson, "Attitudes toward death in an aged population" Journal of Gerontology, 16, 1961, pp. 49-53.

⁴⁰ Simone de Beauvoir, The Coming of Age (Transl. by Patrick O'Brien) (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1972).

⁴¹ This phrase is advisedly used here because of the parallels between the attitude of Dutch elders and Socrates. When Socrates received his death sentence at the age of seventy, he remarked that, at his age, death was to be more desired than life.

⁴² Munnichs, p. 125.

⁴³ See Plato's Phaedo and Phaedrus; and for an expanded discussion of his views on death and the immortality of the soul, see Pamela M. Huby, "Socrates and Plato" D.J. O'Connor (ed.), A Critical History of Western Philosophy (New York and London: The Free Press, 1964), pp. 14-35.

⁴⁴ See John A. Rist, Epicurus; an Introduction (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1972).

⁴⁵ See William Shakespeare, "Julius Ceasar", The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (London, New York, Sydney, Toronto: Spring Books, 1979), Act II, Scene 2, p. 728.

⁴⁶Philippe Aries, p. 15.

⁴⁷Georg Feuerstein in *Da Free John*, p. 18.

⁴⁸Douglas Kimmel, p. 494.

⁴⁹See Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: The Free Press, 1973); cf. Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytic Meaning of History* (New York: Viking Books, 1959).

⁵⁰See Gerald J. Gruman, *A History of Ideas about the Prolongation of Life: the evolution of prolongevity hypotheses to 1800*; *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol.56, 1966, Part 9; cf. W.E. Hocking, *The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience* (New York: Harper and Bros. 1957); C.J. Lamont, *The Illusion of Immortality* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950); C.J. Ducasse, *The belief in a life after death* (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1961). Note: Gruman defines prolongevity as "the significant extension of the length of life by human action".

⁵¹For a full-length account of the epic, see N.K. Sandars, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (London: Penguin, 1965).

⁵²Daisaku Ikeda, *Dialogue on Life Vol. II: Buddhist Perspectives on the Eternity of Life* (Tokyo: Nichiren Shoshu International Center, 1977), p. 125.

⁵³See Jessica Mitford, *The American Way of Death* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1963).

⁵⁴L. Brillouin, "Life, Thermodynamics, and cybernetics" W. Buckley (ed.), *Modern System research for the behavioural scientist* (Chicago: Aldine, 1968), pp. 147-156, p. 121.

⁵⁵Ignace Lepp, *Death and its Mysteries* (New York: Macmillan, 1872), p. 121.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Kastenbaum and Aisenberg, p. 1.

⁵⁷ Montaigne remarked that "the continuous task of your life is to build death"; Schopenhauer pronounced death "The muse of philosophy," and Heidegger once remarked: "existence for death". Of particular interest is Heidegger's declaration that

It is not only when he comes to die, but always and essentially that man is without issue in the face of death. Insofar as man is, he stands essentially in the issuelessness of death (Martin Heidegger, An Introduction of Metaphysics Translated by Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 158.

⁵⁸ Kastenbaum and Aisenberg, p. 1.

⁵⁹ For a detailed discussion of Otto Rank's views see Ernest Becker, The Denial of Death; on Freud, see note 14.

⁶⁰ Sigmund Freud, quoted in Lawrence Langer, p.9.

⁶¹ Kastenbaum and Aisenberg, p. 132.

⁶² F.P. Weber, Aspects of death and correlated aspects of life in art, epigram and poetry (London: H.K. Lewis and Co. Ltd., 1922), p. 66.

⁶³ Kastenbaum and Aisenberg, p. 199.

⁶⁴ Theodore Spencer, Death and Elizabethan Tragedy (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936), p. 201.

⁶⁵ See D. McClelland, "The Harlequin Complex" Robert White (ed.) The Study of Lives (New York: Atherton Press, 1963), pp. 94-119.

⁶⁶ Samuel Beckett, Endgame (London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1985), p. 45.

⁶⁷ See Alfred Alvarez, The Savage God: A Study of Suicide (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971; New York: Random House, 1972). Concentrating on the works of Sylvia Plath, Berryman, Lowell and Ted Hughes, Alvarez associates genius with suicidal tendencies. He argues that some long-lived poets - Frost, Yeats, and Marianne Moore - were able to achieve significance because they underwent an inner suicide. The artist, he says, must push himself beyond the precipice of sanity in order to experience that necessary melancholic breakdown which would bring out the best in him.

⁶⁸ Christian Immo Schneider, The Problem of Death in Herman Hesse (Marburg: N.G. Elvert Verlag, 1973). The book is in three chapters. The first chapter is a general review of the problem of death in the works of Hesse, it also attempts a technical analysis of style, structure and symbolism in the works; Chapter Two discusses the problem of death in Hesse from a psychological standpoint; the third chapter examines the philosophical implications of the problem.

⁶⁹ Leslie Aaron Fielder, Love and Death in the American Novel (New York: Criterion Books, 1960). Fielder says her book is "thick and complex" (p.vii) (the book runs into 503pp.) but it is not "academic" (p.vii), "it is thematic rather than strictly historical, selective rather than exhaustive" (p.ix). The book succeeds beyond the modest aspirations of its author. It may not be academic but it is sound and convincing and in spite of its selectivity, it offers a fairly exhaustive discussion of the treatment of death in the American novel.

⁷⁰ Lawrence L. Langer, The Age of Atrocity: Death in Modern Literature (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978). In his first two chapters, Langer attempts a review of some of the existing literature on death, in the chapters that follow he discusses the death-phenomenon in the works of Thomas Mann, Albert Camus, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Charlotte Delbo in that order.

⁷¹ Garrett Stewart, Death sentences: Styles of Dying in British Fiction (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: Harvard University Press, 1984):

This is a book about terminals and boundaries, mortality and closure, the infinitesimals of style and the finite limits of representational language, about least and last things together. It is a book, to start with, about three vast and familiar facts of life and art: death, content, and form. Only by their particular triangulation in the genre of prose fiction do they mark out the hypothesis of the present study: that death in fiction is the fullest instance of form indexing content, is indeed the moment when content, comprising the imponderables of negation and vacancy, can be found dissolving to pure form. Death in narrative yields, by yielding to, sheer style. (p. 3.)

Stewart proves the foregoing hypothesis through a detailed examination of the novels of Dickens, The Brontes, Gaskell, Eliot, Thackeray, Hardy, Conrad, Forster, Lawrence, Woolf, Beckett and Nabokov.

⁷² See Jules Laforgue, Selected Writings of Jules Laforgue ed. and transl. by William Jay Smith (New York: Grove Press, 1956).

⁷³ Leo Tolstoy, The Religious Writings of Leo Tolstoy (New York: The Julian Press Inc., 1960), pp. 47, 50 and 58.

⁷⁴ Thomas Mann, Essays of Three Decades Transl. by T.H. Lowe-Porter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p. 155.

⁷⁵ Pedro Salinas, "Lorca and the Poetry of Death" Robert W. Corrigan (ed.) Theatre in the Twentieth Century (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1963), pp. 277 and 281.

⁷⁶ See Charles I. Glicksberg, The Ironic Vision in Modern Literature (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969).

77

_____, The Tragic Vision in Twentieth Century Literature (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press; London and Amsterdam: Feffer and Simons Inc., 1968), p. 152.

78

_____, The Ironic Vission ..., p. 91.

79

Margaret Newlin, "The Suicide Bandwagon" The Critical Quarterly, Vol.14, No.4, Winter 1972, p. 378.

80

See John Millington Synge, Plays, Poems and Prose (London and Melbourne: Dent, 1988), p. 27.

81

Wole Soyinka, Collected Plays 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 159.

82

Ibid., p. 187.

83

Eldred Durosimi Jones, The Writing of Wole Soyinka Revised edition (London, Ibadan, Nairobi: Heinemann, 1983), p. 88.

84

Femi Osofisan, "Tiger on Stage: Wole Soyinka and Nigerian Theatre" Oyin Ogunba and Abiola Irele (eds.) Theatre in Africa (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1978), p. 166.
cf. Julius Ogu, "Thematic Imagery and Dramaturgical Accent in Soyinka's Death and the King's Horseman" Nigerian Theatre Journal, Vol. 2, Nos. 1 and 2, pp. 180-184.

85

See J.M. Synge, Four Plays and the Aran Islands (edited with an introduction by Robin Skelton) (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p.192.

86

See T.R. Henn (ed.), The Plays and Poems of J.M. Synge (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1963), pp. 295-297.

⁸⁷ See Wole Soyinka, The Interpreters (London: Andre Deutsch, 1965), p. 12.

⁸⁸ See Abdalla A. Metwally, "Synge's When the Moon Has Set" in his Studies in Modern Drama, Vol. 1. (Beirut: Beirut Arab University, 1971), pp. 38-59. Metwally's main thesis in this essay is that When the Moon Has Set "holds in embryo the main characteristics of (Synge's) later dramas". (p.39)

⁸⁹ Roger McHugh, "Preface" Maurice Harmon (ed.) J.M. Synge: Centenary Papers 1971 (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1972) p. xi.

⁹⁰ Sean O Suilleabhain, "Synge's Use of Irish Folklore" Maurice Harmon (ed.) p. 25.

⁹¹ See Eugene Benson, J.M. Synge (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1982), p. 29.

⁹² See David H. Greene, "J.M. Synge - A Centenary Appraisal" Maurice Harmon (ed.) p. 182.

⁹³ David H. Greene, and Edward M. Stephens, J.M. Synge 1871-1909 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), p. 70.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Padraic Colum quoted in Daniel Corkery, Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1966), pp.63-4.

⁹⁶ Maurice Harmon (ed.), p. 182.

⁹⁷ See Wole Soyinka, Poems From Prison (London: Rex Collings, 1981).

98

_____, Idanre and Other Poems (London: Eyre Methuen, 1969), p.10.

99

See Rufai M. Olusegun, "Semantic Extension as a feature of the Use of English in Nigeria: A case study of Wole Soyinka's Death and the King's Horseman", Ernest Emenyonu (ed.) Critical Theory and African Literature (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1987), pp. 247-260.

100

See Wole Soyinka, Myth Literature and the African World (Cambridge, London, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 140-160, also in Wole Soyinka, Art, Dialogue and Outrage: Essays on Literature and Culture (Ibadan: New Horn Press, 1988), pp. 21-34, for a situating of Soyinka's concern with death in Yoruba culture, see Afam Ebeogu, "From Idanre to Ogun Abibiman: an Examination of Soyinka's use of Ogun Images" The Journal of Commonwealth Literature, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1976, pp. 62-71. Gerald Moore, "The Image of death in African Poetry" Africa, Vol. 38, No.1, 1968. pp.57-70 Eldred Jones, The Writing of Wole Soyinka; Ketu H. Katrak, Wole Soyinka and Modern Tragedy: A Study of Dramatic Theory and Practice (N.Y., Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 1986).

101

See Labanji Bolaji, Yoruba Living Heritage (Ibadan: Omoleye Publishing Company, 1984), p. 39. cf. Sola Adebajo, "Oku Riro: Yoruba System for Avenging the Dead" Oye: Ogun Journal of Arts, Vol. 1, June, 1988, pp. 69-81.

102

Wole Soyinka, Myth ..., p. 145.

103

Wole Soyinka, "The Ritual Archetype" in Myth ..., p.29.

104

Ibid., p. 28.

105

For details see Sean O. Suilleabhain, Irish Wake Amusements (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1969).

¹⁰⁶ See Eleanor Knott and Gerard Murphy, Early Irish Literature (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 112-192.

¹⁰⁷ See notes 88-95 and 100.

¹⁰⁸ For a detailed discussion of loneliness in Synge's plays, see Ellen Douglas Leyburn, "The Theme of Loneliness in the Plays of Synge" Modern Drama, September 1958, pp. 84-90.

¹⁰⁹ Wole Soyinka, Idanre, p. 65.

¹¹⁰ T.R. Henn (ed.), The Plays and Poems of J.M. Synge (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1963, p. 90. All other page references to In the Shadow of the Glen are to this edition.

¹¹¹ Eugene Benson, p. 80.

¹¹² See Kastenbaum and Aisenberg, p. 133: "Playing possum" is perhaps the most familiar expression in the entire realm of thanatomimesis. This phrase is used metaphorically to describe a person who we believe is feigning a limitation or impairment.

¹¹³ Augustine Martin, "Christy Mahon and the Apotheosis of Loneliness" S.B. Bushrui (ed.), Sunshine and the Moon's Delight: A Centenary Tribute to John Millington Synge 1871-1909 (Gerrards Cross, Bucks and Lebanon: Colin Smythe and the American University of Beirut, 1972), p. 62.

¹¹⁴ All page references to the play are to the T.R. Henn edition, see note 110.

¹¹⁵ Wole Soyinka, Collected Plays 1; All page references to the play are to this edition.

¹¹⁶ Oyin Ogunba, The Movement of Transition: A Study of the Plays of Wole Soyinka (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1975), p. 70.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸See note 115.

¹¹⁹cf. T.R. Henn's observation that "death is the most satisfactory terminal point from the point of view of the tragic pattern" (T.R. Henn, The Harvest of Tragedy (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1956), p. 257; Henn's Chapter 21: "Death in Tragedy", pp. 257-269 is worth reading.

¹²⁰Wole Soyinka, Idanre, p. 65.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

CHAPTER THREE

J.M. SYNGE, WOLE SOYINKA AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Introduction

In the first chapter, we established that many critics tend to dismiss Synge and Soyinka as a-national. But a dispassionate interrogation of their art reveals the contrary, and this contradiction between the fact of their art and the fiction of the accompanying criticism emanates from the simple reason that the latter is usually informed by extra-literary considerations which defeat the objective assessment of both authors. Synge and Soyinka are discussed in the present chapter with a view to establish the implications of this tendency; they are also re-considered as nationalist writers and the peculiarity of their approaches, a fact that is probably also responsible for the wrong assessment of their writings, is outlined and compared.

Theoretical Framework/Literature Review

Any attempt to define nationalism is fated to be futile for the concept is complex and amorphous yet it is perhaps the most popular concept in modern thought judging from the

rave attention it receives in almost all field of epistemology:

If we ask what electricity it is that moves so many different men in different places, the simplest answer, the one that allows us to stop thinking most comfortably, is nationalism.¹

The most significant emotional factor in public life today is nationalism. Of the current age it is the mark at once intense and universal.²

Nationalism has become man's greatest attraction. Both as a historical process and as a political concept, it seems to have established itself as the most potent force in history. Wars have been fought on its account, several men have laid down their lives for its sake, many nations exist today on its basis; several others are extinct because they were caught in its cauldron. It is taught in schools, propagandized by governments and worshipped by statesmen.

But nationalism is ultimately contradictory as it has been the author of so much good and simultaneously of untold acts of sabotage. Man has always patronised it but he has also learnt to dread its capacity for evil. A mysterious phenomenon, it appears in different guises depending on its

historical context and the temperament and the orientation of the scholar investigating it. Hence it is descriptive of such attractive figures as Mahatma Ghandhi, Mazzini, Sun Yat-sen, Kemal Pashal and also, ironically, of dictators and tyrants like Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin.

One opinion which seems to hold sway among several commentators on the subject and which seems to produce its most convenient definition is that it possesses certain fundamental features principal among which is its presupposition of the existence of a nation. K.R. Minogue,³ Elie Kedourie,⁴ Ernest Renan,⁵ K.H. Silvert⁶ and Halvan Koht⁷ all aver that the nation is the core of nationalism. A nation, as they define it, is a collectivity of individuals whose existence is determined by the same set of parameters usually a common ancestry, government, common sympathies, language, race and religion. Nationalism arises out of the determination to preserve and protect this national heritage. Thus, nationalism, in spite of Munro Chadwick⁸ and Luigi Sturzo's⁹ objections, is patriotism of a kind because it is fundamentally an expression of the love of the country that is, a dramatisation of the traditional code of patriotism

namely that the country is supreme. Nationalists hold this creed to be sacred and not surprisingly it formed part of the essence of the French Revolution, the American Declaration of Independence and Hitler's war of hatred and attrition. This statement immediately calls our attention to the contradictory nature of nationalism, a theme that would be discussed repeatedly in the course of this chapter. If nationalism is responsible for wars of liberation like the French and the American, is it not illogical that it should also be the motto of the second World War which in spirit and manifestation was antithetical to the French and American revolutions?

This potent ambiguity would seem to be partly responsible for the inability of scholars to arrive at a consensus on the basic meaning of the concept and nowhere is this more evident than in the widely held notion, already stated, that nationalism derives from the sharing and the protection of a common ancestry, language, race, religion and environment.¹⁰ These elements are inadequate for an understanding of the nationalist phenomenon insofar as none of them is absolute.

There is no doubt that many of them have played decisive roles in the emergence of certain nationalities. The racial and linguistic elements are strong, for example,

in the nations of Germany, France, England, Italy and China. Jewish nationalism or Zionism was inspired by racial and religious elements. Arab nationalism owes much of its impetus to religion.¹¹ Language is a particularly decisive factor in Irish nationalism. The geographical environment is so in Polish nationalism. Yet none of these elements is ideal and imperative. There are instances of several nationalities and national movements which do not derive exclusively from any of them.

For example, Yugoslavia, Belgium and Switzerland are made up of several linguistic minorities and none of the European nations can lay claim to racial purity. The fervid nationalism of America also invalidates the question of race. The Soviet Union has about 100 languages.

Nigeria has about 270 languages and here, nationality is an artificial concept as loyalties are tribal rather than national since there is no one group that can serve as the national group. The protection of the homeland may have played such a crucial role in German, Chinese and Shinto nationalism but the reverse is the case in Zionism where it is the aspiration towards recovery rather than the possession

of the geographical entity that is essential to the concept of nationhood. The inadequacy of these elements would perhaps become clearer through an illustrative discussion of the linguistic element.

Many scholars regard language as the soul of nationalism. Commenting on the sources of national consciousness, Hugh Seton-Watson remarks that language is "in modern times by far the most important".¹² Abdullah-al-Alayili says it "is the essential pillar on which a stable national edifice is erected".¹³ E. Haugen insists that

Nation and language have become inextricably intertwined. Every self-respecting nation has to have a language. Not just a medium of communication, a 'vernacular' or a 'dialect' but a fully developed language. Anything less marks it as underdeveloped.¹⁴

These attempts to erect language as the first cause of nationalism seem logical. A nation which claims to be independent and still speaks a foreign tongue, particularly that of the imperialist hegemony which it opposes politically, cannot lay claim to true sovereignty because since language is a vehicle of social and cultural norms, the supposedly

independent nation would still find itself tied to the cultural apron-strings of the imperialist. Language is thus a very powerful index of individuality; hence, human communities have treated it over the ages as the source of pride as explained by the historical antitheses between the Jews and the Gentiles and between the Greeks and the Barbarians.

Language played a central role in German nationalism. Germany, at the time of the French Revolution, was divided into about three hundred and fifty states and the inhabitants spoke nearly four hundred distinct languages. When German nationalism eventually gathered speed, the preservation of the German language was considered primary and the extent to which this was so is evident, for example, in the writings of Herder and Fichte, two philosophers whose influence on the rise of German nationalism is far from being ordinary.

Herder, in his Treatise Upon the Origin of Language argued that "for a man to speak a foreign language was to live an artificial life, to be estranged from the spontaneous, instinctive sources of his personality".¹⁵ Each nation should value its cultural heritage, its language and literature. As Herder puts it,

Has a people anything dearer than the speech of its fathers? In its speech resides its whole thought-domain, its tradition, history, religion, and basis of life, all its heart and soul. To deprive a people of its speech is to deprive it of its one eternal good ... 16

Fichte, writing later in his Addresses to the German Nation expressed the same concern.¹⁷ Throughout the period of German nationalism, the purification and unification of Germany which was achieved by Otto von Bismarck at a political level was complemented, at a cultural level, by the German litterateurs who sought to revive the German tongue and free it of its Latinic and French accretions.

India, at the time of the partition, had hundreds of languages none of which had been developed enough to satisfy contemporary needs due to the supremacy of the English language during the colonial period. Out of the belief that a new nation must have its own language, fathers of the Indian nation resolved to discourage the continued use of the English language hence they decided that fourteen major Indian languages should be "accorded the status of official languages. Hindi was to be the official language of all India, and English was to continue as an official language until 1965".¹⁸

Similarly, language was more or less the major focus of Irish nationalism preoccupied as it was with the revival of Gaelic that is the "caint na ndaoine" (the speech of the people, before the colonial intervention). Nationalists who spoke this original language wore with pride a small badge called the fainne; and de Valera, first President of the Irish Republic, told his friends of the Gaelic League that if he had to choose between language and freedom, he would choose language. Edward de Valera, in true nationalist spirit, changed his name to Eamon de Valera and in the Irish Dail in 1927, "he would begin speaking in Gaelic, only to be forced to revert to English by the fact that not all the deputies could understand him".¹⁹

De Valera was not alone in his fanatical dramatisation of the Irish tongue. Such behaviour was common with many Irish nationalists, particularly Douglas Hyde, founder of the Gaelic League and President of Ireland from 1938-1945. Hyde championed the Irish cause and preferred to be identified in his Irish name - An Craoibhin Aoibhinn. In an address entitled "The Necessity for De-Anglicizing Ireland"²⁰ which he delivered before the Irish National Literary Society on

November 25, 1892, he demanded the severance of all relations with the English and the English tongue. To prove his case, he, a year later, established the Gaelic League - a politico-cultural association which sought to restore dignity to Ireland and establish the Gaelic as the only legitimate mode of expression.²¹ In addition, Hyde wrote plays in the Irish language notably Casadh an tSugsin (The Twisting of the Rope) and An Tinnear agus an tSidhearg (The Tinker and the Fairy).

The Irish nationalists did not restrict their concern with language to Ireland. They carried it abroad to several international conferences and in defiance of the ethics of such forums, they dramatised their enthusiasm. Of particular relevance here is the behaviour of William Gibson during the Third session of the Conference on Nationalities and Subject Races held in Caxton Hall, Westminster, London, June 28-30, 1910. Hon. Gibson attended the conference wearing "the picturesque national Irish dress of saffron kilt and mantle flung like a plaid across the shoulders".²² When it was his turn to address the gathering, he spoke first in Irish in greeting to the chair and was acknowledged by his fellow Gael, Mr. Cunninghame Grahame who chaired the session. Thereafter

Gibson launched into a politics of language:

I use the Irish language because it is my national language. Irish is as much the national language of Ireland as Polish is of Poland or German of Germany, and we Irish will never be satisfied until it is used always and as a matter of course wherever Irishmen meet. At an international gathering like this, however, I propose that we should use French, not only because it is the language of Western civilisation, but as a language in many ways akin to our own....

(At this point, he shifted to the French language):

I am now speaking in French partly as a protest against the idea that English is the language of international relations, or, so far as the Irish are concerned, the language of freedom, but as it appears that there are many present totally ignorant of French, I shall conclude my speech in "the tongue of the stranger", as English is to this day called in Ireland, much as I dislike the language. But I must remind my hearers that there is only one use an Irishman could have for this tongue, and that is to lay it about the back of the stranger himself.

(So saying, Mr Gibson began to speak in English):

There is one language which has been a persecution to me ever since my earliest childhood. It has done serious damage to my mouth, tongue, throat and organs of respiration, and nothing but the very strongest sense of duty

could induce me to speak it now, because if Irishmen wish really to be men, they must be Irish and not bad imitations of other people... In this struggle for the national language of Ireland we shall win, because we intend to win.²³

Nationalism in African countries may not entail the religious attachment to the mother-tongue which characterized German, Irish and Indian nationalism. However, the issue of language was also considered important. In Francophone Africa for example the indigenous tongue had been completely supplanted by the French Language because of the assimilationist policy of the French imperialist, a Cartesian nationalism namely Negritude emerged to demand a wholesale return to the roots - to indigenous customs, traditions, language and ethos.²⁴

Thus language has always played a central role in nationalism but the necessary caveat must be added that it is inadequate as a measure of the nationalist struggle. Often, the aspirations of nationalists in relation to it never actualise. Fichte complained for example that the introduction of such Latinic words as Humanity, Popularity and Liberality into the German language demeans it and imposes a foreign intellectual ethic on the people but it is doubtful

if German, as it is spoken today, has succeeded in freeing itself completely from its Latinic accretions. In India, English has survived beyond its 1965 deadline as it still remains the favourite means of communication. The teaching of Gaelic was made compulsory once Ireland had become independent "but the truth is that most Irishmen are much happier speaking English".²⁵

For their part, Americans do not regret being burdened with the English language. They do not see it as inimical to the American national soul; on the contrary, they have developed a distinct American variety of the language. And in Africa, English, far from disappearing from the socio-political lexicon of the people, is indeed the major vehicle of thought and action.

Because of this inadequacy of the linguistic element, K.R. Minogue observes that "the nationalist belief that a language expresses the soul of a nation is a piece of mysticism difficult to construe rationally".²⁷ The theory of nationalism might be saved from difficulties if language is taken in "a metaphorical sense":

People who speak the same language would then become, not necessarily those who use the same set of words, but those who, in some perhaps spiritual sense understand each other.... "To speak the same language' in this metaphorical sense means loving the same things, admiring the same kinds of behaviour, sharing customs, and understanding each other's experiences. There is another dimension to this metaphorical usage. A language may be taken, not merely as a set of words and rules of syntax, not merely as a kind of emotional reciprocity, but also as a certain conceptualisation of the world. 27

Boyd Shafer is of the opinion that the factors of language and race in nationalism should be recognized but not over-dramatized because they are open to exceptions. 28

Kedourie adds that

academic disciplines like philology, can make a powerful auxiliary for such a political doctrine and enable it to secure conviction and assent, but they do not constitute the ultimate ground on which it takes its stand. 29

As is the case with language so it is with common ancestry, customs, history, race and territory. And if these do not constitute the core of nationalism, what then does? This has been the major question which many scholars have attempted to grapple with and resolve and their effort

has produced a variety of notions. Primal among these is the oft-quoted statement by Ernest Renan that "a nation is a soul, a spiritual principle ... it is an everyday plebiscite, a perpetual affirmation of life"³⁰ Ahad Ha'am says the nation "is what individuals feel in their hearts is the nation".³¹ Karl Deutsch proposes what he calls "a functional definition of nationality":

What counts, he says, is not the presence or absence of any single factor, but merely the presence of sufficient communication facilities with enough complementarity to produce the overall result. The Swiss may speak four different languages and still act as one people, for each of them has enough learned habits, preferences, symbols, memories, patterns of landholding and social stratification, all of which together permit him to communicate more effectively with other Swiss than with the speakers of his own language who belong to other peoples.³²

Max Sylvius Handman submits that nationalism is a sentiment and it involves "the chronic agitation for the integrity and sovereignty of one's people or another".³³ According to Hans Kohn, nationalism is "group consciousness... group mind and group action". It is, he adds, "first and foremost, a state of mind".³⁴

Nationalism is all these and none in particular. It is a very flexible concept capable of lending itself to different interpretations and lacking a specific theoretical framework. But in spite of this multi-dimensionality, it seems the most enduring interpretation of nationalism is to see it as the resolve to uphold the integrity of one's nation or adopted nation.

Scholars often commit the error of insisting that nationalism is a modern invention or as Minogue posits, "a European invention".³⁵ Elie Kedourie states, for example, that "nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century".³⁶ Seton-Watson writes that "nationalism as we understand it, hardly existed before the French Revolution".³⁷ In Snyder's view,

nationalism emerged in eighteenth century Western Europe, spread throughout the continent in the nineteenth century, and in the twentieth century penetrated into the Near and Middle East, Africa and Asia.³⁸

This view is usually rationalised on the grounds that primitive communities lack the conception of nationhood. These communities may have expressed such feelings as the love of the fatherland but this was not nationalism per se

but a kind of devotion to the Heimatliebe, the tribe or the hamlet. Generally, the loyalty of the individual was not directed to the state but to the emperor or the king; or as in the medieval period, to a religious community or creed. Communities did not take serious pride in national languages; often, only one language (Latin or Arabic) was considered the language of civilization.

Let it be noted that the root of the premise that nationalism is absent in pre-modern societies derives essentially from the absence in these societies of the generality of the elements of nationalism earlier discussed; that is, race, religion, territory, language and ancestry. The argument bears, in addition, the colonial mentality tincture in its application to Africa since here, we are confronted again with a part of the larger and more deliberate attempt to deny Africans their history and heritage. Alfred Cobban argues that "National self-determination may in its normal political connotation be out of the question in Africa..."³⁹

On the contrary, nationalism is not out of the question in pre-modern societies and even in Africa. These societies

may not possess the technical and sophisticated arrangement of contemporary nationalism and the basic features which constitute its core but their socio-political history reveals instances of the expression of the central spirit of nationalism namely the expression of love for one's home and the determination to preserve its integrity.

The inter-tribal wars of pre-historic times, the Peloponnesian wars, the Spanish Armada of 1558, the refusal of foreign intervention by the coastal cities of Africa, the authors of the Old Testament and the discoverers of America may hence be considered nationalist. Further, the notion of nation on which the nationalist argument is anchored also exists, contrary to pervasive opinion, in primitive communities even if it did not constitute the focus of loyalty.

Besides, nationalism is a universal phenomenon and a historical process which does not exclude any human community. At all times, human beings have always found the need to exist in community with others and since it is this alliance of peoples which constitutes the basis of nationalism it would be unfair to deny pre-modern societies of their claim to the phenomenon.

These are the views expressed by Louis Synder and Carlton Hayes. Synder explains further that

Nationalism in its modern form is by no means a completely new phenomenon, but rather a revival and fusion of older trends. It existed in cruder form in the tribalism of primitive peoples...⁴⁰

In other words, many of the present-day nationalist movements owe their roots to earlier forms. Zionism for example is merely a modern day variant of the Jewish exodus from Egypt and their return from Persia as recorded in the Old Testament. These two movements occurring at a time when the traits of nationalism as we know them today were absent, are still nevertheless nationalistic because beneath them is the Jewish determination to assert their own sovereignty.

Hayes argues that "nationalism is an attribute of primitive society" although it was "a small-scale nationalism".⁴¹ The point, as it appears to him, is that "Antiquity knew not nationalism as we know it".⁴² The nationalism of that period was tolerant and pacific completely without the fanatical erection of bulbous national and personal egos, the wars of attrition and the intolerance which characterise modern nationalism.

Theorists of nationalism often identify two basic forms of the concept - the primitive and the modern. Both are spiritually related and yet different in scope and personality; the former is the antecedent of the latter.⁴³ Modern nationalism is an intensification of the features of primitive nationalism. It emerged and assumed a distinctive character in the eighteenth century but the recognition of the nation as the ultimate arbiter of human affairs which emerged at this period was not exclusively an eighteenth-century child. Several other factors, spanning earlier centuries, contributed to its growth to the degree that they removed the various blocks which had impeded the full growth of primitive nationalism and hence created room for the emergence of the nation as it is known today.

These factors include the Industrial Revolution, the discovery of new means of transportation, the discovery of the printing press, the collapse of the medieval church and the emergence of a secular world-view, the rise of the middle class, commercial revolutions, the appearance of vernacular literatures and the growth of capitalism.

The effect of these on Europe is that they led to the emergence of new values and re-drew the socio-political map

of the continent. The discovery of new means of transportation opened up hitherto inaccessible regions and ensured free movement within a nation thus making the establishment of unity an easier task. The industrial Revolution, and the growth of secular vision combined to lay greater emphasis on the individual. The King and faith became inconsequential. Individuals no longer accepted the Puritan doctrine articulated in St. Augustine's The City of God. Monarchs were no longer considered synonymous with the state. The emphasis shifted to the people.

And the political goal of the period was neither the deification nor the servicing of superstitions and orthodoxies but the search for the sovereignty of the state and the affirmation of the dignity of man.

Of great import is the emergence, at this period, of a group of philosophers who provided the intellectual stimulation and the body of ideas which accelerated the growth of nationalism. These include Herder, Fichte, Schlegel, Schleiermacher, Arndt, Jahn, Muller and Nietzsche in Germany, John Locke, Sir Walter Scott, Bentham, Edmund Burke and Bolingbroke in Britain; Chateaubriand, Carnot, Barere, Maurras

and Rousseau in France and Machiavelli in Italy. These philosophers emphasized autonomy, individuality and the concentration of political authority in the concept of the nation. The contributions of Herder, Fichte, Machiavelli, Hobbes and Rousseau, particularly Rousseau, were most decisive.

The nationalist doctrine of Herder and Fichte was almost completely cultural since it emphasized the values of language, literature and folk heritage as means of establishing nationhood. Machiavelli's doctrines are contained in his The Prince (1532), written as an address to the Italian monarchy but useful for its far-reaching comments on the state. The Prince is theoretically candid and its central message to the Medicis is that all state resources should be harnessed to free Italy from the barbarians. Machiavelli opines that everything must be subordinated to the state and princes should make the study of the art of war, and its execution, their main vocation in order to establish the supremacy of the state and ensure its survival and sovereignty. The Prince has enjoyed tremendous popularity as a text of nationalism. It influenced Richelieu, Napoleon and Bismarck.

Hobbes in Leviathan and Rousseau in Contrat Social

emphasize the sense of community and argue that a community is enhanced if its members are united by the same goal and attitudes. Hobbes' thesis is diluted by its excessive rationalism and its insistence on the ruthless protection of the community but Rousseau's is more broad-minded and this is perhaps partly why it is considered the most important nationalist doctrine in European history. Rousseau condemns internationalism and demands that the patriotism of the individual be directed not just at the patrie but at a larger unit namely, the nation-state itself. Patriotism, in his view, is the source of all good.

Minogue calls him "the prophet of a growing sense of community".⁴⁴ E.H. Carr says he is "the founder of modern nationalism".⁴⁵

The importance of Rousseau's thought in the development of the idea of nationalism can hardly be exaggerated. It lay not only in its immediate influence on the French Revolution, but also, and probably even more, in its effect upon the whole development of nineteenth-century political thought, above all in Germany. Rousseau provided the theoretical foundations upon which alone the nationalism of the nineteenth century could be built. A proper understanding of the nature of modern nationalism therefore demands a fuller discussion of Rousseau's political

thought than its immediate influence on the course of history, great as that was, would seem to justify. 46

The ideas of Rousseau and those of the other philosophers of nationalism, earlier discussed, in addition to the implications of the various factors, earlier defined, received concrete expression in the French Revolution, the American Revolution and the various revolutions which overtook Europe in the nineteenth century. The thrust of these revolutions as articulated by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen and the American Declaration of Independence is anchored on the determination to protect the nation and defend it against imperialist whims in whatever guise it presents itself; monarchy or colonialism. The French and the American revolutions were about the first most powerful dramatisations of this determination and accordingly, they served as models for other nations. Throughout the early part of the nineteenth century, the nationalist bug overtook Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and by the beginning of the twentieth century, its scope had embraced Asia and Africa.

In its wake, nationalism was positive and humanitarian in intent as it led to the emergence of nations and the growth

of national unity. The Netherlands, Scotland, U.S.A., Italy, Yugoslavia, Germany, Poland, Finland, Norway, Greece, Czechoslovakia, and the independent nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America are some of its products.⁴⁷ It has also produced several nationalist heroes who have served as sources of inspiration for contemporary politics and politicians notably Kemal Ataturk of Turkey, Sa'd Pasha Zaghul of Egypt, Bismarck, Cavour and Mazzini of Italy, Ibn Saud of the Arabian Peninsula, Mahatma Ghandi and Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Sun Yat-sen of China and Ben Yehuda of Israel.

But a closer look at the balance sheet of nationalism reveals that despite its contributions to the growth of the human estate, its impact has been far more negative than positive. Once considered the pet of all nations, nationalism is now regarded as "the root of all our ills".⁴⁸ "Nationalism, as the story is generally told begins as Sleeping Beauty and ends as Frankenstein's monster",⁴⁹ what was once associated with God has become a Moloch, a devil-incarnate. Nationalism has become a threat to world peace and the survival of the human race. It is now

a form of mania, a kind of extended and exaggerated egotism and it has easily recognisable symptoms of selfishness, intolerance, and jingoism, indicative of the delusions of grandeur from which it suffers. Nationalism is artificial and it is far from ennobling; in a word, it is patriotic snobbery. 50

It has become the author of terrorism, violence and "a whole crop of wars - wars of self-determination and wars of irredentism and wars of imperialism...." ⁵¹ In fact, we are no longer talking of nationalism per se "but chiefly something else" ⁵² identified by H. Munro Chadwick ⁵³ and Karl Deutsch as "extreme nationalism", ⁵⁴ by J. Huizinga as "hypernationalism" ⁵⁵ and by Carlton Hayes as "integral nationalism". ⁵⁶

The dysfunctions of nationalism could be seen in the excesses of Hitler and Mussolini who under the guise of nationalism imposed tyranny and agony on their respective countries and the whole world. Mussolini's fascist dictatorship in Italy lasted twenty-three years. Hitler killed six million Jews. ⁵⁷ The first and the second world wars, the various dramas of destruction enacted by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the failure to reconcile the Jews and the Arabs, the American civil

war, the failure of the compromise between India's Hindus and Muslims, the expulsion of the Armenians and Greeks from Turkey, during and after the first world war, and the repatriation of Germans from Mussolini's Italy are all illustrations of the extent to which nationalism has subverted its initial ideals.

Out of concern with this reversal, Carlton Hayes,⁵⁸ the Royal Institute of International Affairs,⁵⁹ and Harold Laski⁶⁰ recommend that nationalism must be mitigated if civilization hopes to survive. If "nationalism is not mitigated", says Hayes, "it will be an unqualified curse to future generations".⁶¹ Reasonable as this proposition may seem, its viability remains nevertheless doubtful for the simple reason that over the years several institutions such as the League of Nations, the Pact of Locarno, the United Nations and the Kellogg Pact have been established to achieve such a task. Yet nationalism remains a scourge imposing one misfortune or the other on the socio-political map of the century.

It is perhaps because of this unrelenting negativism that some scholars dismiss nationalism as absurd and evil. Elie Kedourie says it is "a rejection of life, and a love of death".⁶² Rabindranath Tagore calls it "this brotherhood of

hooliganism ... this abnormality, this terror ... the parent of all that is base in man's nature ... makes one almost openly ashamed of humanity".⁶³

Many attempts have been made to justify nationalism's antithetical metamorphosis. Primal in this regard is the assumption that nationalism has become a menace because many of its apostles are liars and pretenders. Their statements are mere rhetorics, veneer for several subterranean intentions which are far from what they openly profess. John M. Robertson describes this insincerity poetically: "Scratch thus the patriot", he says, "and you find the pirate; test the devotee of freedom, and you find the insolent oppressor".⁶⁴

The language of the nationalist has become unreal and the nationalist himself is involved, says Minogue, "in a fantasy and those involved in a fantasy are liable to violent and unpredictable rage if the world fails to fit their dreams".⁶⁵ Minogue rationalises this behaviour by explaining that many nationalists are "exiles, outsiders, the alienated, the excluded"⁶⁶ who for that reason have dreamy, nostalgic and fanatical ideas about their mother-country.

On the contrary, there are nationalists who are insiders, so to speak, and yet are nothing but pseudo-

nationalists. The exact psychological explanation of the phenomenon would seem to lie in the fact that nationalism is fundamentally a doctrine of power. Very few nationalists can resist the intoxicating urge for power. This, it seems, is the explanation for the perversions of Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and their likes.

Nationalism has also become evil because as it is practised today, the love of one's country has become synonymous with the hatred of the existence of other countries. Modern nationalism is selfish and jingoistic. The peaceful co-existence of all nations has become a catch-phrase remembered only during ceremonial political meetings and never during the moments of national policy-making. Nations find it difficult not to see each other as threats. The competition for economic and scientific security has thrown the world into a vast landscape of horror. Witness the graves of Maidanek, Auswitchz, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Vietnam, the Arab Peninsula and the banana republics of Latin America.

Closely allied to the intolerance among nations is the fact that in the modern world, nationalism has been erected into an absolute, objective a priori. It has become the sole preoccupation of all nations. The soveiregnty and expansion

of the state has become a fanatical vocation.

Karl W. Deutsch argues that modern nationalism is negative because it is characterized by a hardened will which converts it into "a worship of death and a creed of suicide".⁶⁷ When such is the case, the national communication process which is essential to national unity is impaired, the government resorts to propaganda as its only means of mobilising the populace and ultimately this leads to the loss of self-determination and "nationalism at the end of its tether becomes a force for the destruction of the nation".⁶⁸

But perhaps the most fundamental explanation for the nationalist evil is to admit that modern nationalism is a religion. It has become so perhaps because it emerged at a time when religion and medieval philosophy collapsed. With its emergence, it replaced these vanishing religious institutions and provided a new forum for the expression of man's crave for idols and his urge for worship. Nationalism thus became the new religion of the modern world. K.R. Minogue,⁶⁹ Carlton Hayes,⁷⁰ Edward Shillito⁷¹ and Abdullah-al-Alayili⁷² have discussed the senses in which this is so, concentrating on the parallels between nationalism and conventional religious ethics.

Nationalism, like Religion, parades several symbols - for example, the national anthem and the flag. It has its own places of worship, parades and pilgrimages and just as Christianity has its own special days like Corpus Christi, Easter and Christmas, nationalism presents equivalents in such celebrations as the Independence Day or Remembrance Day for Fallen Heroes. The most logical parallel between nationalism and religion, however, would seem to lie in the fact that both have the capacity to intoxicate their apostles and engender a fanatical brand of idealism which is refractorily insensitive to the demands of reality. It is in this sense that the present-day nationalist effusion could further be interpreted as the successor of medieval strong-headedness.

Boyd C. Shaffer has argued that nationalism is a "never-ending circle".⁷³ Jean-Rene Surrateau contends that the principle of nationalism has not finished playing a fundamental role in the history of man.⁷⁴ Both views are correct. For as long as man regards the nation as a fetish and refuses to tolerate his neighbours and define the limits of his own patriotism, nationalism would continue to play a decisive, albeit negative, role in socio-politics, and if we were to go by the present state of international relations, it is doubtful

if the reverse would ever be the case.

This is the lesson which the advocates of internationalism, often considered as an alternative to nationalism, have been forced to learn with all its paradoxical implications. An interesting example to illustrate the supremacy of nationalism could be found in the Marxist attitude towards the concept.

The Marxist position as articulated by Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels in The Communist Manifesto, Josef Stalin in Marxism and the National Question and Nikolai Lenin in "Critical Remarks on the National Question" is that nationalism is a bourgeois phenomenon designed to swindle, compartmentalise and cajole humanity.⁷⁵ Hence, Marxists opt for internationalism - the brotherhood of all nations for the creation of a civilized, non-bourgeois, classless, egalitarian world. "Workers of all countries, unite!" say the Marxists, but it is paradoxical that they have not always lived up to this credo. For example, members of the Second and Third International and many neo-marxists, have been compelled by other political considerations to adulterate or contradict the pristine ideological position articulated by the First International. Take Mikhail Gorbachev. Take Stalin.

Stalin, Russian Prime Minister during the second World War, was one of the most articulate communist critics of nationalism but when on Sunday, June 22, 1941, Hitler's Germany invaded Russia and occupied the Ukraines, Stalin momentarily forgot his anti-nationalism rhetorics and ironically embraced nationalism as a means of whipping up national sentiments against the Hitlerites. Names of folk heroes like Alexander Nevsky and Mikhail Kutuzov were invoked and parents, in demonstration of patriotism, named their children after these heroes. Cultural heritage was publicised. Throughout the second world war, nationalism was the fancy vogue in Russia.

But soon after the war, Stalin and Russians returned to their former ideological position. In 1948, Tito, the Yugoslavian Prime Minister was denounced by the Stalin government as a nationalist and saboteur, the same was the case with leaders of other Eastern Europe countries who, like Tito, sought to re-define the concept of internationalism which bound them to Moscow and assert their own national peculiarities even within the communist framework. Stalin frowned at this attempt to reduce the Russian hold on Eastern Europe.

Nationalism was the scapegoat for the expression of his discontent.

The communist attitude to nationalism is best described as ambivalent and it deserves no further comment except to state that the communist aversion to nationalism is hardly justified for the simple reason that both concepts are essentially two sides of the same political spectrum with a wide range of similarities.⁷⁶

One aspect which is perhaps more germane for our present purpose is the degree to which nationalism manifests and influences the cultural history of man. The love of the nation and the struggle for its sovereignty which occupies the attention of politicians, is often complemented by an equally determined effort by artists to document the heritage and extol the virtues of the nation. Thus, cultural nationalism has always developed as an adjunct to political nationalism. Munro Chadwick observes that during "the period of liberation (in Europe), nationalism, as distinct from patriotism, was (even) more prominent in literature than in actual politics".⁷⁷ Chadwick is right only if we subtract his futile attempt to differentiate between nationalism and patriotism.

Expressing a similar view, Carlton Hayes writes as follows:

Among litterateurs of the nineteenth century, poets, dramatists and novelists have been conspicuously successful propagandists of nationalism. At their hands national traits and national characters have been as rigidly conventionalized as was the chorus on the ancient Greek stage. The average man's notion of a Frenchman or a German or of an Irishman or of a Jew is gotten not from extensive personal observation but from antitypes supplied by versifiers, story-tellers and playwrights.⁷⁸

There seems to be a general consensus among scholars as regards the verity of this proposition.⁷⁹ But a voice of dissent exists in John M. Robertson who insists that "the doctrine that national pride yields literature of which nations may be proud is an error of errors, a falsity of falsities".⁸⁰

Robertson explains that to argue that Dante, Plato, Sappho, Leopardi, Burns, Aristophanes, Shakespeare, Omar Khayam, Goethe, Schiller, Kipling and Dickens spoke for their countries "is to blaspheme their genius".⁸¹ Genius is not the product of nationalism, provincialism or local or continental patriotism but of certain more enduring sociological conditions; "megalomaniacal and parochial patriotism alike

are in themselves noxious to great art".⁸² Robertson adds that literature should be universal in scope and spirit instead of gagging itself with empty gestures of patriotism. Goethe once said that "the literature of the future must be cosmopolitan".⁸³ "Behold", Robertson exclaims, "the strict fulfilment of his speech!"⁸⁴

John M. Robertson is entitled to his righteous indignation but his argument fails when the available data on nationalism and literature is re-examined. Goethe might have preferred cosmopolitan literature and spurned romantic nationalism but the truth is that his works embody romantic ideals and he further craved recognition as a patriotic German; his "Critique of Nationalism"⁸⁵ is therefore, at best, a mere theoretical gesture. Let Robertson take note of this. Let him also consider the fact that literature is often national first before being international.

Besides, ancient writers, contrary to his claim, were nationalists. Many of them expressed the love of their fatherland and even went as far as opposing their colleagues in whose works the national question appeared absent or mute. For example, Homer, Aeneas, Boewulf, Roland, Sophocles,

Aristophanes, Leopardi and Aeschylus all functioned within the national framework insofar as their art received its inspiration and found its objective correlative in the myths, legends, mores and the collective cultural heritage of their peoples. Their literature, to use H. Ernest Lewald's expression, was "the literature of full participation".⁸⁶

Perhaps what we have here is an expanding world view, and hence changing notions of interpretation yet there is some evidence to support the preceding claims. For example, Aeschylus fought in the Peloponessian wars. Is this not the action of a nationalist - a practical complement to his literary works wherein he celebrates the Greek values? In Homer's Illiad, Hector threatened with negative omens, brushes aside superstition and seeks solace in nationalist sentiment. "The one best omen" he says "is to be fighting for your country".⁸⁷

The poet Leopardi is so overcome with nationalist fervour that, when his sister marries in 1821, he composes this epithalamium: 'O my sister, in these times of dejection, in these times of mourning, you will add one more unhappy family to unhappy Italy. Your sons will be either unhappy or cowards. Wish that they be unhappy!'⁸⁸

Such nationalist sentiments also dominate the writings of Aeschylus. His The Frogs, for example, may be regarded, beyond its widely acclaimed value as dramatic criticism, as a commentary on the national question. In this play, Aristophanes enacts an imaginary contest between two Greek dramatists - Sophocles and Euripides. Issues of language, theme, style and characterization are considered and at the end, Aristophanes awards the prize to Sophocles. What Aristophanes does here is to give vent to his own prejudices and those of his contemporaries about Euripides. Sophocles is favoured in The Frogs not actually because he is artistically superior to Euripides, as the play tends to establish, but because the national question is more dominant in his works. Whereas Sophocles accorded the gods their rightful place and character in his plays, Euripides demythologized Greek values and brought the gods to the level of man.

Euripides' interpretation was at variance with the viewpoint of the Greek community of his time and accordingly, he was consistently denied the first prize at the City Dionysia. By condemning him, Aristophanes echoes the popular thought of his time and betrays himself as a nationalist,

for beneath his position is an expression of confidence in the sanctity of the Greek cosmogony and a readiness to defend defend it against critics, be they insiders or outsiders.

English literature is replete with nationalism. John Milton's *Areopagitica* advocates the freedom of the Press, but running through it is a nationalist flavour which Milton once captured pungently when he described England as God's chosen country, the elect-nation. Robert Louis Stevenson, Scottish novelist, essayist and poet, was no less English. Britain, says he, is

a garden enclosed, wherein all things that a man can wish, to make a pleasant life, are planted ... Whoever considers England will find it no small favour of God to have been made one of its natives, both upon spiritual and outward accounts. The happiness of the soil and air contribute all things that are necessary to the use or delight of man's life.⁸⁹

George Orwell (Eric Blair) in "England is a Family", Rudyard Kipling in "Recessional", written specially to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the reign of Queen Victoria and Hillaire Belloc in "The Love of England", also espouse nationalism.⁹⁰

In Africa, literature is part of the revolutionary struggle in Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa.⁹¹ Italian nationalism found its own voice in Dante and more particularly in Vittorio Alfieri, Ugo Foscolo and Gabrielle D'Annunzio - three poets who not only devoted their works to Italy but also participated actively in the Italian Risorgimento. Alfieri disliked the French and the French Revolution; hence he reacted violently against the French invasion of Italy and called for Italian unity in such works as "Il Misogallo".⁹² Foscolo called upon the dead from the Italian past to rise and fight against the Austrians. A Professor of National Eloquence at the University of Pavia, his inaugural lecture entitled "Carme sui Sepolcri" ("The Sepulchers") justifies the need for literary nationalism. D'Annunzio, author of Il Fuoco (The Flame of Life) served Italy during the first world war as an aviator and many of his ideas are said to have influenced Mussolini.⁹³

German nationalism received its impetus from literature, specifically from the Romantic movement which in its German variant was fundamentally nationalist.⁹⁴ Witness, for example, the works of Goethe, Schiller, Wagner and the Grimm Brothers. Goethe's nationalism has already been discussed.

Schiller, like him, disliked romanticism and preferred to be regarded as a classicist yet his works also fit into the nationalist framework.

The major conscious exponents of German nationalism at the literary level would seem to be Wagner and the Grimm brothers. Richard Wagner's music was deliberately German. Surrounded by French cultural presences, Wagner denounced anything French and sought to promote Germany by dramatising various aspects of its culture. He regarded Germans as the intellectual and cultural heirs of the Greeks and, not surprisingly, his music and cultural philosophy exerted great influence on Hitler.⁹⁵ For their part, the Grimm brothers collected German fairy tales and with these, they glorified Germany and promoted the German spirit.⁹⁶

The works of Alexander Pushkin, Dostoevsky and Turgenev demonstrate the contiguity between literature and Russian nationalism. Turgenev would seem to speak the mind of this trio when he remarked in Rudin that "without nationality is no art, nor truth, nor life, nor anything".⁹⁷ America also has its own share of nationalist writers: Whitman, Hemingway, Faulkner, Dreiser, Henry James, Edgar Allan Poe etc. Jewish

nationalism is given literary expression by Abraham Cahan, Meyer Levin, Ludwig Lewisohn, Michael Gold, Clancy Sigal and Norman Mailer.

Jules Michelet, Charles Peguy, Maurice Barres and Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, each in his own way, spoke for France. Michelet declared, for example, that "France is a religion".⁹⁸ Cervantes spoke for Spain. Adam Mickiewicz praised Poland in his poetry and also in his play, The Ancestors. And Petofi Sandor spoke the mind of Hungary during the embattled year of 1848: "This we swear, this we swear, slaves we will no longer be!"⁹⁹

A similar cry runs through Afro-American literature but here, the nationalism is racial, designed as it is to create space for the dignity of the black man within a white-dominated, conservative American society. This was the motive behind the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s and it receives voice in the writings of Jean Toomer, James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison and LeRoi Jones (Imamu Baraka).

Literary nationalism is a universal phenomenon and has always proved useful to the political process; hence politicians often encourage it. But here, we encounter a

paradox. The problematic ambivalence which we discovered in the nature of nationalism namely that the phenomenon despite its positive traits is also shot through with a redoubtable negativism emerges in literary nationalism in form of the contradictory realisation that literary nationalism, despite its good intentions, has also been the author of much dissension and acrimony between writers and politicians and particularly of much palpitation and misfortune for the writer.

It is an interesting fact of literary history that politicians or authorities having realised the value of art to their objectives insist on prescribing the specific philosophy and stance that art must adopt. Politicians often insist that a writer must be patriotic and in their own wisdom, this means that a writer must eulogise the nation. Artists who conform with this injunction are usually praised and rewarded; dissenters are treated with suspicion and punished. This censorship often creates distrust between the authority and the artist because the latter tends to view his vocation as a creative enterprise which ought not to be fettered by any ideology be it for the nation's sake or for the pleasure

of a group of self-styled statesmen.

In the Soviet Union, since the beginning of the twentieth century, all textbooks for use in schools have to be certified by the state to ensure that they conform with the national Communist philosophy; writers are also expected to be necessarily Communist or Russian and when they are so, they are treated as heroes. From June 6-8, 1880, for example, a national festival was held in Moscow in honour of Alexander Pushkin as a token of appreciation for his contributions to the emergence of the Soviet nation. A statue of Pushkin was unveiled on June 8 and Dostoevsky paid tribute to him in a speech entitled "On Pushkin as the Great National Poet".

Dostoevsky himself was no less considered national. When he died, Russians went a-mourning. Vsevolod Meyerhold played an active role in the October Revolution by creating the "October in the Theatre" movement which organized performances at railroad stations and Moscow streets to propagandize the Bolshevik government and its goals. In recognition of his services to the state, Meyerhold was appointed the director of the Theatre department of the new Commissariat of Education. He was also decorated as a "People's Artist".

The rationale for all these is that the Soviet state finds the writings of these artists congenial with its national aspiration but the moment an artist assumes a critical stance and identifies the faults of the system, he is immediately ex-communicated. Consider the example of Meyerhold.

In 1934, Meyerhold became disenchanted with the Bolsheviks following their directive that all plays should present socialist realism. He defied the government by producing Pushkin's The Queen of Spades and La Dame aux Camelias in an experimental impressionist mode instead of the naturalistic mode that was favoured by the state. Later, at the All-Union Congress of Directors in Moscow, Meyerhold criticised the government and defended the artist's right to experiment. The following day, the NKVD arrested him and shortly after, his wife was found brutally murdered in her apartment. Meyerhold's theatre was also closed down by government decree.

This has been the pattern in the Soviet Union, the national goal is sacred; whoever opposes it must be wasted. One more example exists in Stalin's displeasure with the emergence and growth of the Russian pre-Raphaelites who,

contrary to state policy, advocated the practise of art for art's sake. Stalin immediately ordered their arrest and not less than a hundred of them were murdered. Recently, Alexander Soltzhenitsyn, confronted with the threat of murder over his The Gulag Archipelago, which was considered anti-communism and pro-west, also had to flee the Soviet Union.

The Soviet example is remarkable for its ruthlessness but it has antecedents and parallels in the marginalisation of Euripides in the Greek City Dionysia, the rejection of Pierre Corneille's Le Cid by the French Academy, the licensing Act of 1737 in England and the office of the Lord Chamberlain in British Theatre.¹⁰⁰ Parallels could also be found in the censorship policies of the Eastern European countries,¹⁰¹ the rejection of non-Muslim literatures in the countries of the Middle East and the Arab Peninsula and the harshness with which the South African government descends on writers whose works emphasize black nationalism.¹⁰²

History however has always revealed the fallacies at the heart of the reasoning of politicians and authorities. Writers who eulogise the state are not necessarily more national than the iconoclasts who subject it to objective criticism. A nation needs praise-singers for the feeding of

its ego but it needs iconoclasts for its self-appraisal and growth; perhaps more crucial to the national process is the input of iconoclasts.

Hence, nations, years after the nationalist effervescence, tend to acknowledge not the ultra-national praise-singers who ruled the airwaves of nationalism but the iconoclasts who even when national doused their enthusiasm with shots of satire. Shakespeare, Cervantes, Goethe, Schiller, Pushkin, Faulkner, Celine and Hamsun are all regarded as synonymous with their respective nations yet they were more iconoclastic than sycophantic. Is it not also instructive that the pattern of contemporary literary nationalism is more iconoclastic than eulogistic? Witness the works of Evelyn Waugh, Anthony Powell, John Baine (English), Jerzy Andrzejewski, Roman Bratny (Poland), Milan Kundera, Hrabal (Czechoslovakia), Tomasso Grossi, Alessandro Manzoni (Italy), Heinrich Boll, Peter Weiss, Gunter Grass (West Germany), Camilo Jose Cela, Miguel Delibes and Juan Goytisolo (Spain).

The foregoing claims translate into the suspicion that those who condemn writers for not being national may be informed not by genuine patriotism but by subterranean reasons traceable to insecurity, egomania or the fear of the artist.

Synge and Soyinka have been victims of these extra-literary parameters and it is against this background that their nationalism will now be discussed.

Synge and Nationalism

John Millington Synge and Wole Soyinka, particularly the former, have often been dismissed as a-national on the grounds that their works do not give prominence to the national question. An examination of these complaints reveal that they are based on a certain pre-conceived notion of nationalist writing and Synge and Soyinka are criticised largely because their works do not conform with this notion.

The national question is of particular relevance because both writers functioned at periods when their respective countries were still under the yoke of colonialism and still finding means of attaining their own sovereignty. A necessary caveat is that while Synge wrote during the colonial period, in the very thick of nationalist effusion, Soyinka wrote during the waning years of colonialism and in the post-colonial period. This historical fact would perhaps account for the reason why Synge's nationalism attracted greater public interest and opprobrium.

Synge was born into a turbulent society with a chequered history of political and literary nationalism.¹⁰³ The Abbey Theatre where he worked was also trapped in the nationalist flow. And all Irish cultural workers of the period beginning from 1899, when the Irish Literary Theatre was established, found their works and their reception being defined by nationalism especially as articulated by the Gaelic League. The relevance of all these to Synge's career is far from being ordinary.

The Gaelic League was founded in 1893 by Douglas Hyde and others including David Comyn, Eoin MacNeill, T. O'Neill Russell, and Father Eugene O'Growney, with the aim of restoring the Irish language to the privileged position which it occupied prior to colonial intervention. The Gaelicists took particular interest in literature and Douglas Hyde, their first President and spokesman, summarised their views in an address he delivered before the Irish National Literary Society in Dublin on November 25, 1892.¹⁰⁴ Hyde laments how the Irish who had earlier been one of the most sensitive and distinguished races in Europe had become the very antithesis of their former self due to an unimaginative

aping of decadent English customs and traditions. Ireland, he says, must be de-Anglicized to

foster a native spirit and a growth of native custom which will form the strongest barrier against English influence and be in the end the surest guarantee of Irish autonomy ... Every house should have a copy of Moore and Davis. In a word, we must strive to cultivate everything that is most racial, most Irish... 105

The Gaelic League was established a year later to fulfil this declaration and Hyde, leading by example, wrote his Love Songs of Connacht and Religious Songs in Connacht originally in Irish and later translated them into English. He found sympathisers for his cause in such writers as Edward Martyn and George Moore. The league soon became popular and perhaps justly so for it reminded the Irish of their own humanity which centuries of colonialism seemed to have subverted. 106

The Gaelic League soon had two adjunct associations - the Gaelic Athletic Association which promoted indigenous sports, and a dramatic wing which produced plays in Irish and on Irish subjects like Yeats and Moore's Diarmuid and Grania and Douglas Hyde's The Twisting of the Rope, Lost Saint and Nativity at Coole Park.

But soon, as the nationalist struggle became frenetic, the Gaelic League abandoned its cultural and humanistic nationalism and became racist and fanatically Irish. Its ranks became swelled with firebrand radicals, nursed on rhetorics and weaned on propaganda, and for whom Ireland is supreme and inviolable. The result is that the League became parochial and exclusory, parading the doctrine that anything unIrish is worthless and all Irish writers must treat only Irish subjects and use the Irish language.

In other words, the Gaelic League became fiercely political and in this regard, it later found allies in the Sinn Fein and The Daughters of Ireland (the Inghinidhe na hEireann). Established in 1905, the Sinn Fein, as represented by Arthur Griffith in journals like the Sinn Fein and the United Irishman, wanted the independence and the de-Anglicization of Ireland. Same was the case with the Daughters of Ireland led by Maud Gonne, the Irish Lady of action.

The Gaelic League was very popular with the public but its totalitarian doctrine was strongly opposed by some of the writers of the period particularly Synge, John Eglinton and W.B. Yeats. Eglinton called for the

de-Davisation of Irish national literature, that is to say, the getting rid of the notion that in Ireland a writer is to think first and foremost of interpreting the nationality of his country, and not simply of the burden he has to deliver. 107

Yeats, for his part, saw the Gaelic doctrine as an unwarranted censorship of art. An artist, he explained, must be free to treat whatever subjects attracts his fancy. Exasperated with the shenaniganisms of the Gaelicists, Yeats who, earlier in his career, had remarked that "there is no fine literature without nationality" began to doubt the submission of literature to the nationalist cause, at least within the Irish context, and consequently his attitude became one of studied ambivalence.¹⁰⁸ Although he encouraged plays on Irish subjects and even himself wrote Cathleen ni Houlihan, in which he eulogised Ireland, he, at the same time, supported the production of plays which did not serve the cause of propaganda.

This approach to the national question received the disapproval of the politicians, hence they labelled the Abbey Theatre and the entire Anglo-Irish revival anti-Irish and at every opportunity, they protested against Abbey Theatre

performances. Arthur Griffith, for example, continuously attacked the theatre and its writers in his columns in the Sinn Fein and the United Irishman; while Maud Gonne, who had acted Cathleen in Yeats's Cathleen ni Houlihan to great applause, refused to join the Abbey Theatre despite Yeats's pleas that she should do so. She refused out of the resolve that her involvement in the theatre would supplant her political goals; besides, she doubted the nationalist commitment of the Yeats group:

Maud was suspicious of Lady Gregory's interest in 'John O'Leary's literary group, and even of her entertainment of Willie and his friends in her Galway home: 'when these writers came back from Coole', she observed, 'they seemed to me less passionately interested in the National struggle and more worried about their own lack of money ... Lady Gregory and I were gracious to each other but never friends and in the latter struggle in the theatre group, - Art for Art's sake or Art for Propaganda, - were on different sides'. After 'Lady Gregory carried off Willie' to Italy, 'Willie's national outlook underwent a complete change. There would be no more poems against English Kings' visits'. Willie was lost to what Maud called the 'vehement expression of Irish independence'. 109

Determined to carry on intellectual nationalism in her own way, Maud Gonne organised dramatic classes for the daughters of Ireland and as expected, the romanticization

of Ireland and the repudiation of England was their major fare.¹¹⁰ This, together with the dramatic wing of the Gaelic League, provided the politicians an alternative to the Abbey Theatre.

Irish theatre history is replete with instances of confrontations and mutual distrust between literary artists and politicians. It is symbolic that the Irish literary theatre began on this note when it was launched on May 8, 1899 with Edward Martyn's The Heather Field and Yeats's The Countess Cathleen. The latter was denounced by the Gaelicists as anti-Irish and anti-Catholic. Father O'Growney preached against it in his sermons and enjoined all true Catholics to stay away from its performance. The play was further attacked in a pamphlet entitled "Souls for Gold" and its performance was obstructed by serious noisy behaviour in the auditorium, so much so that police protection had to be sought.

A similar pattern was repeated on December 27, 1903 during the first public outing of the Irish National Theatre Society. On this occasion, Synge's In the Shadow of the Glen was booed as a sadistic portrayal of Irish womanhood. Maud Gonne, Maire Quinn, Dudley Digges and Arthur Griffith walked

out of the theatre in protest and Griffith writing later in Samhain, described the play as a "corrupt version of that old-world libel on womankind - the widow of Ephesus".¹¹¹ The Irish Times called it "a slur on Irish womanhood".¹¹²

Similar experiences were recorded during the Abbey Theatre's performances of Synge's The Well of the Saints in 1904, The Playboy of the Western World in 1907, Conal O'Riordan (Norreys Connell's) The Piper in 1908; O'Casey's The Plough and the Stars in 1926 and Seamus Byrne's Design for a Headstone in 1948. The case of the Playboy is particularly remarkable as it lasted intermittently for almost four years and even assumed an international stature. So common were these confrontations between the Abbey artists and the politicians that "the seemingly current idea (was) that to be a good nationalist one had to be anti-Abbey..."¹¹³

It is against this background that Synge's nationalism becomes very clear for he was at the centre of the Abbey Theatre-Gaelic League acrimony. The politicians took particular exception to his plays and their position, as variously articulated by Arthur Griffith, is that Synge was deliberately anti-Irish and a-national. All his plays were received with

suspicion and even though Riders to the Sea was tolerated, it was generally assumed that Synge was an enemy of Ireland. His crime is that he refused to pamper the national ego at a time when that seemed to be everybody's business; hence Arthur Griffith "denounced Synge at every opportunity and lauded the lesser writers such as William Boyle and Padraic Colum. Even before the *Playboy*".¹¹⁴

This negativism is partly an enactment, at the literary level, of the age-old animosity between the two classes into which the Irish society had been bifurcated on the grounds of social status and religion, namely the Anglo-Irish Protestants and the Irish-Irish Catholics. Most of the politicians were members of the latter while Synge and his colleagues belonged to the former and the usual explanation, popular in political circles, is that Synge and Co. could not identify with the Irish cause because, by birth and status, the English blood ran in their veins. It was alleged that their art is a response to this vital aspect of their personality and hence, their writings amount to nothing but a mindless perpetuation of the image of the stage Irishman which had characterized early Anglo-Irish and European literature.¹¹⁵

These allegations raise very fundamental issues about censorship and the freedom of expression and would also seem to confirm the ambivalent nature of the relationship between literature and nationalism earlier discussed. The Gaelicists, it must be admitted, did succeed in mobilising the Irish masses against the theatre and also in awakening in them a consciousness of the Irish heritage and individuality but beyond this, their strictures against the Abbey and Synge, in particular, are unfair coloured as they were by sentiments, propaganda and dogma.

Many commentators on Synge's a-national nature often confirm it on the grounds that Synge was incapable of political thought and the authorship of this statement is traced to no less an authority than W.B. Yeats. Yeats remarked that

Synge seemed by nature unfitted to think a political thought, and with the exception of one sentence, spoken when I first met him in Paris, that implied some sort of Nationalist conviction, I cannot remember that he spoke of politics or showed any interest in men in the mass or on any (sic) subject that is studied through abstractions and statistics. 116

The "one sentence" referred to above is Synge's justification of his withdrawal of his membership of the Young Ireland Society of Paris. Yeats, writing in his Nobel Acceptance Speech, explains:

... he joined the "Young Ireland Society of Paris"... but resigned after a few months because "it wanted to stir up continental nations against England, and England will never give us freedom until she feels she is safe," the one political sentence I ever heard him speak. 117

Yeats's view that Synge was a-political has been echoed by many scholars. T.R. Henn submits that the national question is uppermost in Yeats's works but "in contrast, Synge's work is non-political".¹¹⁸ "The negative side" of his career lies in his avoidance of "many of the preoccupations of his contemporaries":

The Irish land agitation, the rise of Sinn Fein, the Parnell controversy, left him untouched and untroubled. He is moved by no vision of a resurgence of Irish nationalism as a result of the Abbey plays. He has no concern for the historical and well-nursed grievances of Irish history.¹¹⁹

J.L. Styan expresses the same view. "As it happened", says he, "Synge was an apolitical man, and unconcerned with

Irish nationalism".¹²⁰ According to Maurice Bourgeois,

Synge was a man of practically no opinions in an opinion-ridden country. Had he taken an interest in politics, it would have been the interest of the man who watched a dispute for the fun of the thing, and with a mischievous wisdom, forbears from taking sides.¹²¹

John Masefield reports lyrically:

He would have watched a political or religious riot with gravity, with pleasure in the spectacle and malice for the folly - he would have taken no side and felt no emotion. 122

Daniel Corkery is, however, closer to the truth:

Our own idea of him is that one who seeks to find political nationalism in him is on the wrong scent, he was not given to politics, he was only as political as the ordinary citizen who is far more interested in other matters. What we are to understand by nationalism in his case is cultural nationalism - a holding by that inner core of custom of which political nationalism is the shield and defence.¹²³

Contrary to pervasive opinion, Synge is not by nature incapable of political thought or politics. He assumed an apolitical countenance only after his flirtations with politics had resulted in disappointments. In Paris for example, he

was a member of the Young Ireland Society but he later resigned his membership because he did not believe in the society's modus operandi. He was also a member of Maud Gonne's L'Association Irlandaise in Paris but one day, at the Rue Champollion, he was injured on the head when the police dispersed a meeting of the association. This threat of violence coupled with his displeasure with the conduct of the association's journal, Irlande Libre, led him to resign his membership on 6th April, 1897:

I wish, he wrote, to work in my own way for the cause of Ireland, and I shall never be able to do so if I get mixed up with a revolutionary and semi-literary movement.¹²⁴

Synge thus turned away from politics because he could not accommodate the fanaticism, the dogmatism and the hypocrisy of the so-called nationalists of his time. To be a nationalist among the Irish men in Paris in the 1890s was to be idealistic and romantically anti-English but Synge being of a more objective and temperate disposition easily discovered the contradictions in this approach. When he returned to Ireland, he discovered the same insincerity which he had encountered in Paris, manifesting on a grander scale in the

activities of the Gaelic League and it was only a mark of his own conviction and consistency that he avoided the league as if it was an epidemic. Synge was one of the most skeptical critics of the Gaelic League. Writing in an essay, "Can We go Back into Our Mother's Womb?", he declared:

The Gaelic League is founded on a doctrine that is made up of ignorance, fraud and hypocrisy ... I believe in Ireland. I believe the nation that has made a place in history by seventeen centuries of manhood ... will not be brought to complete insanity in these last days by what is senile and slobbering in the doctrine of the Gaelic League. 125

The most sympathetic and most acceptable commentary on Synge's attitude towards politics would seem to be that of Stephen Mackenna whose authority is reliable at least on account of the fact that he was one of Synge's closest confidantes. Mackenna, defending Synge against his critics in a letter to the Irish Statesman on 3rd November 1928, reports:

As regards political interest, I would die for the theory that Synge was most intensely Nationalist: he habitually spoke with rage and bitter baleful eyes of the English in Ireland, though he was proud of his own remote Englishry;

I take it he wanted as dearly as he wanted anything, to see Ireland quite free; but one thing kept him quiet—he hated publicity, co-operation and lies. He refused to support the Gaelic League because one pamphlet it issued contained the statement (I indicate roughly that to know modern Irish was to be in possession of the ancient saga). 126

Let us add that those who dismiss Synge as UnIrish are as wrong as those who allege that he is a-political, for if being Irish means declaring one's love for Ireland and promoting the Irish cause in one's duties, above and in preference to the English, then Synge is Irish and national in the extreme, even more so than the peddlers of hypocrisy and lies, the so-called nationalists whose claim to that title derives solely from the volume of their noise-making.

Though Anglo-Irish, a truly Irish blood ran in Synge's veins and it seems logical to begin a validation of this claim by noting, immediately, that Synge's ancestors voted against the Act of Union in 1801. Synge may have revolted against other circumstances of his birth, such as religion, landlordism and class-consciousness, but the patriotism of the early Synoges, as demonstrated in the 1801 referendum, seems to have re-surfaced in him. In his Autobiography, Synge

declared that soon after he renounced religion, he diverted his attention to Ireland:

Soon after I had relinquished the Kingdom of God I began to take a real interest in the kingdom of Ireland. Everything Irish became precious and had a charm that was neither quite human nor divine, rather perhaps as if I had fallen in love with a goddess, although I had still sense enough to personify Erin in the patriotic verse I now sought to fabricate. Patriotism gratifies man's need for adoration and has therefore a peculiar power upon the imaginative sceptic as we see in France to-day.¹²⁷

He carried this interest in Ireland with him to Trinity College where he distinguished himself in the study of the Irish language by winning a medal in the language before his graduation. He studied Irish literature under Professor Goodman and also developed interest in Irish history. Some of the major books he read include Yeats and Moore's Diarmuid and Grania, Wakeman's Handbook of Irish Antiquities, Musgrave's Rebellions in Ireland, Froude's The English in Ireland, G.T. Strokes' Ireland and the Celtic Church, William Strokes' Life of George Petrie and Petrie's The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland.¹²⁸ Synge travelled to Paris, soon after his graduation from Trinity College, and here, he attended Professor Jubainville's lectures on Celtic

Civilization at the Sorbonne.

But perhaps the real flowering of his nationalist spirit could be dated to his historic encounter with the Aran Islands which he visited four times between May, 1898 and Autumn 1902. Synge encountered on these islands a primitive but natural and distinguished mode of living which contrasted sharply with the civilized decadence which he encountered in the cosmopolitan centres of Dublin, Germany and Paris. Even though the Aran Islanders were peasants, Synge found it easy to identify with them and in spite of several risks to his health, he visited them repeatedly and immersed himself fully in their culture, savouring as he did so, the beauty of their language, customs and costumes.

This encounter with the Aran Islands is central to a discussion of Synge's creativity for it provided him with themes and materials and the bulk of his writings is the product of this encounter - a fact which establishes the Irishness of his writings and invalidates the popular conception that they were imaginative inventions designed to malign Ireland. Synge was so impressed with the Aran Islands that he became convinced of the need to return home. In

March 1903, he went to Paris to sell off his belongings and returned to Ireland.

This is a nationalist action when we consider the fact that during and even before Synge's time, the usual pattern was for artists to flee Ireland and seek comfort in exile. Ireland was to them an asphyxiating environment. The fanaticism of the Irish nationalist effusion imprisoned the creative spirit; very few opportunities for economic gain and creative expression existed in Ireland while America and England held promises of greener pastures. For these and other reasons, many Irish artists fled Ireland.

Shaw, Farquhar, Sheridan, Goldsmith, Congreve and Burke went to England to establish a flourishing comic tradition. George Moore, Conal O'Riordan (Norreys Connell), Lord Dunsany, Oscar Wilde, Padraic Colum, Seumas O'Brien, Joseph Campbell, Austin Clarke, Ernest Boyd, Robert Lynd, John Eglinton, Macklin, Peg Woffington, Spranger Barry, Sheridan Knowles, Mossop, Macready Senior, The Blands, the Glovers, the Boucicaults, Mrs. Henry Irving, John Drew, Ada Rehan, James O'Neill and Virginia Earl also went into exile in nearby England and America.

Thus, Ireland became a provider of talents for other nations while it remained artistically impoverished at home. When Synge left for Europe in 1893, he was therefore merely following an established tradition of exile but by returning to Ireland, by remaining there for the rest of his life, and by situating his creativity in the Irish context, Synge certainly deserves recognition as a nationalist. On his return, he immersed himself fully in the Irish cause first through his activities at the Abbey Theatre and also through his writings. He was, to start with, the most national of the Abbey dramatists.

Greene and Stephens, echoing the thoughts of Sinn Fenians and Gaelicists, claim that the Abbey "was not a national theatre" but "the personal property of an English woman who was antipathetic to Irish nationalism and merely wanted to further the artistic career of W.B. Yeats".¹²⁹ This is not true. The Abbey was a national theatre. It may not have satisfied the wish of the politicians for a propagandist theatre but it was surrounded by the national spirit and many of its members were confirmed nationalists.

Frank Fay, for example, was an "ardent nationalist" and "even something of a party line disciple of Arthur Griffith".¹³⁰ "At the height of his Irish enthusiasm", George Moore who was one of the founding fathers of the Irish Literary Theatre and who, together with Edward Martyn, later withdrew because of his preference for intellectual drama and Ibsenism, "threatened to disown his brother's children (having none to acknowledge himself) if they did not immediately learn to speak Irish".¹³¹

Edward Martyn was for many years a member of the governing council of the Gaelic League. Thomas MacDonagh, author of When the Dawn is come, was a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB). Sally and Molly Allgood were members of Maud Gonne's Daughters of Erin and in 1897, Lady Gregory and Yeats went to Galway to participate in some Gaelic League programmes. Madame Markiewicz and Macbride, active participants in the Easter uprising, were friends of the Abbey and even Maud Gonne, in spite of her trenchant criticisms of Yeats and his friends, once acted the role of Cathleen in Yeats's Cathleen ni Houlihan. Padraic Pearse and Sean Connolly, who died during the uprising, were also associated with the Abbey. Is it not also instructive that

the Irish national anthem, "The Soldier's Song", was composed by Peadar Kearney, a senior Abbey Stage-hand?

By 1926, the Abbey had produced 241 plays by 92 authors, 77 of whom were Irish and some of the major nationalist plays staged by the theatre include W.B. Yeats, Cathleen ni Houlihan in 1899, William Boyle, The Mineral Workers (1906), Thomas MacDonagh, When the Dawn is Come (1908), Conal O'Riordan, An Imaginary Conversation (1909) and Padraic Pearse, The King (1913). In terms of location, the Abbey was close to the pulse of nationalism - James Connolly's Headquarters was situated behind the Abbey and during the Easter uprising, fighting raged round the theatre but it was left unscathed. The fighters, as it were, recognised the place of the Abbey in the national struggle. There is much to be deduced from this symbolic gesture.

It remains to state that the pioneers of the Anglo-Irish dramatic tradition were not pushed by any financial interest but by a nationalist desire to create a viable Irish dramatic tradition that would rival what obtained in the continent and it is the belief in the feasibility of this aspiration that motivated all of them - managers, actors and

directors alike. Besides, the foundation of the Abbey was informed by national considerations. See the following letter drafted by Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats in late 1898:

We propose to have performed in Dublin in the spring of every year certain Celtic and Irish plays, which whatever be their degree of excellence will be written with a high ambition, and so to build up a Celtic and Irish school of dramatic literature. We hope to find in Ireland an uncorrupted and imaginative audience trained to listen by its passion for oratory, and believe that our desire to bring upon the stage the deeper thoughts and emotions of Ireland will ensure for us a tolerant welcome, and that freedom of experiment which is not found in theatres of England and without which no new movement in art or literature can succeed. We will show that Ireland is not the home of buffoonery and of easy sentiment, as it has been represented, but the home of ancient idealism. We are confident of the support of all Irish people, who are weary of misrepresentation, in carrying out a work that is outside all the political questions that divide us. 132

Yeats has written that this nationalist aspiration emerged uppermost in the writings of John Synge, himself and Lady Gregory¹³³ but it seems it was Synge alone who completely succeeded in bringing "Everything down to that sole test again/Dream of the noble and the beggar-man".¹³⁴ It is perhaps this full identification with the Irish soil that makes Synge the most national of the Anglo-Irish dramatists.

As a director of the Abbey, Synge encouraged the production of Gaelic plays and even stage-managed some of them and when Yeats, in a bid to expand the scope of the theatre, wanted to encourage international drama alongside their original dramatic fare, it was Synge who reminded him of the supremacy of the national aspirations of the theatre. An important incident was the appointment of Alfred Waring, "an English actor of conspicuous ability" as the manager of the Abbey sometime in 1904. Synge complained bitterly about Waring's appointment and subsequent productions. Unable to mask his displeasure, he wrote to Yeats protesting Waring's use on the Abbey stage of "many of the worst tricks of the English stage". "That is the end", he wrote, "of all the Samhain principles and this new tradition that we were to lay down".¹³⁵ These are the words of a nationalist.

Daniel Corkery opines that Synge went farther in his nationalism than other Anglo-Irish writers because

he was the only one of them who took the trouble to learn Irish so well that he could freely converse in it with native speakers and also took the trouble to make himself familiar with the details of the peasants' lives. 136

Beyond this, an examination of Synge's writings - critical and creative - would also confirm the strength of Synge's nationalism.

Synge's critical writings are few comprising only occasional remarks on drama and theatre and his prefaces to The Tinker's Wedding, The Playboy of the Western World and Poems and Translations; but running through them, is Synge's love of Ireland and patriotic spirit. In his prefaces, Synge calls for a domestication of the creative intellect and denounces any attempt to ape the decadent dramatic traditions popular in the continent. In his view, an Irish writer would achieve depth and originality only if his art draws sustenance from the Irish heritage of humour and rich dialogue. In The Tinker's Wedding, Synge denounces the didactic and humorless plays of Ibsen and the Germans, popular in Europe at the early part of the twentieth century, and calls for a restoration of humour to the stage. He adds that

in the greater part of Ireland, however, the whole people, from the tinkers to the Clergy, have still a life, and view of life that are rich and genial and humorous. 137

The Tinker's Wedding was written in part in recognition of this Irish love of humour:

I do not think that these country people, who have so much humour themselves will mind being laughed at without malice, as the people in every country have been laughed at in their own comedies. 138

In this statement, which is partly an a posteriori apologia for the acerbic and anti-clerical tone of The Tinker's Wedding, Synge misjudged the Irish temperament as the regular protests against his plays must have shown him. But useful for now, is his preference, in this preface, of the traditional Irish heritage to European literary traditions.

This preference receives a more lucid expression in the Preface to The Playboy where Synge explains the degree to which his works are rooted in popular Irish imagination:

In writing 'The Playboy of the Western World', as in my other plays, I have used one or two words only that I have not heard among the country people of Ireland, or spoken in my own nursery before I could read the newspapers. A certain number of the phrases I employ I have heard also from herds and fishermen along the coast from Kerry to Mayo or from beggar-women and ballad-singers nearer Dublin, and I am glad to acknowledge how much I owe to the

folk-imagination of these fine people. Any one who has lived in real intimacy with the Irish peasantry will know that the wildest sayings and ideas in this play are tame indeed, compared with the fancies one may hear in any little hillside cabin in Geesala, or Carraroe, or Dingle Bay. All art is collaboration... 139.

Synge further argues that a writer must situate his creativity in folk imagination presenting joy and reality at once. It is the absence of this in the writings of Mallarme, Huysmans, Ibsen and Zola - in fact in "the modern literature of towns" and "intellectual modern drama", in general - that makes them "joyless and pallid". Language is particularly important:

In a good play every speech should be as fully flavoured as a nut or apple, and such speeches cannot be written by any one who works among people who have shut their lips on poetry. In Ireland, for a few years more, we have a popular imagination that is fiery, and magnificent, and tender, so that those of us who wish to write start with a chance that is not given to writers in places where the springtime of the local life has been forgotten, and the harvest is a memory only, and the straw has been turned into bricks. 140

Synge re-emphasizes the importance of language in the preface to Poems and Translations where he contends that the

timber of poetry is strong, only when it has "strong roots among the clay and worms".¹⁴¹ And in an essay entitled "National Drama: A Farce" which he wrote, in all probability, shortly after The Shadow of the Glen, had been attacked,"¹⁴² he, speaking through a character called Jameson, recommends national drama but warns that the writer's use of local materials should not blind him to the more universal and humanistic values of art:

... An Irish drama that is written in Ireland about Irish people, and not on a foreign model will and must be national in so far as it exists at all. Our hope of it is that as Ireland is a beautiful and lovely country that the drama that Ireland is now producing may catch a little of this beauty and loveliness, as the Irish music has caught it (without) knowing or thinking, and will escape the foolishness that all wilful national(ism) is so full of ... Art is sad or gay, religious or heretical, by reason of accident and cause we cannot account for and the small Tuscany produced at one time Dante and Boccaccio, who are surely both national and yet we feel that Dante might have been born in Paris or Rabelais in Venice. The national element in art is merely the colour, the intensity of the wildness or restraint of the humour ... The essentials of all art are the eternal human elements (coat sleeve) of humanity which are the same everywhere and it is only in the attributes that make art more or less charged with beauty, more or less daring and exquisite in form, more or (less) dull or shiny on its surface, that the influence of place is to be found ... 143

But perhaps Synge's most direct endorsement of national literature is the following statement which he made while writing The Aran Islands:

Goethe's weakness, he says, (is) due to his having no national and intellectual mood to interpret. The individual mood is often trivial, perverse, fleeting (but the) national mood (is) broad serious, provisionally permanent. 144

Synge lived up to this credo in all his writings - creative and critical. Uniting both levels of his intellect is the national element which emerges throughout like a recurring decimal and hence establishes itself as a cornerstone of Synge's sensibility. Commenting on The Aran Islands for example, Corkery observes that "it is the book of not alone a Nationalist but a patriot".¹⁴⁵ In this book, Synge romanticizes traditional Irish culture as it existed in its primitive form in the west of Ireland and his observations and attitudes towards this culture are not those of a condescending Ascendancy gentleman, used to European civilization, but of a true-born Irish who is appreciative of the wild beauty of Irish culture. Synge identified fully with the islanders;

he was struck by their language which he says is "simple yet dignified";¹⁴⁶ "so simple and so attractive" (p.276) and the people "spoke with a delicate exotic intonation that was full of charm" (p. 162).

They possessed such a flair for language which gave them "a fair notion of what it means to speak and think in many different idioms" (p. 170). Synge noted their linguistic peculiarities and speech patterns. Among them, he learnt and spoke Irish and after returning to Paris, he exchanged correspondence with them also in Irish. Synge listened to stories from old men on the islands and expressed his admiration of the islanders' way of life. He praises their sense of colour, their communal kinship and superstitions, and their optimism even in the midst of the sorrow of early deaths often imposed on them by the sea.

The Aran Islands is the book of a Nationalist and a patriot. It is a celebration of all that is noble and pure in Ireland. It is also remarkable that it is Synge's contact with these islands that engendered his nationalism and provided him with the "objective correlative"¹⁴⁷ of his creativity.

Elsewhere, we have discussed how The Aran Islands constitutes the framework for Synge's plays. Using Riders to the Sea as an example, we explained the extent to which Synge's creative output is situated in folk intelligence or rooted among "the clay and worms".¹⁴⁸ The point is worth pursuing further that all of Synge's plays, without exception, are Irish in conception and execution. The Well of the Saints is based on a story about the holy well which old Mourteen told him during his first visit to the Aran islands;¹⁴⁹ The Shadow of the Glen is based on the story of an unfaithful wife which he heard from Pat Dirane in 1898.¹⁵⁰ The Playboy of the Western World is based on the story, narrated by the oldest man in Inishmaan, of a Connaught man who killed his father with a spade and was protected from the police by the islanders and later helped to escape to America.¹⁵¹ The Tinker's Wedding derives its plot from a story told Synge by a herd in Wicklow. Deirdre of the Sorrows is based on a popular Irish saga - the Deirdre Saga.

These plays are suffused with many details of Irish life and culture and superstitions and they could be seen, as Paul Botheroyd's essay on The Aran Islands and Riders to the Sea evidence,¹⁵² as reliable starting points for an understanding

of Irish culture. "... So also do they contain basic insights not alone into the psyche of life, but by extension into the psyche of Irish life generally."¹⁵³

It must also be admitted that Synge succeeds in achieving, through these plays, the very dream which years of Gaelic League zealotry failed to actualise, and this is ironic considering the fact that many of Synge's arch-detractors were members of the League. The dream of the league, as earlier stated, was to popularise Gaelic and establish it in place of English as the official language of Ireland. This dream lasted only till a few years after independence; today it is already forgotten and many Irishmen prefer to speak English. But Synge's plays, through their Gaelicization of the English language, remind the world of Ireland's own language. Every outsider who encounters Synge's language cannot fail to remark upon its peculiarity and in an attempt to understand this, the outsider's attention is called to its Irish heritage. Thus Synge, through his linguistic idiom, becomes a cultural ambassador and a patriot too.

It is true that Synge inherited this idiom from Standish O'Grady, Douglas Hyde, Lady Gregory, Swift,

Somerville, Ross, Yeats and Maria Edgeworth who before him had experimented with the Anglo-Irish idiom. It may also be true that Synge's use of Gaelic Syntax and patterns is, as St. John G. Ervine,¹⁵⁴ Daniel Corkery¹⁵⁵ and L.A.G. Strong¹⁵⁶ claim, artificial, contrived, stagey and absurd but that it is the most distinguished linguistic innovation in Irish literary history is incontrovertible. With it, Synge popularised the peasant mode of dramatic composition, the Irish language and Ireland herself. His influence, in this respect, is evident in the works of other peasant dramatists - George Fitzmaurice, Padraic Colum, William Boyle, Seumas O'Kelly, Lennox Robinson, Daniel Corkery and T.C. Murray.

Synge's nationalism could also be traced to the fact that his plays are peopled by tinkers, vagrants and peasants. Even in Deirdre of the Sorrows where the material is heroic, Synge divests the characters of their royal and heroic pretenses and brings them to the level of the common man. This mode of characterization is significant because in the colonial Ireland of Synge's time, peasants were the main victims of the imperialist system. By centralising this marginalised class, composed mainly of Irish-Irish Catholics, Synge was by implication recognising and advertising their

significance and humanity and because this was also the main aspiration of the so-called nationalists, Synge, it may also be said, was equally a nationalist.

That Synge is nationalist is conclusive. The aspirations of decades of Irish nationalism dated as far back as the Kildares resistance of Henry VIII's incursion till latterday "Irishlatry" of the Gaelicists and Sinn Feinians are resolved, at a cultural level, in his writings with clarity and comprehensiveness so much so that his writings seem to complement the efforts of politicians. It is an evidence of the ambivalent relationship between writers and politicians that the politicians of Synge's time failed to realise this.

The misunderstanding between Synge and the politicians re-stated, for the purpose of emphasis, arose out of his own refusal to conform with the exclusive and racist doctrine of nationalist writing propounded by them. He summarised his position in a letter to Stephen Mackenna, on January 28, 1904:

I do not believe in the possibility of "a purely fantastic, unmodern, ideal, breezy, springdayish Cuchulanoid National Theatre" ... no drama can grow out of the fundamental realities of life which are never fantastic, are neither modern nor un-modern and, as I see them, rarely Spring-dayish or breezy or Cuchulanoid ... I think squeamishness is a disease, and that Ireland will gain if Irish writers deal manfully, directly and decently with the entire reality of life ... I think the law-maker and the law-breaker are both needful in society - as the lively and volcanic forces are needed to make earth's crust habitable - and I think the law-maker is tending to reduce Ireland, or parts of Ireland, to a dismal, morbid hypocrisy that is not a blessed unripeness. 157

In other words, Synge did not believe in the hypocritical romanticization of Ireland which the politicians demanded but in the facts of reality. And reality, as it appeared to him, was far from being subjective; the picture of Ireland which emerges therefrom is not a saintly and faultless one but a human one with its positive and negative antinomies. By differing from the politicians, Synge then was defending truth and recommending, through his writings, an objective assessment of Ireland in spite of the nationalist delirium. This is in line with the official policy of the Abbey Theatre as articulated by Yeats in his Advice to Playwrights¹⁵⁸ but it is also a reflection of Synge's own

constitution - his lack of pretense, hatred of hypocrisy and lies, and his love of truth.

Synge's nationalism therefore is two-fold: it is cultural to the degree that it is based on and dramatises Irish custom and folk imagination; but it is cultural nationalism without its usual element of flattery. It is also an objective, satirical nationalism, what David Krause describes aptly as "higher nationalism" that is, a form of nationalism that is concerned with "the search for the truth about man, the quintessential nature of his character and his world".¹⁵⁹ It may be said that it is this intrusion of higher nationalism which incidentally serves as a shield for the cultural content of Synge's plays, which prevented the politicians of his time from appreciating the value of his writings. Take The Playboy for example.

Apart from Daniel Corkery who prefers Riders to the Sea,¹⁶⁰ there is a consensus among literary critics that The Playboy is Synge's masterpiece, the maturation of his poetic and theatrical skills and his most important contribution to world drama. There is much truth in this claim but the greater significance of The Playboy would seem to lie in the fact that it is the play which brought Synge,

the Abbey Theatre and the entire Anglo-Irish movement, world fame. The Playboy is a "cause celebre" in Irish theatre history, with it, Synge and the Abbey achieve first a "success de scandale" and then later a "success d'estime".

When the play was premiered in Dublin in the last week of January 1907, it led to serious riots at the theatre. Its subsequent performances in England and America produced similar reactions.¹⁶¹ On account of The Playboy, Lady Gregory was ex-communicated in Gort, her country home¹⁶² and in Chicago, America, she was served a death warrant.¹⁶³ Synge was denounced as an enemy of Ireland for writing the play, the Abbey for staging it and Yeats for having the temerity to defend it.

William Boyle and Padraic Colum, whose nationalist sensibilities were injured by the play and the negative publicity which it attracted, withdrew from the Abbey. Spectators booed the play and its performers; at the end, "A Nation Once Again" was sung to counter the anti-Irishness which they detected in the play. Not even Synge's explanation that the play is based on a factual incident, of a young fellow on the Aran Islands who had killed his

father and was helped by the people to dodge the police and escape to America,¹⁶⁴ could pacify the public. Throughout, The Playboy was performed under police protection and some of the rioters, including Padraic Colum's father, were charged to court. The play generated a spate of public debate evident in many Dublin newspapers of the time, notably Evening Mail, Irish Independent, Freeman's Journal, Evening Herald, Irish News and Belfast Morning News, Sinn Fein, Dublin Daily Express and The Leader.

The main grouse against The Playboy is that it is an insult to the Irish nation, a mockery of Irish men and women and a misrepresentation of Irish religion. In a review on Monday, 28 January, 1907, The Freeman's Journal reported that

A strong protest must, however, be entered against this unmitigated, protracted libel upon Irish peasant men and, worse still, upon Irish peasant girlhood. The blood boils with indignation as one recalls the incidents, expressions, ideas of this squalid, offensive production, incongruously styled a comedy in three acts. 165

H.S.D. of the Evening Mail complained that "the story is simple, and, it must be said at once, entirely unconvincing".¹⁶⁶

The Sinn Fein, edited by Arthur Griffith, arch-critic of

Synge and the Abbey, wrote in its editorial of February 2, 1907:

Mr. Synge's play as a play is one of the worst constructed we have witnessed. As a presentation on the public stage it is a vile and inhuman story told in the foulest language we have ever listened to from a public platform. 167

The Belfast Press, in a review of the Abbey Theatre, summarised the indignation against the play:

Mr Synge has written a play which has been characterised as an insulting monstrosity and a vile caricature of Irish people by three-fourths of the Daily Press of Dublin, and whose dirty and blasphemous language is not defended by even the 'Irish Times'. This play has been violently interrupted and fiercely hissed and hooted by Irishmen in Dublin. The police have been called in to 'quell' the tumult raised by the indignant populace. A torrent of execration has been the nightly reward of the actors who strive to represent a murderer, an idiot, some vulgar, shameless, unnatural viragoes with the soul and tongues of strumpets, and a medley of drunken mindless brutes as typical peasants of the Gaelic County of Mayo. 168

These excerpts do not fully represent the range of bile and revulsion which The Playboy generated but they, at least, give intimations of the kind of reception which

attended the play. In a defence to The Irish Times, Synge explained that

"The Playboy of the Western World" is not a play with 'a purpose' in the modern sense of the word, but although parts of it are, or are meant to be extravagant comedy, still a great that is in it, and a great deal more that is behind it, is perfectly serious, when looked at in a certain light. That is often the case, I think, with comedy, and no one is quite sure to-day whether "Shylock" and 'Alceste' should be played seriously or not. There are, it may be hinted, several sides to 'The Playboy'. (emphasis mine) 169

Critical commentaries on the play have borne out the truthfulness of Synge's comment as many critics have examined the play from different angles with each critical commentary producing its own vistas and generating others and it is this complexity of meaning that partly makes The Playboy the accomplished work that it is. Alan Price says the play embodies "several degrees of blindness to, or awareness of, dream and actuality, instances of deception occur ... but the unconscious deception, the poetic fiction, helps to create a new and better actuality and to bring happiness".¹⁷⁰ Andrew E. Malone describes it as a satire on the "acceptance of appearances".¹⁷¹ Mary C. King says "The Playboy of the

Western World might justifiably be described as the apotheosis of the meta-dramatic itself".¹⁷² Ronald Peacock interprets it as a satire on Synge himself and artists generally:

This comedy is not directed only against the people of Mayo, but against Synge himself; against the artist and his dangerous love of fine words. It is at once the fullest display - conscious display - of his most distinguishing gift, and an ironic commentary on it. ¹⁷³

George Bernard Shaw argues that "The Playboy's real name was Synge; and the famous libel on Ireland (and who is Ireland that she should not be libelled as other countries are by their great comedians?) was the truth about the world".¹⁷⁴ Thomas Whitaker, like Peacock and Shaw, also finds parallels between Synge and Christy Mahon.¹⁷⁵ T.R. Henn¹⁷⁶ and Daniel Corkery¹⁷⁷ see the play as a dramatisation of the Dionysian instinct in man. Yeats described it as "an example of the exaggeration of art";¹⁷⁸ also as "the natural instinct of everyone all over the world - to love the spirited man, to love courage and hate timidity".¹⁷⁹ Una Ellis-Fermor opines that the central theme of the play is "the growth, like a Japanese paper flower dropped into a bowl

of water, of Christopher Mahon's new self".¹⁸⁰

J.F. Kilroy says "The Playboy of the Western World dramatises the gradual development of the poet's craft from its first uncertain expression to the full display of mature art".¹⁸¹ "The Playboy", Nicholas Grene opines, "is at once an extravagant comedy of situation, and a dramatic Bildungsroman in little. We witness the metamorphosis of a figure of farce into a dynamic character".¹⁸² Stanley Sultan¹⁸³ and Hugh H. Maclean¹⁸⁴ draw parallels between Christy Mahon and Christ; but Howard D. Pearce contends that he is merely a "mock-Christ".¹⁸⁵

"There are", indeed, "it may be hinted, several sides to the Playboy":¹⁸⁶

we cannot afford to abstract a theme and say - this is what the play is about. As soon as we formulate some such theme, the relation between fantasy and reality, the nature of role-playing, the growth of personality, it distorts the play's vision. The various levels of meaning which stand in relation like the terms of a fraction are then divided out into a false decimal finality. The play is puzzling, and a common reaction to seeing or reading it for the first time is complete bewilderment. This bewilderment, however, is perfectly appropriate ... There are no short-cuts to the play's meaning. 187

Because of this complexity of meaning, it would be impolitic to either legislate over the two opposite reactions to the play or take sides. Each interpretation of the play is valid in so far as Synge intended it to be a controversial piece. The general condemnation of the play in Ireland should be seen as an upsurge first, of accumulated grievances against the Irish Literary Movement dating back to the production of Yeats's Countess Cathleen in 1899; second, of anti-Synge campaigns beginning with the 1903 production of The Shadow of the Glen; and third, of the native Irish sensitivity to criticism - a trait which reached its peak during the years of nationalist struggle.

Produced in 1907 in the heat of nationalism, the public could not tolerate the boldness with which The Playboy violated the psychic state of the period; at such a period, Ireland, the Playboy riots suggest, could not accommodate any art-work which ridicules the nation and hence may slow down the struggle against British imperialism. The Playboy is therefore a victim of nationalist parochialism and another illustration of the impatience of politicians with art which does not propagandize the spirit of the moment.

The Playboy riots are unfortunate. A detached investigation of The Playboy reveals that, despite the charges of anti-Irishness levelled against it, it is indeed Irish first in the sense that it is culturally situated in Ireland but more urgently in the sense that it is an allegory on the Irish situation with several antinomies and moral instructions which are relevant to the Irish condition and struggle. H.S.D., the Evening Mail reviewer, argues that the play is obscure as an allegory.¹⁸⁸ This is not true.

An academic reading of Synge's texts, without prejudices reveals that they are all, in varying ways, allegorical comments on the Irish struggle for independence. This much becomes clear through an examination of the repression-freedom dialectic at the heart of Synge's dramatic oeuvre.

The Playboy of the Western World,¹⁸⁹ for example, oscillates between the two polarities of repression and freedom and the dramatic pulse centres on Christy Mahon's evolution from an insecure, beleaguered lad into a confident poet and man of the women, strong and capable of perpetuating his new image. In the first and second acts of the

play, he describes himself and is described by Old Mahon, his father, as "a middling scholar only" (p.115), "toiling, moiling, digging, dodging from the dawn till dusk" (p.122), with no one heeding him save only "the dumb beasts of the field" (p.122); "an ugly young streeler ... a dirty, stuttering lout" (p. 142), "a liar on walls, a talker of folly ... a poor fellow" with "a queer rotten stomach", "the loony of Mahon's", "a small low fellow" (p. 142) "dark and dirty", "an ugly young blackguard" (p. 143).

But by the end of the play, in the third act, this personality has undergone a transformation and Mahon becomes "the champion Playboy of the Western World" (p.150), "the champion of the world" (p. 151), "the only Playboy of the the Western World" (p.167) and "a likely gaffer in the end of all" (p. 167). Thus, Synge creates a myth of personality and the accent is on Christy's struggle for freedom and the realisation of his dream.

In Act One, Christy Mahon arrives at the Flaherty's "tired, frightened and dirty" (p.114) burdened by guilt and searching for a safe place to hide from the police. His fear of the police excites his hosts whose life-style and occupation often brings them in contact with the men

of the law; hence they interrogate him determined to unravel the mystery of his fear. But Mahon, intimidated by the prospect of "a prison behind him, and hanging before, and hell's gap gaping below" (p.117) and genuinely ashamed of his deed, is reluctant to disclose his crime.

Confronted with the threat of violence, he, however owns up: "Don't strike me. I killed my poor father, Tuesday was a week, for doing the like of that" (p.117). But contrary to the repudiation which Christy expects a statement of this nature to evoke logically, his audience receives the news "(with blank amazement): Is it kill your father?" (p.117) as if it is an ordinary, quotidian, event normal and reasonable.

This marks the beginning of the series of contradictions which runs through The Playboy as Philly, Jimmy, Michael and Pegeen begin to romanticise Christy's parricide: "There's a daring fellow" says Philly (p. 117); "Oh Glory be to God" (p.117) Pegeen exclaims; and Michael states "(with great respect): That was a hanging crime, mister honey. You should have had good reason for doing the like of that" (p.117). All kinds of eulogy are showered on

Christy and as the scene progresses, the people begin to see him as a source of inspiration and their means of intimidating the policemen of Mayo although these are "decent, drouthy poor fellows, wouldn't touch a cur dog and not give warning in the dead of night" (p.119).

Instead of admonitions and betrayal, Christy finds sympathy and admiration in his hosts and in celebration of his deed, he is further offered a job as a pot-boy at the Flaherty's Shebeen: "That'd be a lad with the sense of Solomon to have for a pot-boy" (p.118). Convinced that he is safe from the law, Christy relaxes and begins to savour the novelty of his new-found fortune. Soon, news of his arrival and deed spreads round the whole of Mayo and he instantly becomes a celebrity especially to the women who shower him with gifts and affection and compete among themselves for his attention. The competition in this respect is more decisive between Pegeen and Widow Quin although it is the former who is more deliberate and desperate in her struggle for this "fine lad with the great savagery to destroy (his) da" (p. 136).

The significance of this struggle is that it enhances Christy's emerging self-confidence and completes the first stage of his movement from repression to freedom. It should be instructive to plot the chart and implications of this movement and in doing so, let us state that Christy's flight from Meath to Mayo is informed by a frustration with the socially and psychologically suffocating nature of the Meath environment and a corresponding search for freedom from this condition.

Meath, according to Christy, is a very repressive environment which dwarfs his talents and initiatives and leaves him no room for growth. He tells his story with poetic flourish in Acts One and Two and his father who appears later in Act Two embellishes it further, although his own account is contemptuous. But through these stories, a picture of Christy's background is drawn providing a contrast to his present condition.

Back home, Christy was a quiet person; "there wasn't a person in Ireland knew the kind I was, and I there drinking, waking, eating, sleeping, a quiet, simple poor fellow with no man giving me heed" (p.122). The girls had no regard for him, he was "the laughing joke of every female where

four baronies meet, the way the girls would stop their weeding if they seen him coming the road to let a roar at him and call him the loony of Mahon's" (p.142). He was so intimidated by this unwelcoming attitude that each time he saw "a red petticoat coming swinging over the hill, he'd be off to hide in the sticks, and you'd see him shooting out his sheep's eyes between the little twigs and the leaves, and his two ears rising like a hare looking out through a gap" (p.142). The result is that Christy had very little personality - "A small low fellow" (p. 142) "Dark and dirty... an ugly young blackguard" (p.143), "an ugly young streeler... a dirty stuttering lout" (p. 141), "a dunce never reached his second book" (p.149); "he was the fool of men" (p.150).

Old Mahon attributes Christy's low personality to laziness and love of talk but Christy, on the contrary, accuses his father of being his major problem. The picture he paints of him is that of a sadistic taskmaster who keeps him so busy on the farm that he has no time for any "joy or sport" except when he goes to poach rabbits and appreciate the beauty of nature.

The cumulative effect of all these is that Christy became psychically embattled with an avalanche of repressed

grievances awaiting a change for expression. He lived a "bitter life" (p. 124) and was "lonesome all times" (p. 136). And rancour raged in his heart against his father. Matters reached a head one day when Old Mahon instructed him to go to the priest and tell him that he, Christy, would wed "the Widow Casey in a score of days" (p. 131).

Christy refused, rejecting his father's rationalisation of the marriage on the grounds that Widow Casey would prevent him from the harshness of the world. He also suspected that his father was primarily interested in the woman's wealth; besides, he hated her; she "a walking terror from beyond the hills", old, flabby, handicapped, and "a woman of noted misbehaviour with the old and young (p. 131):

'I won't wed her,' says I, 'when all know she did suckle me for six weeks when I came into the world, and she a hag this day with a tongue on her has the crows and seabirds scattered, the way they wouldn't cast a shadow on her garden with the dread of her curse' (p. 132).

Old Mahon would have none of his son's audacity and threatening to "flatten" him "like a crawling beast has passed under a dray" if he disobeys him, he sits up

brandishing his mug and lifting a scythe; "he says God have mercy on your soul" (p. 132). Christy disregards the filial ethos between him and his father, and accepts the challenge: "Or on your own says I, raising the loy" (p. 132). Thus, a combat is declared:

He gave a drive with the scythe, and
I gave a lep to the east. Then I turned
around with my back to the north... (p.132)

and

I just riz the loy and let fall the edge
of it on the ridge of his skull, and he
went down at my feet like an empty sack,
and never let a grunt or groan from him
at all. (p. 118)

This is the crime which compels Christy to flee into exile and its significance lies in the fact that it is an act of rebellion, a Camusian context in which the slave says No to his master. It is also important in the sense that it leads Christy Mahon to Mayo where, due to his acceptance by the community, he discovers himself and realises his potentials to the full.

The spotlight of this repression-freedom dialectic may be on Christy, as shown above, but aspects of it also

reflect on all members of the Mayo community with the exception, perhaps, of Shawn Keogh and Father Reilly - the two conservative elements in the community who do not voice any yearning for the transformation of their condition. Like Christy, back in his native home, the Mayoites are also harassed by loneliness and a life-style which compels the individual to think of alternatives; of freedom. It is a dull community, with little excitement, save for the sports and the usual wakes and other social events which provide occasional opportunities for cavorting. Each of the characters craves some novelty and it is because Christy provides this with his galloway story, his gift of the gab and his gallantry that the Mayoites admire him.

Pegeen's fascination with Christy is fairly representative; a marriage to him is supposed to free her from her dull environment but her error, and that of her compatriots, is that unlike Christy, they lack the spirit to face the challenges posed by their aspiration. Christy, for example is desperate to gain his freedom at all costs. Apart from 'Killing' his father in Meath, he 'kills' him a second time in Mayo when he discovers that he is still alive. For him, the object of repression must be done away with at all costs.

But the Mayoites lack this daredevil spirit, this blind, instinctual urge for freedom. As soon as Christy brings the reality of violence and murder to their doorsteps, they immediately desert him and threaten to hand him over to the police. But like the typical comic hero that he is, Christy is saved from the hangman's noose with the discovery that Old Mahon still lives. Thus, in falling, Christy rises again and promises to be an even more endearing personality. The Mayoites eventually lose him; with his exit, it seems they would all return to their former state of loneliness and dreariness. As it is then, it is the conservative forces of tradition that triumph in Mayo; Pegeen would return to Shawn Keogh and life may probably continue in its usual monotonous pattern. It is the realisation of this failure to cling to the alternative possibilities of living opened up by Christy's personality, together with all its symbolic implications, that produces Pegeen's lament: "Oh, my grief, I've lost him surely. I've lost the only Playboy of the Western World" (p.167). This lament conveys Pegeen's personal grief but also echoes the regret of those in her community whose lives Christy's intervention had transformed within two days.

Thus, The Playboy explores two aspects of the dialectic under discussion. At one extreme is Christy's urge for freedom which becomes effective because it is backed up by the spirit to succeed, and at the other is the languid search for change by Pegeen and the rest of Mayo. Far from being a celebration of murder, The Playboy is an allegory for those in search of freedom from self-negating circumstances; by presenting two modes of combating this condition, the play challenges the reader to align with whatever position suits his fancy. Put differently, The Playboy is a commentary on the nationalist struggle and this, coupled with its contextual Irishness, is what qualifies it, in our view, as a nationalist play.

Same is the case with Synge's other plays. Like The Playboy, these plays present the spectacle of characters who are repressed within an hermetic environment, dogged by loneliness and langour, in which meaningful inter-personal relations are almost impossible. These characters enact several strategies to free themselves from this environment. They may fail (as in Riders to the Sea, The Well of the Saints, The Tinker's Wedding, Deirdre of the Sorrows and In the Shadow of the Glen) or succeed (as in The Playboy) but the accent

is neither on their failure nor on their success but on their drive for freedom, on their resolve to establish their individuality under circumstances which dwarf their significance and also, on the epiphanic implications of this struggle for survival.

The nationalist content of Synge's plays is not in doubt. These plays evince cultural nationalism insofar as they derive the tone and colour of their language, characterization and setting from the Irish landscape. They ultimately propagate higher nationalism¹⁹⁰ because this cultural content is harnessed to make cogent statements on man and the reality of his life. An example of such statements is the repression - freedom dialectic already discussed. Besides, In the Shadow of the Glen examines the dilemma of loveless marriages; The Tinker's Wedding bristles with anti-clericalism and iconoclasm as it subjects the two orthodox institutions of religion and marriage to a searing cross-interrogation. Deirdre of the Sorrows discusses pride, freedom, the power of love and the clash between individual will and official stubbornness. The Well of the Saints explores the contradictions between

dream and reality. Riders to the Sea centres on the futility of life in the midst of a compressionist world which negates all initiatives and the will to live.

Through this combination of cultural patriotism and iconoclasm, Synge's plays bear strong symbolic and ethical relevance to Ireland; and the parallels between them and the personality of the Irish nation are patent. For example, Ireland like Synge's characters, was weighed down by a stronger force, namely British imperialism, which colonized it and robbed it of the possibilities of self-assertion and expression. That is, Ireland, like Nora, Deirdre, Christy, the Mayoites and the Douls, was also trapped within the opposite poles of repression and freedom and the accompanying yearning for liberation. It is for this reason that Synge's plays are seen as allegorical commentaries on the Irish struggle for independence.

But Ireland, caught in the tide of the nationalist cauldron and sold to easy solutions, failed to heed not to talk of contemplating these comments and their ethical implications. And ironically, it was Synge who bore the brunt of this failure evidenced by the strong wave of anti-Synge campaigns during the period 1903-1912.

Soyinka and Nationalism

A discussion of Soyinka's nationalism requires a consideration of the negritude phenomenon which was popular in Africa in the sixties partly because the growth of this phenomenon coincided with the beginning of Soyinka's active involvement in Nigerian literature and also because it constitutes the theoretical base of the various charges of anti-nationalism that have been levelled against Soyinka.

The term negritude was first coined by Aime Cesaire, the Martinique poet, in a poem entitled "Cahiers d'un retour au pays natal" published in France in 1939. In this poem, Cesaire enjoined all black peoples who have experienced colonialism to return to their native roots in order to re-discover themselves. This entails a rejection of the colonialist's culture and a dramatisation of the indigenous heritage. In its theoretical context, this summon seems logical considering the fact that part of the aim of the imperialists is to de-emphasize the indigenous culture of the colonized and substitute theirs for it. In Africa, this cultural colonization did not merely stop with the imposition of cultural values but also involved the indoctrination of the indigene to make him accept the inferiority of his culture.

Thus, the entire colonial machinery was designed to demean the indigenous African culture. Witness colonial literature for example.

Here, the portraiture of the African invites parallels with the image of the stage Irishman; that is, the African is portrayed as sub-human, incapable of civilized thought and congenitally backward and dishonest. This is the kind of image we encounter in such novels as John Cameron Grant, The Ethiopian: A Narrative of the Society of Human Leopards; Mary Bird, Adaora: A Romance of West African Missions; Mary Gaunt, The Arm of the Leopard; Joyce Cary, Mister Johnson; Elspeth Huxley, Flame Trees of Thika¹⁹¹ and in the plays of George Peele, Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, William Shakespeare, George Chapman, Thomas Heywood, Ben Jonson, John Webster, Thomas Middleton, John Fletcher, Phillip Massinger and John Marston.¹⁹²

The specific task of negritude was to correct such bastardization of the black personality and insist on the dignity of the black race; hence it soon became very popular with black people. In Africa, its cause was championed by Leopold Sedar Senghor, Birago Diop, David Diop, Ranaivo,

Rabearivelo and Jacque Rabemanjara, to name only a few, with Senghor as its main theoretician and apostle. The movement invites parallels with the Gaelic League movement and the Sinn Fein in the Ireland of Synge's time. Like these two, negritudists romanticized the (African) past and condemned all European values and preached complete literary exclusiveness. They enjoined writers to support the movement compulsorily. Those who agreed to do so were declared true patriots; those who differed were labelled traitors.

The Negritude fever soon swept across Africa and it became very popular in the sixties in many emerging and emergent independent African nations but generally, it met with two kinds of reactions, namely total acceptance and indifference. The latter reaction was more widespread in Anglophone Africa whereas in Francophone nations, negritude was upheld as the most authentic cultural philosophy and socio-political blue-print for Africa. In Nigeria, the movement gained much popularity in the sixties obviously because this was, for Nigeria, the season of independence and also because it articulated the aspirations of the politicians.

The Nigerian politicians at the time were largely preoccupied with nationalism. They sought to justify the newly-acquired independence and prove to the imperialist world that Nigeria was capable of sovereignty and its people were contrary to colonial reasoning, capable of managing their own destiny as individuals and as a collectivity. But although the Nigerian literati and artists of the period espoused nationalism in their works and collaborated with politicians,¹⁹³ many of them including Chinua Achebe, Christopher Okigbo and Wole Soyinka, were less enthusiastic about negritude and its aesthetics. Only a handful like Obi Wali, Dennis Osadebay, Onuora Nzekwu and later in the seventies, Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Ihechukwu Madubuike regarded negritude as relevant to the Nigerian literary context.

The result is that there were regular altercations between the emergent opposite camps of ideological sympathy and in this exchange of intellectual brick-bats, Soyinka was a lead actor; in the sense that his own strictures against negritude were particularly decisive. Soyinka, it may be said, displayed an abiding and unrelenting aversion

to negritude. Evidences of this abound in his critical writings.

In an article entitled "The Future of West African Writing", published in The Horn in 1960, he inveighs against the idyllic romanticization of the past engaged in by the negritudists and dismisses it as an escapist approach to the African problem. Instead, the African writer should engage himself with the present and try to contribute to the survival and growth of the newly independent nations of Africa by examining their problems and peculiarities. And instead of seeking to celebrate himself, he should accept himself as he is. With these premises, Soyinka discusses negritude writers like Onuora Nzekwu, William Conton, Camara Laye and Lewis Nkosi and concludes:

If we could speak of negritude in a more acceptable broader sense, Chinua Achebe is a more 'African' writer than Senghor. The duiker will not paint 'duiker' on his beautiful back to proclaim his duikeritude, you'll know him by his elegant leap. The less self-conscious the African is, and the more innately his individual qualities appear in his writing, the more seriously he will be taken as an artist of exciting dignity. 194

In many of his later essays and commentaries, Soyinka further re-states and embellishes this initial view. In "The Writer in a Modern African State" he notes that soon after independence many African nations turned out to be the antithesis of what their leaders envisioned before independence: "What we are observing in our time is the total collapse of ideals, the collapse of humanity itself".¹⁹⁵ Hence, "the time has now come" for the African not to celebrate the past but "to determine alone what can be salvaged from the recurrent cycle of human stupidity".¹⁹⁶ Negritude, Soyinka says, is "only another evasion of the inward eye";¹⁹⁷ "as with most movements which begin on the cafe sidewalks, it is largely artificial, rhetorical ... Negritude has not really affected my life".²⁰⁰

In "The External Encounter: Ambivalence in African Arts and Literature", Soyinka re-examines negritude and describes it further as a neo-expressionist movement which assumes the blacks "became aware of their being in the world upon contact with whites". The irony however is that negritudists, despite their chest-pounding criticisms of the white race, are nevertheless entrapped in "the dialectics

of the master race". France for example, "held a mystic hold on them". Leopold Sedar Senghor, their spokesman, is "the true griot with a false vocation".²⁰¹

In Myth, Literature and the African World, Soyinka summarises his position.²⁰² A few quotations will suffice:

Both for Africans on the mother-continent and for the black societies of the diaspora, Negritude provided both a life-line along which the dissociated individual could be pulled back to the source of his matrilineal essence, and offered a prospect for the coming-into-being of new black social entities. In the process it enmeshed itself necessarily in negative contradictory definitions. 203

and

Negritude proceeded along the route of oversimplification. Its re-entrenchment of black values was not preceded by any profound effort to enter into this African system of values. It extolled the apparent. Its reference points took far too much colouring from European ideas even while its Messiahs pronounced themselves fanatically African. In attempting to refute the evaluation to which black reality had been subjected, Negritude adopted the Manichean tradition of European thought and inflicted it on a culture which is most radically anti-Manichean. It not only accepted the dialectical structure of European ideological confrontations but borrowed from the very components of its racist syllogism.²⁰⁴

One final quote:

Negritude trapped itself in what was primarily a defensive role, even though its accents were strident, its syntax hyperbolic and its strategy aggressive. It accepted one of the most commonplace blasphemies of racism, that the black man has nothing between his ears, and proceeded to subvert the power of poetry to glorify this fabricated justification of European cultural domination. Suddenly we were exhorted to give a cheer for those who never explored the oceans.²⁰⁵

An examination of Soyinka's aversion to negritude invites comparison with Synge's refusal to embrace the Gaelic League. Common in both instances is a refusal to subject art to propaganda for fundamentally, the Negritude movement and the Gaelic League are offshoots of the same stalk- both demand a repudiation of imperial values and a complementary rhapsodization of indigenous values and are both shot through with contradictions which Synge and Soyinka rejected and exposed. Just as Synge was concerned with truth, Soyinka too criticises negritude because he sees it as a negation of truth.

Truth, as the negritudists understood it, stipulates that the African world is unique and superior. But to Soyinka, Africa is neither unique nor superior; in fact, no world view or society can be regarded as such. There are, he insists, several complementarities in human experience and

the colonizer and the colonized are not so sociologically, ethically and culturally distant from each other as the negritudists would have us believe. Contrary to the negritude view that the African past is a long tale of nobility, Soyinka argues that it is a melange of nobility and ignobility. Historical and artistic truth must not be mortgaged on the altar of propaganda.

What unites Soyinka and Synge therefore is the dominance of higher nationalism in their writings. Instead of being propagandist, both writers are iconoclastic and so, objective and ideologically non-aligned. Rather than eulogise their backgrounds, both achieve through their criticisms what Kofi Awoonor calls "feats of dislocation"; that is, "the breaking (of) a malformed limb in order to reset it for a healthier, shapelier growth".²⁰⁶

In Synge, this entails the criticism of contemporary reality and the desecration of national effigies to expose the various contradictions which may have a deleterious effect on the Irish march towards sovereignty. Synge rejected the attitudinizing posturings of propagandists and couched his messages in privatist, metaphorical codes and in using the Irish cultural heritage, he projected a redemptive

vision. Soyinka confesses a similar concern. In one of his critiques of negritude, Soyinka writes as follows:

The artist has always functioned in African society as the record of the mores and experience of his society and as the voice of vision in his own time. It is time, for him to respond to this essence of himself.²⁰⁷

And bothered about the misinterpretation of this statement by critics to mean that he conceives "voice of vision" to represent "the highest possible function for the contemporary African writer",²⁰⁸ he clarifies the statement, in his discussion of ideology and the social vision, to mean

A creative concern which conceptualises or extends actuality beyond the purely narrative, making it reveal realities beyond the immediately attainable, a concern which upsets orthodox acceptances in an effort to free society of historical or other superstitions, these are qualities possessed by literature of a social vision. ²⁰⁹

Soyinka upholds this credo in his writings. Like the negritudists, he draws upon traditional heritage for materials, but he does so without any eulogy, rhapsody or romance, and when these are pressed into creative service

they are harnessed to critically interrogate contemporary reality. Even in Death and the King's Horseman, The Lion and the Jewel and Kongi's Harvest - plays in which two cultural aspects of the African historical experience are juxtaposed, Soyinka examines reality without compassion. And this is where he invites the ire of negritudists. Like Synge, he demands the freedom of the artist to relate to other cultures, subject his traditional background to creative alchemy, and serve no fetish but truth and his own imagination and because these contradict ultra-nationalist reasoning, Synge and Soyinka have been victims of negative appraisals from that quarter.

For example, Obi Wali in an essay entitled "The Dead End of African Literature?"²¹⁰ complains about Soyinka's anti-negritude stance and although he discusses other writers like Mphahlele and Okigbo, the bulk of his tirade is directed towards Soyinka. Zeroing in on the language issue, he notes that the use of the English and French languages by African writers is retrogressive; unless these writers use African languages, "they would be merely pursuing a dead end, which can only lead to sterility, uncreativity, and frustration".²¹¹

African literature in European languages caters only for the educated audience and distances "the ordinary local audience":

Less than one per cent of the Nigerian people have had access to or ability to understand Wole Soyinka's Dance of the Forest. Yet, this was the play staged to celebrate their national independence, tagged on to the idiom and traditions of a foreign culture. 212

A page later, Wali again singles out Soyinka:

The student of Yoruba for instance, has no play available to him in that language, for Wole Soyinka, the most gifted Nigerian playwright at the moment does not consider Yoruba suitable for The Lion and the Jewel or the Dance of the Forest. 213

In a reply to Wali, Soyinka asks: May I know what Obi Wali has done to translate my plays or others into Ibo or whatever language he professes to speak?"²¹⁴ Wali, perhaps in response to this challenge, went ahead to write a novel in Igbo entitled Ngozi Dili Chukwu. Whether this novel is successful or not is a matter for discussion elsewhere.

The most aggressive and articulate criticism of Soyinka's anti-negritudism is published by the troika of

Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Ihechukwu Madubuike, a.k.a. "bolekaja critics".²¹⁵ Their position as summarised in a book entitled Toward the Decolonization of African Literature²¹⁶ is that African literature must be rooted in orature for it to be authentically African and for the achievement of the cultural task of decolonizing African literature: but there are, says the troika, some Nigerian writers, identifiable as the Ibadan-Nsukka School of Nigerian Poetry and the Leeds-Ibadan connection, who instead of engaging in this cultural nationalism embrace decadent euromodernist traditions and by so doing, subvert the growth of African literature.

Such writers oppose negritude and when they do so, "the particular merits or demerits of negritude poetry and esthetic pronouncements were hardly the central issue"²¹⁷ but a British-motive to stifle the growth of nationalist consciousness in African literature. In this respect, Soyinka has served the British as "pointman and demolition expert":²¹⁸

Soyinka's success has wasted for us a generation of opportunities for our cultural liberation. This lamentable waste should indicate the enormity of our loss from that British cultural coup in which Wole Soyinka, who delights in masquerading as the authentic and quintessential African literary force, played so quixotic a role. 219

Quoting and expanding W.H. Stevenson's view that it was Soyinka's anti-negritude stand in his "The future of West African Writing" which suppressed the rise of nationalist consciousness on the pages of The Horn,²²⁰ the troika conclude that this stand also "succeeded in driving out of Nigerian poetry the issue of a nationalist outlook, it also drove sympathizers with such an outlook off center stage and underground, as it were".²²¹ Hence, Soyinka is anti-African, anti-nationalism and an agent of European imperialism:

As a practitioner of what he advocates, Soyinka treats public issues in the privatist mode and from the universalist-individualist outlook. He is much concerned with man's inhumanity to man, but shows practically no interest in Europe's historical and systematic inhumanity to Africans. When such issues interest him, he exhibits a deep commitment to the imperialist European view of Africa.²²²

The allegations of anti-nationalism that have been instituted against Soyinka do not, as can be seen, possess the kind of political and sociological weight evident in our discussion of Synge's nationalism. Instead of the radical dichotomy between politicians and writers, the tantrums, and the riots which attended Synge's nationalism, Soyinka's example has been largely in form of an intellectual debate between him and his colleagues and an exclusively academic exercise useful perhaps only for its wealth of polemics and tirade. This difference between Synge and Soyinka nationalism derives from the differences in the nationalism of their respective backgrounds and also from the fact that both wrote under slightly different political contexts.

Whereas in Ireland there was an established animosity between politicians and artists over the meaning of true patriotism and a disagreement over the appropriate method of liberation, in Nigeria, politicians and writers seem to have collaborated with an equanimity of purpose. There was, consequently, a close integration of political and cultural nationalism.

Besides, Nigerian nationalism does not entail the

fierceness and the air of desperation which enveloped Irish nationalism. Ernest Jones suggests a means of understanding this difference when, in his discussion of the psychology of Irish nationalism, he argues that many islanders tend to regard their home as a mother. Hence, they guard it jealously and Ireland, being an island, seems to have produced a similar reaction in its citizens.²²³ Jones may be right but noteworthy is the fact that Nigerians did not struggle for independence with the mentality of a man whose lovely mother has been ravished.

Whereas Irish nationalism was most meaningful in terms of riots and violent protests, Nigerian nationalism was largely a round-table phenomenon, intellectual, peaceful and gentlemanly with a kind of studied amiability and across-the-counter haggling which would have amounted to a luxury in the Irish context.²²⁴ This fundamental sociological difference would seem to account for the differences in the relationship between politicians and artists during the years of independence struggle in both countries.

Let it be noted also that a discussion of Soyinka's nationalism does not seem to require the bulk of sociological

data and polemical justification which the discussion of Synge's nationalism commands for the simple reason that the fact of Soyinka's nationalism seems to be generally accepted by literary critics. The voices of dissent against this view, represented here by Wali and "the bolekaja critics", are few and largely controversial. The general view, represented by the writings of Alain Ricard,²²⁵ Ketu H. Katrak,²²⁶ Eldred Jones,²²⁷ Joel Adedeji,²²⁸ Adrian Roscoe,²²⁹ Oyin Ogunba,²³⁰ Afam Ebeogu²³¹ and James Booth²³² is that Soyinka's works express the nationalist ideal.

Yet, it is still necessary to re-examine the allegations of unpatriotism raised against Soyinka and assess their validity or otherwise. Let us state, at once, that we consider these allegations unfounded. Obi Wali's prophecy that the continuous use of the English language would lead to a cul-de-sac in African literature has not yet made its point as African literature seems to have attained maturity and eloquence in the English Language. That the use of English alienated the largely illiterate local audience is a legitimate grouse and the best option would seem to lie not in the abandonment of the tongue

but in a simultaneous translation of works written in it into indigenous languages and vice versa.

Already, the examples of Ngugi's Matigari, Ngaahika Ndeenda (I will Marry when I want), Maitu Njugira (Mother Sing For Me); Wale Ogunyemi's Obaluaye, Samson O.O. Amali's Onugbo Mloko and Femi Osofisan's "Yeepa, Solarin Nbo!" (Who's afraid of Solarin?) has shown the viability of this option. Soyinka's works, with the exception of Ake,²³³ have not yet been translated into indigenous African languages but they contain a consciousness of the indigenous tongue since Soyinka writes in a powerful English which at appropriate times aspires to and attains the flavour of "Yorubanglish".²³⁴ This may not invalidate the charge of obscurity which Wali and the "bolekaja" troika level against him but it dilutes their view that he is exclusively euro-modernist.

There is also much evidence to show that Soyinka, contrary to the troika's argument, is committed to the African cause. Far from perpetuating the European hegemony, his plays are dispassionate interrogations of African history - past and contemporary - with particular interest in the political evolution of the continent in its moral

and sociological imports. The modernist apparels of Soyinka's works are a confession of the fact of colonialism which no African writer can escape even when he pretends to the contrary; and these, we hope to argue more fully in Chapter Five, are not opposed to African literature as Chinweizu et al. would have us believe. For all its modernist gestures however, Soyinka's creativity is rooted in his traditional Yoruba background.

As we have demonstrated elsewhere with "The Fourth Stage" and Death and the King's Horseman,²³⁵ this background reflects in his writings as the aesthetic foundation of his vision and as the source of his metaphors, raw materials and linguistic idiom. It is this that establishes Soyinka, in the first instance, as a cultural nationalist. Many scholars have discussed this at length,²³⁶ Soyinka himself attests to it severally:

I cannot claim a transparency of communication even from the sculpture, music and poetry of my own people the Yoruba, but the aesthetic matrix is the fount of my own creative inspiration; it influences my critical response to the creation of other cultures and validates selective eclecticism as the right of every productive being, scientist or artist. 237

in other words,

I have long been preoccupied with the process of apprehending my own world in its full complexity, also through its contemporary progression and distortions - evidence of this is present both in my creative work and in one of my earliest essays, The Fourth Stage.²³⁸

Further, the claim by the "bolekaja" critics and W.H. Stevenson that Soyinka's tigritude outcry stifled the growth of nationalist consciousness in Nigerian literature amounts to an avoidance of the facts of history. The negritude phenomenon in Africa was largely a Francophone affair as it was received with less enthusiasm in Anglophone Africa. This difference in reception must be traced to the different colonial experiences undergone by both blocks: Francophone Africa was subjected by France to an assimilationist policy with the intention of de-Africanizing and so, Frenchifying it completely. Thus, French colonialism was more deliberately imperialist and racist; whereas in Anglophone Africa, Britain, through its indirect rule policy, asserted its might yet left a lacuna which allowed the survival of indigenous traditions.

Consequently, while post-colonial Francophone Africa felt culturally disoriented; hence a need to return to its

native roots; its Anglophone cousin was less desperate. In Nigeria, for example, while the negritude renaissance gripped Africa in the sixties, many Nigerian writers were reluctant to embrace its racist and propagandist cultural doctrines. This indifference is summarised in a communique issued by the Society of Nigerian Writers founded in 1962, jointly signed by Ekwensi, Achebe, Nzekwu, Clark and Wole Soyinka:

Nigerian writers are free to treat the subjects they wish ... writing does not germinate in the air but is the result of social and other pressures, allied with the desire for self-expression. The great theme of Africa today is the problem which concerns the entire continent and its leaders: the new national status, the arrival on the international scene, the national construction, the search for the right path in a world torn by opposing ideologies. 239

It may be argued, in the light of this evidence, that Soyinka's anti-negritude stance is both an expression of his own revulsion against the hegemonisation of propaganda and literary provincialism and exclusiveness; and also an articulation of general Anglophone indifference towards negritude. If this is true, it is wrong then to accuse

him of single-handedly stifling the growth of nationalist consciousness in Nigerian literature. The truth is that his activities, particularly in the areas of drama and theatre, establish him as a true nationalist. Soyinka has always frowned upon the slavish imitation of European artistic modes and encouraged the creation of a virile indigenous dramatic arts tradition. These are nothing if not the actions of a nationalist.

His "1960 Masks", a theatre group, founded soon after his return to Nigeria in 1960 and later supplemented by a younger troupe called "Orisun Theatre" in 1964 marked the beginning of an indigenous literary tradition in Nigerian theatre. Around this time, there were other theatre groups like The Players of the Dawn, formed in 1959 by some young graduates resident in Ibadan,²⁴⁰ the University of Ibadan Dramatic Society, the Arts Theatre Production Group and John Ekwere's Ogui Players known as the Eastern Nigerian Theatre Group. Although these other groups produced indigenous plays, the aspiration to promote indigenous dramatics was most successfully realised by the Soyinka group.

The example of the Orisun theatre engendered further interest in theatre arts and also inspired many young

dramatists for whom Soyinka became a model. The Orisun, like the Abbey, although in a slightly different manner, was also a national theatre and Wole Soyinka, its founder and leader, is to be credited for this achievement. Even after the demise of this group, Soyinka, in his teaching posts at the Universities of Ibadan, Lagos and Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) continued to contribute to the growth of Nigerian drama both by personal example and by instruction.

With Synge, we established a case of cultural nationalism and admitted, with several qualifications and reservations, that he was indifferent to politics. With Soyinka, we are confronted with a marriage of cultural and political nationalism. Unlike Synge, Soyinka has always played an active role in politics by allegedly holding a radio station at gun-point, staging one-man demonstrations against the killing of Nigerian students by the police, joining a political party, expressing political opinions in newspaper articles, making anti-government speeches, by condemning the tyranny of Idi Amin, Bokassa and Sese Seko, the incompetence of Shagari, the corruption of Gowon or the insensitivity of Buhari and Idiagbon or by accepting government appointments.

In all these instances, his political goal is the same as his artistic goal namely the defence and the promotion of the humanistic and the national ideal.

Let us repeat, for the sake of emphasis, that the issue at stake in a discussion of Soyinka's nationalism is not, as in Synge's case, one of justification and rationalisation for the simple reason that Soyinka's nationalism - political and cultural - is more or less, as earlier stated, an accepted fact. What seems to deserve discussion, in our view, are some of the misconceptions which have dogged discussions of Soyinka's nationalism by other scholars, particularly the tendency to approach the subject from two divergent, extremist positions. One extreme, represented by the Wali - "bolekaja" axis, dismisses Soyinka as anti-African and a-national; the other, represented by Peter Nazareth, Bruce King and Femi Osofisan, claims that Soyinka is pro-negritude and culturally narcissistic in some of his writings.

The fallacies at the heart of the former have already been highlighted, it is time to contend with the latter position. But first, the truth of the matter is that Soyinka belongs to no extremes. It is difficult to pigeon-hole him

into any particular frame of sympathy. The fact that there is no standard consensus as to whether he is completely anti or pro-negritude is a salutary indication of this. A more dialectical interrogation of his plays reveals no evidence to prove that he consciously, as alleged, promotes either the indigenous tradition or its Western rival.

In their discussions of The Lion and the Jewel, Peter Nazareth and Bruce King both describe the play as pro-negritude since in it, it is the traditional world-view that triumphs.²⁴¹ In his "Ritual and the Revolutionary Ethos", Femi Osofisan divides Soyinka's works into two broad categories: those that are written in "a conscious Negritudist zeal" and those in which he attempts a dialectical interrogation of history. The former category is represented by Death and the King's Horseman, The Strong Breed and Idanre, the latter by The Road, Madmen and Specialists and Ogun Abibiman. "The first category of works are usually written 'in exile' in reaction to some racist attack on the African culture"; hence what we have for example in Death and the King's Horseman, says Osofisan, is a "narcissism which seems to reinforce a decadent order".²⁴² This is not true.

Soyinka's writings, where the issue of nationalism is concerned, contrary to the claim of the Wali-Bolekaja axis, do not seem to celebrate Euromodernism nor do they seem to celebrate negritude as Nazareth, King and Osofisan opine. Granted that there is usually an interaction of two world-views in Soyinka's plays but he does not confess any allegiance to either of these. Even when the resolution of the conflict seems to be in favour of the Western world-view as in Kongi's Harvest or the traditional as in The Lion and Jewel and Death and the King's Horseman, the apparent success is merely a carapace for a more fundamental critical interrogation of socio-historical configurations.

This is the pattern in A Dance of the Forests, written in commemoration of Nigeria's independence celebrations in 1960. Because of its historical significance, it is logical to expect this play to celebrate the African heritage and flatter the ego of the newly independent nation and that of its leaders but it does not. Traces of cultural nationalism however abound in it as in many of Soyinka's plays. First, it adopts a story-telling format, and employs local proverbs, idioms and performance modes. It is designed in form of a festival and the characters, particularly Agboreko and Obañeji

speak in an English with a Yoruba flavour. Also noteworthy is the play's anthropomorphic portrayal of gods, its heavy leanings on orature and Yoruba cosmological beliefs evident in Soyinka's portraiture of Dead man and Dead woman, in the setting of the play in the forest, and also in the use of masks and disguise in the characterization of Eshuoro. These cultural evocations of national identity are however not harnessed for the purpose of eulogy but to highlight the contradictions in the history of a newly independent state.

A Dance of the Forests does not dramatise a confrontation between two world-views but between two generational gaps, the past and the present, with a prognosis of the future. Soyinka's portraiture of the past is of particular relevance. The play was written at a period when negritude was in full swing and it was then the norm to describe the past in idyllic terms but here, Soyinka reveals that the past, contrary to the expectations of those living in the present, is not a romantic idyll but a morbid terrain fraught with corruption and bestiality.

Hence, the ancestors who are invited to the Gathering of the Tribes are not illustrious as Adenebi and other

members of the council had thought but lackeys, opportunists and uninspiring degenerates. The living therefore flee from the dead in order to avoid contamination but in a sharp satirical swipe, Soyinka establishes that they have no moral justifications to condemn the dead because they are equally guilty of the same offences which they accuse the dead of. The present, Soyinka establishes, is an extension of the past and both levels of existence are "linked in violence and blood".²⁴³

Human existence as depicted in the play is a cyclic exercise in futility. Dead Man claims to have lived thrice and for him, each existence, was the same pattern of victimisation and futility. The future, like the past and the present is, as argued in the preceding chapter, tainted by the prospect of death.

Interpreted in the light of nationalism, A Dance of the Forests suggests that human experience is gloomy because of man's inhuman and unnationalistic tendencies - his love of war, graft, corruption, bigotry, hypocrisy, self-romanticization. These inadequacies are given a symbolic edge by the depiction of the intolerance and rivalry between

Ogun and Eshuoro - gods who because of their elevated consciousness are expected to be saner than men but whose actions reveal that they themselves are not immuned from the imperfections which necessitate the collapse of man's historical process.

The central moral of the play to man, universally; and particularly to the Nigerian nation, for whose independence it was specially commissioned, is that the human estate and the national estate can survive only when man begins to re-examine himself morally and avoid the kind of perversions which run through Mata Kharibu's court in the past and the city council in the present. Soyinka establishes this without any ideological or historical fixation.

In Kongi's Harvest, the forces of tradition and modernism, represented by Oba Danlola and Kongi respectively are brought into conflict. The issue at stake and the central metaphor is the New Yam and the motivating question - Who will eat the new yam? Oba Danlola being the spiritual leader of the community is traditionally the first person who is supposed to taste the yam, bless it and then declare it fit for communal consumption; but Kongi, having come into

power as the new Head of State, decides to usurp this function. To Danlola and his fellow traditionalists, this is a taboo; consequently, they resist Kongi's decree but Kongi is adamant.

The eating of the new yam must be seen only as a symbolic event, a mere metaphor serving as a vehicle of dramatic action. The major thematic thrust of the play is on power and its intricate dynamics and the dominant picture here, as in A Dance of the Forests and Opera Wonyosi, is that power is a potent intoxicant capable of sending man into fits of delusion. Beneath Kongi's crave for the new yam is a desperate desire to acquire Danlola's spiritual power, which results from his role as the first-eater of the new yam, and add it to his own political power in order to realise his dream of becoming an absolute ruler who is not just the "SPIRIT OF HAAR-VEST!"²⁴⁴ but also the author of life and death.

But what must be noted is that Soyinka does not take sides in this confrontation between Danlola and Kongi; nor does he attempt to portray either of them as the ideal form of leadership. Even though Kongism appears aggressive and

hence unsympathetic, and Danlolaism appears sympathetic because it is the victim of various brands of aggression, at the end of the conflict, our sympathy goes neither way. What we are left with is the realisation that neither Kongi nor Danlola is ideal for Isma.

Danlola's power is people-centred, spiritual, level-headed and wise but it is exploitative in certain ways. And because of its illiteracy, it can hardly survive the new trend of politics and hence appears inadequate for contemporary Isma. There is therefore a need for its replacement by a new order but Kongi who proposes himself as the alternative is hardly appropriate too. His power is too absolute, inhuman, unpopular and narcissistic. Its rule can only spell doom and decay and it is perhaps in order to highlight this negativism that Soyinka surrounds Kongi with symbols of oppression and repression.

To drive home the inadequacy of both levels of power; neither of them is allowed to eat the new yam. Through a combined use of blackmail, force and coercion, Kongi succeeds in compelling Danlola to give up his right to eat the yam and as the feast of the new yam is celebrated, it does appear as if Kongi would realise his dream:

(The rhythm of the pounding emerges triumphant, the dance grows frenzied. Above it all on the dais, Kongi, getting progressively inspired harangues his audience in words drowned in the bacchanal. He exhorts, declaims, reviles, cajoles, damns, curses, vilifies, excommunicates, execrated until he is a demonic mass of sweat and foam at the lips) (p.131).

Described as such, Kongi cuts the picture of an acolyte at an orgy, intoxicated and lost in the mass mixture of euphony and language and as he engages in this auto-dramatisation, the play reaches its climax and he, the main protagonist, prepares for what is perhaps the most important moment in his political career:

Segi returns, disappears into the area of pestles. A copper salver is raised suddenly high, it passes from hands to hands above the women's heads; they dance with it on their heads; ... (pp.131-132).

This is clearly Kongi's moment of triumph. His happiness is imaginable as the salver

is thrown from one to the other until at last it reaches Kongi's table and Segi throws open the lid. In it the head of an old man. In the ensuing scramble, no one is left but Kongi and the head, Kongi's mouth wide open in speechless terror. A sudden blackout on both (p.132).

Thus, the feast of the New Yam ends with a sharp reversal of expectations and within the short sequence quoted above, the play moves sharply from comedy to the borderlines of tragedy. That Kongi is served "the head of and old man" instead of the new yam, illustrates the futility of his ambitions and establishes, with finality, the suggestion that he is neither the spirit of harvest nor a life-giving spirit but an agent of death and destruction. Thus, he fails at the very moment he expects success; in the ironic manner of all heroes who, like him, lay too much premium on their own understanding of reality. When these heroes are humbled by harsh empiricism, they hardly evoke our sympathy. Hence, Kongi's "speechless terror" would seem to be a just recompense for his megalomaniac fits in the preceding scenes.

By the time the drama resumes, the Organising Secretary is in flight; Danlola is engaged in a "rapid dialogue with (his) legs" (p.135) and for both political opponents, all roads have suddenly become one and self preservation becomes the only code of survival. In the midst of all these, the fate of the nation remains uncertain:

What happens now? The hornets' nest
Is truly stirred. What happens to
The sleeping world? (p. 136).

Kongi's Harvest ends with a question mark and with an ambiguous coda, without resolving the conflicts it dramatizes. With the deflation of Kongi and the flight of Danlola into exile, the two major antagonists in the drama are denied any easy victory and neither of them is presented by the dramatist as the ideal in the struggle for political leadership in the play. The underlying suggestion is that they are both greatly flawed, incapable of steering the ship of the state competently.

Existing side by side with these two levels of power is a third level, namely the Daodu-Segi entente, which appears to be an alternative to Danlolaism and Kongism. This level represents a level of moderation; that is, a kind of balance between both extremes. It embodies the good qualities of Danlola and Kongi but without their excesses. In other words, Daodu and Segi possess the spiritual power and traditional wisdom of Danlola. They also possess the educated snobbery of the Kongists.

They therefore appear to be the ideal form of leadership in the play and accordingly, they attempt to displace the other power-groupings. Daodu and Segi are rebels and at the same time, Frye's "pharmakos" - sacrificial lambs who have to use themselves to check the excesses of the "one individual pole" whom Frye calls "the tyrant leader... who commands loyalty only if he is egocentric enough to represent the collective ego of his followers".²⁴⁵

It is instructive that the prize-winning yam at the feast of the new yam is from Daodu's farm and also that it is prepared by Segi and her women. Daodu appears, on account of this, as the spirit of harvest instead of Kongi. Danlolaism and Kongism placed besides the Daodu-Segi entente would appear selfish and unattractive devoted as they are to the perpetuation of personal fancies and the servicing of superstitions. Daodu and Segi are forces of change, harbingers of a more promising political machinery.

But at the end of the play, they fail to displace the older powers; perhaps because their success would have amounted to an arithmetic and overtly optimistic resolution of dramatic conflict. By making them fail, Soyinka ends

the play on an ambiguous, objective note and the spectator is left to resolve the conflicts, in his own imagination as he contemplates the possibilities of pessimism and optimism which mark the ending of the play.

Thus Kongi's Harvest, through its dramatisation of power-politics, presents three brands of nationalism: Danlolaism, Kongism and the Daodu-Segi entente and in his characteristic dispassionate interrogation of social history, Soyinka betrays no allegiance to any of these. Kongi's Harvest, like A Dance of the Forests, is a moral tale with a satiric edge.

Two brands of nationalism are dramatised in The Lion and the Jewel: the traditional represented by Baroka and the modern represented by Lakunle and the pattern of conflict between them invites parallels with the confrontation between Danlola and Kongi in Kongi's Harvest. Danlola and Kongi compete for the New Yam but here, it is Sidi, the village belle of Ilujinle, that is the bone of contention as Baroka and Lakunle compete for her hand in marriage. The parallels between the New Yam and Sidi must be noted: the struggle for both represents a symbolic competition for power and authority and a contest between two brands of leadership.

In The Lion and the Jewel, Baroka wins and Lakunle loses but this resolution does not translate into a preference for Baroka's brand of authority, as Bruce King and Peter Nazareth have argued.²⁴⁶ Soyinka may appear to be on the side of tradition as represented by Baroka but the truth is that Soyinka, as in Kongi's Harvest, does not portray either of the two conflicting types of leadership as ideal. Lakunle loses but Baroka even in victory also appears vacant and fraudulent. The dominant impression is that both of them are flawed and they represent two undesirable extremes of political leadership.

Lakunle, in spite of his eloquence and flair for dramatics, is ultimately a victim of inferiority complex, and a short-sighted neo-colonial agitator. He dreams of progress and civilization but his dream amounts to a self-denying Eurocentrism. Finding nothing good in his own indigenous custom and culture, he romanticizes European culture and dismisses his own race as "a race of savages".²⁴⁷

He is however an appropriately comedic character. He carries himself with much aplomb and conviction but the fact that he is black deflates his European pretensions and the more he repudiates indigenous ways and espouses Europeanisms,

the more risible he becomes. That he loses Sidi eventually is a just illustration of the impotence of his boasts and dreams. At a satirical level, he is a caricature of the educated and the half-educated native - the cultural albino who because of a chance encounter with white ways insists on becoming whiter than the European and more Biblical than the cleric. Lakunle is an extreme example of this specie and it seems Soyinka sets him up to ridicule the self-abdication that was common in the colonial and early post-colonial period with educated Africans.

Baroka occupies an opposite cultural pole. In his own case, he opposes any intrusion of Western culture into Ilujinle on the assumption that such intrusions would disrupt the cultural stability of the community. For example he bribes the surveyor to ensure that the railway line is not brought to Ilujinle but Baroka, like Lakunle, is a specious culturologist. His defence of indigenous culture amounts to a desperate attempt to cling on to a vanishing mythology of the self as opposed to a genuine patriotic effort. Is it not ironic that it is the same Baroka who opposes the erection of the railway line who

engages in an infantile fascination with a magazine and a stamp-printing machine, obvious artifacts of Western culture? Baroka is deflated by contradictions such as this with the most outstanding being the fact that the aspects of indigenous culture which he admittedly propagates are those which enable him to engage in a vainglorious game of ego-massage involving the erection of a harem, lascivious escapades and engagement in wily schemes which are unbecoming for a man of his office.

He cuts the picture of an undignified village chief and it is doubtful if Soyinka intended him to be anything other than a caricature. He may win Sidi at the end but that he does so through cunning schemes is a further comment on his moral ineptitude. His victory is an easy one, accordingly requiring no celebration; for if Lakunle had agreed to pay the bride price earlier on, the pendulum of dramatic action could easily have swung differently.

The resolution of the play is therefore a mere dramatic event, a logical, inevitable resolution of the conflict, the unstated fundamentalist resolution of the play is that neither Baroka nor Lakunle represents the ideal political

leadership: the ideal lies perhaps as in the Daodu-Segi entente in Kongi's Harvest, in a reconciliation of the good sides of both tendencies.

Soyinka's approach to the subject of nationalism, especially where the use of traditional culture is involved and where this culture is juxtaposed with its Western counterpart, as in A Dance of the Forests, Kongi's Harvest and The Lion and the Jewel, would perhaps seem to attain a wider significance in a discussion of Death and the King's Horseman since in this play, the two cultures under reference are brought together in a most decisive dramatic opposition.

Soyinka objects to this line of interpretation and warns against the tendency to reduce the play to "a clash of cultures".²⁴⁸ "The confrontation in the play", he says, "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".²⁴⁹ Elsewhere, he writes that his purpose is to "epochalise History for its mythopoeic resourcefulness".²⁵⁰

The mythopoeic and metaphysical factors of the play are indeed very much patent but of equal thematic value, hence of intellectual concern, is the sociological factor of the play represented by the cultural confrontation between the indigenes and the Pilkingses. The colonial factor is not, as Soyinka claims, a "catalytic incident merely".²⁵¹ The confrontation in the play is partly a confrontation between two brands of nationalism - the indigenous and the modern; and easily, the characters can be categorised into two camps of opposition. On one hand are the indigenes - Praise-singer, Elesin, Iyaloja, the market women, the young girls and Olunde, on the other - the Pilkingses, Joseph, The Resident, The Prince and the Aide-de-camp. Standing mid-way between these two camps and useful not only for the comedy which arises from his antics but also for the fact that his cultural vacillation represents the kind of contradictions in colonial Africa and the manner in which colonialism fragmented individual personalities into a mesh of opposing alliances and tendencies is Sergeant Amusa.

The confrontation between the two camps arises from a conflict in the discharge of their duties as defined by

their individual cultural world-views, both world-views are diametrically opposed and each camp, in true nationalist spirit, insists on protecting and asserting the integrity of its own world-view. This is the logic which underscores the confrontations between Elesin and Pilkings, between Iyaloja, the market women, the young girls and Amusa, although the caveat must be added here that Amusa is not propagating the European culture but merely performing his official duty. "I am here", he says, "on official business" (p.34). "You know me, I no like trouble but duty is duty". (p. 36).

Critics must avoid the error of assuming that the play superiorises one culture and inferiorises the other. Osofisan's claim for example that the play is written in conscious negritudist zeal to "reinforce a decadent order" is not validated by the text. The moral tone of the play may seem to indict the illogicality and the unwisdom of the actions of the Pilkingses and by extension, of the entire colonial apparatus, but the moral failure of this nationalist camp does not translate into a superiorisation of its opposite. The indigenes are admittedly accorded a moral

victory but it is a victory with a question mark and an implied contextual interrogation of their own world-view.

The indigenes eventually achieve their desire to send a horseman after their late king in order to restore communal balance and well-being but far from reinforcing this tradition, Soyinka subjects it to a dialectical interrogation. With the death of Elesin and Olunde, the future of the horseman tradition becomes uncertain. According to tradition, only first-borns inherit this social responsibility and if tradition is to be followed, Olunde's first-born should be the next Elesin, but within the context of this drama, Olunde has no child yet. The result is that the community would be ultimately compelled to re-examine its carrier-tradition. Through the confrontation between them and the Pilkingses, the playwright seems to be highlighting the dialectics which new socio-political realities impose on their culture.

Interpreted thus, Elesin, at a sociological level, would therefore appear to be a victim of change and circumstances because if the social context were pre-colonial, that is, if Pilkings had not intervened, he, despite his other shortcomings would still have succeeded in entering

the metaphysical gulf of transition: "I would have shaken it off", he says, "already my foot had already begun to lift but then, the white ghost entered and all was defiled" (p.65).

The entrance of the white ghost refers, at a wider level, to the phenomenal intervention of colonialism in the indigenous setting with its attendant socio-political implications, the most central being that it attempts to change the entire epistemological landscape of the indigenes. Pilkings then is a symbol of colonialism and his actions represent the kind of change which the phenomenon imposes on the life of the colonized.

Iyaloja waxes eloquent about the horseman tradition and rebukes Elesin, but as the community follows her bidding and turns to the future, it would eventually be realised that the Elesin incident is merely a beginning of the changes which they would experience in their world not necessarily out of their own faults, but because society is in a state of flux. Soyinka emphasizes this flux and hence raises doubts about the survival of the horseman tradition and other communal traditions as the indigenous setting grapples with the winds of change imposed by colonial and

post-colonial reality. This sociological change also invariably affects the mythopoeic and mythical heritage of the community.

Conclusion

This chapter has thus far examined nationalism in the writings of Synge and Soyinka. In Synge's case, our concern has been to combat the charges of anti-nationalism that have been levelled against him and on the contrary, justify him as a nationalist writer. In Soyinka's case, such justifications are hardly necessary since his nationalism is not so much in doubt, hence, we concerned ourselves with an examination of two of the gross misconceptions which have coloured discussions of Soyinka's nationalism by other scholars.

In conclusion, let us state that those who seek in Synge and Soyinka a propagandization of the racial or tribal or national heritage and cause or even of a particular attitudinal tendency; and those who dismiss them as a-national for the same reason, are engaged in a hazardous academic exercise. In their treatments of the national question, both writers are more concerned with higher nationalism,

already defined as a search for truth and a basically humanistic aspiration. Synge's cultural nationalism and Soyinka's cultural/political nationalism are harnessed to fulfil this aspiration.

It is important that the weight of polemics and literary history swing in favour of both writers. That Soyinka is a national writer, for example, is an accepted fact. Synge who was once dismissed as unnational later appeared to have anticipated post-colonial Irish nationalist writing as writers like Brendan Behan, Mervyn Will, John Montague, Michael Farrell and James Plunkett adopted, in their portraiture of contemporary Ireland, a tone of scepticism and irreverence which is largely reminiscent of Synge.

Is it not also ironic that Synge is accepted today as one of Ireland's leading nationals? Take The Playboy. This play which was once rumoured to have been kept in the Abbey repertory in order to indispose the English public mind against Home Rule²⁵² is now regarded as one of the landmarks of the Abbey. Is it not surprising and amusing that when the Abbey company, in 1968, had a special audience with the Pope, they presented him with a rare edition, bound in white

leather of that play which once caused riots: The Playboy of the Western World"?²⁵³

Synge invites parallels with Hamsun, Celine, Cervantes, Faulkner and Dante - writers who avoided politics and the nationalist insurgence of their time but who are no less nationalist on that account. Soyinka however is a man of politics and action. His political nationalism reinforces his literary nationalism. Both writers are conscious of the pitfalls of national consciousness. Synge, writing in a colonial context, dramatised these pitfalls and sought to caution his compatriots. Soyinka, writing in a post-colonial context, highlighted them and the extent to which they have traduced post-colonial ideals.

The condemnation of both writers on nationalist grounds arises from their refusal to follow the bandwagon syndrome of nationalist thinking with all its errors of exclusiveness. In Synge's case, this means an opposition of the Gaelic League, in Soyinka, a rejection of Negritude.

Both writers attempt, in their works, a privatist, individualist and objective interpretation of reality. These works embody strong allegorical and ethical implica-

tions for the state and man but these are often ignored and misunderstood because they are not cast in the explicit, eulogistic mode of political sloganeering favoured by ultra-nationalists. By adopting this approach, Synge and Soyinka emerge as true artists for true art is hardly propagandist.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

NOTES

¹K.R. Minogue, Nationalism (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1969), p. 22.

²Carlton J.H. Hayes, Essays on Nationalism (New York: Russel and Russel, 1966), p. 1.

³Minogue, p. 31: "A nation", Minogue writes, "is a living component of nationalism".

⁴Elie Kedourie, Nationalism (London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd., 1960), pp. 12-31.

⁵See Ernest Renan, "Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation? (1882), quoted in Kedourie, p. 81; also in Louis L. Snyder (ed.) The Dynamics of Nationalism: Readings in its meaning and Development (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company Inc., 1964), pp. 9-10; also quoted in Royal Institute of International Affairs, Nationalism: A Report by a Study Group of Members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1939), p. 259.

⁶K.H. Silvert, "The Strategy of the Study of Nationalism" K.H. Silvert (ed.), Expectant Peoples: Nationalism and Self Development (by the American Universities Field Staff), with a preface by Kenneth W. Thompson (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), p. 19. "Nationalism is the acceptance of the state as the impersonal and ultimate arbiter of human affairs".

⁷Halvan Koht, "The Dawn of Nationalism in Europe" Louis Snyder (ed.), p. 30: "That nationalism cannot exist without nations is self-evident". For further discussions of the concept, see F.H. Hinsley, Nationalism and the International System (New York: Oceana Publications Inc., 1973), Chapter

Four: "Concepts of the Nation", p. 58f.; also see K.R. Minogue, Chapter Five: "The Equipment of a Proper Nation", pp. 114-132; and see Chapter XIV of Royal Institute of International Affairs, Nationalism: A Report...: "The Nature of Nations" pp. 254-259.

⁸ H. Munro Chadwick, The Nationalities of Europe and The Growth of National Ideologies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 3: "Although patriotism and nationalism tend to coalesce, they are apparently of different origins...".

⁹ Don Luigi Sturzo, "Nationalism as an ism" Louis Snyder (ed.), p. 22:

To confound patriotism with nationalism is to err not only linguistically but also politically. Nevertheless we have to admit that for many the two substantives were and are quite equivalent.

¹⁰ For a full discussion of this view, see John Stuart Mill, "Of Nationality, as Connected with Representative Government" in Louis Snyder (ed.), pp. 2-4. cf. Carlton J.H. Hayes, Essays on Nationalism, pp. 16-21; cf. H.A.L. Fisher, The common weal (London, 1924), p. 195 quoted in Louis Snyder, "The Historian's Understanding of Nationalism" in Snyder (ed.), p. 26:

What is essential to the growth of the national spirit is a common history - common sufferings, common triumphs, common achievements, common memories, and it may be added, common aspirations.

Also see Abdullah-al-alayili, "What is Arab Nationalism?" Sylvia G. Haim (ed.) Arab Nationalism: An Anthology (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 120-127. Alayili outlines the following as the factors which engender national feeling: Language, interest, the geographical environment, ancestry, history and customs.

¹¹For a discussion of Arab nationalism, see Sylvia G. Haim (ed.) Arab Nationalism: An Anthology (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976).

¹²Hugh Seton-Watson, Nationalism and Communism: Essays, 1946-1963 (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1964), p.7.

¹³Abdullah-al-Alayili, in Sylvia G. Haim (ed.) p. 122 cf. Royal Institute of International Affairs, p. XVI: "Among other difficulties which impede the study of 'nationalism' that of language holds a leading place".

¹⁴E. Haugen, "Dialect, Language, Nation" J.P. Pride and Janet Holmes (eds.) Sociolinguistics (England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1982), p. 103.

¹⁵Quoted in Kedourie, p. 64.

¹⁶See Briefe au Beforderung der Humanitat, Br. 10, Vol.1, (Riga, 1793), pp. 146-148 quoted in Carlton J.H. Hayes, pp. 53-54.

¹⁷For a full account of Fichte's views, see Kedourie, pp. 64-68. Note that Herder's and Fichte's views, when closely examined, are emendations of Kant's notion of autonomy

¹⁸K.R. Minogue, p. 122.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 121.

²⁰For a full text of the address, see Louis L. Snyder (ed.), pp. 234-236.

²¹For further information on the Gaelic League and its revival of the Irish Language, see Desmond Fennell, "The Irish Language Movement: its achievements and its failure" Twentieth Century Studies, Nov. 1970, No.4: Ireland, pp.64-77.

²² See Nationalities and Subject Races: Report of Conference Held in Caxton-Hall, Westminster, June 28-30, 1910 (London: P. S. King and Son, 1911), p. 85.

²³ William Gibson, "Ireland's Greatest Need" in *ibid.*, pp. 87-88. cf. G. Gavan Duffy, "Failure of Imperialism in Ireland", *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

²⁴ On Nationalism in Africa, see

Basil Davidson, Which Way Africa? The Search for a New Society 3rd ed. (England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1971).

Elie Kedourie (ed.), Nationalism in Asia and Africa (New York and Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1970).

Patrick, F. Wilmot, In Search of Nationhood: The Theory and Practice of Nationalism in Africa (Ibadan: Lantern Books, 1979).

Nnamdi Azikiwe, Renascent Africa (London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd., 1968).

Davidson Nicol (ed.) Africanus Horton: The Dawn of Nationalism in Modern Africa - Extracts from the political, educational and scientific writings of J.A.B. Horton, M.D. 1835-1883. (London and Harlow: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1969).

W.W. Macmillan, Africa Emergent Rev. ed. (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1949).

Julius Nyerere, Freedom and Unity-Uhuru Na Moja, a selection from writings and speeches, 1952-65 (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia Shall Be Free: an autobiography (London: Heinemann, 1962).

Obafemi Awolowo, Awo: the Autobiography (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1960).

Ndabaningi Sithole, African Nationalism, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968).

²⁵ Minogue, p. 121.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 124.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 120.

²⁸ Boyd C. Shafer, Nationalism: Myth and Reality (London: Victor Gollancz, 1955), p.33.

²⁹ Kedourie, p. 80.

³⁰ Ernest Renan, "Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?" in Louis L. Snyder (ed.), pp. 9 and 10 cf. Harold Laski, A Grammar of Politics (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982), p. 219: "the idea of nationality is ... essentially spiritual in character. It implies the sense of a special unity which marks off those who share in it from the rest of mankind..."

³¹ Quoted in Kedourie, p. 81.

³² Karl Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality Second ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1975), p. 97.

³³ Max Sylvius Handman, "The Sentiment of Nationalism" Political Science Quarterly, Vol.XXXVI, 1921, pp. 104-109.

³⁴ Hans Kohn, Nationalism as group consciousness (New York: Macmillan, 1964), p. 18.

³⁵ Minogue, p. 33; for a clarification of this position, see chapter Four of his Nationalism: "Europe Exports Nationalism".

³⁶ Kedourie, p. 9.

³⁷ Seton-Watson, p. 4.

³⁸ Louis L. Snyder (ed.), p. ix.

³⁹ Alfred Cobban, National Self-determination (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944), p. 134.

⁴⁰ Louis L. Snyder, "The Historian's Understanding of Nationalism" Louis L. Snyder (ed.), p. 29.

⁴¹ Carlton Hayes, The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism (New York: Russell and Russell 1968), p. 1, also see his Essays on Nationalism (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), here, he argues that

nationality has existed from the earliest times of which history and anthropology can treat. Most of the tribes described by anthropologists and most of the peoples whom we encounter in history, are nationalities (p. 21).

⁴² Hayes, Essays on Nationalism, p. 26.

⁴³ More complex forms of nationalism exist but these are variants of this basic taxonomy; in the main, these variants do not concentrate on the historical bi-polarity of the concept but on its character and its area of influence. Minogue, for example, identifies five classes of nationalism namely: "the originals, underdeveloped nationalism, Pan-movement or macro-nationalism, the nationalism of people in search of a home and fascism or totalitarian nationalism". He further classifies nationalism by the area of life in which it operates: "cultural nationalism, religious nationalism, linguistic nationalism, economic nationalism"; and also by the kind of nationalist politics we encounter: "Liberal, conservative, integral, right-wing and left-wing nationalisms" (for details, see Minogue, pp. 12-19).

Max Sylvius Handman identifies four types of nationalism: Oppression-nationalism, "irredentism", precaution-nationalism and prestige-nationalism (see his "The Sentiment of Nationalism" Political Science Quarterly, Vol. XXXVI, 1921, pp.104-109).

Carlton J.H Hayes outlines five types: (i) Humanitarian nationalism (ii) Jacobin nationalism (iii) Traditional nationalism (iv) Liberal nationalism (v) Integral nationalism (see his The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism, pp. 16-17, 45, 52-54, 56-57, 87-88, 120, 135, 165-166,

⁴⁴ Minogue, p. 40.

⁴⁵ E.H. Carr, Nationalism and After (London: St. Martins Press Inc. and Macmillan Co. Ltd., 1945), p. 7.

⁴⁶ Royal Institute of International Affairs, p. 27.

⁴⁷ See Arthur P. Whitaker, Nationalism in Latin America (Gainesville, Florida: Univ. of Florida Press, 1962), Peter F. Sugar and Ivo J. Lederer, Nationalism in Eastern Europe (Seattle and London: Univ. of Washington Press, 1971), Kendrick Charles Babcock, The Rise of American Nationality 1811-1819 (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row Publishers, J. and J. Harper Editions, 1968).

⁴⁸ Astor in "Foreword", Royal Institute of International Affairs, p. v.

⁴⁹ Minogue, p. 7.

⁵⁰ Carlton J.H. Hayes, Essays on Nationalism, p. 275. For a detailed discussion of the dysfunctions of nationalism, see the last four chapters of this book: Chapter V: "Nationalism and International War", pp. 126-155, Chapter VI: "Nationalism and Militarism", pp. 156-195; Chapter VII: "Nationalism and Intolerance", pp. 196-244, and Chapter VIII: "Nationalism - Curse or Blessing?", pp. 245-275. cf. Hans Kohn, "A New Look

at Nationalism" The Virginia Quarterly Review, Vol. 32, Summer 1956, pp. 321-332; also see Barbara Ward; Chapter 7: "Nationalism's Failure".

⁵¹ Hayes, Essays on Nationalism, p. 198.

⁵² Ibid., p. 274.

⁵³ H. Munro Chadwick, p. 13.

⁵⁴ Karl W. Deutsch, pp. 181-191.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Hans Kohn, "A New Look at Nationalism", pp. 321-332.

⁵⁶ Hayes, The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism, See Chapter VI: Integral Nationalism, p. 320f.

⁵⁷ Louis L. Snyder has argued further that under Hitler, Germany was "overtaken by the wrong kind of nationalism" which took the nation away from the aspirations of Bismarck and earlier German nationalists. (see his German Nationalism: The Tragedy of a People - Extremism Contra Liberalism in Modern German History, 2nd ed., Port Washington, N.York: Kennikat Press, 1969).

⁵⁸ Hayes, Essays on Nationalism, p. 260f.

⁵⁹ Royal Institute of International Affairs, Nationalism... It is instructive to note that the study which forms the background of this book was conducted out of a genuine concern about the evils of nationalism. "The present study", we are told, "has been written because contemporary developments of nationalism appear to threaten the very future of civilization" (p. XIV).

⁶⁰H.J. Laski, Nationalism and the Future of Civilization (London: C.A. Watts and Co. Ltd., 1932), pp. 26-29, pp.42-43, Laski recommends an alternative - nationalism: "We must learn", says he, "to think internationally or perish".

⁶¹Hayes, Essays on Nationalism, p. 260.

⁶²Elie Kedourie, Nationalism (London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd., 1960). She argues that nationalism looks inwardly, away from and beyond the imperfect world. And this contempt of things as they are, of the world as it is, ultimately becomes a rejection of life, and a love of death (p.87). Besides, she regards nationalists as pretenders, self-styled idealists and agents of falsehood. Nationalism, Kedourie repeats, is

a passionate assertion of the will, but at the core of this passion is a void, and all its activity is the frenzy of despair; it is a search for the unattainable which once attained, destroys and annihilates (p. 89).

⁶³Rabindranath Tagore, Nationalism (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1917), pp. 28 and 29.

⁶⁴John M. Robertson, Patriotism and Empire Third edition (London: Grant Richards, 1900), p. 30.

⁶⁵Minogue, p. 23.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 24.

⁶⁷Karl W. Deutsch, p. 183.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 184.

⁶⁹K.R. Minogue, pp. 146-147.

⁷⁰ Carlton J.H. Hayes, Essays on Nationalism, in particular see Chapter IV: "Nationalism as a Religion", pp. 93-125.

⁷¹ Edward Shillito, Nationalism: Man's Other Religion (London: Student Christian Movement Press, March, 1933).

⁷² Abdullah-al-alayili, pp. 120-127, see p. 120 in particular where Alayili says nationalism is a religion "with all that the word connotes and entails".

⁷³ Boyd C. Shaffer, Nationalism: Interpreters and Interpretation (Washington D.C.: Publication no. 10, Service Center for Teachers of History, American Historical Association, 1959).

⁷⁴ Jean-Rene Surrateau, L'Idee Nationale de La Revolution a Nos Jours Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972), p. 8. I have only translated Surrateau's view; here are his own words:

"... le principe des nationalites n'a-t-il pas fini de jouer un role determinant dans l'histoire du monde aujourd'hui" (p. 8)

⁷⁵ On Marxism vs. Nationalism, see Barbara Ward, Nationalism and Ideology (London: Harnish Hamilton, 1967) Chapter Nine - "A Post-National Attempt: Communism", Royal Institute of International Affairs, pp. 309-316., K.R. Minogue, pp. 138-144.

⁷⁶ For further details on this, see Hugh Seton-Watson, Nationalism and Communism: Essays 1946-1963, p. 100f. Horace B. Davis, Toward A Marxist Theory of Nationalism (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1978).

⁷⁷ H. Munro Chadwick, p. 6.

⁷⁸ Hayes, Essays on Nationalism, p. 67.

⁷⁹ See, for example, W.B. Yeats, Letters to the New Island Horace Reynolds (ed.) (Cambridge, Mass., 1934), p.6. Yeats writes that "there is no fine literature without nationality"; also see John Drinkwater, Patriotism in Literature (London: Williams and Norgate, 1924). Drinkwater writes generally on patriotism and illustrates his discussion with literature. Some of the authors he cites are William Blake, Wordsworth, Congreve, Shakespeare, Whitman, Symons, Milton, Kipling, Emerson, Shelley, Johnson, Yeats, Aristotle and Matthew Arnold.

⁸⁰ John M. Robertson, Patriotism and Empire 3rd edition (London: Grant Richards, 1900), p. 65.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 68.

⁸² Ibid., p. 66.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 67.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Critique of Nationalism", 1830 in Louis L. Snyder (ed.), pp. 157-158.

⁸⁶ H. Ernest Lewald, "Introduction" H. Ernest Lewald (ed.), The Cry of Home: Cultural Nationalism and the Modern Writer (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1972) p. 11.

⁸⁷ Quoted in Elie Kedourie, pp. 84-85.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Robert Louis Stevenson (R.L.S.), "Britain: A Garden Enclosed" from R.L.S. "Virginibus Puerisque" (The English Admirals) (London, 1881) Quoted in Louis L. Snyder (ed.), p. 91; also in Frederick Page (ed.), An Anthology of Patriotic Prose (London, 1915), pp. 57-58.

⁹⁰ Belloc's example is instructive. He is French but a naturalised Briton - this would seem to validate Handman's argument that nationalism is merely a sentiment which could be directed not necessarily at one's own country but any other country to which one's loyalty may have been transferred. (see Max Sylvius Handman, "The Sentiment of Nationalism", pp. 104-109.

⁹¹ See Emmanuel Ngara, Art and Ideology in the African Novel: A Study of the Influence of Marxism on African Writing (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1987).

⁹² His role in Italian nationalism has been well documented by Gaudence Megaro (see Gaudence Megaro, Vittorio Alfieri: Forerunner of Italian Nationalism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930).

⁹³ D'Annunzio's practical involvement is only an isolated instance of the extent to which Italian artists collaborated with politicians during Italy's most desperate moments. It is on record that many writers were also members of the Carbonari - one of the many secret societies which sought to create alternative means of liberating Italy.

⁹⁴ On the links between Romanticism and German Nationalism, see Hans Kohn, "Romanticism and the Rise of German nationalism" The Review of Politics, Vol. 12, October, 1950, pp. 443-447; also see Louis L. Snyder, German Nationalism: The Tragedy of a People - Extremism Contra Liberalism in Modern German History.

⁹⁵ For details, see Louis Snyder, German Nationalism..., see chapter 7: "Music and Art: Richard Wagner and The German Spirit", pp. 153-179; also see Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner (transl. Walter Kaufmann) (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).

⁹⁶ For details, see Louis Snyder, German Nationalism... Chapter 3: "Literature: Nationalistic Aspects of the Grimm Brothers Fairy Tales", pp. 44-74.

⁹⁷ Turgenev adds: "Russia can do without us but none of us can do without Russia" (quoted in Daniel Corkery, Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature, Cork: The Mercier Press, 1971), p. 236.

⁹⁸ Jules Michelet, The People trans by C. Cocks (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longman, 1846), pp. 240-244.

⁹⁹ Quoted in Basil Davidson, Which Way Africa? The Search for a New Society 3rd edition (England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1971), p. 55.

¹⁰⁰ The office of the Lord Chamberlain was quashed in 1952 but its spirit still lingers in contemporary British Theatre. see John Calder, "Political Theatre in Britain Today" Gambit, Vol.8, No. 31, 1977, p. 6f.

¹⁰¹ See John Bowen, "You Get What You Pay For: You Pay What you get" Gambit, Vol. 6, No. 24, 1974, pp. 77-84.

¹⁰² See Anthony Ackerman, "Prejudicial to the safety of the State: Censorship and The Theatre in South Africa" Theatre Quarterly, Vol. VII, No. 28, 1977, pp. 54-57.

¹⁰³ On Political and Literary Nationalism in Ireland, see William Smith Clark, The Early Irish Stage: The Beginnings to 1720 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955).

John D. Seymour, Anglo-Irish Literature 1200-1582 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1929).

Thomas Flanagan, The Irish Novelists 1800-1850 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

Herbert Howarth, The Irish Writers: Literature and Nationalism, 1800-1940 (New York, 1959).

A. Norman Jeffares, Anglo-Irish Literature (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1982).

Douglas Hyde, A Literary History of Ireland: From Earliest Times to the Present Day (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899).

Robert O'Driscoll (ed.) Theatre and Nationalism in Twentieth Century (Toronto: Unive. of Toronto Press, 1971), p. 40.

Martin Wallace, The Irish: How They Live and Work (Great Britain: David and Charles Publishers Ltd., 1972).

Jeremiah J. Hogan, The English Language in Ireland. (Dublin: Educational Co. of Ireland, 1927).

Conor C. O'Brien and Maire, A Concise History of Ireland (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972).

F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine (London: Collins and Fontana, 1981).

¹⁰⁴ Douglas Hyde, "The Necessity for De-Anglicizing Ireland" Louis L. Snyder (ed.) pp. 234-236.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 235.

¹⁰⁶ See Desmond Fennell, pp. 64-77.

¹⁰⁷ United Irishman, May 31, 1902 quoted in F.S.L. Lyons, "James Joyce's Dublin" Twentieth Century Studies, Nov. 1970, No. 4: Ireland, p. 17.

¹⁰⁸ See Note 81. Yeats's nationalist career is interesting. In 1903, he declared:

I am a Nationalist, and certain of my intimate friends have made Irish politics the business of their lives, and this made certain thoughts habitual with me, and an accident made these thoughts take fire in such a way that I could give them dramatic expression. I had a very vivid dream one night, and I made Cathleen ni Houlihan out of this dream (W.B. Yeats, Explorations selected by Mrs. W.B. Yeats. New York; 1962), p. 116.

cf. Yeats statement in 1937:

I am no Nationalist except in Ireland for passing reasons; State and Nation are the work of intellect, and when you consider what comes before and after them they are, as Victor Hugo said of something or other, not worth the blade of grass God gives for the nest of the linnet. (W.B. Yeats, Essays and Introductions New York, 1961), p. 526.

109

Maud Gonne, A Servant of the Queen (London, 1938), pp. 332-333; quoted in George Mills Harper, "Intellectual hatred and intellectual nationalism: The paradox of passionate politics" Robert O'Driscoll (ed.), p. 53.

¹¹⁰ For a full account of the activities of the group, see Elizabeth Coxhead, Daughters of Erin (London: Secker and Warburg, 1965).

¹¹¹ Quoted in David H. Greene and Edward M. Stephens J.M. Synge 1871-1909 (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1959), p. 148.

¹¹² Ibid, pp. 146-147.

¹¹³ Thomas MacANNA, "Nationalism from the Abbey Stage" Robert O'Driscoll (ed.), p. 95.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 94.

¹¹⁵Examples of the Stage Irishman could be found in Captain MacMorris in Shakespeare's Henry V, iii, 2; Sir Lucius O'Trigger in Sheridan's The Rivals and Tim Haffigan in Shaw's John Bull's Other Island; and also in the writings of Maria Edgeworth, Dion Boucicault and J.W. Whitebread.

It is based on an exaggerated conception of the Irish man and complements, at a literary level, the political attempt by the imperialist to deny the Irish any significant individuality. The Stage Irishman portrays the Irish as a wild and vicious race, boastful, dirty, child-like, unnecessarily excited, harum-scarum, fond of war and violence and congenitally treacherous and corrupt.

¹¹⁶See W.B. Yeats, Autobiographies (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1955), p. 424; also in W.B. Yeats, The Autobiography of William Butler Yeats (New York, 1953), p. 317, and in W.B. Yeats, "J.M. Synge and The Ireland of His Time" Thomas R. Whitaker (ed.) Twentieth Century Interpretations of the Playboy of the Western World (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1969), p. 24.

¹¹⁷W.B. Yeats, "The Tragic Generation" Nobel Foundation and the Swedish Academy, Nobel Prize Library: Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, R. Tagore, Sigrid Undset, W.B. Yeats (New York: Alexis Gregory, and California: CRM Publishing, 1971), pp. 345-346.

¹¹⁸T.R. Henn (ed.) The Plays and Poems of J.M. Synge (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1963), p. 6.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 10.

¹²⁰J.L. Styan, Modern drama in theory and practice 1: Realism and Naturalism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 100.

¹²¹ Maurice Bourgeois, John Millington Synge and the Irish Theatre (London: Benjamin Blom, 1965), p. 87.

¹²² Quoted in Daniel Corkery, Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1966), p. 43.

¹²³ Corkery, p. 44. Corkery was a nationalist writer of note. He has been described as the only Irish writer during the anxious years of 1916-1926 who gave himself "fully to the revolution". He is, says Francis MacManus,

a most gifted, contemplative and critical scholarly man, well-read in the literatures of Europe including the great Russians, and a passionate believer in the Gaelic tradition which, so to speak, was the marrow of his bones (see Francis MacManus, "Imaginative Literature and the Revolution" Desmond Williams (ed.) The Irish Struggle 1916-1926 London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p.24.

¹²⁴ Quoted in Robin Skelton, J.M. Synge and His World (New York: The Viking Press, 1971), p. 40.

¹²⁵ Quoted in L.P. Curtis Jr., "The Anglo-Irish Predicament" Twentieth Century Studies, Nov. 1970, No.4: Ireland, p. 50.

¹²⁶ Quoted in Daniel Corkery, p. 46.

¹²⁷ J.M. Synge, The Autobiography of J.M. Synge (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 26.

¹²⁸ The list is taken from Greene and Stephens, pp.28-29.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 250.

130 See Introduction to Frank J. Fay, Towards A National Theatre: Dramatic Criticism edited with an introduction by Robert Hogan (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1970), pp. 9-10.

131 See Ann Saddlemeyer, "Stars of the Abbey's Ascendancy" Robert O' Driscoll (ed.), p. 33.

132 Quoted in Andrew E. Malone, Irish Drama (London: Benjamin Blom, 1965), pp. 34-35.

133 In his "The Muncipal Gallery Revisted", Yeats writes as follows;

John Synge, I and Augusta Gregory thought
All that we did, all that we said or sang
Must come from contact with the soil from
That contact everything Ataeus-like grew
strong

We three alone in modern times had brought
Everything down to that sole test again
Dream of the noble and the beggar-man.

(W.B. Yeats, Collected Poems London: Macmillan, 1955), p. 49; also in Alan Price, Synge and Anglo-Irish Drama (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1961), pp.61-2.

134 Ibid.

135 Quoted in Andrew Malone, p. 287.

136 Corkery, p. 52.

137 J.M. Synge, Plays, Poems and Prose (London and Melbourne: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1988), p. 33.

138 Ibid.

139 Ibid., p. 107.

140 Ibid., p. 108.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 219.

¹⁴² See Robin Skelton, The Writings of J.M. Synge (London: Thomas and Hudson, 1971), p. 66.

¹⁴³ Ibid., pp. 66 - 67.

¹⁴⁴ Quoted in Robin Skelton, J.M. Synge and His World (New York: The Viking Press, 1971), p. 60.

¹⁴⁵ Corkery, p. 46.

¹⁴⁶ J.M. Synge, Four Plays and the Aran Islands (ed. with an introduction by Robin Skelton) (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 163. All references to The Aran Islands are to this edition and henceforth, pages in which the quotations appear are incorporated after the citation.

¹⁴⁷ T.S. Eliot's expression, see his Selected Essays ed. by J. Hayward (London: Penguin, 1953), p. 74. "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an objective correlative" says Eliot.

¹⁴⁸ Reuben Abati, "J.M. Synge and Wole Soyinka: A Comparative Study" unpublished M.A. Project Essay, University of Ibadan, 1987, pp. 239-230.

¹⁴⁹ See J.M. Synge, Four Plays and The Aran Islands, pp. 165-166.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 185-187.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 216.

¹⁵² Paul F. Botheroyd, "J.M. Synge's The Aran Islands, Riders to the Sea and Territoriality: The Beginnings of a Cultural Analysis" Dapo Adelugba (ed.), Studies on Synge (Ibadan: University Press, 1977), pp. 75-86.

¹⁵³ Sean O. Tuama, "Synge and the Idea of a National Literature" Maurice Harmon (ed.), J.M. Synge: Centenary Papers, 1971. (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1972), p. 7.

¹⁵⁴ Ervine argues that:

Synge was a faker of peasant speech... It is high time that all the tosh that was formerly spouted about Synge, and still is by sentimentalists late for the fair, was stopped. (St. John Ervine, Some Impressions of my Elders New York: Macmillan, 1922), p. 201 cf: Synge's dialogue is "contrived stuff, withdrawn from reality and made into a pattern, pretty enough, but, after a time, tiresome and tedious". (St. John Ervine, How To Write A Play London: Allen and Unwin, 1928), p. 20.

¹⁵⁵ Corkery, p. 199:

Synge's phrases, then, seem not alone watery to us who know the originals, but very often strike us as being also absurd. Every Catholic knows that no Connacht peasant, drunk or sober or utterly lost in ecstasy, could have used them, no more than drunk or sober or gone in our five wits, we could find ourselves asserting that two and two made five.

On p. 207, Corkery says Synge "Had aimed at being a lord of language but there was other stuff all the time within him, protesting against such an ideal".

¹⁵⁶L.A.G. Strong, John Millington Synge (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1941), pp. 81-82: The Language of Synge's plays is not the language of the peasants, inasmuch that no peasant talks consistently as Synge's characters talk; it is the language of the peasants, in that it contains no word or phrase a peasant did not actually use.

¹⁵⁷Quoted in Greene and Stephens, pp. 157-158.

¹⁵⁸We do not desire propagandist plays, nor plays written mainly to serve some obvious moral purpose, for art seldom concerns itself with these interests or opinions that can be defended by argument, but with realities of emotion and character that become self-evident when made vivid to the imagination (quoted in Andrew Malone, p. 129).

¹⁵⁹See David Krause, Sean O'Casey and the higher nationalism: the desecration of Ireland's household gods" Robert O'Driscoll (ed.), p. 115.

¹⁶⁰Corkery argues that:

For touch, neither The Well of the Saints nor The Playboy of the Western World can be compared with Riders to the Sea: indeed beside it The Playboy seems flashy, over-wrought yet unfinished, unachieved. Indeed one would be hard put to it to find half a dozen one-act plays in English fittingly to companion it (Corkery, p. 144).

¹⁶¹See Daniel J. Murphy, The Reception of Synge's Plays in Ireland and America: 1907-1912 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1975), cf. Greene and Stephens, pp. 234-275; also see Mark Mortimer, J.M. Synge, Notes on The Playboy. (London: York Press, 1981).

Richard M. Kain, "The Playboy Riots" S.B. Bushrui (ed.) Sunshine and the Moon's Delight: A Centenary Tribute to John Millington Synge 1871-1909 (Gerrards Cross, Bucks: Colin Smythe Ltd., Lebanon: American University of Beirut, 1972), pp. 173-188.

James Kilroy, The 'Playboy' Riots (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1971).

¹⁶² See Elizabeth Coxhead, Lady Gregory: A Literary Portrait second ed. (London: Seeker and Warburg, 1966), p. 117.

¹⁶³ In Chicago, Jan. 1912, Lady Gregory received an anonymous letter which contained the drawing of a revolver, coffin, hammer and nails. Underneath the drawing was a threat: "Never again shall you gaze on the barren hilltops of Connemara, your doom is sealed".

¹⁶⁴ Also by the case of Lynchehaum, who was a most brutal murderer of a woman, and yet, by the aid of Irish peasant women, managed to conceal himself from the police for months, and to get away also (see "Interview with Mr. W.B. Yeats" in Freeman's Journal Wednesday, January 30, 1907, p. 7; quoted in James Kilroy, p. 34).

¹⁶⁵ Kilroy, p. 7.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 66.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 58 .

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁷⁰ Price, p. 176..

¹⁷¹ Malone, p. 152.

- 172 Mary C. King, The Drama of J.M. Synge (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1985), p. 133.
- 173 Ronald Peacock, The Poet in the Theatre (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960), p. 114.
- 174 G.B. Shaw, The Matter with Ireland eds. David Greene and Dan Laurence (London, 1962), p. 84.
- 175 Thomas R. Whitaker, "On Playing with The Playboy" Thomas R. Whitaker (ed.) Twentieth-Century Interpretations of the Playboy of The Western World (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Inc., 1969), pp. 6-11.
- 176 T.R. Henn, "The Playboy of the Western World" Whitaker (ed.), pp. 56-67. Henn, in addition, suggests that the play might be seen as a "semi-tragedy", "a free comedy", a "mock-heroic" or "a tragicomic piece". "But again we may see it, if we will, as tragedy".
- 177 Corkery, p. 187f.
- 178 Yeats made the statement during the trial of some of the rioters at the Abbey during the performance of the play. He was being cross-examined by Mr Lidwell who asked: "Is it a caricature of the Irish people?" And Yeats answered:
It is no more a caricature of the people of Ireland than 'Macbeth' is a caricature of the people of Scotland or 'Falstaff' a caricature of the gentlemen of England. The play is AN EXAMPLE OF THE EXAGGERATION OF ART (see Kilroy, p. 49).
- 179 See "Two Lectures on the Irish Theatre by W.B. Yeats" Robert O'Driscoll (ed.), p. 77.

¹⁸⁰Una Ellis-Fermor, The Irish Dramatic Movement (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1967), Second ed., p. 177.

¹⁸¹J.F. Kilroy, "The Playboy as Poet", PMLA, Vol.83, 1968, pp. 439-442.

¹⁸²Nicholas Grene, Synge: A Critical Study of His Plays (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1975), p.139.

¹⁸³Stanley Sultan, "A Joycean Look at The Playboy of the Western World" Maurice Harmon (ed.) The Celtic Master (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1969), p. 51.

¹⁸⁴Hugh H. Maclean, "The Hero as Playboy", UKCR, XXI, Fall 1954, pp. 9-19.

¹⁸⁵Howard D. Pearce, "Synge's Playboy as Mock-Christ" Modern Drama Vol. VIII Dec., 1965, pp. 303-310; also in Thomas R. Whitaker (ed.) pp. 88-97.

¹⁸⁶See Note 169.

¹⁸⁷Grene, p. 145.

¹⁸⁸James Kilroy, The 'Playboy' Riots, p. 13.

¹⁸⁹See J.M. Synge, Plays, Poems and Prose, "The Playboy" is on pp. 106-167. All further references to the play are to this edition and page references are incorporated into the text immediately after the citation.

¹⁹⁰See note 163.

¹⁹¹On the portraiture of Africans in British Colonial literature, see

Fredrick Nnabuenyi Ugonna, "The Influence of African Nationalism on African Literature 1900-1960, with special reference to Casely Hayford's Ethiopia Unbound" unpublished M.A. thesis, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, January, 1971, p. 100f.

¹⁹² See Eldred Jones, Othello's Countrymen: The African in English Renaissance Drama (London: Oxford University Press, 1965) cf. Dorothy Bramson Hammond, "The Image of Africa in British Literature of the Twentieth Century", Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University, 1963.

¹⁹³ There was a close integration of political and cultural nationalism and unlike in Ireland, the politicians, even during the desperate moments, worked in unison with the artists. Theatre in particular was recognised by politicians as a powerful tool of cultural mobilisation and political edification, hence they gave it financial and moral support. Ogunde's theatre, for example, received a lot of support from nationalist papers like West African Pilot, Daily Service and the Daily Comet. On the literature/theatre of this period, see

Dapo Adelugba, "Nationalism and the Awakening National Theatre of Nigeria" unpublished M.A. Thesis, UCLA, 1964.

Ebun Clark, Hubert Ogunde: The Making of Nigerian Theatre (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), Chapter Three: "The Theatre and the Nationalist Movement", pp. 74-81.

Joel Adedeji, Nationalism and the Nigerian National Theatre Munger Africana Library Notes, No. 54 (Pasadena: California Institute of Technology, 1980).

¹⁹⁴ Wole Soyinka, "The Future of West African Writing", The Horn, IV(1), 1960, pp. 10-16.

¹⁹⁵ Wole Soyinka, "The Writer in a Modern African State" Wole Soyinka, Art, Dialogue and Outrage (Ibadan: New Horn Press, 1988), p. 19.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Wole Soyinka, "And After the Narcissist?" African Forum, 1, 1966. cf. Wole Soyinka, "From A Common Back Cloth: A Reassessment of the African Literary Image" in Wole Soyinka, Art, Dialogue and Outrage, pp. 7-14.

¹⁹⁹ _____, Myth, Literature and the African World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.150.

²⁰⁰ Soyinka made this statement during a discussion with Faculty and students of the School of Drama University of Washington, on April 30, 1973; see Karen L. Morrell (ed.), In Person: Achebe, Awoonor and Soyinka (Seattle, Washington: Institute for Comparative and Foreign Area Studies, University of Washington, 1975), pp. 101 and 102.

²⁰¹ Wole Soyinka, "The External Encounter: Ambivalence in African Arts and Literature" Wole Soyinka, Art, Dialogue and Outrage, pp. 221-246.

²⁰² _____, Myth, Literature and the African World; in particular, see pp. 126-139.

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 64.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 126-127.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 129.

²⁰⁶ Kofi Awoonor, "Nationalism: Masks and Consciousness" Books Abroad, Vol.45, No.2, Spring, 1971, p. 211. The entire article is on pp. 207-211. In this article, Awoonor

identifies two forms of nationalism in African literature. On one hand are "Senghor and his negritudinist friends (who sing of Africa's passing beauty and luxuriate in a world consciousness of their warm Frenchified intellectual souls" (p. 210). On the other are the "new voices" of Tchicaya U'Tamsi, Christopher Okigbo, Awoonor himself and Achebe whose ancestors he says "committed impieties and unwarranted crimes in the name of gods". In their works, "Praise of nation, race and color - a feature of the early literary efforts - has given way to an austere critical appraisal of the balck man's estate" (p. 210), that is, to "feats of dislocation" (p. 211).

207 Wole Soyinka, "The Writer in A Modern Africa State"
Wole Soyinka, Art, Dialogue and Outrage, p. 20.

208 _____, Myth, Literature and the African World,
p. 65.

209 Ibid., p. 66.

210 Obi Wali, "The Dead End of African Literature?"
Transition, Vol.4, No. 10, Sept. 1963, pp. 13-15.

211 Ibid., p. 14.

212 Ibid., p. 14.

213 Ibid., p. 15.

214 See Transition, Vol. 3, (11), Nov. 1963, p. 9.

215 The expression "bolekaja critics" deserves some explanation. It is a term used by the troika to describe themselves. According to them:

We are boleka ja critics, outraged tauts for the passenger lorries of African literature and we

are administering a timely and healthy dose of much needed public ridicule to the reams of pompous nonsense which - has been floating out of the stale, sterile, stiffling covens of academia and smothering the sprouting vitality of Africa's literary landscape. There comes a time, we believe, in the affairs of men and of nations, when it becomes necessary for them to engage in bolekaja criticism, for them to drag the stiffeners of their life down to earth for a corrective tussle. A little wrestle on the sands never killed a sturdy youth.

(Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Ihechukwu Madubuike, Toward the Decolonization of African Literature, Vol. 1, (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980), p. xiv.

216 Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Ihechukwu Madubuike, Toward the Decolonization of African Literature, Vol.1, cf. Chinweizu, "Prodigals Come Home" Okike, 4, 1973; also see Chinweizu et al., "Towards the Decolonization of African Literature" Okike, No.6, Dec., 1974, pp. 11-27.

217 Chinweizu et al., Toward the Decolonization of African Literature, p. 200.

218 Ibid., p. 208.

219 Ibid.

220 Stevenson writes as follows:

Many of the poems in The Horn can be seen as supporting the concept - the poems that consciously recall the cultural heritage of the writers. But Negritude was an idea that took only shallow root in Nigeria, and it soon withered. When Wole Soyinka, coming to fame as Nigeria's first internationally - known playwright attacked it (Vol IV No.1)

in his essay "The Future of West African Writing", its doom was sealed. (W.H. Stevenson, "The Horn: What it was and What it Did" Bernth Lindfors (ed.), Critical Perspective on Nigerian Literatures (Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1976), pp. 227-229.

221 Chinweizu et al., p. 230.

222 Ibid., p. 235. For Soyinka's reply to these allegations, see his "Neo-Tarzanism: The Poetics of Pseudo-Tradition" Wole Soyinka, Art, Dialogue and Outrage, pp. 315-329.

223 Ernest Jones, Essays in Applied Psycho-Analysis (London, 1951) discussed in Minogue, p. 145.

224 For a detailed discussion of Nigerian nationalism see James S. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1971); also see G.O. Olusanya, "The Nationalist Movement in Nigeria"; Obaro Ikime (ed.), Groundwork of Nigerian History (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nig.) Ltd., 1980), pp. 545-569.

225 Alain Ricard, Theatre and Nationalism: Wole Soyinka and LeRoi Jones (transl. by Femi Osofisan (Ile-Ife: University of Ife, Press, 1983).

226 Eldred Jones, "Wole Soyinka: Critical Approaches" Edgar Wright (ed.) The Critical Evaluation of African Literature (London: Heinemann, 1973); also see his The Writing of Wole Soyinka (London: Heinemann, 1983).

228 Joel Adedeji, "The Theatre and Contemporary African Political Development" African Theatre Review, Vol. 1, No.1, April, 1983, pp. 32-45.

229 Adrian Roscoe, Mother is Gold: A Study in West African Literature (London: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 244f.

230 Oyin Ogunba, The Movement of Transition (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1975).

231 Afam Ebeogu, "From Idanre to Ogun Abibiman: An Examination of Soyinka's Use of Ogun Images" The Journal of Commonwealth Literature, Vol. XV, No. 1, Aug., 1980, pp. 84-96.

232 James Booth, Writers and Politics in Nigeria (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981) see Chap. 5: "The Artist and Political Commitment: Wole Soyinka", pp. 114-170.

234 "Yorubanglish" is defined by Dapo Adelugba as "a kind of English which carries the weight of Yoruba thought, philosophy, sentiments, innuendoes, imagery and world view" (See Dapo Adelugba, "Wale Ogunyemi, 'Zulu Sofola and Ola Rotimi: Three Dramatists in Search of a Language" Oyin Ogunba and Abiola Irele (eds.), Theatre in Africa Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1978), p. 207.

235 Reuben Abati, pp. 300-328.

236 See Notes 225-232.

237 Wole Soyinka, "Neo-Tarzanism: The Poetics of Pseudo-Tradition" Art, Dialogue and Outrage, p. 329.

238 _____, Myth, Literature and the African World, p. ix.

239 See West Africa, London, 25 Aug., 1962, p. 941.

240 Members of this group were later absorbed into the 1960 Masks. This is what Yemi Ogunbiyi said (see his Drama and Theatre in Nigeria, p. 28) but oral communication with Professor Dapo Adelugba disproves this. What happened, Adelugba explains, was that both groups existed side by side from 1964 onwards and there were joint productions of both groups from 1965 forwards. Kongi's Harvest was notable among such collaborations.

241 Peter Nazareth, An African View of Literature (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1974), pp. 63-64.

Bruce King, The New English Literatures London: Macmillan, 1980), pp. 79-81.

242 Femi Osofisan, "Ritual and the Revolutionary Ethos" Okike, 22, 1982, pp. 72-81.

243 Wole Soyinka, Collected Plays 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 5.

_____, "Kongi's Harvest" Collected Plays 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 91. All references to the play are to this edition. Henceforth, all page references to the text are incorporated immediately after the quotation.

245 Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (New York: Atheneum, 1968), p. 148.

246 See Note 241.

247 Wole Soyinka, "The Lion and the Jewel" Collected Plays 2, p. 5. All references to the play are to this edition and henceforth, all page references to the text are incorporated immediately after the quotation.

²⁴⁸Wole Soyinka, Death and the King's Horseman (London: Eyre Methuen, 1975), See "Author's Note". All references to the play are to this edition and henceforth, all page references to the text are incorporated immediately after the quotation.

²⁴⁹Ibid.

²⁵⁰Wole Soyinka, "Who's Afraid of Elesin Oba?" Art, Dialogue and Outrage, p. 126.

²⁵¹See Note 248.

²⁵²Bourgeois, p. 204.

²⁵³Thomas Kilroy, The 'Playboy' riots, p. 91.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

CHAPTER FOUR

LANGUAGE: THE SYNGE AND SOYINKA EXPERIENCE

Introduction

In this and the next chapter, we discuss two of the various aspects in which Synge and Soyinka may be located within a universalist theoretical perspective, that is, aspects in which they may, for example, be considered modernist and universal. In the next chapter, this task is essayed through an examination of their iconoclastic temperament but here, we concentrate on the manifestation of language in their works.

Both Synge and Soyinka, it is observed, foreground language. That is they lift it above its traditional function as the vehicle of thought, and transform it into a theme and hence, the core of dramatic action. This use of language approaches the threshold of Brecht's gestus and Kenneth Burke's "dramatism". It reveals the meta-theatrical potentials of Synge's and Soyinka's plays plus their range of semiotization and modernist pretensions.

The reference to language here as a theme deserves explanation for the simple reason that language is tradi-

tionally regarded as a tool and not as a theme. What we seek to establish is that language is used by Synge and Soyinka in a special and heightened manner so much that it attains the gesture and the force of a theme. Theme is native to language for it is its vehicle but when language is stretched beyond its traditional functions, it becomes elevated to the stature of a theme. And it can be isolated and studied in terms of the specific instances in which it has been foregrounded.

Apart from highlighting all these, we shall, in conclusion, discuss the theatrical implications of both writers' use of language. Let us begin, by way of introduction, with a discussion of language per se in human society and in literature and theatre.

Theoretical Framework/Literature Review

It is an ultimately futile academic exercise to attempt a definition of either the meaning or the origin of language for the simple reason that the concept, like most human concepts, refuses to lend itself to a precise definition which may be accorded a canonical status. The fashionable

tendency in academic circles is for commentators on language to impose upon it their own peculiar intellectual backgrounds or individual perceptions to such a degree that a sociological definition of language becomes almost irreconcilable, a prima vista, with a historical or philosophical definition of it. Hence, there are as many definitions of language as there are commentators on the subject.

The foregoing proposition might sound like a platitude yet for an understanding of language an examination of this platitude, if at all it may be so regarded, becomes imperative.

In defiance of the difficulty of the task, Edward Sapir, Block and Trager, R.A. Hall and Noam Chomsky have attempted, each in his own way, to define language. Sapir sees

language as a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols ... (which) are, in the first instance, auditory.¹

Block and Trager describe language as "a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates".²

Hall defines it as an "institution whereby humans communi-

cate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols".³ In Chomsky's view, language is "a set of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of an infinite set of elements".⁴

Each of these definitions is fraught with limitations and none may be regarded as fully comprehensive. What happens is that they all examine language from a peculiar perspective. Sapir highlights the communicative value of language, Block, Trager and Hall concentrate on its social function and Chomsky on its linguistic sense. What this goes to prove is our initial premise that language lends itself to motley definitions and nowhere perhaps is this statement most empirically dramatised than in Peter H. Salus' encyclopaedic book, On Language: Plato to von Humboldt.⁵

But varied as definitions of language are, one basic fact seems to underline them all; namely that language, in the final analysis, involves the manipulation of words, in their auditory and visual ambiances, to forge meaning out of reality. The nature of this manipulation is, usually, almost invariably conditioned by the political, social and cultural variables existent within the specific context in which language is employed.

* It must be noted that the problems encountered in the definition of language equally emerge in the attempt to discern its origin. So many theories have been proposed in this respect but none offers the ultimate notion about the etymology of language. Noteworthy, in the first instance, is the divine-origin theory which traces the beginnings of language to two events in the Bible - the naming of creatures by Adam in the Garden of Eden (Genesis Chapter 2, verse 19) and the confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel (Genesis, 11:1-9).⁶ This theory would no doubt appeal to religionists but academically, it has little value insofar as it is based on sentiment and faith.

There is also the evolutionary theory which argues that language is a logical and integral aspect of man's own development and that the instinct for language is natural in man. This theory is popular with linguists and psychologists but plausible as it may seem, it appears, in the final analysis, to be stating the obvious.

More appealing, perhaps because of its empiricism, is the invention theory of language which states that man invented language in order to cope with the basic demands of life; but what scholars have not agreed upon is the

specific nature of these demands. Richard Albert Wilson argues, for example, that man invented language as part of the need to control the sensuous and vanishing nature of his world. Language, he says, served man as a tool with which he could "introduce the element of permanence into (this) vanishing world". Language was found adequate for this purpose because of its "non-sensuous and non-vanishing"⁷ nature - it is a time symbol "lifted above the evanescence of time" and a space-symbol "released from the fixity of space".⁸

J.J. Rousseau argues, on the contrary, that language was invented not to serve any need - practical or psychological - instead, it arose out of man's confrontation with the passions of love, hatred, pity and anger. Rousseau is entitled to his own view but examined closely, the difference which he observes between his position and those who emphasize man's needs as the origin of language is non-existent. Both positions are essentially androgynous; they are, after a manner of speaking, two sides of the same coin. The degree to which this is so is illustrated, ironically, by Rousseau's own statement:

It is suggested that men invented speech to express their needs: an opinion which seems to me untenable ... Whence this origin? From moral needs, passions. All the passions tend to bring people back together again, but the necessity of seeking a livelihood forces them apart. It is neither hunger nor thirst, but love, hatred, pity, anger which drew from them the first words.⁹

A discussion of the more complex implications of the attempt to define the meaning and origin of language is a task that would be further necessary to a student of linguistics. But here, the description of the issue, such as has been done above, would seem adequate. More germane for our purpose is the specific personality of language in human societies and how this relates to its use in literature and theatre and here, scholars seem to agree on the fact that language has always played a central role in the evolution of the human estate.

Language, to use Alfred Korzybski's word, is seen by many scholars, as the core of "the manhood of humanity".¹⁰ There have however been attempts to question or qualify this position, popular as it may seem to be. Charles Darwin expanding on his theory of evolution in Descent of Man (1871) insists, for example, that language is not the exclusive prerogative of man. He contends that there is no fundamental

difference between man and the higher animals in their mental faculties. The latter, in fact, are equally capable of speech.

Darwin's view has received expansion in the works of such scholars as Weiskrantz,¹¹ Kuhler,¹² Roger Brown,¹³ R.M. Yerkes and Ada W. Yerkes,¹⁴ Karl von Frisch,¹⁵ and Stuart Chase;¹⁶ but the ultimate conclusion which every commentator on the speech habits of animals almost inevitably arrives at is that language is a humanizing factor and it is man, alone, of all creatures, that is capable of meaningful speech. As Lewis Thomas puts it, "the gift of language is the single human trait that marks us all genetically, setting us apart from all the rest of life".¹⁷ Language says William J. Entwistle, "is a world into which the speechless animals have no entry, but from which we humans, no doubt have no exit".¹⁸ Stuart Chase is more specific. "Animals", says he, "as well as men convey message, using sound and gesture, but never meaningful words; Homo sapiens, alone of all earth's creatures, uses words to refine his passages".¹⁹

This use of language for the refinement of man's passages has been a historical process dating back to pre-historic times when man, confronted with the immensity of the cosmos, began to erect several epistemological structures

with which he could preserve himself and maintain his sanity. Peter Dixon has attempted a discussion of this process in his Rhetoric. He concludes that man has always expressed "faith in the word"²⁰ and this has been a sustaining force in human civilization.

In particular, man has used language to define his world and create meaning out of life; through it, he communicates his thoughts, interacts with his colleagues and designs modes of action. Language has served man as a vehicle of culture, as a compass with which he charts the directions of being and as a thermometer with which he measures the temperature of his feelings. The thought of a world without language is hard to contemplate; such a world would be a non-world, it would return man to the level of vegetables - a world bereft of meaning, character and glamour.

Richard Rorty opines that the idea of an objective world without language is inconceivable.²¹ According to Walter J. Ong, "encounters with others in which no words are ever exchanged are hardly encounters at all."²² Leonard Bloomfield adds: "Language plays a great part in our life".²³

I. A. Richards writes as follows:

Words are the meetings at which regions of experience which can never combine in sensation or intuition, come together. They are the occasion and the means of that growth which is the mind's endless endeavour to order itself. That is why we have language. It is no mere signalling system. It is the instrument of all our distinctively human development, of everything in which we go beyond the other animals.²⁴

Christopher Caudwell,²⁵ S.J. Tambiah,²⁶ Ernst Cassirer,²⁷ W.W. Urban,²⁸ Garth Gillian,²⁹ Richard Albert Wilson,³⁰ Isaac Goldberg³¹ and Edward Sapir³² have similarly commented on the indispensability of language to man. "It gave man", says Cassirer, "the sense of power over his environment".³³

It is doubtful if any other cultural asset of man, be it the art of drilling for fire or of chipping stone, may lay claim to a greater age. I am inclined to believe that it antedated even the lowliest developments of material culture, that these developments, in fact, were not strictly possible until language the tool of significant expression, had itself, taken shape.³⁴

That language has helped man chart his way through a labyrinth of challenges is a widely acknowledged view but it has been observed that it has on the contrary, equally

been the author of many misfortunes not just in the sense that it is the means through which these are conceived and expressed but that it is directly responsible for their manifestation. Thus, the personality of language, as a social instrument and as a tool of cognition, has been two-faced. Isaac Goldberg, writing in The Wonder of Words, talks of "Janus words".³⁵ Although Goldberg is referring here to the fact that words usually operate at two levels of meaning, the manifest and the latent, his phrase would seem to be fully descriptive of the character of language. Like Janus, language presents two contradictory and equally decisive visages: the one is good; the other is evil.

A.C. Ward, Simeon Potter, William J. Entwistle and Stuart Chase have discussed this contradiction. They begin with the admission that language has advanced human thought and action and end with the opposite view that it has become "the most readily ascertainable of all the factors that divide mankind";³⁶ "a medium of public bemusement and stupefaction, and a weapon of destruction. Men are both its manipulators and victims".³⁷ Entwistle illustrates this view through a discussion of the connections between language and nationality. He is of the view that language

has been one of the core issues of nationalism and because, in this respect, it recommends racism and exclusion, it has become "one of the most dangerous divisive forces of our time".³⁸

Entwistle's example is useful and the degree to which it is true has already been discussed, in part, in the preceding chapter. Of equal interest is Stuart Chase's claim that man is living under "the tyranny of words".³⁹ Chase adds that the Second World War was caused by the manipulation and misapplication of language. He is worth quoting in full:

A Japanese word, mokusatsu, may have changed all our lives. It has two meanings: (1) to ignore, (2) to refrain from comment. The release of a press statement using the second meaning in July, 1945 might have ended the war then. The Emperor was ready to end it, and had the power to do so. The cabinet was preparing to accede to the Potsdam ultimatum of the Allies - surrender or be crushed - but wanted a little more time to discuss the terms. A press release was prepared announcing a policy of mokusatsu, with the no comment implication. But it got on the foreign wires with the ignore implication through a mix-up in translation: "The cabinet ignores the demand to surrender". To recall the release would have entailed an unthinkable loss of face. Had the intended meaning been publicized, the cabinet might have backed up the Emperor's

decision to surrender. In which event, there might have been no atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, no Russian armies in Manchuria, no Korean war to follow. The lives of tens of thousands of Japanese and American boys might have been saved. One word, misinterpreted.⁴⁰

It is perhaps because of this inherent capacity for evil that some scholars recommend the de-centralization of language and a simultaneous reversal to the use of silence for purposes of human activities. Noteworthy here is Steiner's argument that language is inadequate for the apprehension of the world. Language, he says, "diminishes the immediacy, the hard edge of actual circumstance".⁴¹ In two sets of radio talk, George Steiner makes the same case by insisting "that much of reality now begins outside language ... large areas of meaning - as mathematics, formulae, and logical symbolism".⁴² Others belong to "anti-languages" such as the practice of non-objective art or atonal music. "The world of the word has shrunk".⁴³

Steiner's position has been strongly criticized as false, misleading and pessimistic notably by Frank Kermode,⁴⁴ Richard P. Brickner⁴⁵ and David Newton-De Molina,⁴⁶ and this condemnation is perhaps just insofar as Steiner and other

scholars of similar conviction tend to overlook the fact that the shortcomings of language are, at a broader level, a reflection of the general non-absolutistic nature of all epistemological constructs. We are yet to know of a human event or concept or phenomenon which is so perfect that it carries no limitations; hence, the errors of language deserve no academic dramatisation.

And besides, no matter how grave and divisive these errors may be, it does not seem likely that man can evolve an alternative. Silence may seem attractive at the level of theory but in practical terms, a world in which no word is uttered would obviously be a very dull world and man would be worse for it. The inadequacy of silence is driven home by the example of the Western Apache societies, the Arizona tribes and the Indian societies of South West America, particularly the Navajo and the Papago. Taciturnity is an integral part of the culture of these societies. They celebrate silence and imbue it with cultural and cosmological significance. Yet, it has not been possible for them to abandon language completely.⁴⁷

By implication therefore, the assumption that reality can ever exist outside language is an illusion; a purely

academic statement valid exclusively in the realm of hypothesis and completely at variance with concrete truth. The truth, as it appears, is that the decentralization or the total abandonment of language is impossible. Man would continue, and does still continue, to rely on language as his major means of being, feeling and thought, and this indispensability becomes all the more patent when language is conceived not ordinarily as words but as a verbal and non-verbal phenomenon which, for that very reason, embraces every sphere of human action.

Perhaps nowhere is this centrality more evident than in literature and theatre. Writers, actors and theatre producers rely on language - verbal and non-verbal - for the communication of their messages and although the anti-language stance discussed above also manifests in this area in form of a demand for alternative modes of expression; the result has been the eventual triumph of language. Writers dramatise language; in their hands, it becomes not just a vehicle of impressions but an integral part of action.

No less than the professional linguist, a writer is a student of the language he uses: indeed, it might be argued that his exemplary

craft, particularly if he be a playwright and a poet-playwright, demands a subtler and more comprehensive study of language than does the analytical and anatomical craft of the linguist.⁴⁸

Stuart Chase submits that

A writer is supposed to understand the behaviour of language, for his working life is largely spent in deciding the sequence in which one word follows another.⁴⁹

"Literature", says Northrop Frye, "is not a piled aggregate of 'works' but an order of words".⁵⁰ According to I.A. Richards, "it is through the interactions of words within a language that a poet works".⁵¹ Stephen Minot argues that the main business of poetry should be the exploitation of the multitudinous resources of language and the success or otherwise of a poem depends on the magnitude of the skill with which this is attempted. Writing poetry in Minot's view, is "a time to play around with language... No matter how insightful or compelling the theme may be, the poem itself will fail if the language is dull or conventional".⁵²

Yet, despite this general recognition and acceptance of the value of the written word to the literary enterprise, there have been attempts, largely articulated by modern and contemporary writers, to establish a contrary position namely that language does not deserve the centralization which traditional literary practice and aesthetics accord it. Far from being a useful tool, it is a negative force insofar as it carries the risk of misleading the writer and of limiting the scope of human perception. Hence, it is insisted that an alternative mode of communication and of apprehending human circumstances must be erected.

Friedrich Duerrenmatt avers that:

... Language can lead a writer astray. The joy of being able all of a sudden to write, of possessing language, as it came over me, for instance, while I was writing The Blind Man can make an author talk too much, can make him escape from his subject into language ... Dialogue, like playing on words, can also lead an author into byways, take him unawares away from his subject.⁵³

George Steiner, for his part, reports that the "writer of today" uses "far fewer and simpler words ... mass culture has watered down the concept of literacy"; words have lost their "precision and vitality".⁵⁴

These criticisms of language have received further illustration in the hands of many modern writers particularly the avant-gardists. Rimbaud, for example, disliked language as a means of rational thought and therefore attempted the use of non-verbal means. Virginia Woolf announced in The Voyage Out: "I want to write a novel about silence..."⁵⁵ And in The Theatre and its double, Antonin Artaud, as part of his effort to return theatre to its pristine value as an exploration of the subconscious, declares words irrelevant and adopts the use of gestures and movement:

... I make it my principle that words do not mean everything, and that by their nature and defining character, fixed once and for all, they arrest and paralyse thought instead of permitting it and fostering its development... I am adding another language to the spoken language, and I am trying to restore to the language of speech its old magic, its essential spell-binding power.⁵⁶

Like Artaud, several avant-garde theatricians have equally erected alternatives to words. Ionesco in The Chairs, Beckett in Waiting for Godot and Endgame and Jean Genet in The Balcony resuscitate pantomime. Beckett is further noted for his use of silence and non-verbal

registers and Harold Pinter is famous for his use of pauses.

According to Robert Corrigan,

Each of these playwrights is revolting against the tyranny of words in the modern theatre. As a result, their plays - at least until very recently - have no "message"; the dialogue is not a monologue apportioned out to several characters; they are packed with symbols, but these symbols don't mean anything in particular and they suggest many things... . In fact, these writers assert that in objectifying the feeling in order to describe it, words kill the very feeling they would describe.

It is no wonder, then, that these playwrights feel a great affinity to the mimes - Etienne Decroux, Marcel Marceau, and Jacques Tati, no wonder that they turn for inspiration to the early films of Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, the Keystone Cops, Laurel and Hardy, and the Marx Brothers; no wonder, finally, that they are all under the influence of Jacques Copeau and Antonin Artaud. 57

But let it be noted, on the contrary, that the attempts to devitalize words in literature and theatre is a futile exercise. As is the case in our discussion of the sociological position of language, it does not seem likely that writers would ever eventually arrive at a position where they can conveniently abandon words. For the purpose of characterization, of articulating thoughts, of describing mood, feeling and tone and of conveying style,

language would continue to serve writers as a most reliable tool. What seems possible is not the abandonment of language but its revitalization in terms of the extension of its frontiers as in Caryl Churchill's Top Girls,⁵⁸ John Russell Brown's Theatre Language: A Study of Arden, Osborne, Pinter and Wesker⁵⁹ and David Bevington's Action is Eloquence: Shakespeare's Language as Gesture.⁶⁰ "A total evasion" of language is "impossible for men".⁶¹

It is instructive to note that all the organised oppositions against language have always been shortlived. Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty", for example, is remembered today only as one of those evanescent experimental gestures which have given modern art its badge of eclecticism and stylistic restlessness. In the late twenties, Jean Jacques Bernard tried to develop a theatre of silence in Paris. He failed and immediately abandoned the project. Similarly, Virginia Woolf who dreamt of writing a novel about silence soon admitted the difficulty of the task. To quote her in full, "I want to write", she says, "a novel about silence, the things people don't say. But the difficulty is immense".⁶²

A checklist of the place of language in literature and theatre further reveals that in spite of the attempts

to de-emphasize it and hegemonise other artifacts, it still remains our primary means of artistic communication and this would seem to explain, in part, the obsession with language which Terry Eagleton observes in modern literary theory.⁶³ In particular, this obsession is dominant in deconstruction where the critic may concentrate on a word and interrogate its use within a particular text to such a degree that the various oppositions which govern the text are dismantled into disparate units thus converting the meaning of literature into an indeterminate coda and the text into an agglomerate of horizontal signifiers and signifieds.

Thus, writers have always found language indispensable. Many of them in fact dramatise language and often, they transform it into "the object of discourse",⁶⁴ that is, a part of dramatic action itself, imbued with performative and generative capacities and important for its own sake and not for any functional purpose. It is this phenomenon, usually referred to as the foregrounding of language, that this chapter discusses henceforth in relation to Synge and Soyinka. According to Keir Elam,

Linguistic foregrounding in language occurs when an unexpected usage suddenly forces the listener or reader to take note of the utterance itself, rather than continue his automatic concern with its 'content': 'the use of the devices of the language in such a way that this use itself attracts attention and is perceived as uncommon, as deprived of automatization, as deautomatized, such as a live poetic metaphor'.⁶⁵

This framing of language has several semiotic implications in the sense that it transforms language into a volatile sign-vehicle with a wide range of signifieds and in the theatre, when this framing or foregrounding is translated into performance, it has a serious impact on the performer - audience communication flow especially with regards to audience response. The most obvious implication is that a predetermined and automatic response to the performance becomes inconceivable because of the volatility of the language and other aspects of performance which may be similarly foregrounded.

The foregrounding of the linguistic sign is reminiscent of Kenneth Burke's "dramatism" and at the same time of Brecht's gestus. Burke defines dramatism as the employment of language "primarily as modes of action" rather than as means of conveying information⁶⁶ while the concept of

gestus in Brecht's epic theatre involves the framing of an aspect of performance such that it stands out on its own, independent of the rest of the text.⁶⁷

Taken together, these clarifications of the foregrounding of language merely reinforce the pre-eminence of language in artistic creation and for empirical purposes, the works of Synge and Soyinka provide illustrations of the phenomenon.

Language in Synge and Soyinka

Commentators on the use of language by Synge and Soyinka often concentrate on both writers' reaction to and their resolution of the linguistic dilemma of their respective countries; that is, Synge's use of the Anglo-Irish dialect and Soyinka's use of English and Yoruba to create a literature that is English and yet Irish and Yoruba, respectively, at once. Also already discussed in great detail by critics are the semantic and stylistic values of the language of both writers.⁶⁸

Apart from the exceptions of St. John G. Ervine,⁶⁹ L.A.G. Strong,⁷⁰ Maurice Bourgeois⁷¹ and Daniel Corkery⁷² who complain about the artificiality of Synge's language,

and Anthony Appiah,⁷³ Chinweizu et al.⁷⁴ and Stanley Macebuh⁷⁵ who accuse Soyinka of wilful obscurantism, the general tone of the criticism of both writers' use of language has involved the admission that both of them employ language with a sharp sensitivity to the homophones and the audiophones of words and in the process have succeeded in achieving a correspondence between deeper intuitions and provincial accents of daily speech.

Through his use of the Anglo-Irish peasant dialect, Synge created a linguistic mode which became a model for dramatic composition as evidenced by the works of George Fitzmaurice, T.C. Murray, Seamus O'Kelly, Lennox Robinson, William Boyle and even Daniel Corkery. Soyinka's language, despite its cosmopolitan flavour is also like Synge's rooted "among the clay and worms",⁷⁶ rooted that is, in Soyinka's indigenous background and fully expressive of the Yoruba world-view.

Through the adoption of this intricate bilinguality, Synge and Soyinka authenticate the indigenosity of their works and at the same time, speak to a universal audience. So far, this approach is about the most convenient and logical resolution of the linguistic dilemma of their respective

countries. Writers in Ireland and Nigeria or Africa, as it were, often debate what language should be chosen between the indigenous and the colonial and this debate, in both instances, has produced extremely divergent views and propositions. But the solution seems to lie in a mixture of the indigenous tongue with the English language because try as they may, Irish and African writers, in spite of their aspiration to promote indigenous languages, cannot completely renounce their colonial experience. It is a historical fact and an inescapable one too, judging from the mulatto personality which it imposes on the culture and literature of both regions as is also the case in all regions which have experienced colonialism.⁷⁷

Synge's and Soyinka's language reflect this cultural experience and historical fact. Besides, their language, to use Synge's famous expression, is "fully flavoured as a nut or apple".⁷⁸ Both writers accord language a place of pride in their writings. Evidence of this exists in Synge's prefaces to The Playboy of the Western World, in his poems and also in the careful attention which he paid to the phrasing and the rhythmic counterpoint of his dialogues. Synge, where the matter of language is concerned, is an

aesthete and it is true, as Corkery claims, that he aimed at being a "Lord of language".⁷⁹ Hence, he polished his sentences for special tonal and affective effects and in the Abbey theatre, he insisted on the rendition of his words with the same fidelity with which he set them down.

Not much research has been done on Soyinka's working methods with regard to language but it seems obvious that he, like Synge, evinces traits of epeolatry. His works reveal a sharp sensitivity to language plus a "mastery of metaphor" which according to Aristotle, is "the mark of genius".⁸⁰ "Soyinka's words", says Niyi Osundare,

have the protean power of symbols; they are often multireferential as well as transreferential, the words weaving into one another like threads in an intricate tapestry. His words do not only mean; they also connect.⁸¹

Not surprisingly, commentators on the parallels between Synge and Soyinka although their commentaries are usually transient and illustrative of other concerns often note the parallels between the language of both writers. For example, Penelope Gilliat, writing in the blurb of the Three Crowns edition of Wole Soyinka's The Lion and the Jewel,

remarks that Soyinka's language has done for the Nigerian theatre what Synge's did for the Irish theatre.⁸² And commenting on the reviews of the 1967 London Production of The Trials of Brother Jero, Martin Banham reports:

In London, more recently, productions of some of Soyinka's earlier plays have been seen, and the critics of the newspapers have been lavish in their praise ... Particular comment has been aroused by Soyinka's language. The critic of The Observer commented that he wrote like an angel, The Times says that 'given the impoverished state of our language, his contribution to English-speaking drama could grow into something as important as Synge's opening up of the Western isles'.⁸³

These comparisons of Synge and Soyinka, as can be seen, concentrate on the bilingual texture and the poetic sophistication of their language and the underlying logic has been to explore the strength of this language as vehicles of thought and cultural landmarks; that is, the extent to which both writers automatize language. But equally deserving attention is how they foreground and deautomatize language. René Frechet and Mary C. King have discussed the manifestation of this phenomenon in Synge's plays. Of particular interest is their justification of Synge's fascination with language.

Frechet points out that it is a manifestation of the traditional Irish gift of the gab: "The reputation of the Irish as talkers is firmly established ... The Irish have always been very much alive to the importance of words and of verbal expression". In consonance with this background, writers of the Irish literary Renaissance, particularly Synge, expressed concern about "words, speech and language language".⁸⁶

Mary King adds that Synge's preoccupation with the word was made possible

by the fact that he stood historically close to the crossroads of Ireland's complex and contradictory linguistic, as well as her social and political, revolution. It was also facilitated in no small measure by his extensive excursions into European literature, aesthetics and philosophy and by his systematic study of philology and philologically based Celtic studies.⁸⁷

To prove this, King explains how Synge grew up in an Anglo-Irish household where language was part of the religious instruction for the children, although Mrs Synge's medieval strictures upon expression almost paralysed her children's use of language. She also argues that Synge's contact with Darwin at an early age prepared him

for his "epistemological questioning of the status of language"⁸⁸ while his Celtic studies in college, and his subsequent encounter with the beauty of the Irish tongue on the Aran Islands, sharpened his sensitivity to language.

Soyinka, like Synge, also grew up in circumstances which made him sensitive to language. His autobiography, Ake, reveals that he was surrounded, as a young man, by adults who, unlike Synge's mother, encouraged free expression and spoke the Yoruba language with its traditional and poetic nuances. He later attended Government College, Ibadan (GCI) where he was trained by white teachers and here, Soyinka was said to have immersed himself in the word, devouring as he did so, many books in the college library. Later at the University College, Ibadan (UCI), he, like Synge at Trinity College before him, distinguished himself in the study of languages.

Ifeghale Amata reports that "his essays in English literature were always the best, he was top of the class in Greek" and he read Euripides' Medea and Bacchae and Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus in the original.⁸⁹ Soyinka left UCI in 1954 and proceeded to the University of Leeds

where, instructively again, he studied language. His stay in Britain, particularly his eighteen month stint at the Royal Court Theatre, was also an encounter with language as he worked in various capacities with the original speakers of the English language.

Let us state here that Synge's and Soyinka's foregrounding of language deserves further attention not just because it establishes their mastery of language or an important aspect in which they may be regarded as modernist, but more urgently because of its theatrical implications and the extent to which a discussion of it may offer suggestions for the theatrical production and understanding of their plays.

In the Irish literary Renaissance, Synge is preceded in this enterprise by Lady Gregory for whom language was sheer talk. Her plays, particularly Spreading the News, Hyacinth Halvey, The Workhouse Ward, The Gaol Gate and Grania involve a large amount of talk for the purpose of talking but Gregory fails in elevating this genuine linguistic concern into great art because as Malone claims, "talk alone will not make a great play".⁹⁰ The reverse is however the case with Synge in whose plays language stands

in special relationship with other artifacts which are similarly foregrounded to create a compact and well-wrought drama.

Synge frames language by peopling his plays with characters who revel in talking and admire talkers and also by creating situations in which talking itself becomes action. Frechet observes that "the very vocabulary in Synge's plays is indicative of the important role played by speech: words like "say, 'tell', 'word', 'story', etc. crop up again and again "but the word indicating speech most frequently used is "talk". Twenty-eight instances of this exist in The Well of the Saints alone".⁹¹

In this play, language is dramatised both as a theme and as an event. First, the use of blind protagonists and their direct naming as Doul, an Irish word which means blind or dark is an instance of linguistic framing both in terms of characterization and nomenclature. Besides, all the characters in the play, least of all the Saint and mostly the Douls, rely heavily on language for affective and cognitive concern. Although the Saint warns against talking and recommends its opposite, his own ecclesiastical business becomes meaningful only through the use of language; a

special language for that matter, namely Latin. Timmy and Molly Byrne equally speak with poetic flourish and an instinctual grasp of imagery but it is the Douls whose life is more totally surrounded by linguistic fields.

They depend on language for orientation and perception so much so that without it and the very business of talking, one wonders if they would survive. This much is established in the early moments of the play. Language is for the Douls not just a vehicle of communication but of survival. Ironically however, the Douls are uncomfortable with their dependence on language; hence they distrust the seeing on whom they have always relied for the supply of linguistic stimuli and for the clarification of their fields of perception, and they begin to yearn for a movement from the dream-world of talking to the reality of seeing. That is, for the ability to match their gift of the gab with a corresponding ability to subject objective data to empirical tests.

This aspiration is realised towards the end of Act One through the restoration of their sight by the Saint, but the accompanying transformation does not entail a renunciation of language but instead a heightening of their dependence

on it. Note that immediately Martin regains his sight, he launches into a verbal celebration and attempts to identify Mary. Each person he goes to rebuffs him as he tries to match what he had been told about his wife's beauty with the reality he sees around him, but this attempt to apprehend reality through sight fails and for his contact with Mary Doul, Martin has to rely on language. As he searches for her, she comes out from the church behind him and asks: "which of you is Martin Doul?"⁹² Thus, contact is established between the couple through words. Martin Doul turns round to face her, speaking at the same time: "It's her voice surely. (They stare at each other blankly)" (p.74).

The effect here is at once dramatic, cinematic and climactic as the Douls face each other confronted with the falsehood of their former lives. Earlier on, those who have their sight had told them that they are a handsome couple, indeed the wonders of the west, and despite their doubts about these claims, they still derived much joy from the psychological consolation which they offer them. But in the moment quoted above, from all indications a moment of reckoning, earlier claims are empirically tested and there is a clash between illusion and reality. The result is

disappointing. What follows is a rejection of the new-found reality of sight by the Douls and a return to language; and as the couple appraise each other, their language becomes harsh, imagic, poetic and brutal. Mary fires the first salvo:

I'm thinking it's a poor thing when the Lord gives you sight and puts the like of that man in your way.

MARTIN DOUL: It's on your two knees you should be thanking the Lord God you're not looking on yourself, for if it was yourself you seen you'd be running round in a short while like the old screeching mad-woman is running round in the glen.

MARY DOUL: (Beginning to realize herself) If I'm not so fine as some of them said, I have my hair, and big eyes, and my white skin -

MARTIN DOUL: (Breaking out into a passionate cry) Your hair and your big eyes, is it?... I'm telling you there isn't a wisp on any grey mare on the ridge of the world isn't finer than the dirty twist on your head. There Isn't two eyes in any starving soe isn't finer than the eyes you were calling blue like the sea.

MARY DOUL: (Interrupting him) It's the devil cured you this day with your talking of sows, it's the devil cured you this day, I'm saying, and drove you crazy with lies.

MARTIN DOUL: Isn't it yourself is after playing lies on me, ten years, in the day and in the night, but what is that to you now the Lord God has given eyes to me, the way I see you an old, wizendy hag, was never fit to rear a child to me itself.

MARY DOUL: I wouldn't rear a crumpled whelp the like of you. It's many a woman is married with finer than yourself should be praising God if she's no child ... (p.75)

The foregrounding of language in the foregoing sequence resides in the Douls' extra-descriptive use of language, their mobilisation of cynical similes and metaphors and their contrapuntal repetitions. This linguistic texture, coloured by the Douls' despair, is carried forward into Act Two. Here the brutality between the couple is extended to the seeing on account of their discovery that Timmy the Smith and Molly who had been friendly with them when they were blind are no longer so. Martin berates Timmy with words ridiculing his "bleary eyes" and his "big nose, the like of an old scarecrow stuck down upon the road" (p.82). Similarly, Mary, who is no less a rhetorician than her husband, denounces Molly reminding her that beauty is transient:

It's them that's fat and flabby do be wrinkled young, and that whitish yellowy hair she has does be soon turning the like of a handful of thin grass you'd see rotting, where the wet lies, at the north of a sty. (Turning to go out on right) Ah, it's a better thing to have a simple, seemly face, the like of my face, for two score years, or fifty itself, than to be setting fools mad a short while, and then to be turning a thing would drive off the little children from your feet. (pp.87-88)

Language becomes most dramatic in this Act when Martin, speaking in poetic and surrealistic tones, woos Molly and implores her to elope with him. We are at once reminded of similar encounters between the Tramp and Nora in The Shadow of the Glen and Christy and Pegeen in The Playboy of the Western World. In these three instances, Synge's men appear as talkers and their advances towards the opposite sex amount to sheer lingo. Martin Doul admits this, for example, when he tells Molly: "Let you not put shame on me, Molly, before herself and the Smith. Let you not put shame on me and I after saying fine words to you, and dreaming dreams ... in the night" (p. 87). Martin, as he himself admits, is a talker and a dreamer; examined closely, his words to Molly do not give any indications that he is capable of shouldering her responsibilities as Timmy would do for instance. This is why Molly, freeing herself from him, flees to Timmy for support. Words alone, she insists, do not constitute the basis of marriage. Martin, however, thinks differently. Hear him and note his dramatic use of language:

MARTIN DOUL: (Stands up, comes towards her, but stands at far side of well). It was not, Molly Byrne, but lying down in a little rickety shed... Lying down across a sop of straw, and I thinking I was seeing you walk, and hearing the sound of your step on a dry road, and hearing you again, and you laughing and making great talk in a high room with dry timber lining the roof. For it's a fine sound your voice has that time, and it's better I am, I'm thinking, lying down, the way a blind man does be lying, than to be sitting here in the grey light taking hard words of Timmy the Smith (p.84)

... Let you come on now, I'm saying, to the lands of Iveragh and the Reeks of Cork, where you won't set down the width of your two feet and not be crushing fine flowers, and making sweet smells in the air (p.86).

Towards the end of Act II, Martin Doul begins to lose his sight but without any remorse. Having witnessed "the villainy of a woman and the bloody strength of a man" (p.89), he rejects the objective reality of sight and rejoices that he has a voice left for prayers and with this embrace of the power of speech, he brings the Act to a close with a diatribe which is a mixture of metonymy, syndetic phrases and simile. Elsewhere, Synge writes that "before verse can be human again it must learn to be brutal".⁹³ The Douls' speeches seem to validate this statement.

In Act III, Martin and Mary return to their initial dependence on language. They both grope in, already blind again and as in the first act, they complain about loneliness, the threat of death and the insincerity of those that have their sight. The animosity between them, beginning at the end of Act I through Act II, and the brutality of their language, soon gives way to reconciliation and a temperate use of words. This transformation is the result of the epiphanous implication of their experiences in the preceding Act but more important is the fact that both of them resort to a creation of new fantasies through the art of talking.

Mary dreams of becoming a "a beautiful white-haired woman (who) is a grand thing to see" (p.93). Martin talks of "letting my beard grow in a short while, a beautiful, long white, silken, streamy beard, you wouldn't see the like of in the eastern world..." (p.94). And Mary, "laughing cheerfully" (p.94) declares that "we're a great pair, surely, and it's great times we'll have yet, may be, and great talking before we die" (p. 94). Mary's emphasis on "talking" must be seen in its proper linguistic light insofar as it involves the erection of language, beyond its traditional function, into a vehicle of being. For the better part of

Act III, the Douls savour their re-discovered happiness and they begin to value their status; hence, they reject the Saint's offer to cure them a second time out of the awareness that the acceptance of this offer may throw them into further despair. This rejection is supported with logic and words; the emphasis on the latter is particularly evident in the following excerpt:

MARY DOUL: If it is you'd have a right to speak a big, terrible word would make the water not cure us at all.

MARTIN DOUL: What way would I find a big terrible word and I shook with the fear, and if I did itself, who'd know rightly if it's good words or bad would save us this day from himself?

(p. 96).

In their eventual encounter with the Saint and the people, Martin does not find "a big terrible word" but a pack of weighty words which are as important for the thought they convey as for the attention which they attract to the Douls' credentials as rhetoricians and Synge's own skills as a semanticist.

The Well of the Saints confesses a certain cyclic structural mechanism which involves a movement between the two poles of language and vision, and of illusion and reality.

Cognate with this is a centralisation of language as a theme and this, as can be seen, is illustrated by the fate of the Douls caught as they are in an inevitable oscillation between the two poles of dramatic action resulting ultimately in the hegemonisation of language as the compass of survival. The foregrounding of language in The Well of the Saints must be discussed also in terms of the play's unrelenting use of repetitions. Some of the repeated phrases include "talk, talking, grand, destroyed, sight, great, wonders, God, truth, and lies". They lend the play a peculiar syncopation and a metonymic rhythm.

The same is true of the repeated use of non-finite '-ing' words. The general use of this speech pattern by all the characters in the play seems to situate all of them within the same linguistic spectrum. Take this speech by Timmy:

They are, holy father, they do be always sitting here at the crossing of the roads, asking a bit of copper from them that do pass, or stripping rushes for lights, and they not mournful at all, but talking out straight with a full voice, and making game with them that likes it. (p. 70)

And this by the Saint:

... you'll see an odd time shining out through the big hills, and steep streams falling to the sea. For if it's on the like of that you do be thinking you'll not be minding the faces of men, but you'll be saying prayers and great praises, till you'll be living the way the great saints do be living, with little but old sacks, and skin covering their bones (p. 77).

Also note the foregrounding of language through the repetition of 'bell-ringing' in the following:

MOLLY BYRNE: (To Martin Doul). Would you think well to be all your life walking round the like of that, Martin Doul, and you bell-ringing with the Saints of God?

MARY DOUL: (Turning on her, fiercely). How would he be bell-ringing with the saints of God and he wedded with myself.

MARTIN DOUL: It's the truth she's saying, and if bell-ringing is a fine life, yet I'm thinking, may be it's better I am wedded with the beautiful dark woman of Ballinstone (p. 69).

In Riders to the Sea, Synge appears to be more concerned with the antinomies of human experience and its accompanying pathos, and with the traits of the compressionist space within which man is confined, by fate and circumstances, and compelled to eke out a living. Hence he constructs the play with great economy, without frills and without the luxuriant verbiage which dominates his other plays particu-

larly The Well of the Saints and The Playboy of the Western World. Yet several instances of linguistic foregrounding abound in the play.

Maurya, it is established very early in the play, is a talker. Cathleen, commenting on her, says "who would listen to an old woman with one thing and she saying it over?"⁹⁴ a few moments later, she complains that "There's no sense left on any person in a house where an old woman will be talking for ever" (p.23). Talking, as she claims, is a major definer of Maurya's character. Throughout the play, the only action she seems to engage in is that of language. This linguistic preoccupation highlights her anxiety and constitutes, because of the centrality of her character, the heart of dramatic action. It also establishes her as a rhetorician albeit her rhetorics is loaded with jeremiad and remorse.

The irony however is that Maurya attains her greatest linguistic heights at the moments of sorrow. Her statements are sombre but beneath this carapace of simplicity is an inherent beauty and energy which reveal Maurya's ability to employ language simultaneously at several levels of meaning. Her words convey meanings beyond what they ordinarily seem

to signify; that is, they are dramatic. In the following, for example, she describes her helplessness and submits to fate, but beyond this, her words echo universal despair and summarise the archetypal fate of man:

They're all together this time, and the end is come. May the Almighty God have mercy on Bartley's soul; and on the souls of Sheamus and Patch, and Stephen and Shawn (bending her head); and may He have mercy on my soul, Nora, and on the soul of everyone is left living in the world.

(continuing). Michael has a clean burial in the far north, by the grace of the Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards, and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied. (p.30)

Synge situates language more concretely in the mainstream of action, in the first movement of the play, immediately after Bartley's exit, when Cathleen complains about Maurya's failure to bless Bartley's journey. The emphasis here, it must be noted, is on word, on language and its spiritual power. The idea of a mother blessing her son to ensure good luck has roots in Irish culture but when this cultural fact is suspended, what remains is Synge's framing of the idea of language. Consider this statement by Cathleen:

Isn't it sorrow enough is on every one in this house without your sending him out with an unlucky word behind him, and a hard word in his ear? (p.22).

"An unlucky word behind him, and a hard word in his ear" is a foregrounded statement as it entails the erection of language into an object of discourse. From this point onwards, the drama concentrates on the exploration of Cathleen's idea and its thematic implications. Maurya's failure to bless Bartley, according to Cathleen, portends ill-luck for him and this foreboding of evil is further enhanced by the fact that she and Nora also forgot to give him his "bit of bread" (p.23). To avert this possibility, she cuts some bread and asks their mother to take it after Bartley. It is instructive that this redemptive move also involves the foregrounding of language, of the idea of the word:

You'll see him then and the dark word will be broken, and you can say 'God speed you', the way he'll be easy in his mind (p. 23).

Thus, the spoken word becomes a determinant of action and the impression is established that the eventual direction of the plot would depend on whether Maurya succeeds in

uttering the phrase 'God speed you' or not. This is confirmed three pages later when Maurya returns and reports her failure to utter the magical word and give Bartley his 'bit of bread!

I'm after seeing him this day, and he riding and galloping. Bartley came first on the red mare, and I tried to say 'God speed you', but something choked the words in my throat. He went by quickly; and "The blessing of God on you", says he, and I could say nothing. I looked up then, and I crying, at the grey pony, and there was Michael upon it - with fine clothes on him, and new shoes on his feet (p.27).

Maurya's linguistic failure above, and the accompanying vision, confirm the death of both Bartley and Michael; at least for now, at the level of symbolic associations. Hence, Maurya "goes on kneeling" (p. 26) and Cathleen laments that "It's destroyed we are from this day. It's destroyed, surely" (p. 27). Language is further foregrounded in the ensuing lament by Maurya first through the iteration of negative phrases and past tenses: "I won't", "I've had", "some of them were found and some of them were not found", "there was", "I was" (p. 27); to highlight Maurya's misfortune and the seemingly irreversible negation of her experiences; and also through the use of language as an icon.

Quoting Pavis' Problemes de semiologie theatrale and commenting on the use of iconism in the theatre, Keir Elam writes as follows:

Patrice Pavis has suggested that "the language of the actor is iconized in being spoken by the actor", i.e. what the actor utters becomes the representation of something supposedly equivalent to it, 'discourse' (Pavis 1976, p.13). In naturalistic performances especially, the audience is encouraged to take both the linguistic signs and all other representational elements as being directly analogous to the denoted objects. 95

Two instances of this are suggested in the speech by Maurya under reference. At a point, she says:

There were Stephen and Shawn were lost in the great wind, and found after in the Bay of Gregory of the Golden Mouth, and carried up the two of them on one plank, and in by that door (p.27)

Here, Maurya is talking retrospectively but her statement is given immediate relevance by the ensuing stage-direction which establishes an iconic relationship between her words and the subsequent action of the play:

(She pauses for a moment, the girls start as if they heard something through the door that is half open behind them.) (p.27).

Maurya continues her speech and again at the end of it, we are confronted with another instance of linguistic foregrounding which, as in the preceding example involves a sharp transition from the past to the present and from language to action:

I was sitting here with Bartley, and he a baby lying on my two knees, and I seen two women, and three women, and four women coming in, and they crossing themselves and not saying a word. I looked out then, and there were men coming after them and they holding a thing in the half of a red sail, and water dripping out of it - it was a dry day, Nora - and leaving a track to the door
(pp. 27-28).

This speech is immediately linked with action. Maurya pauses "with her hand stretched out towards the door":

It opens softly and old women begin to come in, crossing themselves on the threshold, and kneeling down in front of the stage with red petticoats over their heads.

MAURYA: (Half in a dream, to Cathleen) Is it Patch, or Michael, or what is it at all?

...

CATHLEEN: It's Michael, God spare him, for they're after sending us a bit of clothes from the far north.
 (She reaches out and hands Maurya the clothes that belonged to Michael. Maurya stands up slowly, and takes them in her hands. Nora looks out.

NORA: They're carrying a thing among them, and there's water dripping out of it and leaving a track by the big stones.

CATHLEEN: (In a whisper to the women who have come in) Is it Bartley it is?

ONE OF THE WOMEN: It is, surely, God rest his soul.
 (Two younger women come in and pull out the table. Then men carry in the body of Bartley, laid on a plank, with a bit of a sail over it, and lay it on the table. (p.28)

There is an obvious homological correlation between the foregoing action and Maurya's preceding speech; here, Synge links language and action and the effect is both cinematic and dramatic. Language is similarly foregrounded again in Maurya's liturgy at Bartley's wake through the responsorial use of negative phrases: "I'll have no call now", and "It isn't" (p.29). The effect, as before, is to illustrate the futility of Maurya's struggle for survival.

The marriage of language and action such as has been detected in Riders to the Sea emerges in The Shadow of the Glen⁹⁶ in the scene where Nora flirts with Michael and

describes the prospect of getting old, As she speaks, the picture she paints linguistically and theoretically, is given practical illustration by Dan Burke whose appearance coincidentally validates her statements. The scene is worth reproducing at length:

NORA: (Pouring him out some whisky). Why would I marry you, Mike Dara? You'll be getting old and I'll be getting old, and in a little while, I'm telling you, you'll be sitting up in your bed - the way himself was sitting - with a shake in your face, and your teeth falling, and the white hair sticking out round you like an old bush where sheep do be leaping a gap. (Dan Burke sits up noiselessly from under the sheet, with his hand to his face. His white hair is sticking out round his head. Nora goes on slowly without hearing him.) It's a pitiful thing to be getting old, but it's a queer thing surely. It's a queer thing to see an old man sitting up there in his bed with no teeth in him, and a rough word in his mouth, and his chin the way it would take the bark from the edge of an oak board you'd have building a door ... God forgive me, Micahel Dara, we'll all be getting old, but it's a queer thing surely. (p.13)

The fact that Nora is unaware that Dan, who had hitherto been dead, resurrects as she speaks makes the above sequence fully dramatic, and also the comic height of the play. Beyond this, The Shadow of the Glen is full of talking and the major talkers in it are the Tramp and Nora. Both of

them anticipate the other talkers in Synge's drama: Mary Byrne in The Tinker's Wedding, the Douls in The Well of the Saints, Christy Mahon and Pegeen Mike in The Playboy of the Western World and Lavarcham and Owen in Deirdre of the Sorrows. Running through their speeches is a repetition of "It's" and of the non-finite element "-ing" often linked with other elements with "and". Added to this is their frequent use of similes and alliterations.

Part of the reason why they exit together at the end of the play is because they are aware of this verbal kinship between them. For example, the Tramp, talking with Dan, describes Nora as "a grand woman to talk" (p.8) and she, herself, admires the Tramp's gift of the gab and cites it as the main reason why she decides to follow him: "you've a fine bit of talk, stranger, and it's with yourself I'll go" (p.16). Nora has already been quoted, here is a sample of the Tramp's own rhetorics:

Come along with me now, lady of the house,
and it's not my blather you'll be hearing
only, but you'll be hearing the herons
crying out over the black lakes, and you'll
be hearing the grouse and the owls with them,
and the larks and the big thrushes when the
days are warm; and it's not from the like of
them you'll be hearing a tale of getting old
like Peggy Cavanagh, and losing the hair off

you, and the light of your eyes, but it's fine songs you'll be hearing when the sun goes up, and there'll be no old fellow wheezing, the like of a sick sheep, close to your ear. (pp.15-16).

Whereas language is treated largely as symbolic action in Synge's plays and not so obviously celebrated for its own sake; both aspects of linguistic foregrounding receive their loudest expressions, as we shall presently discover in Soyinka's plays.

The reason for this could be traced to the fact that Synge's characters, although verbally gifted, are physically reticent, presumably because the sombre circumstances in which they find themselves rarely engender a celebrative spirit, whereas the reverse is the case with Soyinka's characters who, almost without exception talk histrionically, turning language into a drama, capable of engaging attention if appreciated exclusively for its own sake.

Perhaps the only exceptions to this rule are the characters in Synge's The Playboy of the Western World which has been described as "the apotheosis of the metadramatic itself".⁹⁷ For a validation of this claim, witness the series of picturesque physical activities in the play and the homological relationship between Pegeen, the widow Quin

and the widow Casey, between Christy and Old Mahon, and between Michael James and Old Mahon. Christy deserves particular attention. Witness the scenes in which he narrates the events that lead to his flight from Meath and the scene where he woos Pegeen. He is the poet of the play; dreamy and romantic. His words assume ethereal breadths and through a polyphony of repetitions, metaphors and figurative expressions, they embolden the page and enliven the spirit beyond conventional expectations.

Christy Mahon's equals abound in Soyinka's plays. Agboreko and Adenebi in A Dance of the Forests; the Secretary, Oba Danlola and Kongi in Kongi's Harvest, Lakunle and Baroka in The Lion and the Jewel, Old Man in Madmen and Specialists; Jero in The Trials of Brother Jero and Jero's Metamorphosis, and Professor in The Road all belong to his tradition of rhetoricians. Through them, Soyinka elevates language to the level of theatre.

In the preceding chapter, we contended that Lakunle and Baroka in The Lion and the Jewel occupy two extremes of the ethical polar and are both united by the vacuity of their convictions, but when considered from a linguistic standpoint, both characters emerge, despite their differences,

as homological insofar as they exist within the same linguistic plane to the degree that they use language in a colourful, histrionic sense. Sidi is the first to note this; reacting to Baroka's vision of progress, she declaims:

I can no longer see the meaning, Baroka.
 Now that you speak
 Almost like the school teacher, except
 Your words fly on a different path. 98

Baroka's words tread a different path because of the ideological differences between him and Lakunle, but fundamentally, their words share the same spirit and he himself, acknowledges this. He quotes Lakunle's expressions and admits his usefulness to Ilujinle and the homologicality between both of them. "Your school teacher and I", he tells Sidi, "are much alike./ The proof of wisdom is the wish to learn./Even from children". (p.48).

Baroka and Lakunle, to use a more direct superlative, are rhetoricians and the latter's credentials in this respect are established at the very beginning of the play when Sidi complains that "the school teacher is full of stories" (p.3). Throughout the play, our school teacher engages in a romance with words converting every discourse, either with Sidi or

Sadiku or Baroka, into advertisements for himself. And the emphasis is not so much on the significative value of his words as on their exhibitionistic potentials; hence, Sidi tells him:

You talk and talk and deafen me
with words which always sound the same
And make no meaning (p.8).

Through Lakunle, Soyinka thus turns language into drama. Instances of this also exist in his discussion of bride price with Sidi when he characteristically invokes words in defence of his aversion to the custom:

A savage custom, barbaric, out-dated,
Rejected, denounced, accursed,
Excommunicated, archaic, degrading,
Humiliating, unspeakable, redundant,
Retrogressive, remarkable, unpalatable.

SIDI: Is the bag empty? Why did you stop?

LAKUNLE: I own only the shorter Companion
Dictionary, but I have ordered
The Longer one - you wait! (p.8).

Again, at the end of the enactment of how Baroka "foiled the Public works attempt/To build the railway through Ilujinle" (p.23), Lakunle launches into a romantic condemnation of Baroka and eulogises Sidi so obsessively that he does not know when Sidi and Sadiku, unable to follow the drift of his verbal ejaculations, quietly desert him. He returns from his never-never land of words only to discover that he is alone.

The reaction of Sidi and Sadiku here is representative of the manner in which the entire Ilujinle community regards Lakunle. He is seen not as the progressive he considers himself to be but as a "fop" (p.31), "a cockatoo" (p.8), "the madman of Ilujinle who calls himself a teacher!" (p.5), a "fool" with "fine airs and little sense" (p. 5).

Even Baroka finds his affectations somewhat extravagant. The first time they meet in the play, Lakunle "bows deeply from his waist" (p.16). Instead of prostrating as culture demands, he greets Baroka in a typical English fashion: "A good morning to you sir" (p.6) Baroka converts this into a play on language by accenting "good morning" thereby producing a performative semi-Yoruba variant of the phrase:

Guru morin guru morin, ngh-hn! That is All we get from 'alakowe'. You call at his house hoping he sends for beer, but all you get is Guru morin. Will guru morin wet my throat? (p. 16).

Baroka may cavil at Lakunle's words but like him, he is equally a rhetorician with the only difference between them being that Lakunle's language entails regular flights into an autotelic dream-land whereas his own words are pragmatic,

directed as they are towards the achievement of concrete immediate goals such as the seduction of Sidi.

Sidi and Sadiku, like Lakunle and Baroka, also display a capacity for poetry, albeit at a slightly less ambitious level. Both of them wax eloquent whenever their enthusiasm is aroused as in the Noon segment where Sidi romanticises her beauty and justifies her superiority to Baroka; or as in the Night segment when Sadiku celebrates the triumph of woman-kind over Baroka. The meeting between Baroka and Sidi later in this segment also involves a series of verbal wrestling sustained by innuendoes and double entendres which further highlight Sidi's talent for language.

The result of all these is that The Lion and the Jewel is imbued with several dramatic situations which reveal Soyinka's sense of poetry and his ability to elevate the seemingly ordinary to a high level of cognition and art. Instances of this linguistic foregrounding exist in Lakunle's oratorical flights, in Baroka's re-phrasing of "good morning" and also in his introspective and musical lamentation of his supposed impotence at the end of the Noon segment (pp.28-29). Also note Sadiku's unsuccessful attempt to pronounce

barbarians which gives rise to a twisted alternative namely "brabararians" (p. 55).

As is the case with Synge, Soyinka also frames language by repeating a phrase or word within a sequence of speeches to effect a rhythmic progression of dialogue. Two examples of this involving the repetition of "man" and "Is this not right"/"So?" are quoted below for illustration. First, take this exchange between Sadiku and Lakunle:

SADIKU: (advances menacingly) You less than man, you less than the littlest woman, I say begone!

LAKUNLE: (nettled). I will have you know that I am a man. As you will find out if you dare To lay a hand on me.

SADIKU: (throws back her head in laughter). You a man? Is Baroka not more of a man than you? And if he is no longer a man; then what are you? ... (p.32)

And then, the following between Baroka and Sidi:

BAROKA: ... The school teacher
And I, must learn one from the other.
Is this not right?
(A tearful nod).

BAROKA: The old must flow into the new, Sidi,
Not blind itself or stand foolishly
Apart. A girl like you must inherit
Miracles which age alone reveals.
Is this not so?

SIDI: Everything you say, Bale,
seems wise to me.

BAROKA: Yesterday's wine alone is strong and blooded,
child,
And though the Christians' holy book denies
The truth of this, old wine thrives best
Within a new bottle.
The coarseness is mellowed down, and the rugged
wine
Acquires a full and rounded body ...
Is this not so - my child?
(Quite overcome, Sidi nods), (p. 49).

In our discussions of Synge's Riders to the Sea and The Shadow of the Glen, earlier in this chapter, we isolated two instances in which language is converted into symbolic action with both action and language merging together to create a cinematic effect. An instance of this could also be found in The Lion and the Jewel at the end of Lakunle's lengthy sermon on progress (pp. 34-35). This segment of his speech is fully theatrical as it foreshadows and is linked cinematically with the encounter between Sidi and Baroka in the latter's bedroom as follows:

LAKUNLE:...

Have you no shame that at your age,
You neither read nor write nor think?
You spend your days as senior wife,
Collecting brides for Baroka
And now because you've sucked him dry,
You send my Sidi to his shame...

(The scene changes to Baroka's bedroom...)
(p.35).

What follows is the verbal fencing between Sidi and Baroka culminating in the latter's triumph due to the superiority of his wiles.

Several instances of this linguistic foregrounding abound in The Road.⁹⁹ These include the flashback scene about the accident on the bridge (pp. 198-199) and Samson's imitation of a millionaire (pp. 154-156), of Professor (pp. 162-164) and of Sergeant Burma (pp. 216-218) and his demonstration of his skills as a tout (p. 225). With the facility of a raconteur, Samson weaves several stories and dreams, be it that of himself as a millionaire, or that of the gentleman duel between Professor and the Bishop, or the story of Kokol'ori or the birth of Kotonu or the conduct of Sergeant Burma during Remembrance Day Sermon. Like Lakunle and Baroka, he is a colourful speaker, gifted with an immense capacity for talking and throughout the play, he oscillates between three linguistic registers: pidgin, Yoruba and English. Running through his speeches is a peculiar framing of words and an ability to achieve high poetic flavour whether his intention is to "siddon here make we talk" (p.165) or to "make cinema" (p. 165).

Say Tokyo Kid attains a measure of Samson's linguistic flourish through his racy Americanese but it is only Professor whose use of language seems to exist within the same axis, in fact, at a slightly higher axis, as Samson's language. Professor, we are told, is engaged in a search for the word. At the level of spiritual, philosophical reckoning, this translates into a search for the meaning of life and a determination to cheat the fear of death "by fore-knowledge" (p.227).

But in practical terms, it manifests as a literal obsession with words as words, hence, Professor surrounds himself with linguistic signs and speaks a heavily imagic prose inundated with unusual word choices, histrionic phrases and an autotelic manner of speaking. Describing an accident scene, he begins with a touch of hyperbole: "Lorry was travelling at excessive speed" (p. 194); then he pauses to flaunt his linguistic skills:

You see, I can make up a police statement that would dignify the archives of any traffic division, but tell me - have I spent all these years in dutiful search only to wind up my last moments in meaningless statements. What did you see friend, what did you see? Show me the smear of blood on your brain (p.195).

Kotonu's statement that "It was a full load and it took some moments overtaking us, heavy it was" (p. 196) assumes a new personality in the hands of Professor as he writes furiously:

It dragged alongside and after an eternity
it pulled to the front swaying from side
to side, pregnant with stillborns.
Underline - with stillborns. (p.196)

Professor may be a fop in demeanour, he is even more so in writing and speech and his linguistic exploits, together with Samson's and Say Tokyo Kid's, would seem to fit into the overall mood of the play. Through these characters and in the entire play, Soyinka frames language, turning it into a performance. Noteworthy is the unusual conversion of "comfort ye my people" to "Comforti yi, enia mi ni" (p. 197), this example serves no significant purpose except to highlight the volatility and transformability of language.

Soyinka takes full advantage of this volatility by going on in the same speech to render the miscasting in Yoruba of the biblical phrase in an English translation as: "This Comfort my people is my people" thus heightening the comedic tempo of the drama. Existing within the same spectrum with

it is the expression during Samson's role-playing of a millionaire in which the Christian saying "Give us this day our daily bread" is changed to "Give us this day our daily bribe". (p.155).

Let us add that The Road begins on a dramatic note through the scenic inscription "AKSIDENT STORE-ALL PART AVAILEBUL" (p.152) in which emphasis is placed on homophony as opposed to syntax. Language receives further dramatisation a few moments later when Professor enters clutching "a road-sign bearing a squiggle and the one word, 'BEND'" (p. 157). Uses of language such as this reveal the power of language to mean at several levels of implication.

Madmen and Specialists¹⁰⁰ does not seem to possess the same wide range of linguistic framing as The Road, A Dance of the Forests and The Lion and the Jewel perhaps because of its austerity, and the urgency of its subject-matter. It nevertheless contains many instances of linguistic foregrounding which deserve notice because of their outstanding peculiarity when considered alongside the other patterns already discovered in Soyinka's plays. Central is Soyinka's capitalization of certain phrases in the play "R.A.T., R.A.T. Rem Acu Tetigisti" (pp. 222-223), "SPEAK MAN!" (p.223), "THE

TRUTH" (p. 223), "THINK!" (p. 242), "WHY AS!" (p. 263) and "HOLE IN THE ZERO OF NOTHING!" (p. 275); this practice emphasizes the automative significance of the words but because of its unusualness, it equally draws attention to their individuality and their deautomative value.

The capitalization of "As" is perhaps most central insofar as the entire play is woven round this particular word. Here, As is mystified and erected into a conundrum whose meaning the characters, particularly Bero, seek to unravel. Thus foregrounded, As becomes full dramatic. Witness the following:

BERO: And the god you worship?

OLD MAN: Abominates humanity - the fleshy part,
that is.

BERO: Why As?

OLD MAN: Because Was-Is-Now...

BERO: Don't!

OLD MAN: So you see, I put you all beyond
salvation

BERO: Why As?

OLD MAN: A code. A word.

BERO: Why As?

OLD MAN: It had to be something

BERO: Why As?

OLD MAN: If millions follow... that
frightened you all.

BERO: Why As?

OLD MAN: Why not?

BERO: Why As?

OLD MAN: Who wants to know?

BERO: I. Why As?

OLD MAN: What's in it for you?

BERO: I am asking questions? Why As? (pp.253-254)

As is foregrounded, as can be seen above, through its capitalization and its continuous repetition and despite its intellectual exploration by Bero, Old Man and the mendicants, its meaning remains indeterminate but clear and well-established is its peculiar personality which is a complete deviation from its conventional grammatical function. In conventional expression, "As" functions either as an adverb or as a conjunctive but in Madmen and Specialists, Soyinka divests it of this traditional function and invests it with metaphorical responsibilities. Added to "As" but occupying a lower rung in the play are the puns on "de-balled/disabled" (p.258), "pendant/pe-dant", "gushpillating/palpitating" (p.258).

At the level of characterization, Old Man is the linguist of the play. His speeches are few but they entail an ambitious use of language influenced by the use of similes, metaphors and iterance. Examined closely, they reveal a gradual linguistic foregrounding which climaxes in Old man's last major speech:

OLD MAN: (his voice has risen to a frenzy):
 Practise, Practise, Practise ... on the
 cyst in the system ... (Bero is checked
 in stride by the voice. He now hesitates
 between the two distractions). ... you
 cyst, you cyst, you splint in the arrow
 of arrogance, the dog in dogma, tick of
 a heretic, the tick in politics, the mock
 of democracy, the mar of marxism,
 a tic of the fanatic, the boo in
 buddhism, the ham in Mohammed, the
 dash in the criss-cross of Christ,
 a dot on the i of ego an ass in the
 mass, the ash in ashram, a boot in
 kibbutz, the pee of priesthood, the
 peepee of perfect priesthood, oh
 how dare you raise your hindquarters
 you dog of dogma and cast the scent of
 your existence on the lamp-post of Destiny
 you HOLE IN THE ZERO of NOTHING. (p. 275)

Here, language is stretched beyond its colloquial use and transformed into a mass of alliterations and metaphors, the result is that language becomes a performance and meaning is collapsed into the capsule of metadrama.

Conclusion

Such discussion of the foregrounding of language in the plays of Synge and Soyinka as has been attempted above becomes complete and more meaningful only when its practical and pedagogical implications are contemplated especially as they relate to drama and performance.

According to Keir Elam, "conspicuous rhetorical figures, highly patterned syntax, phonetic repetitions and parallelisms augment material presence of the linguistic sign on stage"¹⁰¹. Instances of these plus the use of language as symbolic action and the use of metonymy, homophony, syndesis and metaphor have already been observed in the plays of Synge and Soyinka.

This framing of language by both writers legitimizes their recognition as connoisseurs of language but more importantly, it raises the issue of the literary and theatrical communication of their plays.

Soyinka has often been accused of obscurity and Synge, in his life time, complained about the failure of the public to follow the drift of his plays. We suspect that this misapprehension of their works is partly due to the highly polysemic and semiotic character of their language. Readers

and spectators traditionally approach a play with a capacity for the understanding of language at a purely utilitarian, colloquial, automative level. But when language, as in Synge and Soyinka's plays, operates not at a one to one indexical level but with a volatile iconic capacity and an n-range of signification, the reader or spectator finds it convenient to accuse the writer of deliberate mystification.

What happens in Synge and Soyinka's case, and perhaps in all cases, is that the ordinary reader or spectator usually approaches literature with a stock of pre-determined and automatic responses; but, because the foregrounding process in Synge and Soyinka's plays negates this approach, the writer-audience communication flow is often impaired and meaning is frustrated.

This should, however, not be the case. The signification range of a work of art should be accompanied by effective communication particularly in the theatre where the aesthetic experience derives validation almost entirely from the communication flow between the performer and the spectator. Hence, the point must be made that every participant in the creative process must be sensitive to the communicative demands of the text.

It is recommended that a reader or actor or director of Synge and Soyinka's plays must avoid the error of interpreting them literally and automatically since to do so is to miss their meaning. If a director hopes to understand the plays of both writers in their varied interconnectedness, he must recognise the power of their language to generate a hierarchy of meanings. He must also set himself the task of grasping these meanings in relation to other aspects of performance.

The actor whose duty it is to speak this language must be schooled in oral and textual interpretation so that he would be able to express its automative and deautomative aspects in their full implications. As earlier stated, the plays of Synge and Soyinka are peopled by talkers, men and women for whom language is an act and a display, the actor or actress who impersonates these characters on stage cannot afford to have lesser credentials.

The point made above becomes more relevant when we consider the fact that language in the works of Synge and Soyinka refers not merely to the verbal aspect but also to the non-verbal, para-linguistic references and codes in them. These para-linguistic aspects heighten the potency of the word either on the page or on the stage, pushing it, in the process, to the status of a lively metaphor. And both for

the literary critic and the theatrician, an appreciation of these two levels of linguistic deployment is important for a fuller and richer understanding of both writers.

The specific instances in which language is used in a dramatic fashion in Riders to the Sea, for example, has already been discussed but equally observable in this play are several complementary para-linguistic gestures which deepen the meaning of the text.

At the beginning of the play, the occupation and the life-style of the characters are immediately established through stage symbolism as we are informed that we are at a "cottage kitchen, with nets, oilskins, spinning-wheel [and] some new boards standing by the wall" (p.19). But perhaps more important is the bundle that is brought in by Cathleen. The bundle, it is later discovered, contains "a bit of an old shirt and a plain stocking" (p.25) which belong to Michael. At the level of symbolic associations, what is suggested here is the death of Michael which is later ascertained in the play. By reducing Michael to a mere bundle, his death and indeed the general reduction of life on the island is established. A theatrician could easily highlight these para-linguistic gestures to clarify the discussions between Nora and Cathleen.

The cake referred to in the play is also a para-linguistic symbol. After Bartley's exit, it is discovered that no one remembered to give him his cake. The cake, placed within the Irish cultural cognitive map, is as a result of its association with the fire meant to represent good luck. The Irish believe that fire could be used to drive away evil and if a traveller takes something from the fire in the home on a journey, his security zone would be widened and he would be assured of a safer journey. Hence, the spectator at a performance of Riders to the Sea may already suspect the misfortune that awaits Bartley immediately it is noticed that he leaves the house without the cake kneaded for him by Cathleen. The expression of this suspicion at the verbal level by Cathleen and Maurya merely reinforces the point that has already been made through the use of para-language.

Further, Maurya, it has been observed, eventually submits to fate having been confronted by the almost total insensitivity of nature and the futility of her endeavours to embrace and protect life. She expresses this in the final lament which brings the play to a close but even before this, her resignation has already been established non-verbally when she

"puts the empty cup mouth downwards on the table and lays her hands together on Bartley's feet" (p.30).

Such non-verbal codes also abound in Soyinka's The Road. The moment Professor enters the play, his foppish and eccentric character is established most tellingly through para-language:

Professor is a tall figure in Victorian outfit-tails, top-hat etc., all thread-bare and shiny at the lapels from much ironing. He carries four enormous bundles of newspaper and a fifth of paper odds and ends impaled on a metal rod stuck in a wooden rest. A chair-stick hangs from one elbow, and the other arm clutches a road-sign bearing a squiggle and the one-word, 'BEND'.
(p.157)

All these are before Professor begins to speak. The visual impact that is recorded here already delienates Professor's character and is further strengthened by the verbal utterances which follow. It is not only Professor's character that is so delienated; equally noteworthy is the association of Kotonu with the spider. At the beginning of the play, Samson "goes over to a spider's web in the corner and pokes it with a stick. He soon wearies of this". Some moments later, he returns to this seemingly tiresome task

and tells Kotonu that he reminds him of a spider. The obvious parallelism between the non-verbal action here and the words that accompany it seems a good illustration of the interplay between language and para-language in Soyinka's plays.

We might consider also the symbolism of Sergeant Burma's jacket and the mask. Both serve, at the level of physical imagery, as vehicles of memory as they provide a link between present and past circumstances thereby clarifying and deepening the plot. The Road also opens instructively on a non-verbal note. The juxtaposition of the roadside shack and the church, the mammy wagon and the group of sleepy layabouts and their actions suggest not just the breaking of a new dawn but more importantly, the sharp contrasting patterns which characterise the rest of the play.

Para-linguistic structures refer largely to the use of language in its theatrical sense in form of symbolism, space, costume and props and the point being urged is that there is also a rich store of these in the works of the two writers under study. But while language as words can easily assert itself on the page and on the stage, non-verbal language

requires practised expertise for its import to be fully appreciated. It is in this respect that the theatrical communication of Synge's and Soyinka's plays would need to be considered whenever their use of language is discussed.

In all, Synge and Soyinka's language poses serious challenges for the entire theatre ensemble; it requires from every theatrician a high intellectual approach and a capacity to suit the word, as it were, to the action, and vice-versa.

The audience to whom the theatrical message is directed should also receive the plays with an open mind without any pre-conceived codes. Synge's audiences, in his life time, rioted and hooted his plays because of their failure to achieve this feat; those who accuse Soyinka of obscurity may equally be guilty of the same shortcoming.

That spectators and the reading public often insist on imposing their own prejudices on a work of art is a curious phenomenon which would seem to negate the logic of common-sense. But unfortunately, this has always been the case in the arts. Synge, Yeats and Soyinka have, in various ways, opposed this unwarranted deification of public taste and intelligence. With particular reference to the subject of language discussed here, for example, Synge and Yeats during

the Playboy riots repeatedly defended the realistic base of Synge's language against allegations to the contrary. They argued that the words that were considered offensive and indelicate by the public, **such** as the invocation of Holy names and the references to feminine underclothing are, in actual fact, spoken by the natives of rural Ireland.¹⁰²

Similarly, Soyinka has engaged in many debates with those who accuse him of loading his writings with linguistic impediments and also with those who fail to grasp the sense in his use of words. In such essays as "The Critic and Society: Barthes, Leftocracy and other Mythologies"¹⁰³ he re-affirms, inter alia, the artist's freedom to employ his own kind of linguistic codes and decries the critic's tendency to misappropriate these to serve his own a priori thesis.

Synge and Soyinka's language deserve a more sympathetic understanding than many critics and spectators seem to realise.

NOTES

¹Edward Sapir, Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1921), p. 8.

²B. Block and G.L. Trager, Outline of Linguistic Analysis (Baltimore: Linguistic Society of America/Waverly Press, 1942), p. 5.

³R.A. Hall, An Essay on Language (New York: Chilton Books, 1968), p. 13.

⁴Noam Chomsky, Syntactic Structures (The Hague: Mouton, 1957), p. 13.

⁵Peter H. Salus (ed.) On Language: Plato to Von Humboldt (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1969). Some of the essays in the book include Aristotle, "Poetics"

M.T. Varro, "On the Latin language"
 Quintillian, "Institutes of Oratory"
 Donatus, "The Ars Minor of Donatus"
 St. Anselm, "De Grammatico"
 Peter of Spain, "Tractatus Suppositionum"
 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Essay on the Origin of Languages"
 J.G. Herder, "Essay on the Origin of Language".

⁶For details on this, see V. Fromkin and R. Rodman, An Introduction to Language (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974), p. 17f.

⁷Richard Albert Wilson, The Miraculous Birth of Language (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1949), p. 154.

⁸Ibid., p. 191.

⁹J.J. Rousseau, "Essay on the Origin of Languages" Peter H. Salus (ed.), On Language: Plato to Von Humboldt, p. 142.

¹⁰ Alfred Korzybski, The Manhood of Humanity (Conn.: Inter Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing Co. 1950).

¹¹ L. Weiskrantz (ed.), Animal Intelligence (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

¹² W. Kuhler, The Mentality of Apes (2nd ed.) (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1927).

¹³ Roger Brown, Words and Things (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1959), in particular, see the section entitled "Animal Languages", pp. 156-166.

¹⁴ R.M. Yerkes and Ada W. Yerkes, The Great Apes (3rd ed.) (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1945).

¹⁵ Karl von Frisch, Bees, Their Vision, Chemical Senses and Language (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1950).

¹⁶ Stuart Chase (in collaboration with Marian Tyler Chase), Power of Words (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1954). in particular, see Chap. 6: "Bees, Monkeys and Cats", pp. 56-65.

¹⁷ Lewis Thomas, "Language and Human Communication" Dialogue, Vol. 8, No. 3/4, 1975, p. 30.

¹⁸ William J. Entwistle, Aspects of Language (London: Faber and Faber, Mcmliii), p.2.

¹⁹ Stuart Chase, p. 8.

²⁰ Peter Dixon, Rhetoric (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1971), p. 7.

²¹Richard Rorty, "The World Well Lost" Journal of Philosophy, Vol.69, 1972, pp. 649-667; also see his Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1979).

²²Walter J. Ong, The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), p. 125.

²³Leonard Bloomfield, Language (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1950), p. 3, for similar views on the social significance of language, see Dell Hymes, Language in Culture and Society: A Reader in Linguistics and Anthropology (New York: Evanston and London: Harper and Row Publishers, 1964), also see Pier Paolo Giglioli (ed.) Language and Social Context (England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1977), in particular, see J.A. Fishman, "The Sociology of Language", pp. 45-58.

²⁴I.A. Richards, Philosophy of Rhetoric (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 131.

²⁵Christopher Caudwell, Illusion and Reality: A Study of the Sources of Poetry (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1946). Caudwell sees language as a tool with which man probes nature and associates with his colleagues:

Language is the most flexible instrument man has evolved in his associated struggle with Nature. Language is the essential tool of human association. It is for this reason that one can hardly think of truth except as a statement in language, so much is truth the product of association (p.139).

²⁶S.J. Tambiah, "The magical power of words" MAN: The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. 3, No.2, June 1968. Quoting Edmund Leach, Tambiah declares that "the uttering of words itself is a ritual" (p. 176) and rituals also rely heavily on language for the attainment of magical strength. cf. Edmund Leach, "Ritualization in man in relation to conceptual and social development" Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B251, 1966. pp. 247-526; also

see T. Izutsu, Language and Magic (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Philological Studies, 1956).

²⁷Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth (New York: Dover Publications, 1953).

²⁸W.W. Urban, Language and Reality: The Philosophy of Language and the Principles of Symbolism (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., New York: The Macmillan Coy., 1951).

²⁹Garth Gillian, From Sign to Symbol (Sussex: The Harvester Press; New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1982): "We live within language and it is in language that we confront our tasks. From words we move to action..." says Gillian (p.22).

³⁰See note 7. Wilson writes as follows:

... written language is the crystallization of the fluidity of time, while time still retains its movement and fluidity even while standing fixed and motion-less in space. This, as it seems to me, is the unique characteristic of language which marks it off from all other phenomena of the world, the peculiar fusion of motion and permanence in a single synthesis without destroying the nature of either, and making language the completely adequate instrument of free and conscious mind (p. 187).

³¹Isaac Goldberg, The Wonder of Words: An Introduction to Language (London: Peter Owen Ltd., MCMXLVII)

³²See note 1.

³³Cassirer, p. 186.

³⁴Sapir, p. 23.

³⁵Goldberg, p. 237.

- ³⁶ Simeon Potter, Language in the Modern World (London: Andre Deutsch, 1975), p. 28.
- ³⁷ A.C. Ward, "Language and the Community" Essays and Studies 1961, p. 66.
- ³⁸ Entwistle, p. 27.
- ³⁹ See Note 16, also see Chase's first book, The Tyranny of Words (1938).
- ⁴⁰ Chase, Power of Words, pp. 4-5.
- ⁴¹ George Steiner, Language and Silence: Essays 1958-1966 (London, 1967), p. 23.
- ⁴² _____, "The retreat from the word: I, Listener London, 14 July, 1960.
- ⁴³ _____, "The retreat from the word:II" Listener, London, 21 July, 1960.
- ⁴⁴ Frank Kermode, The Sense of an Ending (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).
- ⁴⁵ Richard P. Brickner, "Language and Man's Humanity" Dialogue, Vol. 5, 1972, No.2, pp. 95-96 (a review of George Steiner's Extraterritorial: Papers on Literature and the Language Revolution (New York: Atheneum, n.d., 210pp).
- ⁴⁶ David Newton - De Molina, "George Steiner's Language and Silence" The Critical Quarterly, Vol. 11, No. 4, Winter 1969, pp. 365-374. Note the following statement by Molina:

It is not enough to say that Steiner's thesis contains a grain of truth. It does not. It is, in all its parts, radically intemperate and misleading. Steiner's entire discourse is on a plane which leads in one direction only, downwards: towards pessimism, intellectual abdication, and the continual diminution of belief in the efficacy of rational thought. (p. 373).

⁴⁷ For details on this, see K.H. Basso, "To Give Up on Words: Silence in Western Apache Culture" Pier Paolo Giglioli (ed.), pp. 67-86.

⁴⁸ William Mathews, "Language in Love's Labour's Lost" Essays and Studies, 1964: Shakespeare Quarter Centenary Edition, p. 1.

⁴⁹ Chase, Power of Words p. ix.

⁵⁰ Northrop Frye, "The Teaching, Learning and Study of Literature" Randolph Quirk and H.G. Widdowson (eds.) English in the World: Teaching and Learning the Language and Literatures (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 185.

⁵¹ I.A. Richards, "The Interactions of Words" Allen Tate (ed.) The Language of Poetry (New York: Russell and Russell, 1960), p. 71.

⁵² Stephen Minot, Three Genres: The Writing of Poetry, Fiction and Drama 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1988), pp. 20 and 23.

⁵³ Friedrich Duerrenmatt, "Problems of the Theatre" Robert W. Corrigan (ed.) Theatre in the Twentieth Century (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1963), p. 64.

⁵⁴Steiner, Language and Silence, p. 44.

⁵⁵Virginia Woolf, The Voyage Out (London, 1929), p. 262, Quoted in Newton-De Molina, p. 365.

⁵⁶Antonin Artaud, The Theatre and its Double trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958), pp.110-111.

⁵⁷Robert W. Corrigan, "The Theatre in Search of a Fix" Robert W. Corrigan (ed.), Theatre in the Twentieth Century (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1963), pp. 19 and 20.

⁵⁸Caryl Churchill, Top Girls (London and New York: Methuen, 1984), 87pp.

⁵⁹John Russell Brown, Theatre Language: A Study of Arden, Osborne, Pinter and Wesker (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1972). Brown extends the definition of language, beyond words, to embrace non-verbal codes such as gesture, spectacle, silence and theatrical demonstration. cf. Harold Clurman, "The New Theatre" Dialogue, Vol.5, 1972, No.2, pp. 57-68. Brown's position would seem to confirm Clurman's argument that language is no longer dominant in the new theatre as it exists in relation to other modes of expression.

⁶⁰David Bevington, Action is Eloquence: Shakespeare's Language as Gesture (Cambridge M.A.:Harvard Univ. Press, 1984.) Bevington regards not just words but also costuming, props, posturing, movement, space and ceremony as part of the language of Shakespeare's plays. A delightful book.

⁶¹Entwistle, p. 3. cf. Robert Corrigan, "The Theatre in Search of a Fix", p. 25:

... we must never forget that the theatre in its most embracing form begins with the play and if you eliminate the spoken language, the play will not exist. It can be admitted that words are limited in what they can express, but they are finally all we've got ... Only an increased trust in the possibility of words to communicate meaningfully will bring about the renaissance of our theatre.

⁶²See Note 55.

⁶³Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory: An Introduction (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1986), pp. 140-141: Eagleton writes that

Structuralism began to happen when language became an obsessive preoccupation of intellectuals, and this happened in turn because in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, language in Western Europe was felt to be in the throes of deep crisis... The formalist, Futurist and Structuralist preoccupation with the estrangement and renewal of the word, with restoring to an alienated language the richness of which it had been robbed, were all in their different ways responses to this same historical dilemma.

⁶⁴Keir Elam, The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama (London and New York: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1980), p. 154.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 17.

⁶⁶Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives (New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1945), p. xxii.

⁶⁷John Willett (ed.), Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic (New York: Hill and Wang, 1966); on gest in language, see pp. 104, 106, 115-117.

⁶⁸On Synge's language, see

St. John Ervine, Some Impressions of my Elders (New York: Macmillan, 1922), pp. 116, 198-200; also see his How to Write A Play (London: Allen and Unwin, 1928), p. 20f.

John Gassner, Masters of the Drama (Third revised and enlarged edition) (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1954), pp. 554-555.

Ronald Peacock, The Poet in the Theatre (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960), pp. 111-112.

Alan J. Bliss, "The Language of Synge" Maurice Harmon (ed.), J.M. Synge: Centenary Papers 1971 (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1979), pp. 35-62.

Seamus Deanne, "Synge's Poetic Use of Language" in Maurice Harmon (ed.), pp. 127-144.

Rene Frechet, "The Theme of Speech in the Plays of J.M. Synge" Dapo Adelugba (ed.), Studies on Synge (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1977), pp. 34-51, earlier published as "Le Theme de la Parole dans le Theatre de Synge", Etudes Anglaises, XXI, 3, July, 1968, pp. 243-256.

F.L. Lucas, Style (London: Pan Books Ltd., 1964), pp.22-26.

On Soyinka's Language, see

James Gibbs, Wole Soyinka (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1986), p. 29f.

Martin Banham, "African Literature II: Nigerian Dramatists in English and the Traditional Nigerian Theatre" The Journal of Commonwealth Literature, No. 3, July, 1967, pp. 97-106.

Dapo Adelugba, "Language Use in African Theatre" unpublished paper presented at the Linguistics Association of Nigeria Conference, 1985.

Stanley Macebuh, "Poetics and the Mythic Imagination" Transition, No. 50, Vol. 9 (vi), No. 1, Vol.1 (1), October, 1975/March, 1976, pp. 79-84.

Anthony Appiah, "Soyinka and the Philosophy of Culture" P.O. Bodunrin (ed.), Philosophy in Africa: Trends and Perspectives (Ile-Ife: Univ. of Ife Press, 1985), pp. 250-263.

Ropo Sekoni, "Metaphor as Basis of Form in Soyinka's Drama" Research in African Literatures, Vol. 14, No.1, Feb., 1983. 45-57.

Oyin Ogunba, "Language in an Age of Transition: Shakespeare and Soyinka" Journal of the Nigerian English Studies Association (JNE SA), Vol. 6, No.1, May, 1974, pp.107-118.

Niyi Osundare, "The Poem as a Mytho-Linguistic Event: A Study of Soyinka's Abiku" Eldred Durosimi Jones, Eustace Palmer and Marjorie Jones (eds.) Oral and Written Poetry in African Literature Today (London: James Currey, Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1988), p. 97f.

⁶⁹ See Note 68.

⁷⁰ See L.A.G. Strong, John Millington Synge (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1941).

⁷¹ Maurice Bourgeois, John Millington Synge and the Irish Theatre (London: Benjamin Blom, 1965).

⁷² Daniel Corkery, (Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1966), pp. 195-198.

⁷³ See Note 68.

⁷⁴ Chinweizu, Onwchekwa Jemie and Ikechukwu Madubuike, Toward the Decolonization of African Literatures Vol.1 (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980), p. 165f.

⁷⁵ See note 68.

⁷⁶ John Millington Synge, Plays, Poems and Prose (London and Melbourne: Dent and Sons Ltd., 1988), p. 219.

⁷⁷ On the Language debate in African Literature, see Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Decolonising the mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature (London: James Surrey; Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya, 1987).

John Spencer (ed.), Language in Africa (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1963).

Martin Tucker, Africa in Modern Literature: A Survey of Contemporary Writing in English (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1967).

Bernth Lindfors (ed.); Research Priorities in African Literatures (Munich, N.Y., London, Paris: Hans Zell Publishers, 1984).

K.A.B. Jones-Quartey, "The Problems of Language in the Development of the African Theatre" Okyeame, Vol. 4, No. 1, Dec., 1968, pp. 95-102.

Obi Wali, "The Dead End of African Literature?" Transition, Vol. 4, No. 10, Sept. 1963, pp. 13-15.

Saka Acquaye, "The Language Problem of the Developing African Theatre" Africa arts/arts d'Afrique, Vol. II, No. 1, Autumn 1968, pp. 58-59.

Niyi Osundare, "Caliban's Curse: The English Language and Nigeria's Underdevelopment" Ufahamu, xi, No. 2, 1981, pp. 96-107.

Lekan Oyegoke, "African Literature in English (French, Portuguese): A Cultural Dilemma" Oye: Ogun Journal of Arts, Vol. 1, June, 1988, pp. 46-53.

On Language in Irish Literature, see

Neil Kevin, "Our English in Ireland: Abuse of Metaphor" Irish Ecclesiastical Record, 53, Jan., 1939, pp. 19-29.

Desmond Fennell, "The Irish Language movement: its achievements and its failure" Twentieth Century Studies, Nov. 1970, No. 4: Ireland, pp. 64-77.

Jeremiah J. Hogan, The English Language in Ireland (Dublin: Educational Co. of Ireland, 1927).

Thomas MacDonagh, Literature in Ireland: Studies (in) Irish and Anglo-Irish (Dublin: The Talbot Press Ltd., n.d.).

Douglas Hyde, A Literary History of Ireland: From Earliest Times to the Present Day (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899).

A. Norman Jeffares, Anglo-Irish Literature (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1982).

⁷⁸ Synge, p. 108.

⁷⁹ Corkery, p. 207.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Warren A. Shibles, Metaphor: An Annotated Bibliography and History (Wisconsin: The Language Press, 1971), p. vii.

⁸¹ Niyi Osundare, "The Poem as a Mytho-linguistic Event: A Study of Soyinka's Abiku", p. 97.

⁸² Wole Soyinka, The Lion and the Jewel (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1963), (A Three Crowns book).

⁸³ Martin Banham, p. 97.

⁸⁴ George Sampson, The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970), p. 901.

⁸⁵ James Gibbs, Wole Soyinka, p. 29.

⁸⁶ Frechet in Adelugba (ed.), Studies on Synge, p. 34

(⁸⁷ Mary C. King, The Drama of J.M. Synge (New York: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1985), p. 2.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 7. Note that King's super-objective in this book is

to establish by close textual analysis the significance of language and action, and of language as action in Synge's drama... its evolution and ... how it relates to the highly self-reflective nature of his strategy and style (p. 13).

⁸⁹ See Ifoghale Amata. "Soyinka of the Jewel Not of the Specialist (The UCI Days)" Dapo Adelugba (ed.), Before Our Very Eyes: Tribute to Wole Soyinka Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 1987), p. 28.

⁹⁰ Andrew E. Malone, Irish Drama (London: Benjamin Blom, 1965), p. 164.

⁹¹ Frechet in Adelugba (ed.), Studies on Synge, p. 36.

⁹² John Millington Synge, "The Well of the Saints" in Plays, Poems and Prose, p. 74. All further references to the text are to this edition and henceforth, page references are incorporated immediately after the citation.

⁹³ Synge, p. 219.

⁹⁴ Synge, "Rider to the Sea" in Plays, Poems and Prose, p. 22. All further references to the text are to this edition and henceforth, page references are incorporated immediately after the citation.

⁹⁵ Elam, p. 23.

⁹⁶ Synge, "The Shadow of the Glen" in Plays, Poems and Prose, pp. 1-16. All further references to the text are to this edition and henceforth, all page references are incorporated immediately after this citation.

⁹⁷ Mary King, p. 133.

⁹⁸ Wole Soyinka, "The Lion and the Jewel" in Wole Soyinka, Collected Plays 2 (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1976), p. 48. All further references to the text are to this edition and henceforth, all page references are incorporated immediately after the quotation.

99

_____, "The Road" Collected Plays 1 (Oxford: University Press, 1977), pp. 147-232. All further references to the text are to this edition and henceforth, all page references are incorporated immediately after the quotation.

100

_____, "Madmen and Specialists" Collected Plays 2, pp. 215-276. All further references to the text are to this edition and henceforth, all page references are incorporated immediately after the quotation.

¹⁰¹Elam, p. 19.

¹⁰²For details on this, see James Kilroy, The 'Playboy' Riots (Dublin: The Dolmen Press Ltd., 1971), pp. 18, 27, 31-34, 65.

¹⁰³See Wole Soyinka, Art, Dialogue and Outrage (Ibadan: New Horn Press, 1988), pp. 157-161.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 315-329.

CHAPTER FIVE

MODERNISM AND THE THEATRE OF REVOLT: J. M. SYNGE AND WOLE SOYINKA

Introduction

Our aim in this chapter is to argue that Synge and Soyinka are modernists, whether considered as individuals or as writers. A modernist is noted for his iconoclastic temperament as he re-interprets the orthodoxies of his age and also insists on a radical re-evaluation of the conventional parameters of being. Central to the plays of Synge and Soyinka is this factor of revolt which, in our view summarises and encapsulates the full range of attitudes and tendencies which have become identifiable with modernism. We are aware of two objections to this proposition.

Thomas Kilroy has written that Synge displays traits which are in concert with modernism; his solitude, for example, is one "facet of his personality" which places him "within the mainstream of modernism",¹ but it is nevertheless difficult to label him a modernist because of his self-confessed aversion to the label. Here are Kilroy's words:

In his prefaces to The Tinker's Wedding and The Playboy as elsewhere in his occasional writings, Synge deliberately rejects modernist drama and makes an appeal on behalf of a vital regionalism in literature, uncontaminated by

the sterility, as Synge saw it, of modern urban life. Yet the sensibility behind the plays is one which constantly evokes the kind of aesthetic values that inform the best of modern writing. This is exactly the kind of problem which faces the modern student of Synge's work.²

The problem which Kilroy identifies is non-existent and his anxiety would seem somewhat over-dramatised. What he is saying, by implication, is that, even though the evidence of Synge's text also places him within the mainstream of modernism, we should desist from describing him as modernist because he himself is opposed to the idea. Since when, we ask, did the likes and the dislikes of a particular author become the central yardstick of criticism? A writer's opinion is useful only to the degree that it provides signposts for criticism and saves it from the error of blind misapprehensions, but no genuine criticism ought to elevate such opinions for any reason at all to the status of a papal decree.

What is most fundamental to critical perception is the evidence of the text³ and if the text throws up a particular scheme or schema of impressions, the author's opinion, whether confirmatory or renunciatory of these, becomes purely ancillary. Is Kilroy asking us to disbelieve the evidence of the text? Synge's apathy for "the modern literature of towns" and what

he calls "the intellectual modern drama"⁴ does not amount to a rejection of modernism because modernism is not necessarily defined by the absence of reality and joy which he discovered in the works of Mallarme, Huysmans, Ibsen and Zola. It refers instead to the iconoclastic nature of a writer's sensibility and in this respect, Synge belongs to the same family with Mallarme, Huysmans, Ibsen and Zola, even in spite of his celebrated aversion to their methods.

And contrary to Kilroy's suggestion that regionalism is outside the scope of modernism, the truth is that a work can be vitally regional and yet remain modernist. Kilroy is much closer to the truth when he admits that "the sensibility" behind Synge's plays "is one which constantly evokes the kind of aesthetic values that inform the best of modern writing."⁵ This claim is apodictic.

Responding to Michael Echeruo's "Traditional and Borrowed Elements in Nigerian Poetry", Chinweizu exclaims that "Echeruo's usage of the expressions of 'Modern European poetry' and 'modern Nigerian poetry' is cause for alarm!"⁶ and using this statement as a backdrop for his analysis, he inveighs at large against any attempt to situate an African writer within the canons of modernism. Modernism, he says, is a thorough-

bred Western conception, useful only for the study of western literature but completely irrelevant to the African context. Its application to African literature is at best a propagation of cultural imperialism and a monumental index of a colonial mentality.

Taxonomised, Chinweizu's aversion to the modernist reading of African literature falls under a wider critical genus which rejects the use of foreign critical modes and demands the erection of indigenous standards of criticism. Such a critical genus may appear patriotic but it is rendered questionable by its reliance on sentiments instead of logic, and its preference for assumptions. Contrary to the assumption that the use of foreign standards vitiates African literature, the truth is that it enriches it and enables us to appreciate literature, be it drama, prose or poetry, more effectively in its contemporaneous sense as the product of one global community of being, feeling and thought. The erection of indigenous standards is no less important but such an aspiration should not be marked by the kind of flair for literary provincialism which seems to constitute the core of Chinweizu's proposition. Deserving particular attention is his argument that:

There was a specific burden of tradition that Western modernism reacted against in its revolt. But however familiar we may be with all that; however familiar we may be with that tradition or with the various modernist revolts against it (Symbolism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Futurism, etc.) they are not part of our history. They do not belong to our past. The individual African writer may school himself into all that knowledge (just like his western contemporary), but the fact remains that (quite unlike his western contemporary) none of that revolt affected and went directly into the constitution of our culture... We must stop thinking that the past trajectory of Western history, literary or otherwise, is our own. We may have been hit over the head by the West; but that does not make us Westerners - at least not yet??

The contact of Africans with Western culture should certainly not transform them into Westerners, but Africans, at any stage of their development, cannot really deny their colonial history. African art and literature confess an indebtedness to this history and even the issue of revolt, which Chinweizu dismisses as a Western relic, constitutes an aspect of it. Besides, modernism in its broader philosophical and sociological sense is not a Western phenomenon but a global one. The collapse of human values and the anomie which engendered it manifest universally and it is wrong to assume, as Chinweizu does, that Africa is untouched by this

gradual change of orientation which humanity has been undergoing, with greater intensity, since the turn of the century.

The plays of Synge and Soyinka yield rich dividends when read under the lamps of modernism. Far from proving problematic, such a reading would extend the frontiers of the critical appreciation of both writers, illuminate their sensibilities and provide signposts for the situating of their works within the broad canvas of existing literary traditions.

Theoretical Framework/Literature Review

An extended discussion of modernism and revolt and a review of some of the theoretical issues which they generate would seem advisable. Several theorists and critics have attempted to identify the date of birth of modernism but the exercise has yielded a variety of dates which are useful only as intellectual conveniences. The following statement by Eric Bentley in his The Modern Theatre: A Study of Dramatists and the Drama explains the futility of the exercise:

In this book, the period of "modern" drama has been taken several different ways ... The period of "modern" drama, then, may be said to begin around 1730, or around 1830, or around 1880... Somewhere between 1900 and 1925 arose a "fourth modernism" whose roots one must dig a little to discover. 8

Other commentators on the subject are less circumspect and less indecisive. G.D. Josipovici opines that modernism refers to "Romantic and post-Romantic literature".⁹ J.I.M. Stewart puts the date at 1880.¹⁰ "In or about December, 1910", says Virginia Woolf, "human character changed";¹¹ D. H. Lawrence adds five years and states in Kangaroo, with an appreciable amount of self-assurance, that "it was in 1915 the old world ended".¹² Marshall Cohen believes that modernism began during "the period just before World War 1"¹³ but the truth, says Maurice Beebe, is that "modernism began during the last quarter of the nineteenth century".¹⁴ In Malcolm Bradbury's view,

The positive assertion of the idea of a distinctively modern tradition in the arts, of a redefinition of the total artistic context belongs in fact to a narrow period of time - the last years of the nineteenth century and the first years of this.¹⁵

"The generally accepted view", states John Gassner, is "that drama and theatre became distinctively 'modern' during the last quarter of the nineteenth century".¹⁶ "The watershed," Duncan Williams observes, "seems to have occurred approximately half-way through the eighteenth century and coincides with the career of J.J. Rousseau".¹⁷ And according to Phillip Thody,

1793 is the true beginning of the modern era, the beginning of the attempt to construct the city of man without and against God. 18

The truth of the matter is that it is difficult to give modernism a date; equally difficult is the attempt to identify its origins. Malcolm Bradbury essays this latter task in his "Struggling Westward: America and the Coming of Modernism" when he describes modernism as an American phenomenon¹⁹ but modernism, contrary to his view, transcends geographical boundaries. It is a universal phenomenon, rootless and without a home; and it must be remembered that its traces are evident even in the ancient period at a time when the traditional temperament was the norm. It is described as modern only because it is in this period that it became dominant and assumed a distinctive character.

By implication, the seeds of modernism were sown during the ancient period but these seeds fell, as it were, on rocky soils; they could not germinate fully because the ancient societies seemed to be apathetic towards the modernist credo. Aspects of modernism are however evident, for example, in the works of ancient poets like Calvus and Catullus, and in some of the plays of Euripides. These poets may be said to anticipate present-day modernism, even though their revolt against

the literary traditions and the ethical orthodoxy of their time was rather half-hearted.

It is also necessary to note that there are certain supposedly modern artists who, though writing in modern times, cannot be regarded as modernist for their works do not reflect the sensibility and the range of attitudes which have become identifiable with that label. Stephen Spender refers to these artists as "traditionalists and neo-traditionalists".²⁰ A good example is Yvor Winters (1900-1968).

It may be difficult to give modernism a local habitation - and a name, a la Shakespeare, but it is possible to outline some of the forces which shaped it and which, in turn, account for the spectacle of revolt which constitutes the central icon of modernism. To start with, we must turn our attention to Romanticism, the literary movement which gathered momentum during the second half of the eighteenth century and remained influential until the beginning of the twentieth century.

Romanticism is the watering-hole of modernism as it provided the fertilizing factors which engendered its growth and, not surprisingly, it was during the romantic period that the values and tendencies which constitute the core of modernism assumed an articulate posture and played more crucial roles

in the determination of literary and socio-political thought. More significant here is the fact that Romanticism, like modernism, was predicated on a principle of revolt.

Romanticism was an orchestrated revolt against the doctrines of neo-classicism and rationalism which defined the outlook of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The neo-classical principles demanded a strict compliance with classical patterns and encouraged the perpetuation of those patterns. Thus, the movement inherited the penchant for order and formality and the religious posture of the classical world. Rationalism, along the lines of which neo-classicism grew and flowered, as propagated by the writings of Descartes, Pope, Samuel Johnson and Boileau, presented reason as the most fundamental fact of life. As Descartes puts it, "cogito ergo sum" - I think; therefore, I am.

If reason is the sole root of epistemology, it follows that the use of the imagination; that is, reality beyond the limits of thought is unacceptable. What the rationalists sought to entrench was order in its traditional form and this aspiration, equally evident in neo-classicism, reveals the closeness between the rationalists and classicists. Their common goal was to develop a well-ordered and objective universe

in which there is a proper conjunction between God, man and the lower beings. Between 1750, when romanticism gathered momentum, and 1850 when it had attained full maturity, this aspiration was traduced and the orderly cosmogonic edifice which these apostles of the Age of Enlightenment had diligently erected began to crumble.

The romantic writers, contrary to the rationalists and the neoclassicists, exalted the imagination and the irrational force. Consequently, they proffered a subjective interpretation of reality. With this, they dismantled the prevalent modes of thought and produced alternative vistas which had always been immanent but submerged by the rationalist effervescence. The romantics are regarded, not without justification, as rebels, and it is this rebellious streak and their iconomachy that unites them with the modernists and it is indeed logical to argue, as Kenneth Cameron does, that the romantic period "uniquely anticipated the present" or that "the romantic rebels of the past speak more directly to the rebels of today than any other group of writers of the past".²¹

The romantic base of modernism is often disputed, perhaps because romanticism did not completely displace the features of the dominant culture which it contends against in the sense

that those features still remained decisive up till the Victorian age. But there is no denying the fact that the mood of despair and skepticism that was engendered by romanticism contributed in no small measure to the emergence of modernism as an articulate and distinctive phenomenon.

Other factors equally helped to accelerate this process, notable among them are the Industrial revolution, the French and American revolutions, the Napoleonic wars, the First world war and the Boer wars. These revolutions and wars completed at a practical, quotidian level the task that was begun at a somewhat abstract and intellectual level by romanticism, namely, the jettisoning of the pillars of classical conception. They destroyed the vestiges of order and balance which remained in the intellectual and social framework of Europe and created an unprecedented sense of fright and unease by showing man that he is no longer the centre of the universe. His world is capable of disintegrating and, indeed, if the scales of existence were to swing a bit too histrionically, man may find himself dangerously perched on the edge of a precipice. Such was the impact of the various revolutions and wars which wracked the western world between the eighteenth and the early part of the twentieth century.

And if there is a need to identify the minds who had suspected such a sudden change of direction in the temperament of man and his world, the names of Copernicus, Galileo, Frazer, Freud, Darwin, Marx and Ernest Renan ought to be mentioned. The first duo in what is now collectively known as the Copernican revolution attacked the medieval, Ptolemaic conception that earth is the centre of the universe and all the heavenly bodies including the sun and the moon revolve round it. Galileo re-affirms the Copernican position in his Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems - Ptolemaic and Copernican (1632) and argues that the earth revolves round the sun. In the eyes of the medieval pontiffs, this proposition puts a limit to God's omnipotence and contradicts the established ecclesiastical intelligence. Consequently, Copernicanism was banned, and Galileo was forced to recant and sentenced to house arrest for the rest of his life. Galileo died without witnessing the triumph of his cause but later events vindicated him and, as the years went by, other forms of Copernicanism, equally forceful and heretical, emerged.

Take Charles Darwin, for example. His Origin of Species (1859) is, to all intents and purposes, Copernican. Man, Darwin argues, is not the supreme owner of earth, as was

hitherto thought, he is instead a minute factor on earth. Earth belongs not only to man but also to other biological species and, because it is ruled by a competitive principle which stipulates "the survival of the fittest", man is involved in a struggle with these species and it is possible he loses the struggle and therefore become extinct. Darwin states further that the forces of environment and heredity are the most decisive determinants of the nature of existence and, if this is true, then God if he exists at all, is completely ancillary in the business of living.

This irreligious posture receives further expression in the writings of Frazer, Renan, Freud, Marx and Nietzsche. Frazer in The Golden Bough upholds myth, not faith or religion, as the means of re-establishing ties with primitival roots and of understanding life. Ernest Renan in The Life of Christ denies Jesus Christ the pre-eminent status which Christian mythology accords him and parades him instead as an impostor. "With Freud, the depreciation of the human condition reached the lowest level";²² he divested man of his spirituality and his sense of decency. Man, says Freud, is a slave of passion and a plaything of the libido. His life-pulse exists not in the upper regions but in the lower regions, in-between his legs, very close to the anal passage.

In the Critique of Political Economy, Karl Marx dismantled the bourgeois and feudalistic hegemonic structures of the ancient world and demanded a proletarian and egalitarian distribution of resources and the forces of production. Nietzsche, for his part, announced the death of God, christianity and all transcendental aspirations. Man, he opines, is the architect of his own destiny and every man must aspire to become a Superman, capable of controlling the tide of life and disdainful of religion and its concomitant superstitions.²³

The Romantic and Copernican roots of modernism are indeed very much patent, and common to both of them and peculiar to the modernist temperament is their revolt against established conventions and the corresponding erection of alternative frames of reference. This peculiarity is everywhere evident in nineteenth and twentieth century art. In literature and theatre, for example, the influence of Freud, Frazer, Marx, Darwin and Nietzsche is often admitted.²⁴

It is worth noting, by way of explanation, that Nietzsche's influence is usually regarded as the most far-reaching. His views, it is said, fully conceptualise the ideas of other thinkers on the modernist phenomenon. Irving

Howe calls him "a writer whose gnomic and paradoxical style embodies the very qualities of modernist sensibility"²⁵ and

John Burt Foster Jr. observes that

Nietzsche was to become a commanding presence for the modernists because he had expressed some of their deepest impulses so fully and so pointedly. ²⁶

Not all commentators on Nietzsche have elevated him to this status. Bertrand Russell, for example, does not hide his dislike of Nietzsche and what he represents. "His followers", he insists, "have had their innings, but we may hope that it is rapidly coming to an end".²⁸ And Walter Kaufman reports that Nietzsche was "once stupidly denounced as the mind that caused the first world war."²⁸ Nietzsche's followership and the force of his influence, contrary to Russell's expectations, is on the increase, and he did not cause the first world war.

What ought to be said is that the war lent empirical credence to his propositions and those of other thinkers, particularly Hobbes, Spinoza, Berkeley, Leibniz, Voltaire, Schopenhauer, Frazer, Darwin, Freud and Marx. The First World War clarified man's position in the scheme of things and showed him that he is not as invincible as he had always

assumed himself to be. Subsequent incidents, including the Great Depression of the 1920s, the rise of Hitler, the Spanish civil war (1933-1939) and the apocalyptic second world war (1939-1945), confirmed the worst: "the world is no longer orderly, man is no longer the centre of the universe, and looming large in the horizon is the eleventh hour not just of civilization but of survival".²⁹

By the first half of the present century, the fortune of man had turned full circle and, out of desperation, man devised several life-jackets, but the tide was too strong for these devices and they proved ineffectual. It was eventually realised that the various "antics which seem like solutions are merely distractions from the problem of existence,"³⁰ there is "no master scheme,"³¹ no means of escape. Man fell back upon his traditional modes of thought, particularly science and religion, but each one of them confronted him with the limits of his mortality. Rejected by society, disappointed in himself and overwhelmed by his fate, he decided to retrace his steps and return to the past, but even this retrospective move is suicidal. It confronts man with Lot's lot; that is, the prospect of turning into a pillar of salt and also of "the total disappearance of man as man and his silent return to the animal scale".³²

In sum, man realises, according to Karl Popper, that "there is no return to a harmonious state of nature, if we turn back, then we must go back the whole way - we must return to the beasts".³³ Having discovered the emptiness of the present and the past, man, in his explorations through the passages of time, chose to look into the future, but the future, as Alving Toffler,³⁴ George Eckstein,³⁵ Julian Simon,³⁶ Marvin Cetron and Thomas O'Toole,³⁷ the Global 2000 Report³⁸ and Robert L. Heilbroner³⁹ have argued, with varying degrees of emphasis, holds no promise. This is the condition of the modern man - rootless and helpless, he has no present, no past and no future. Pleberio's last speech in Fernando de Rojas' Celestina may well be taken as the new song on the lips of this novus homo:

... Thou mightest, O Fortune, fluctuant as thou art, have given me a sorrowful youth and a mirthful age, neither have therein perverted order. O world, in my more tender years I thought thou wast ruled by reason, but now thou seemest unto me a labyrinth of errors, an habitation of wild beasts, a dance full of changes; a fell full of mire; a steep and craggy mountain; a meadow full of snakes; a garden pleasant to look at but without fruit. O thou false world! Thou dost put out our eyes and then to make amends anointest the place with oil; after thou hast done us harm, thou givest us cold comfort, saying that it is some ease to the

miserable to have companions in misery. But I, alas, disconsolate old man stand all alone. I am singular in sorrow; no misfortune is like unto mine.⁴⁰

No misfortune is perhaps comparable to that of the modern man. Running through the available data on the subject is a general consensus that the condition of the modern man is peculiar and, as such, it invites a series of apocalyptic descriptions. The modern age, we are told, is a "chaotic pile of rubbish"⁴¹ marked by the "tragic devitalization of the very concept of the person"⁴² and "the death of man".⁴³ "The world today is suffering from a grave demoralization",⁴⁴ "disorientation is the keynote"⁴⁵ and many, according to Teilhard de Chardin, have lost that "essential taste for life".⁴⁶ Jose Ortega y Gasset adds:

No one knows towards what centre human beings are going to gravitate in the near future ... the life of the world has become scandalously provisional.⁴⁷

Yet, according to John Paul II:

Without a doubt, our age is the one in which man has been most written and spoken of, the age of the forms of humanism and the age of anthropocentrism. Nevertheless it is paradoxically also the age of man's abasement to previously unsuspected levels, the age of human values trampled on as never before.⁴⁸

Robert Brustein concludes that "We are living in a profoundly decadent society ... our age is apocalyptic,"⁴⁹ It is, as various writers have declared "an age of crisis,"⁵⁰ "the age of Osiris and a world in transition"⁵¹ "filled with disquiet and alienation".⁵² "Anxiety attack has become part of our everyday speech";⁵³ "we are living in a golden age of eccentricity" in which "plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose"⁵⁴ and our history, in Ivan Illich's opinion, is, "the history of fading hope and rising expectations."⁵⁵

This is the setting of the modernist temperament and the literature and theatre which arises from it is equally marked by regret, anguish and the dread of apocalypse. J.I.M. Stewart,⁵⁶ Malcolm Bradbury,⁵⁷ Stephen Spender,⁵⁸ Bamber Gascoigne,⁵⁹ Travis Bogard and William I. Oliver,⁶⁰ Robert Corrigan,⁶¹ and Robert Brustein⁶² have written variously and at great length on this literature and theatre. The thrust of their submissions is that modernism, on the whole, is an unusual phenomenon. It suggests a radical change of orientation in the socio-political arrangement of the world; and literature and theatre, being social products and reflectors, bear the marks of this reversal.

In this new literature and theatre, man casts a panoramic glance at his existence and environment; what confronts him is not the order, the objectivity and the formal, neat arrangement of circumstances which he is familiar with, but a chaotic, disordered world smarting under the impact of revolutions and wars and ravaged by famine and disease. The standard cry in modernist literature and theatre is unmistakably Blakean:

And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic mills? 63

The Jerusalem that existed in ancient literature and theatre gives way in its modernist counterpart to Satanic mills, hope is replaced by helplessness, and characterising these mills are attitudes or values which point to gloom and annihilation. At the end of the first act of Chekhov's The SeaGull, Dorn, overwhelmed by fate, laments to Masha: "But what can I do, my child? Tell me what can I do? What?"⁶⁴ If ancient literature and theatre provided answers to man's problems, their modern counterpart asks questions and hides under a self-defeating excuse: "What can I do?"

Duncan Williams has written, and we agree with him, that

the breezy good humour and redemptive tolerance of man and his foibles which characterize the writings of Fielding and Goldsmith are replaced in those of their modern counterparts with a viciousness and a hatred and contempt for man and his posturings. 65

Man, in this literature, is portrayed as an animal and a machine, completely devoid of decorum and commonsense. Joe Christmas in William Faulkner's Light in August is a standard example. Describing him, Faulkner says "there was something rootless about him, as though no town or city was his, no street, no walls, no square of earth his home".⁶⁶ In addition, he is lonely, incapable of companionship and surrounded by danger and horror.

In Jean-Paul Sartre's No Exit, to use another example, the characters are trapped in a compressionist world which offers no means of escape and in which companionship is problematic. "Hell", says the male member of the trio in the novel, "is other people".⁶⁷ A similar viewpoint informs the dramatic landscape of T.S. Eliot's The Cocktail Party; in this play, Edward Chamberlain observes that

Hell is oneself
 Hell is alone, the other figures in it
 merely projections. There is nothing
 to escape from. And nothing to escape
 to. One is always alone. 68

The loneliness that is described here is equally evident in Kafka's The Castle where the characters lament that "No one comes, it is as though the world had forgotten us".⁶⁹ The same is true of the characters in Beckett's Waiting for Godot. "No one comes", says Estragon, "no one goes, it's simply awful"⁷⁰ and in Williams' "To Elsie" the central message is that

The pure products of America
go crazy
No one
to witness
and adjust, no one to drive the car.⁷¹

This loneliness and isolation is compounded by the images of death and disease which surround the modern hero, constantly reminding him of the limits of his mortality and threatening to fragment his psyche. Overwhelmed and flustered, the modern hero shouts like Kurtz in Conrad's The Heart of Darkness: "The horror!, the horror!" and because of the strange peculiarity of his person and his circumstances, he is more of an anti-hero. He invites a new set of critical parameters and generates a completely different climate of assessment.

If the picture of man that arises out of modernist literature and theatre is gloomy, it is worth remembering

that that of society and God and existence in general, is no less so. Society is painted as tempestuous, God is denied his existence, life is described as nihilistic, despair is the resonant tone of composition and literature becomes anti-literature, and a pseudo-literature, whose goal appears not to be the upliftment of the human soul but the dramatisation of human foibles.

The chaos and indecision which characterise the content of this literature is equally evident in its form. It is rarely satisfied with any particular form of expression. It adopts a particular form only to abandon it immediately and move on to another. Consequently, it is axiomatic that modernist literature is marked by a profusion of forms and movements. Vorticism, Futurism, Dadaism, Imagism, Symbolism, Surrealism, Expressionism, Absurdism, etc. The list is inexhaustible. This ceaseless experimentation is particularly noticeable in the modern theatre.

In more ways than one, modernist literature and theatre are products of their social context and not surprisingly, the modernist writer equally displays the various attitudes which dominate them. He is, in most instances, isolated, sad and fascinated by death, decay, disintegration or what

Erich Fromm describes broadly as "necrophilous"⁷² tendencies. He is also a rebel, perpetually at war with accepted norms, surrounded by unusual fancies and unapologetically deviant in tone and behaviour. Kafka, for example, was obsessed with the subject of nothingness, Thomas Mann with disease, Chekhov with loneliness, Sartre with nausea and bad faith, Wallace Stevens with death and Edward Thomas with nostalgia. Joyce rejected God and sought to create, ex-nihilo, an alternative universe. One morning, Baudelaire looked out upon Paris and expressed his disgust with "that vast cemetery that is called a great city". Strindberg was ill and perpetually tormented by self-imposed delusions. Genet was a thief. Joe Orton was homosexual. Alfred Jarry, Arthur Nortje and Hemingway committed suicide. Andre Gide lived with an incurable sense of guilt. D.H. Lawrence was lonely and distraught.

More often than not, the modernist writer is in conflict with governments and usually accompanying his craft are ceaseless intimidations and regular trips to the gaol. The public is suspicious of him and governments fear him. With him, the writer is no longer a teacher but the voice of vision in his time and, because his vision is gloomy, he has few friends. There is no doubt that there are writers in present

times who are socially well integrated and who still write on harmless topics and paint the picture of an approaching nirvana but generally, it is the modernist temperament that dominates.

For all his gloom and rebellion, however, the modernist is not entirely an apostle of apocalypse; behind his nihilistic posturing and anarchic pronouncements is a humanistic drive - a veiled confidence in the ability of man to rise above his fate - but because this humanism is often couched in privatist and strange codes, the public finds it impenetrable and the writer is considered obscure.

Duncan Williams has asked, "Can we recover any of that order, harmony and balance which characterized the poetry of Pope, the music of Mozart, the paintings of Watteau, the landscaping of Kant ...?"⁷³ It is difficult to answer in the affirmative. It seems certain that, as long as the disjunction between the artist and the society, the absence of a common perception and the presence of a disordered chaotic cosmos which characterise modern literature and theatre persist, modern literature and theatre would also continue to reflect a debilitating picture, that of man moving from one act of desperation to another.

Modern literature, from whichever angle one chooses to look at it, is shot through with "a sadness too dreadful to be quite human."⁷⁴ It is, says Wilhelm Emrich, "a literature of metaphysical isolation".⁷⁵ It is also, according to Nathan A. Scott, "an extreme literature which plunges us into extreme situations",⁷⁶ it is, in sum, a "crisis literature".⁷⁷ But perhaps the most apt description of this literature is the literature of revolt; or the theatre of revolt. Modernism, at bottom, is a form of revolt, a rejection of preconceived notions, received attitudes and orthodoxies and without revolt, no writer can actually be referred to as modernist. This is precisely the thrust of the argument of David Daiches,⁷⁸ J.V. Cunningham,⁷⁹ Irving Howe,⁸⁰ Stephen Spender,⁸¹ Eric Bentley⁸² and Paul Fussell⁸³ when they state that modernism involves a rejection of the past; and, writing on modernist writers, Nathan A. Scott contends that

Whether they knew it or not, (they) had as their patron saint not St. Athanasius but Dionysus the Areopagite, for in their dealings with the body of this world, their way has been not the way of Affirmation but the way of Rejection.⁸⁴

Theatre, perhaps because of its special advantage as the melting pot of all the arts, gives candid expression to this phenomenon in a manner which literature may not antici-

pate. It is the norm rather than the exception nowadays to talk of modern theatre in such terms as "the uncomfortable theatre",⁸⁵ "the angry theatre",⁸⁶ "the theatre of the absurd"⁸⁷ and "the theatre of protest and paradox".⁸⁸ Basic to all these epithets is the assumption that the modern theatre is a theatre of revolt. Aspects of this assumption are examined in such books as E.T. Kirby's Total Theatre, John Gassner's Directions in Modern Theatre and Drama, Robert Corrigan's Theatre in the Twentieth Century and Laurence Kitchin's Mid-Century Drama, but it receives its most pedagogic and expansive discussion in Robert Brustein's Theatre of Revolt. "Revolt", writes Brustein, is "the energy which drives the modern theatre, just as faith drove the theatre of the past"⁸⁹ and "in the theatre of revolt, the note of banishment is repeatedly struck and the modern drama aches with nostalgia, loneliness and regret".⁹⁰

Many critics have attempted to formulate answers to the question as to why revolt should constitute the core of modernism. Conceiving revolt in negative terms; Alvin Toffler avers that "instead of rising in revolt" against his circumstances, man must "from this historic moment on, anticipate and design the future".⁹¹ What Toffler ignores is the fact

that the revolt of modernism is not negative, instead it is informed by a positive instinct which manifests in the form of humanism. As Maurice Benn puts it,

Revolt implies positive values which the rebel seeks to vindicate even if he is not fully conscious of them, even if he only becomes aware of them in the moment of their violation. 92

The following testimony by Phillip H. Rhein is equally pertinent:

Revolt is the first of three consequences to total acceptance of the absurd. It is a constant confrontation between man and his obscurity, an on-going struggle with the absurd. It challenges the world every moment and it extends awareness to the whole of experience.... Revolt gives life its value and its majesty, for it creates the beauty of the human mind at grips with a reality which exceeds it. 93

Whether one chooses to see revolt in a positive or a negative light, is a function of one's orientation and persuasion but revolt nevertheless remains a widely acknowledged function of modern art. This much was the conclusion arrived at during the thirty-eighth International P.E.N. Congress held in Dublin in September 1971. During the second session of the congress, participants from India, Korea, Yugoslavia, Israel, Japan and the U.S.A. gave accounts of the

manifestation of the phenomenon of revolt in the literatures of their respective countries⁹⁴ and it became clear that the whole world is undergoing an artistic revolution. Old modes are giving way to new ones and a new pattern of thought and creativity is emerging.

R.M. Alberes in his La Révolte des Ecrivains Aujourd'hui, Maurice B. Benn in The Drama of Revolt: A Critical Study of Georg Buchner, Issa Asgarrally in Littérature et révolte, Yuri Davydov in Myth, Philosophy, Avant-Gardism and Pierre de Boideffre in Une Histoire Vivante de la Littérature d'Aujourd'hui discuss the linkages between the modern writer and revolt but the subject receives a more sustained discussion in the hands of Albert Camus.

The central ethic of Camus oeuvre is that revolt is man's only means of combating the absurdity of his cosmos and of survival in a world that is void of meaning and faith; hence he argues in The Rebel that rebellion is "one of man's essential dimensions. It is our historical reality".⁹⁵ Camus' principal thesis in this book is worth stating - "I rebel-therefore we exist,".⁹⁶ The kind of rebellion that he advocates is not the slave-revolts-against-master variety that is discussed, for example, by J. Bowyer Bell, Michael Crowder and Ted Robert Gurr⁹⁷

but the metaphysical type in which man confronts the absurdities of his life and resolves to live, even though circumstances seem to drive him in the opposite direction.

This thought received expression in such earlier works as Revolte dans les Asturies;⁹⁸ La Remarque sur la Revolte and The Myth of Sisyphus but it is more articulately set out in The Rebel and this book, in spite of Phillip Thody's allusion to its lack of originality,⁹⁹ seems to provide the framework for Camus' writings inasmuch as they seem to obey the principle in it. The typical Camus hero does not sit on the seashore of life, moaning and lamenting, nor does he commit suicide. Through a combination of scorn, will and sheer nerve, and even at great risk to his own equilibrium, he strives to master the absurdity which confronts him. This is the story of Sisyphus in The Myth of Sisyphus, Meuersault in The Outsider, Caligula in Caligula, Diego in State of Siege, Kaliayev in Les Justes and the miners in Revolte dans les Asturies. Their methods of aggression may not bring them any relief but their indignation alone reveals the high value which their author places on the human essence.

For all its relevance, candour and intellectual puoch, however, Camus' The Rebel is part history, part literature and part philosophy and, for this reason, it does not provide

the student of revolt with a convenient theoretical framework on which his investigation can be anchored, but Robert Brustein's The Theatre of Revolt fulfils this need,¹⁰⁰ hence his typology of revolt will be adopted henceforth in our attempt to examine the spectacle of revolt, and, by implication, the character of modernism, in the plays of Synge and Soyinka.

Brustein's The Theatre of Revolt concentrates on the theatre but it makes statements that are relevant and which can be applied far afield. Besides establishing that it is revolt that accounts for the differences between the ancient theatre and the modern theatre and that the various 'isms' which characterise the latter are also reducible to the phenomenon of revolt, Brustein divides revolt into three categories namely, messianic revolt, social revolt and existential revolt, and he examines, within this framework, the art and thought of Ibsen, Strindberg, Shaw, Chekhov, Brecht, Pirandello, O'Neill, Artaud and Genet.

And though he demonstrates enough familiarity with his subjects, he overlooks the significance of their personal temperaments in relation to the subject of revolt. Yet it appears that rebellion, at the personal level, is the starting point for artistic revolt. In other words, it is the

individual temperament that feeds the literary and shapes it, and, if this is true, then a consideration of this seemingly extra-literary assumption would be necessary for a proper understanding of the extent of a writer's engagement with revolt. Brustein also seems to concentrate on the content of the works he discusses without considering their form and aesthetics, and this is perhaps an oversight, especially as the modernist's revolt is also decisive at the level of aesthetics.

In the specific cases of Synge and Soyinka, however, revolt is more manifest at the level of content than of aesthetic but it would be necessary to assess the individuality of both writers with a view to ascertain whether they possess that personal streak for iconoclasm which cuts out all rebels and paves the way for literary revolt.

Synge and the Theatre of Revolt

From whichever angle one chooses to look at him, Synge is a rebel and his rebellion is not an accident but the product of his reflection upon the socio-political and existential contradictions of his time and the expression of a subsequent inner turmoil and revulsion against those contradictions.

W.B. Yeats describes Synge as "one of the last romantics"¹⁰¹

but he is also one of the first moderns. He stands historically mid-way between the nineteenth century and the twentieth, and it is perhaps this privileged position that makes his art so anticipatory of mid-century avant-garde drama.

What Synge shares with the romantics is his elevation of the imagination to the status of a major index of truth and his impatience with orthodox modes of perception. His works emphasize and explore the imagination, although they reveal a contradictory and somewhat decisive oscillation between it and rationality, between dream and actuality and between objectivity and subjectivity.

This flirtation with two contradictory values and levels of meaning would seem to be vintage Synge and it accounts for the density of his works, but more noteworthy is the fact that Synge exalted the imagination to the level of high art at a time when its limits were already being defined in European drama, particularly in the writings of Ibsen, Huysmans and Zola, admittedly the most influential European dramatists at the turn of the century.

With them realism and naturalism were the established norm and the city and its foibles constituted the ideal setting of the drama but Synge, in conformity with the aspirations

of the Abbey Theatre movement, steered clear of this cosmopolitanism and produced a literature that has its "roots among the clay and the worms"¹⁰² and is at once realistic and romantic. It is this revolt against received aesthetics, this differentness, as Randall Jarrell would say,¹⁰³ this dislike of existing tradition and iconoclastic interrogation of prevalent mythologies that qualify Synge, in the first instance, to be considered as a romantic rebel.

Thomas Kilroy has written that Synge is technically conservative and for his models, he constantly looked back to sixteenth and seventeenth century drama, to Jonson, Moliere and Racine.¹⁰⁴ This traditionalism, as Kilroy interprets it, does not place Synge outside modernism because unlike typical traditionalists and neo-traditionalists like Edward Thomas, Robert Frost, Yvor Winters, Edwin Muir and Elizabeth Bishop, he does not deify the past. Instead, he demythologizes it and out of this emerges new patterns which bear the marks of his originality.

His indebtedness to romanticism and his use of mythology in Deirdre of the Sorrows are cases in point. Synge borrowed from the romantics but he jettisoned their excesses and in Deirdre of the Sorrows, his re-interpretation of the Deirdre

myth which disregards the original myth and the two existing versions by Yeats and A.E. is another indication of the strength of his individuality as a rebel.

He is a rebel in other respects. Very early in life, Synge rebelled against the circumstances of his birth. A member of a religious family with a long history of Protestantism and clericalism on both paternal and maternal fronts, Synge rejected the religiosity of his family and frustrated his mother's frantic efforts to make him a christian. This rebellion came about around the age of fourteen when he read Darwin's Origin of Species. The book drove him to the awareness that the existing myths of existence which parade God as the author of life and man as the supreme lord of the universe are fallacious; ¹⁰⁵ in reaction, he denounced God and Christianity and it is doubtful if he ever stepped into the church again thenceforth.

He also rejected the tradition of clericalism in his family. Five of his uncles were bishops; one of his own brothers, Samuel Synge, was an Anglican priest and his mother hoped that he himself, on account of his training at Trinity College, Dublin would toe the family line. But, on the contrary, Synge rejected the cassock and the surplice. He also rejected

landlordism - the other profession for which his family and the entire Ascendancy class were known. Rather than show interest in it, he condemned it and inveighed against the manner in which his mother and his brother, Edward Synge, treated the peasant gentry. For his choice of profession, Synge opted first for music and then theatre - two professions which were considered undignifying for a member of the Ascendancy class.

But he was completely indifferent to the fact that members of his family, particularly his mother, disliked his chosen faith and vocation. All through his life, he remained a man of his own mind and he was never in the habit of glancing behind his shoulders before embarking upon any line of action he deemed appropriate. Synge, it may be said, was a rebel right from his roots. Any reason why he should not be rebellious in other aspects of life?

His rebellion is further evident in his attitude towards the political currents of his period. Prior to 1920, the life of the average Irish man revolved largely around the subject of nationalism which was then the main event of the emerging Irish nation. The major concern was to extol the virtues of Ireland, assert its right to sovereignty and free it completely

from the fetters of imperialism, but Synge did what was unusual at this time - he avoided the nationalistic effervescence and remained indifferent to practical politics. Many critics have commented on this apoliticalness but often overlooked is the fact that it establishes another aspect of Synge the rebel. Synge was apolitical not because he was incapable of politics but because as earlier observed, he disliked the factitiousness, the hypocrisy and the naked violence which attended Irish nationalism. These were the factors which repulsed him.

Synge also rebelled against life itself. Unlike Yeats who cherished the sound of his own voice and accordingly lived a life of perpetual conversazione, as if he was engaged in a competition with the reputation of Shaw,¹⁰⁶ Synge learned the virtue of silence and avoided the limelight, as if he was afraid to live. His life was one interminable battle with death and his last word on his death-bed summarises this battle in all its pungency. "It's no use", he said, "fighting death any longer". This continual fight with death and the terrifying silence and the nostalgia which accompanied it is a rebellion - that of a man who was fully aware of the limits of his own mortality and yet was prepared to discour-

tenance those limits and who went about his daily business with seeming indifference to the impending fate.

Soyinka and the Theatre of Revolt

It is difficult to insist, as in Synge's case, that Soyinka rebels against the circumstances of his birth and against life itself. Looking at his life, particularly from the perspectives offered in Ake, we see a writer whose career conforms with the patterns and impulses that were established during his earlier days; and whose works do not reveal the kind of nostalgia and private despair that is common with many modern writers. D.W. Harding contends that, without nostalgia, no writer can be modernist.¹⁰⁷ Soyinka is an exception to this rule; but his love of life, his capacity for companionship and his penchant for the spotlight do not detract from his significance as a rebel.

This significance emerges vividly in his participation in politics. Unlike Synge, he participates, at a very active level, in practical politics and in this instance, as in other instances, he carries the banner of a rebel.

For example, in the wake of the Nigerian civil war in 1967, Soyinka created a Third Force, a pressure group whose intention was to stop the war of cannibal rage which overtook

Nigeria from 1967 to 1970. He made several trips to Biafra and also wrote articles in Nigerian newspapers pleading for caution on both sides. Unimpressed by his unsolicited interventions, the Nigerian government arrested him; and he was detained for two years. In 1971, he staged a one-man demonstration in the streets of Ibadan and Lagos condemning the murder of Kunle Adepeju, a student of agriculture at the University of Ibadan, by Nigerian policemen, during the student riots of that year. Yemi Ogunbiyi states, in addition, that also

There was the "Ali-Must-Go" crisis during the Obasanjo regime which led to the death of quite a number of students, there was the Bakalori massacre in Sokoto State, there was the murder of Dele Udoh, there were the outbreaks of power rash during the Adewusi years as Inspector General, there were the horrific years of the Shagari administration - in every instance, Soyinka not merely spoke out, but did when it mattered the most. There are certainly not many Nigerians like him.¹⁰⁸

In 1979, during the Nigerian Second Republic, he became a card-carrying member of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) led by the late Aminu Kano. The cardinal goal of this party was to improve the lot of the masses and overhaul the social machinery. Soyinka was easily one of the most articulate political commentators of the period. Between December, 1983

and August 1965, Nigeria was ruled by the gestapo duo of Muhammadu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon, a culture of terror and fear gradually overtook the country and Nigerians lived in utter desperation. In the thick of this situation, Soyinka dismissed the ruling government as deaf. In December 1986, he attacked the British and American governments of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan respectively, in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, and accused them of aiding and abetting apartheid in South Africa and terrorism in other parts of the world.

The list of Soyinka's indictments of governments and political groupings is inexhaustible and, even though this has won him the ire of rulers and interest groups, he has been rarely apologetic about his views and actions. The result of this unwavering iconoclasm is that the public came to recognise him as a social rebel and in the wisdom of the public, anyone that is so regarded is not expected to praise the establishment for any reason whatsoever, and he is not even supposed to have his preferences outside those of the public. Criticism, as it appears to public intelligence, is a censorious art.

This is about the most apt explanation of the indignation of the Nigerian public over Soyinka's recognition of the administration of Ibrahim Babangida as the most humane government

that Nigeria ever had. The ox of the public was further gored when Soyinka, in addition, accepted his investiture by this same government, as a Commander of the Federal Republic and as the Chairman of the Federal Road Safety Corps; and not surprisingly, many Nigerians expressed their indignation in several articles in the newspapers. What they failed to realise is that the social critic is, in spite of his rebelliousness, a human being, and he is liable to his own imperfections and surrounded by his own peculiarities and preferences. But, if Soyinka is actually guilty, as charged, of inconsistency as a political rebel, the same cannot be said of him when his rebellion is considered from the literary perspective.

Soyinka is in this respect, as in other respects, the kinsman of Synge. Both writers are gifted with that spark of rebellion which enables them to approach art and life with undiluted skepticism and, even though it is true that the spectacle of revolt in their plays is informed and partly occasioned by the general wave of anguish and rebellion which overtook the twentieth century, equally significant are their own personal constitutions which, as broadly defined here, are fed by iconoclastic impulses. A study of the specific patterns of revolt in the plays of both writers would be instructive.

Messianic Revolt

Messianic revolt is the most fundamental of the three patterns of revolt under discussion, and its hero, namely the messianic rebel, is peculiar in more senses than one. Subjective and self-centred, he is imbued with a large ego which necessarily compels him to see himself as a most superior being, better than everyone around him and more deserving of attention. He is a critic nonpareil at least where dogmatism and rhetorics are concerned, and, as he subjects reality to a passionate interrogation, he flinches at the meaningless botch which he discovers around him and the world emerges, in his view, as a whimsical joke or as a faulty automobile, urgently in need of succour and repair.

He is full of aggression and quick to apportion blames for this reversal of the human fate and, in doing so, he blames neither the society nor man, but God whom he inveighs against and declares irrelevant. He is easily the most romantic rebel in the theatre of revolt and it is this romantic streak that gives him the audacity to question ontology, harass God and declare himself the heir-apparent to God's throne. He regards himself as the only person who is capable of creating a new order out of the botch that the world has become and, in

consonance with this self-assigned task, he carries himself with the punctiliousness of an apostle and messiah. His personality is contradictory - negative in its denunciation of God and the world but positive in its optimism that the error can be rectified - and basic to it is an existentialist philosophy explained by the messianic rebel's portrayal of man as the architect of his own destiny.

What drives the messianic rebel is the strength of his will-power; and what endears him to his followers is his bravado and overbearing self-confidence. But, eventually, he turns out, in spite of his God-like reverence and rhetorics, as a ranter and dreamer; and his followers desert him. Robert Brustein explains that he

is a militant of the ideal, an anarchic individualist, concerned with the impossible rather than the possible, and his discontent extends to the very roots of existence. 109

His antecedents in myth are "Lucifer, Mephistopheles, Don Juan, Cain and Judas"¹¹⁰ and, in dramatic literature, examples of him can be found in Pentheus in Euripides The Bacchae, the Stranger in Strindberg's The Road to Damascus, Caligula in Camus' Caligula, Lazarus in O'Neill's Lazarus Laughed, Emperor Julian in Ibsen's Emperor and Galilean, the Chief of Police in Genet's

The Balcony and Brand in Ibsen's Brand. Each of these characters is a messianic rebel and they all attempt, in their own ways, to erect "a temple without God".

The significance of messianic drama, lies not in the success or otherwise of its hero but in the poignancy with which it illustrates man's idealism and the collapse of the romance between God and man. Messianic drama does not justify the ways of God to man, but it highlights the schism between them. In this drama, the rebel oftentimes appears to be the mouth-piece of the dramatist. His statements are usually so central and so revealing that it would not be too far from the truth to describe him as the dramatist's alter ego:

Ibsen admitted that Brand, Peer Gynt, and the Emperor Julian were aspects of himself, Wagner identified with Siegfried and named his child after him, Strindberg put himself into his Stranger, as O'Neill did with most of his central characters, and Shaw had much (too much) in common with his Ancients. 111

In appearance, messianic drama is usually long and unstageable, its language is heightened and bombastic, its structure is epic. Take Shaw's Back to Methuselah, Ibsen's Brand and Peer Gynt and Strindberg's Road to Damascus. Back

to Methuselah is a long epic with Methuselan characters who live and remain active for as long as three hundred years; a play like this imposes special demands on the theatre worker and it is indeed understandable that the play has been restricted to the closet. Brand and Peer Gynt were also conceived as closet-dramas. "Ibsen never intended Brand for the stage; he wrote it, as he wrote Peer Gynt, eighteen months later, simply to be read".¹¹²

The incidence of messianic revolt in the modern theatre has been few and far between. Few writers, notably Ibsen, Shaw, Sartre, Camus, Genet, D'Annunzio and Strindberg, seem to regard messianism as the solution to the modernist question. The prevalent tendency has been mainly existentialist but without the romantic, indecisive zeal of messianic drama. The modern theatre is full of plays which express confidence in the ability of man to master his own destiny but this optimistic stance is dogged by an equally strong conviction that man may not achieve this goal because he has lost his grandeur. In this respect, the pulpit and the staff of Brand have now been replaced by a dustbin as in Beckett's Endgame, a machine as in Elmer Rice's The Adding Machine and empty chairs as in Ionesco's The Chairs. The overall conclusion is that man has no redemptive qualities, as messianic drama claims.

He is now a pile of garbage and a pawn in the chess-game of life, and, because this has been the case, it has been difficult, in fact impossible, for messianic drama to dominate the modern theatre.

Messianic revolt seems to be absent in the plays of Synge and Soyinka. Their plays seem to lack the kind of characters who are convinced that they are better than all men and God and more capable of steering the ship of life. Synge's characters, particularly the men, lack the fiery assertiveness of Zarathustra, the determination of Sisyphus and the ruthlessness of Cain, and, as such, they do not possess the kind of doggedness that messianism requires. They seem too willing to capitulate to the whims of fate; when they are not passive on-lookers like Michael in The Tinker's Wedding they are marionettes like the Naisi brothers in Deirdre of the Sorrows or self-confessed jokers like Dan Burke in In the Shadow of the Glen.

Many critics are wont to describe Christy Mahon in The Playboy as messianic but it is doubtful if he is a messiah in the sense in which the word is used here. That his intervention leads the community in the play to epiphanic heights and jostles its people out of their dreariness is valid but to

argue that this amounts to messianism is to misread the play. If Christy Mahon must be a messiah at all costs, then he is an unwilling one and hence he does not fit into the concept of messianism as discussed above. Synge's women are more confident and daring than their male counterparts but they are often incapacitated by the infirmity of old age, the caprice of fate and the restrictive circumstances under which they live. Consequently, they, like their male colleagues, do not rise to messianic dimensions.

Soyinka's characters, both male and female, are determined and full of Promethean glee but their interrogation of socio-political circumstances does not in any way approach messianic revolt. They may be inquisitive like Professor in The Road, skeptical and defiant like Eman in The Strong Breed and Old man in Madmen and Specialists and quixotic like Segi in Kongi's Harvest; but, like Christy Mahon and other Synge characters, they do not display the tendency to confront God and spit in his face. For the flowering of revolt in the plays of both writers, it is to the second category, namely, social revolt, that we must turn.

Social Revolt

Social revolt has its roots in messianic revolt with which it shares its tendency to subject life and society to a searing cross-questioning but, essentially, the link between them exists only at the spiritual level; at a more practical and pedagogic level, social revolt assumes a set of characteristics which are radically different from those of messianic revolt.

While messianic revolt concentrates on the dwindling affection between God and man, social revolt concentrates exclusively on man in his domestic and more contemporaneous settings - "man in society, in conflict with community, government, academy, church or family".¹¹³ Each of these aspects is scrutinised and, in addition, the schism and the rapid deterioration of the sense of being which colours man's vast estate is examined and condemned.

Social drama employs a set of modes and codes which already exist within the cognitive and affective frameworks of the average man. It does not confront us with a superman with an expansive and intimidating ego, instead, "human stature shrinks to average height, and man's surrounding closes in".¹¹⁴ The social rebel, unlike his messianic cousin, is "one of us"

and "we respond to a sense of his common humanity and demand from the poet the same canons of probability that we find in our experience".¹¹⁵ The poet supplies these not only in the ordinariness of his subject-matter but also in the simplicity of the architectonics of his composition. The language is simple, the setting is contemporary, the structure is compact, and the drama is usually in two acts.

The result of this contemporaneity, accessibility and all-round simplicity is that social drama is easily the most popular form in the theatre of revolt as it elicits a high degree of empathy between the audience and the performer. Social revolt, explains Brustein, "characterizes the best-known plays of the contemporary stage".¹¹⁶ It

dominates Ibsen's "modern" plays, Strindberg's "Naturalist" dramas, Chekhov's inner actions, most of Shaw, a large part of Brecht, and some of Pirandello - as well as the peasant dramas of Synge and Lorca, the parables of Durrenmatt and the entire work of such secondary dramatists as O'Casey, Odets, Miller, Osborne, Wesker and Frisch. 117

For its subject matter, social drama chooses to "examine and protest against the institutionalized life of man,"¹¹⁸ "social, political, moral, and economic questions are aired

in an atmosphere of impartiality"¹¹⁹ and modern life is represented "for the purpose of whipping and scourging it".¹²⁰

Ibsen's task as a dramatist was the protection of the sacredness of truth and the exposure of all covert attempts to enthrone falsehood. This, without meaning to be reductionist, is the underlying credo of A Doll's House, A Pillar of the Community, An Enemy of the people, The Wild Duck and The Ghost. Ibsen, in his own word, sought to "Torpedo the Ark" and beneath this declaration is a cry of revolt which was directed, in his writings, towards the excesses of the society of his time.

In spite of his avowed resentment of Ibsen, Strindberg's task was the same as Ibsen's except that, the scope, in his own case, was narrow and subjective, reduced as it was to the excoriation of the female specie. Chekhov was concerned about the dreariness of life and the increasing state of anomie in the modern world. His characters whine, whimper and cry but the significance of their cry goes beyond their own personal anguish and echoes a global anxiety. Shaw's radical interrogation of the nineteenth century society and his gift of seeing everything wrong with everything has few equals in the history of drama. Brecht, inspired by Marxian ethos, rebelled against the contradictory inequality in human societies and used his

art to conscientize the populace towards the jettisoning of the bourgeois hegemony and the corresponding establishment of an egalitarian society.

The social dramatist is essentially a satirist and, though contemporary, he is much indebted to the eighteenth century dramatists, especially Lillo, Steele, Diderot, Beaumarchais, Lessing and Hebbel; he, however, "differs from these bourgeois dramatists in his satiric animus and his hatred for middle-class life".¹²¹

In modern social drama, the respect for middle class ethics and the optimism in the writings of Beaumarchais, Lessing and Hebbel, give way to a "harsh, condemnatory tone" and an increasing skepticism "about the capacity for human perfectibility".¹²² Messianic revolt is two-sided: positive and negative; negative in the doggedness with which it seeks to dismantle the castle of God and positive in its aspiration to erect a man-centred alternative; social revolt, on the contrary, is unilateral in its negative stance. In its arguments and style of presentation, it busies itself with serious belly-aching but without offering any possibility of escape out of the terrain of frustration and despair which it describes with a touch of infectious bravado.

And even though the social rebel-dramatist puts on an air of impartiality and seeming indifference, there is enough evidence to show that his projections are subjective, that is to say, they are foregrounded by a desire to promote a particular cause or point of view. He

enters the social drama occasionally, if only in disguise - as Doctor Stockmann in An Enemy of the People, as Jean in Miss Julie, as Captain Shotover in Heartbreak House, as Laudisi in It is so! (If you Think So), as Mackie in The Threepenny Opera. 123

and peculiar with him is the smell of dogmatism which envelopes his thoughts and this, to a large degree, is the product of his flirtation with scientific and political ideas. For example, Ibsen, Strindberg and Shaw regarded themselves as "literary scientists under the influence of Darwin, Lamarck or Marx, while Chekhov, who claims no intellectual influences, adheres to an ideal of juridical attachment".¹²⁴ Perhaps this flirtation with schools of thought and radical ideas has also been responsible for the popularity of social drama.

It dominates the plays of Synge and Soyinka. All their plays without exception revolt against certain aspects of the society and even in such plays as Riders to the Sea, Madmen and Specialists and The Strong Breed where the primary concern is

existential rather than social, the questions of social revolt still appear relevant, albeit silent. Synge and Soyinka are essentially satirists and satire is exclusively the province of the social rebel. Witness The Tinker's Wedding and Opera Wonyosi.

In The Tinker's Wedding, Synge satirises and rebels against religion and marriage - two social values which occupied a pride of place in the Ireland of his time and, in conclusion, he highlights the unbridgeable contradictions between the social and the anti-social classes in the Irish society.

Religion has been about the most sensitive subject in Ireland, particularly during the nationalist period when the animosity between the Irish-Irish and the Anglo-Irish was complemented by a corresponding bifurcation of the society into two religious blocs, namely, the Catholic and the Protestant. During this period of heightened iconomachy, the institution of religion was reversed and the priest, who is its embodiment, was regarded as sacrosanct.

In The Tinker's Wedding, Synge desecrates this traditional image and paints a landscape in which a priest appears lurid and machiavellian and religion becomes synonymous with crass materialism. Alan Price warns against such an anti-clerical

interpretation of the play:

Some of the most vehement objections to The Tinker's Wedding centre on the character of the Priest. These (so far as they attain coherence) would seem to add up to the belief that although in real life a few priests may have characters as unpleasant as, or worse than, that of the Priest, Synge has made a grave moral and artistic error in putting such a figure on the stage.¹²⁵

Price contends that Synge's writings on religion were usually devoid of partisanship, even though he had "little liking for institutional religion"; in fact, "he praises the clergy on several occasions and he seems to have been on good terms with the curate of the Aran Islands". It is therefore "clearly ridiculous to take the Priest in The Tinker's Wedding as Synge's considered judgement about the leader of the majority of his fellow-countrymen".¹²⁶

On the contrary, the priest in The Tinker's Wedding is representative of Synge's perception of priests and the clergy; running through all his plays in which a priest appears or is discussed is an anti-clerical stance which can hardly be dis-
countenanced. In Riders to the Sea, a priest is dismissed as unknowledgeable about the ways of the world. In The Well of the Saints a blind couple spit on a Saint's offer to restore their sight and describe the Saint in violent and uncomplimentary

terms; and in The Playboy of the Western World, Father Reilly, though at the background of the drama, seems to be given to prima facie conclusions without any objectivity.

This is the case even in spite of the fact that these characters appear to be more dignified and more committed to their vocation than the priest in The Tinker's Wedding. The latter is a type and Synge's choice of him could hardly have been fortuitous.

Mary Byrne is, however, the most important character in the play for she is the primal rebel of the drama. It is through her that Synge enters the drama in disguise and the other two tinkers - Michael and Sarah - eventually become rebels only through her own initiatives. Before anything else, she calls our attention to Synge's tendency to use elderly women as the voices of reason in his plays and, in this respect, she is reminiscent of Mary Costello in When the Moon Has Set, Widow Quin in The Playboy and Old Woman in Deirdre of the Sorrows. All these characters claim to be more worldly wise than their younger colleagues on account of their age and experience and, as such, they often criticise the ideals of the young and introduce the element of skepticism into Synge's drama. Mary Byrne is a good example and it is through an

appreciation of her character and her relationships with other characters that we can begin to understand the specific tone and direction of the revolt in The Tinker's Wedding.

She is talkative, genial, amiable, and is easily the most histrionic character in the play, but beneath her panache is a distraught mind beleaguered by loneliness, and the fear of impending senescence; and in fact, her verbal flourish, her love of song and her bibulousity are mere defence mechanisms against these concerns. When, towards the end of Act one, for example, Mary and Michael go out to "get two of Tim Flaherty's hens"¹²⁷ and she is left alone, she suddenly becomes aware of her old age and the prospect of impending death and, to cushion this, even if ephemerally, she decides to go for a drink at Jimmy Neill's.

She enters the drama on a rebellious note singing "The Night Larry was Stretched", "a bad, wretched song" (p. 41) which mocks the clergy. The disregard for priests which underlies this song receives empirical illustration in Mary's subsequent pillorying of the priest in the play. In the first instance, Mary offers him some "porter" and when he appears to be reluctant to accept it, she quickly reminds him of his reputation with the bottle:

Let you drink it up, holy father:
 let you drink it up, I'm saying,
 and not be letting on you wouldn't do
 the like of it, and you with a stack
 of pint bottles above reaching the
 sky (p.41).

So harsh is her indictment of the Priest that he has to flee from her during their first encounter describing her as an "old, wicked heathen" (p.43). While Michael and Sarah tend to treat him with some reverence, Mary is completely untouched by his office. With her, he is "the fearfulest old fellow you'd see any place walking the world" (p.44) and the genial, casual manner in which she treats him goes a long way to emphasize her anti-clericalism. In sum, her actions and speeches imply that the priest is a pretender and a drunk and all priests, she insists, are incompetent. Their main business, as it appears to her, is to offer prayers, but all through her life, "there's one thing I never heard any time, and that's a real priest saying a prayer" (p.42).

The priest in The Tinker's Wedding is painted throughout as a liar, a drunkard and a hypocrite and he would seem to invite comparison with Moliere's Tartuffe. Though a priest, he frequents the doctor's place, apparently a kind of clubhouse, to play cards, drink, and sing songs till dawn. He is also lascivious as he derives pleasure from "looking out and

blinking at the girls" (p.55). All these activities are completely at variance with his ecclesiastical calling and the whole play is, in part, a dramatisation of his vanity and the institution he represents.

Of significance are Sarah Casey's attempts to get him to marry her and Michael Byrne. It is noteworthy that money or materialism is the major determinant of their negotiation and Synge's intention would seem to be the exposure of the degree to which materialism has overtaken the ideals of the church for it would have been expected that the priest, in conformity with the ethics of his calling would sympathise with the tinkers, because of their poverty, and marry them free. Sarah pleads, "whines", "half sobs" and "finally sobs" (pp. 39-40) and also begs the Priest to "give us a little small bit of silver to pay for the ring" (p.39), but all these acts of entreaty are ineffectual. Sentiments and charity are beyond divine service; if Sarah and Michael must marry, they must be prepared to pay him "a crown along with the ten shillings and the gallon can" (p. 40).

Thus, in the first movement of the play, Synge establishes, by illustration and suggestion, the vanities of the Priest, his drunkennes, dissoluteness, materialism and his

ruthlessness. The remaining sections of the play are further devoted to the cauterization and the derobing of his character and this process reaches its peak in the second Act when the tinkers assault him physically and verbally, and then "tie him up in some sacking" (p.56) thus symbolically divesting him of any importance that he may lay claim to; and instead of the bit of gold and the gallon can which he had demanded for his services, he is offered "three empty bottles" (p.53). The spectacle of the empty bottles is an accident, instructively caused, again, by Mary Byrne but it is also the height of sarcasm and comedy; it illustrates the hollowness of the wedding event and casts a slur on the personality of the Priest for whom it is intended.

At the end of the play, Mary describes the Priest as a "villain" (p.58) but he is also a hero, that is, a sympathetic character. He is a villain because of his machiavellian ways but he is a hero because these shortcomings are not the products of his own innate flaws but of the restrictive circumstances of his vocation and service. He complains, for example, of leading a "hard life", "saying Mass" with a dry mouth, "running east and west for a sick call" and hearing the rural people's confessions (p.42); besides, he works under an

autocratic bishop "and he an old man, would have you destroyed if he seen a thing at all" (p.42).

He therefore engages in extra-ecclesiastical habits to cushion the frustration of this hard life but he is, consequently, a false Priest. He has accepted the clerical profession but without the spirit of the vocation and his awareness of this fact and the guilt of sin that accompanies it constantly disconcerts him.

Synge's dramatisation of this is perhaps intended to highlight the politics within the clergy and the fact that a priest, contrary to popular assumptions, is not above basic human problems and foibles; with perhaps a greater emphasis on the latter than the former.

The Tinker's Wedding is set in motion by Sarah Casey's desire to legalise her marriage with Michael Byrne with the assumption that this would confer respectability on her. She is immediately reminiscent of Nora in The Shadow of the Glen, Molly Byrne in The Well of the Saints, and Pegen Mike in The Playboy who, like her, are preoccupied with marriage. But while their own concerns seem to be logical and genuine, hers is a whim. Nora puts an end to her marriage with Dan Burke because of its drabness and lack of comfort and goes with the

Tramp in search of freedom and an eventful life. Molly chooses to marry Timmy the Smith for material security; and Pegeen Mike adores Christy because of his gallantry and fine words. Sarah, in her own case, does not seem to have a cogent excuse. She has been living with Michael for a long time and she has even borne him children and she is happy and beautiful. Her sudden desire for church wedding would therefore seem to be diversionary since she has been living successfully without it for many years, moreso since it also contradicts the values of the tinkers' society to which she belongs. Hard put to justify herself, she blames the weather: "the spring time is a queer time, and it's queer thoughts may be I do think at whiles" (p. 35).

The dominant impression in the play is that church marriage is a queer event, a mere will-o'-the-wisp which neither confers status on nor ensures the happiness of its adherents, and in this instance, as in the pillorying of the Priest, Mary Byrne is also the agent of rebellion. She is surprised when she learns of the impending wedding between Sarah and Michael and after dismissing her son as a "black born fool" (p. 50) for fooling with the idea of marriage, she wades into Sarah:

Is it putting that ring on your finger will keep you from getting an aged woman and losing the fine face you have, or be easing your pains; when it's the grand ladies do be married in silk dresses, with rings of gold, that do pass any woman with their share of torment in the hour of birth, and do be paying the doctors in the city of Dublin a great price at that time, the like of what you'd pay for a good ass and a cart?

SARAH: (Puzzled) Is that the truth? (p. 51)

Mary parades what she calls her "great knowledge and a great sight into the world" (p.51) in order to validate her claims but Sarah refuses to be convinced because the truth suggests the abandonment of her central desire but by the end of the play, after having seen the Priest in various shades of vanity, she is compelled to embrace Mary's reasoning and the play reaches its climax exactly at the moment when she renounces her supposed wedding ring and places it on the Priest's finger. Thus, Synge brings the priesthood and the marriage institution within one perspective and dismisses both as a case of the unapproachable embracing the undesirable.

Beyond this, The Tinker's Wedding also highlights the class differences in the Irish society. It is in this spirit that Nicholas Grene sees the play as a dramatisation of "the clash between two mutually uncomprehending worlds"¹²⁶ and Alan Price describes it

as an embodiment of a tension between two ways of life, between a cautious, respectable, more settled way of life and an unrestrained materially insecure way allowing scope for passion and imagination. 129

The play sets the priest, representing the former, against the tinkers, representing the latter and Sarah Casey's marriage is supposed to serve as the event which would link both classes. This reconciliation is impossible because the Priest does not understand the tinkers' Shelta nor is he sympathetic with their peculiarities and they, on the other hand, find his officiousness and urbane pretensions somewhat tedious. It is noteworthy that the Priest is reluctant to have anything to do with Sarah the first time she approaches him and, even after he has agreed to wed her and Michael, he changes his mind and offers them a shilling in exchange for a discontinuation of their wedding plans: "So it would be best, and let you walk on, and not trouble me at all" (p. 49).

This kind of mutual distrust characterises the relationship between the priest and the tinkers throughout the entire play and even in such instances when there seems to be some form of camaraderie between the two classes, as in the scene where the Priest accepts a jug of drink from Mary, this seeming friendliness soon gives way to violent confrontation.

The last stage direction in the play, after the tinkers have fled from the Priest's Latin malediction, describes the Priest as "master of the situation" (p.58) but it seems obvious that the tinkers are indeed the masters of the play. They are the victors in their confrontation with the Priest since it is his values, not theirs, that are trampled upon and converted into subjects of comedy. Synge's sympathy is no doubt with the tinkers and "what we can say with certainty", according to Vivian Mercier, "is that The Tinker's Wedding defines the anti-society and claims for it an equality with established society."¹³⁰ Commenting on tinkers, Henn explains that

... They have managed to free themselves, to a greater or less extent, from government and convention, while allowing the maximum freedom to instincts of sexual promiscuity, fighting, drinking, yet they retain a primitive awe of the religious customs which they have themselves abandoned, and a mixture of envy and contempt of settled communities ... 131

The tinkers are, in one word, rebels and it is only appropriate that Synge should rebel through them against the pretensions of the Irish privileged class and its institutions of religion and marriage. Placed in its contemporary setting however, it is this same fact that made The Tinker's Wedding "too immoral for Dublin".¹³² It is on record that Lady Gregory

and Yeats were reluctant to stage the play and, though written about the same time as Riders to the Sea and The Shadow of the Glen, it was not published until January 1908 and it was never staged in Synge's lifetime, and when it was eventually premiered in November 1909, it was not in Dublin but in London, at Her Majesty's Theatre. The Abbey Theatre finally staged the play sixty-four years after its publication. Even Synge himself was reluctant to publish it. In a letter to Elkin Mathews, his publisher, he explains:

I would rather have the two plays you have brought out now together, and hold over the third, as a character in The Tinker's Wedding is likely to displease a good many of our Dublin friends, and would perhaps hinder the sale of the book. 173

The Tinker's Wedding would have displeased Dublin audiences because its violent treatment of the Priest and its abuse of established values contradicts the public wisdom of the Irish society in which it is set. Cognate with this is the fact that it is written by an Anglo-Irish author and it appears to be against a Catholic Priest, a distinguished member of the Irish-Irish class. The Ireland of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a deliberately dogmatic society fanatically attached to religion, land and Victorian

ethics and was bifurcated into two mutually contemptuous classes: the Catholics and the Protestants also known respectively as the Irish-Irish and the Anglo-Irish. The Tinker's Wedding disregards this social super-structure and the unwritten codes which held it aloft and, if it had been staged at that time, perhaps the Playboy riots would have been child's play compared to the kind of opprobrium that it would have generated.

Many critics, until recently, prefer to dismiss the play as an "artistic failure"¹³⁴ or as an aside to Synge's dramatic development. Maurice Bourgeois complains that the play

has wounded sincere religious susceptibilities which had a right to be respected in a country where religion dominates the public mind.¹³⁵

and Daniel Corkery, driven by ultra-nationalism rather than inspired criticism, regards it as worthless:

Only in a few passages do we come on the deeper Synge, and those few passages apart, the play is hardly worth considering either as a piece of stagecraft or as a piece of literature ... one is sorry Synge wrote so poor a thing, and one fails to understand why it should ever have been staged anywhere.¹³⁶

The fate of The Tinker's Wedding is perhaps the fate of all works of art which caterwaul against established values

and encourage alternatives but the condescending treatment which the play often receives on account of this is ill-deserved. Far from illustrating the sincerity of Synge's satirical spirit, it has the compactness of Rider to the Sea, the ironic counterpoint of In the Shadow of the Glen and an atmosphere of rollicking rambunctiousness and a hard-textured humour which is all its own. That the contradictions it highlights still remain decisive in contemporary arrangements is an illustration of its far-reaching significance.

Soyinka's Opera Wonyosi¹³⁷ exposes those foibles which have induced the moral and economic collapse of the Nigerian society and those private criminal fantasies and public acts of sabotage which everyone is guilty of but no one admits for fear of destroying the exotic mythologies of the self in which we are all cocooned. In this play, Soyinka assumes the garb of an ombudsman and unveils the phantasmagoric mask behind which society hides its flaws to reveal a "way-out country" in which everyone acts way out" (p.303).

The play is probably Soyinka's most comprehensive satire to date for it encompasses all aspects of the society and accommodates all crimes in its satirical swipe and pronounces "Guilty on all counts" (p. 299). Some of the subjects it

dramatises include the sadism of soldiers, tyranny, the sophistry of lawyers, contemporary 'Tartuffeism', graft in official corridors and the cadaverous taste of the public but the power-mania and the schizophrenia that attend it are perhaps the most fundamental issues which Soyinka examines in the play. He highlights this concern in the preface to the play when he writes that "Opera Wonyosi is an exposition of levels of power in practice - by a satirist's pen" (p. 298), but, somehow, many critics prefer to avoid this subject and concentrate instead on the play's broad satirical implications and ideological values.

The play exposes five levels of power, viz. Macheath and his gang, Anikura and his Home from Home for the Homeless, the Police (represented by Commissioner Inspector Brown), the Army (represented by Colonel Moses) and Emperor Boky. In sum, the thought of the play is reminiscent of Bertrand Russell's declaration that

Of the infinite desires of man, the chief are the desires for power and glory ... It is only by realising that love of power is the cause of the activities that are important in social affairs that history, whether ancient or modern can be rightly interpreted. 138

The love of power and glory is the fundamental motive of the actions of the characters in Opera Wonyosi and it is only through an acknowledgement of this fact that the political mechanics and the social history in the play can be rightly interpreted. The five levels, without exception, acquire power through clandestine and criminal means and, having acquired it, they abuse it without imagination and remorse. Attached to this is a cupid urge to expand into the territory of other levels and displace them if possible, but the logic of survival that is common to all of them is that a threat to their power, no matter how slight, usually elicits a defensive, tiger-like ferocity and a fanatically desperate bid to preserve their estate and a private ontology of the self.

At moments such as this, all sentiments, including filial ones, become irrelevant and it is this expansionist urge and combative self-preservation which pitches the various levels against each other and accounts for the dominance of cat and mouse patterns and machiavellian stratagems in the play. It instructively sets the initial conflict in the play in motion.

Macheath (a.k.a. Mack the Knife or Mackie) has already seduced Polly, Anikura's only daughter, and has also won the confidence of De Madam, Polly's mother, with the urbane

manners he displayed when he took her and her daughter to a dance at the Octopus Disco, but he is not the doting suitor he appears to be. His marriage to Polly, as explained by Anikura, is part of a grand design to displace Anikura, inherit his wealth and become the most powerful businessman in New Ikoyi. In a bid to thwart this ambition, Anikura blackmails Commissioner Inspector Brown into arresting Macheath. His wish is to have him "Arrested tonight. Tried in the morning. Shot by noon" (p. 341) - a hasty trial and conviction which leaves no room for escape. When Macheath springs his own counter-strategy which gains him the right of an appeal and eventual freedom, Anikura retaliates by forcing Colonel Moses to pronounce "A tiny decree, back-dated of course, abolishing the right of appeal" (p. 364) and by the end of the play, it seems as if Anikura would have his way.

Examined closely, the feud between him and Macheath goes beyond family disagreements and presents itself as a power-tussle between two equally resourceful men. Noteworthy is the admission by De Madam in Part Two Scene One that Anikura is not merely interested in settling a score with Macheath for abducting his underaged daughter but in inheriting Macheath's estate after his execution. Of course, without him, Anikura

would become the sole controller of all the businesses in New Ikoyi.

It is instructive that Brown agrees to participate in this intrigue. Though a police officer, he is Macheath's close friend, covering him in his criminal activities and warning him in advance, of police raids in return for varied acts of gratification and twenty-five percent of his earnings. As a token of their friendship, they both sing a song entitled "Khaki is a Man's Best Friend" (pp. 328-330) at Macheath's wedding, but Brown is compelled to betray Macheath because his own interest is at stake as Anikura threatens to disrupt Emperor Boky's coronation and thus get him into trouble with the Emperor. Self-preservation is thus, as earlier stated, the first rule of the social jungle in this play. Brown himself is also betrayed by Emperor Boky in the latter's bid to exhibit his status and reassure himself of his own invincibility. This development is interesting when we consider the fact that Macheath had earlier described Brown as "the individual in whom the present ruler of Centrafrique reposed his trust - in the bad old days, and has learnt to increase that absolute trust in the worse new days" (p. 327).

In the competitive, power-conscious world of Opera Wonyosi, friendships, loyalties and filial attachments are thus readily betrayed whenever an opportunity to covet exploit or abuse power presents itself or when, as in Brown's case, the individual security is threatened and, without doubt, it is this monomania that makes the five levels of power so impossibly brutal and self-serving. But perhaps these levels could be seen as double-faced for each one of them presents two faces - the saintly and the devilish. The former is the ego that is presented to the public, a mere facade that is usually sustained by finery and rhetorics, but it is the devilish aspect that is more fundamental and descriptive of their temperament. Thus, each one of them is the antithesis of its avowed persona.

The mutual distrust among them culminates in an eventual show-down between Macheath and Inspector Brown on one side and Anikura and Colonel Moses on the other. As the play approaches its final moments, it seems as if the former would lose, but Macheath's execution which Anikura had almost successfully stage-managed is prevented by a lucky intervention by Emperor Boky who, in a typical display of narcissism, grants a "general Amnesty for all common criminals" (p. 403). Rather than express remorse or disappointment at this sudden turn of events,

Anikura rationalises it: "We men of influence - of power if you like-respect one another. We speak the same language, so we usually work things out". (p. 403).

In other words, all the men of power in this play, in spite of the enmity between them, are united by a common urge to preserve the bourgeois, oppressive clique which they all belong to. Macheath does not die, therefore, because his death may lead to a chain of reactions which may overturn this clique and probably expose its criminality.¹³⁹ Hence, at the end of the drama, this clique is maintained, socio-political arrangements are returned "to-square-one" (p. 403) and all evidence indicates that the tradition of crime and graft which spans the play would continue unabated. The last portion of Anikura's epilogue is relevant.

What we must look for is the real
beneficiary
Who does it profit? That question soon
Overtakes all your slogans - who gains?
Who really accumulates and exercises
Power over others. The currency of that power
Though it forms the bone of contention
Soon proves secondary. I tell you -
Power is delicious (Turns sharply)
Heel! (p. 404).

It is obvious that it is "the men of influence - of power" (p.403) like Anikura, Macheath, Emperor Boky, Brown and Colonel

Moses - who are the real beneficiaries of this drama. But who loses?, who suffers? The masses certainly, that is, those who have neither influence nor power, who have no access to the men in uniform and at whose expense the men of power live "a life of ease" (p. 378). Like the Mrs Professor of Physiotherapy at the University of Bangui, they are the ones who are robbed and brutalised, used, duped, and dumped like Sukie, exploited like Ahmed and ridiculed like Dogo. While the "Big man chop(s) cement" (p. 311) and acquires wealth, they are eaten up and murdered by the very cement which they produce with their sweat. They jostle daily "to catch a bus to beat the factory deadline, barely dodging those haphazard blows" (p.378) in the over-crowded and overheated bus. While "the rich can telephone for private cure" (p. 378), they are compelled to queue up in the public hospital which offers them no cure but aspirin, "insolence from clerks lolling on the table and a waiting room that smells worse than a stable" (378). They fight "with rats for gari in a garret" (p.379) and their condition is further worsened by its bleakness and the absence of a prospect of improvement.

Even when they seem to have an opportunity to upset the applecart of the powerful, they never do so as evident in Part

Two Scene Four where they gather to witness Macheath's decapitation. In the process, a patient loses his life and a woman divorces her husband. These acts of self-immolation are wasteful because, in the final analysis, Macheath is spared the agony of execution and the people are denied the opportunity of witnessing the collapse of the clique which he symbolises. Opera Wonyosi is one Soyinka play of which it may be truly said that "the ordinary people, workers and peasants ... remain passive watchers on the shore of pitiful comedians on the road".¹⁴⁰

Leftist critics of the play have seized upon this fact to accuse Soyinka of a reactionary interpretation of history. Biodun Jeyifo argues that Opera Wonyosi lacks a "solid class perspective":

The play has not been consciously written for and about the popular urban and rural masses, these crucial groups and classes play a passive, almost invisible role.¹⁴¹

and in Yemi Ogunbiyi's view, the play fails to "yield concrete insights into society's causal network".¹⁴² Olu Obafemi contends that Soyinka essays a dialectical approach to theatre in Opera Wonyosi and fails because he is accustomed to the aesthetic and ethical theatre in which human contradictions are lucidly

satirised. Obafemi advises that Soyinka should restrict himself to the area in which he is most gifted and leave "other areas such as the dialectical approach to theatre to other playwrights who are so inclined and so gifted".¹⁴³ But far from being an attempt to repugn and malign the lower class, Soyinka's portraiture of this class in Opera Wonyosi reveals the contradictions in the social condition which the play describes and these include inequality and the brutalisation of the under-privileged by the privileged.

It is unfair to insinuate that Soyinka pampers the ego of the latter. His purpose, on the contrary, is to expose the power-mania, the mercantile and cupid mentality and the malfeasances of the men of power and the negative effect of these on the general well-being of the society. His most startling revelation is that the officials of the state like Moses and Brown who are supposed to maintain law and order are also criminals, whose criminality is hidden, of course, beneath their uniforms, and there is no difference between them and those who have taken crime as a profession. Hence, Moses and Brown speak the same language with Anikura and Macheath, and Professor Bamgbapo and A.G. Alatako attend refresher courses under Anikura. Emperor Boky, the ruler who should have provided

the society with a sense of direction, is a pseudo-revolutionary, a Francophile and a self-adulating tyrant. The suggestion is strong that each of these characters is a type representing a horde of others who are equally power-besotted and who, like Bamgbapo, are under tutelage in the art of begging, graft and daredevilry. The result is a society in which order and decorum are thrown overboard, crime is legalised and the very business of living becomes risky.

Soyinka unmasks and indicts the authors of this condition. In Part One Scene Two, Prophet Jero is the victim of derisive insinuations by Baba and Jake. In Part Two Scene Three, he is sarcastically introduced by Anikura to Colonel Moses with expressions that are far from being flattering: "What a friend. What a holiness" (p. 385) and to complete his devitalization, Soyinka makes him relate how he was once brutally flogged by Colonel Moses. He is a contradictory character, simultaneously devilish and saintly, power-seeking and self-dramatising, and can hardly be considered a true prophet. Through him, Soyinka seems to be calling attention, as he does in The Trials of Brother Jero and Jero's Metamorphosis, to the not-always-holy ways and perhaps the hollowness of the priesthood.

The police and the army do not escape the scourge of the satirist's pen. The emergent picture is that both organisations

are controlled by criminals in and without uniform and in spite of their bravura, they are mere elephantine institutions, distanced, in spirit and action, from their fundamental objectives. In Part Two Scene Three, for example, Alatako uses the army's own definition of a secret society and accuses the army of being a secret society by outlining the various atrocities that have been committed by them. The product of this trial is a ruthless army that is engaged in a one-sided terrorist battle with the very society whose integrity it is supposed to protect.

The comprehensive sweep of the social revolt of this play, however, emerges concretely through the use of songs and it may be said that it is through these songs that Soyinka himself enters the drama and speaks in his own voice. In each of them, he examines certain aspects of the society which he considers problematic. Running through all of them is a harsh, condemnatory tone and an accompanying positive resolve, most categorical in "Anikura's Song", (pp. 305-306), "Big Man Chop Cement, Cement Chop Small Man" (pp. 311-312) and "Jenny Leveller" (pp.359-360) that one day the faulty social machinery in the play would be overhauled and a new, humane, egalitarian order would prevail. Some examples from the text will suffice.

In "Anikura's Song" (pp. 305-306), Soyinka satirises religious bigotry as he accuses Moslems and Christians of using a con technique to deceive and exploit the public. Beneath the "smooth and sleek" appearance of the Christians, and the "gold turbans of the Moslems, Soyinka detects "dirty play":

You bankrupt your neighbour everyday
 And smother good consciences with play
 Then on Sundays and Fridays
 You deny all your fun-days
 And the next week resume your dirty
 play (p. 305).

In the last stanza, he attempts a prognosis of the fate of these religious impostors and observes that the public which has hitherto appeared gullible would some day react violently and they would be compelled to flee:

But look out, one day you will find
 That pus-covered mask hides a mind
 And then-boom! - oga sah
 What's that blur? - oga sa?
 With a red flame fanning his behind (p.306).

"Big Man Chop Cement, Cement Chop Small Man" (pp.311-312) is, as the title suggests, an indictment of the system of operations in cement factories whereby the wealthy manufacturer acquires more wealth at the expense of the poor labourer who has only a congested chest to show for his diligence. The

second stanza of the song puts the matter succinctly. The third stanza and the first four lines of the fourth identify the carrots that are used to cajole and encourage the labourer. These include "Udoji" which "will come when things grow dull" (p. 312) and "overtime pay" which "makes the worker content" (p.312). Soyinka's position is that these are insignificant when compared with the exploitation and the hardships of the labourer; hence, he complains:

A man's lungs for clean air is meant
 Not for breathing in clouds of cement
 And overtime pay comes to mere chicken feed.
 When the cement tycoon has filled out his
 greed (p. 312).

"The Song of Ngh-ngh-ngh" (p.316) begins with a commentary on the taste of Polly Anikura - "rather than spend her nights with her love", she chases soldiers in search of a vague standard called "class" and this, at bottom, is a materialistic urge which is peculiar not only to her but also, presumably, to her peers. This debauchery of young girls is complemented by a desperate struggle for contracts and foreign exchange by the ex-politician, Mr. Professor, the Perm-Sec and a Chief, and "time", Soyinka discloses "has proved each one a thief". But operative in this society, is a fraudulent judiciary which

acquits these privileged thieves and convicts only small-time bandits. Crime is thus legalised and the society is the worse for it.

In "Who killed Neo-Niga?" (pp. 342-344), the title of the song is used as a refrain and the wealthy, the Professor, market women, doctors and the entire public are collectively found guilty of the murder of Neo-Niga. In other words, Soyinka avers that every member of the society in this play is responsible for the collapse of its body politic and the interesting point that is raised here, and which is dramatised in the play in the characters of Brown and Moses, is that the army and the police who are supposed to protect and maintain this polity are ironically indifferent and joyous at its collapse.

This song is, therefore, an indictment of the society and the security forces and its high point is reached when a box-coffin bearing the inscriptions "BODY OF 1001st UNKNOWN VICTIM" and "GIFT OF TAI SOLARIN TO A CONSCIENCELESS RACE" is carried across the stage. This piece of stage symbolism added a topical touch to the play when it was premiered in 1977 for the event it highlights was an actual occurrence which was then fresh in the memory of the public, but its significance lies in its

graphic illustration of the ineffectuality of the security forces in the Nigerian society of the seventies and the resultant insecurity of lives and property.

The first stanza of "It's the Easy Life for me" (pp. 378-379) complains about the inadequacy and the poverty of the transport facilities for labourers. The second laments the deplorable condition of public hospitals while the third reveals the palliative, Judaeo-Christian sermon that is usually preached by Bishops. Categorically stated in this song, is the inequality of opportunities between the rich and the poor and, contrary to the Bishop's opinion that the poor should accept their lot because "suffering is sent to make a fellow great", Soyinka insists that the riches of the state should be equally distributed. The Bishop's sermon, he says, is nothing but "Bullshit!"; no man can be great "when the wind of hunger blows". "Mackie's Farewell" (pp. 401-402) is a swan song with a caustic thrust. It describes policemen as rotten, women as venal and prays that both should "roast in he-e-ell!" The chorus of the song is a double-barrelled attack on the colour-discrimination of white colonialists and the excesses of Emperor Bokoy who is described as a crazy, little terror, fit only for the zoo.

Songs are thus useful in Opera Wonyosi not only within the structural and aesthetic contexts of the play but also as satire, and, through them, Soyinka succeeds in broadening the scope of his revolt, and the play seems to emerge, on account of this, as his most comprehensive satire to date. Jeyifo has argued that the play is flawed by this comprehensiveness, for, in an attempt to accommodate all issues in its breadth, it ends up with surface treatments.¹⁴⁴ On the contrary, it is this comprehensive examination of the social condition which distinguishes Opera Wonyosi and makes it stand out in Soyinka's oeuvre as the play that is probably most expressive of social anomie.

Existential Revolt

On account of his awareness of the possibility of associating existential revolt with existentialism, Brustein immediately differentiates between both terms:

I am using this late seventeenth-century word in its original, more neutral sense. As the Oxford English Dictionary defines "existential", it simply means "of and pertaining to existence". Existentialism is a highly self-conscious movement, existential revolt is not. And though Sartre and Camus may be existential rebels on occasion, very few existential rebels are formal Existentialists. 145

What Brustein seeks to avoid is the hair-splitting polemics that is traditional with existentialism and the self-assertive theorizing of its proponents, but beyond this, existentialism and existential revolt appear to pursue the same fundamental goal, namely, to highlight the various contradictions which assail the human condition and expose the ineffectuality of the values which have hitherto served as its frame. Robert Brustein writes, in the authoritative manner that runs through the length and breadth of his book:

The drama of existential revolt is a mode of the utmost restriction, a cry of anguish over the insufferable state of being human (p.26)

The same is true of existentialism but where both concepts differ is in the extent to which they go in finding solutions to the problem "of and pertaining to existence". Existentialism demands a new cosmic arrangement in which man is the centre of the universe and the architect of his own destiny. In this new world, the existence of God is not denied but his place has been taken by another-man himself, and even though the goals of existentialism hardly materialise at a practical level, its proponents remain optimistic about their ideology. This is perhaps the self-consciousness which Brustein inveighs against.

Existential revolt, on the other hand, is pessimistic and, apart from portraying man as a vegetable, it sees the future as bleak. Besides,

The Gods and Supermen of messianic drama have turned into animals and prisoners, the world is a vast concentration camp where social intercourse is strictly forbidden. Alone in a terrifying emptiness, the central figure of existential drama is doomed, as it were, to a life of solitary confinement (p.27)

Images of decay and decomposition fill the drama and the hero is usually an arriere-garde personality, on his way to the grave. He is "usually a tramp, a proletarian, a criminal, an old man, a prisoner confined in body and spirit, and deteriorating in his confinement" (p. 32). Because of this inertia and complete lack of will, the existential hero is best conceived as an anti-hero; and owing to the unfathomable depth of his pathos, he also qualifies as a tragic hero but without the grandeur and the savoir-faire of the traditional tragic hero.

He is usually sad, morose and withdrawn. He has no God to cling to, no society to call his own, everywhere around him is a tale of misfortune and debilitation and he lives in a state of perpetual fear. Time haunts him. The past, the

present and the future offer him no promise of redemption and, not surprisingly, his time is "spent mournfully meditating on his past" (p. 31); that is, on a past that was once glorious and is now a reminder of lost opportunities.

It is precisely this spectacle of despair and nostalgia that compels him to rebel and this involves the erection of a number of constructs with which he hopes to cheat time and scorn fate, but eventually he fails, and circumstances reveal that he is "no longer a Cartesian chose qui pense - he is now the Bergsonian chose qui dure" (p. 31). That he "dures" shows that he eventually accepts his fate but even then he does not stop revolting because this is the only thread which keeps him alive. As Brustein explains,

This melancholy resignation, however, is accompanied by a continuous protest, occasionally expressed through violent outbursts, almost always through a mordant, biting style. (p.31).

Thus, the existential hero alternates between an acceptance of his fate on one hand and a rebellion against it on the other.

This is ironic and

Irony, in fact, is the mark of the entire existential drama which is written in what Frye calls the "ironic mode". In the ironic mode, the word "hero" has lost its meaning

entirely - the central figure is "inferior in power and intelligence to ourselves, so that we have a sense of looking down on a scene of bondage, frustration or absurdity" (p.32)

The "tragic devitalization of man" which typifies the existential hero also applies to the other characters in the drama, and, though Laurence Kitchin does not use the term, there is enough evidence to show that he describes an important aspect of **existential** drama when he defines compressionism as a

play in which the characters are insulated from society in such a way as to encourage the maximum conflict of attitudes. 146

Existential revolt receives eloquent and appreciable expression in the plays of Strindberg, Brecht, Shaw and O'Neill and in "the plays of Williams, Albee, Gelber, and Pinter - not to mention Beckett, Ionesco and the entire theatre of the absurd" (p. 27).

The existential hero wastes and pines and this, to a large degree, is what differentiates him from his messianic and social counterparts. Like the messianic hero, he rages against existence; like the social rebel, he inveighs against social circumstances but, unlike both of them, he is incapable of seeing his redemptive moves to a logical conclusion. He has

neither the stature of a prophet nor the ability to absorb and evaluate situations. Despair is the only reality he knows and the only activity he seems capable of is the "cry of anguish". This drama, because of its nihilism and its necrophily, is perhaps most descriptive of the modernist question and accordingly, it is popular with modern dramatists;

as a matter of fact, a number of modern dramatists, messianic in their youth, conclude their careers as existential rebels, their urge towards Godhead dissipating in anguish and frustration (p. 27).

George Buchner, Strindberg and O'Neill easily fit into this pattern but not Synge and Soyinka, both writers are, however, also concerned about the existential question, especially in Riders to the Sea and Madmen and Specialists.

Both plays parade the traits of existential drama. They are set in a compressionist setting which, as Kitchin would say, engenders "the maximum conflict of attitudes"¹⁴⁷. Riders to the Sea¹⁴⁸ takes place in "an island off the west of Ireland". To get their means of livelihood, the characters have to travel out of the island, across the sea, but the irony is that this genuine search for survival often results in death and because they have no alternative, their life becomes

a repetitive cycle of deaths. Madmen and Specialists¹⁴⁹ takes place "in and around the home surgery of Dr. Bero" (p.216) and the interesting point about this setting would seem to be its isolation and its loss of contact with humanity. "This lane", says the Cripple, "is deserted. Nobody comes and goes anymore". "Something", Goyi adds, "is driving them away from here..." (p.219). Partly as a result of this isolation and partly as a result of their own eccentricities, the characters in the play are thrown into a tightly-knit web of conflicts and a broad pattern of pathos and macabre humour emerges.

The central motif in Riders to the Sea and Madmen and Specialists is decay and death and all the images in both plays are directed to emphasize this motif. Riders to the Sea begins with a death and ends with a burial; within the short span of the play, the death of eight men in Maurya's life is announced: Stephen, Shawn, "Sheamus and his father and his own father again" (p. 27) and Patch, Michael and Bartley, and, as the play ends, it seems certain that Maurya and her two daughters would not live long. In their community, the survival of a family is the responsibility of its male members who go back and forth across the sea to secure the means of livelihood, and, now that they have been robbed of their own men, they would have to content themselves with "a bit of wet flour" (p. 29). For how long can

they live on this meagre means? The fate of this family is the fate of other families on the island and the sea establishes itself here as a symbol of death and destruction. These images are further established by other artifacts in the play, particularly Michael's clothes, the grey pony and the red mare, the keening, and even the characters themselves to the degree that all of them are either old, dead, simply drifting or likely to die.

Madmen and Specialists is similarly coloured by death and gloom and peopled by characters who are either old or sick or afflicted, who are imprisoned within their own peculiar world, and whose experiences suggest that life is nothing but a bad tale, narrated in the middle of a Sunday service sermon. At the background of the play is the story of an anti-human war in which cannibalism has already become an established mode and within the play itself, a similar pattern exists although at a civilised level, but there is no denying the fact that Bero's Nazi-like postures and perpetual parade with a gun seem to give intimations of doom. Madmen and Specialists therefore celebrates the triumph of the necrophilous instinct and, accordingly, its characters and imageries are Thyestean. A decisive imagery in the play is that of the berries which Si Bero gives Iya

Agba and Iya Mate at the beginning of the play. An examination of the berries reveals that they are the poisonous type; thus, it is poison that is taken from nature, and this, it would appear, is a pungent foreshadowing of the events in the play. Elevated to the level of symbolism, it illustrates the macabre tone of the drama.

Besides living in a peculiar world, the characters in Madmen and Specialists are also imbued with their own individual peculiarities. Iya Agba, Iya Mate and Old man are old. Bero is a specialist, incapable of human feelings and sentiments. Pastor and Si Bero seem to be the only innocent ones in this drama but they are not untouched by the excesses of the others. Pastor's enthusiasm, humanism and ecclesiastical innocence are at odds with the temperament of the world of the play and this is why he exits not with the self-assured boisterousness with which he enters but with fright. Si Bero is in many ways a sacrificial lamb, and her fate is pitiable because the sacrifice does not yield any positive result either at a personal or at a communal level.

More descriptive of the existential temperament of Madmen and Specialists are the mendicants. They cut the picture of a suffering humanity. One is blind, another is crippled, Aafaa

is a victim of St. Vitus spasms and Goyi is "held stiffly in a stooping posture by a contraction which is just visible above his collar" (p. 217). Life, for the quartet, is almost without meaning and significance. The first time they appear on stage, they are seen trying to "pass the time by throwing dice" (p.217). We are at once reminded of Gogo and Didi in Beckett's Waiting for Godot. Like this duo, the mendicants are oppressed by time and they search in vain for a sense of purpose to endow their life with some significance. While Gogo and Didi wait for a characterless Godot who never arrives, the mendicants wait for passers-by from whom they beg for alms. The symbolism of the dice ought not to be overlooked. The mendicants throw dice because, for them, life has lost its value and has become a roadside joke. That they are trying to pass the time also indicates the emptiness and the idleness which they are compelled by circumstances to contend with.

Besides, they seem to have lost faith in the human condition and in the importance of their own individuality; hence they describe themselves in putrid and unflattering terms. Aafaa says "In a way you may call us vultures. We clean up the mess made by others" (p. 220) and Cripple points out that they "are at the bottom" (p. 222) of the society. They are the dregs,

the undertrodden, humanity suffering in silence. They also engage in multiple role-playing sequences and distract themselves with illogical banter and fully descriptive of their character is the scene where they use parts of their bodies in a game of dice:

AAFAA: What did you stake?

GOYI: The stump of the left arm

CRIPPLE: Your last?

GOYI: No, I've got one left.

BLINDMAN: Your last. You lost the right stump to me yesterday (p. 217)

Eventually, Goyi stakes all parts of his body until he is reduced to a rubber ball. This reduction of the human essence into an inanimate and ridiculous form is a strong statement on the hopelessness of the human condition. A similar reduction exists in Riders to the Sea in the conversion of Michael into an ordinary bundle of clothes. Blindman brings the game of dice to a close with a philosophical comment: "Sooner or later we all eat sand" (p. 218). In other words, death is the ultima ratio of life; man is born to die - this is the meaninglessness which existential drama dramatises.

Perhaps the nature of existential revolt in Riders to the Sea and Madmen and Specialists becomes more understandable

when we consider the fact that both plays are concerned with existence. They paint a situation in which life becomes arduous and almost void of its human essence and at the centre of both plays is a character who rebels against these circumstances but eventually the rebellion is subverted by nature and fate and the rebel is compelled to resign.

What precipitates this pattern in Riders to the Sea is the sea, a central image in the play which serves a dual, self-contradictory purpose. The sea in this play simultaneously symbolises life and death but it is in the latter sense that it achieves greater significance. It is crucial to the lives of the characters because it is the only means through which they get in touch with the outside world but the irony is that this means to Paradise is also the route to Armageddon. The significance of the outside world to the characters in this play must be noted, it represents for them a land of opportunities and good life and consequently, they, particularly the young men, always aspire to go there. The following statement by Maurya would seem to explain the contrast between the island and the world beyond it:

In the big world the old people do be leaving things after them for their sons and children, but in this place it is the young men do be leaving things behind for them that do be old (p. 23).

In other words, life in the big world is better and it is represented here by Connemara where Maurya bought the white boards for Michael's burial and also the venue of the horse fair which Bartley insists on attending. While the island is isolated and drab, Connemara is eventful and it is only logical that it should attract the youth but the tragedy is that this attraction often results in death. The sea is the agent of this death. It stands between the island and the big world and destroys those who dare to travel on it. This tragedy is communal; hence, Maurya states that "There does be a power of young men floating round in the sea..." (p. 28).

What heightens this pathos is the fact that it is irreversible; if the people go to the sea, they would die; if they do not, they would still die of starvation. They are thus trapped in the cyclic ordeal of Sisyphus. The major problem in Riders to the Sea therefore is existence or survival and what the characters fear is not life itself but the prospect of death which seems to confront all their well-meaning efforts to live and it is the realisation of this dilemma that would seem to

account for the recurrence of a note of anguish in the play. The dominant cry is, in varying tones, "God help her" (p. 19, 23, 29); "by the grace of God" (p. 19); "God help us" (p. 20); "the son of God forgive us" (p. 23). "God spare him" (p. 28); "God have mercy" (p. 30).

Beneath these cries is a suggestion that life has become problematic and only God's intervention can return it to a normal course. Life in Riders to the Sea is reduced to its lowest score; what we have here is the complete devitalization of man. Take Michael, for example. He appears in this play not as a human being but in the form of "a bit of an old shirt and a plain stocking" (p. 25). Humanity is thus devalued and echoing through the entire play is Nora's lament that

Isn't it a pitiful thing when there is nothing left of a man who was a great rower and fisher but a bit of an old shirt and a plain stocking? (p. 25).

Maurya in this play is a prototype - her fate is representative of the fate which awaits and befalls all mothers and prospective mothers on the island. Beyond the play, she represents the kind of gloom which envelopes every individual whose resolve to survive is counteracted by misfortune. She is

a victim and a rebel, a victim of the unrelenting wickedness of the sea but also a rebel against this condition, determined to overcome it and make life less frightening. Her life entails a continuous struggle with the sea and it is important that she does not accept this fate with folded arms, instead she makes efforts to combat it.

She seeks succour in religion and accordingly she believes in the potency of the Holy water which she gets "in the dark nights after Samhain" (p. 29) and at the beginning of the play, we are informed that she offered prayers all through the night and the priest has also assured her that "the Almighty God won't leave her desittute with no son living" (p. 20). Added to this religious faith is her steeled determination to circumvent fate and nowhere is this more evident than in her concerted effort to prevent Bartley from going to the sea. Taken together, all this amounts to a struggle with fate and they are inspired by the assumption that everything would turn out well but the tragedy of Maurya's condition is that her optimism is shattered and all the props with which she hopes to survive are removed.

By the beginning of the play, she has already lost six men in her life, the death of one is yet to be confirmed and the only son she has left is also planning to go to the sea.

Since she understands the nature of the sea, she pleads with Bartley not to go to Connemara; her argument is that if he were to be "drowned with the rest" (p. 22), it would be difficult for her and her daughters - Cathleen and Nora - to survive. But Bartley, inflamed by the idealism and the stubbornness of youth, ignores her pleas. The underlying message is that she had a similar experience with the other men who went to the sea before Bartley, that is, "Stephen, Shawn, Sheamus and his father and his own father again" and Patch and Michael. It is ironic that these men who had regular contact with the sea and were aware of its fury should continue to dare it. It may be plausible to argue that all the men in Maurya's life are victims of the sea and of fate but they are also victims of their own stubbornness. The degree to which this is so with the others may not be easy to prove but the fact that Bartley is stubborn in the extreme is self-evident. To borrow Maurya's words, he is "hard and cruel" (p. 22); but if he does not go to the sea, how would Maurya and her daughters live? This is the central dilemma of the play. Wherever the characters turn, it is gloom that confronts them and the sea remains inescapable.

With Bartley's death, Maurya's fate seems to be sealed. It is doubtful if she and her two daughters would be able to

survive for long. Maurya is an old woman and without enough care, she may die. Nora and Cathleen are still young and they may be able to survive either through marriage or sheer will but these are mere conjectures, what is certain is that their youth may lose its flavour and they may age earlier than necessary. Maurya is a tragic hero. Her grief is total and her circumstances are too bleak, almost completely impervious to sense and manipulation, and it is this pervasive helplessness that makes her sympathetic and compelling. Her qualifications as an existential rebel become very clear immediately after Bartley's corpse is brought in. She receives the news of his death with unusual calm. In a whisper to Cathleen, Nora notes that

She's quiet now and easy; but the day Michael was drowned you could hear her crying out from this to the spring well. It's fonder she was of Michael, and would anyone have thought that?
(p. 30)

Cathleen's reply is relevant:

An old woman will soon be tired with anything she will do, and isn't it nine days herself is after crying and keening, and making great sorrow in the house? (p. 30).

Cathleen is closer to the truth. Maurya is quiet and easy not necessarily because she is fonder of Michael and not because Bartley's death does not surprise her but because she is already tired of the repetitive cycle of keening and weeping which fate, masquerading as the sea, often subjects her to. Bartley is the last of the men in her life and with his death, there is nothing to hope for again. Life has lost its meaning and the only solution is to resign to it. For this reason, she refuses to keen with the sympathisers who keen significantly not just for Bartley and the entire Maurya family but for the entire community doomed as it is to the caprices of fate and death. Maurya instructively presides over Bartley's wake.

His corpse is placed on a table, Cathleen and Nora kneel at one end of it, Maurya kneels at the head of the table, the men kneel near the door and the women around the body and in front of the stage. Conversation is kept to the barest minimum, and the women keen softly and sway slowly. This is punctuated with commentaries by Maurya and, as she kneels and stands repeatedly in a somewhat liturgical pattern, she sprinkles Holy water and relates to Bartley's corpse. At one point, "she lays her hands together on Bartley's feet"; "bending her head" and then "she pauses" and as she does so, "the keen rises a little more loudly". (p. 30).

The atmosphere is ritualistic and it is at once Christian and Irish and, in this sequence of liturgy and elegy, Maurya is the priest. Her sermon is shot through with revolt. She revolts against the harshness of her existence and the ineffectuality of the various means with which she had thought she would be able to bring life under control. When Nora recalls the priest's promise that God would not render her destitute, she immediately dismisses him as ignorant. "It's little", she says, "the like of him knows of the sea" (p. 27). This condemnation of the priest is the first step in Maurya's renunciation of her faith. A few moments later, she declares that she would no longer get Holy water in the dark nights after Samhain and as if to confirm this, the moment she finishes sprinkling the remaining Holy water on Bartley's corpse, she turns the empty cup downwards; that is, she has no intention of re-filling it. Added to this is her decision to bother about prayers no longer or about any other religious activity:

It isn't that I haven't prayed for you Bartley, to the Almighty God. It isn't that I haven't said prayers in the dark night till you wouldn't know what I'd be saying; but it's a great rest I'll have now, and it's time, surely. It's a great rest I'll have now, and great sleeping in the long nights after Samhain, if it's only a bit of wet flour we do have to eat, and maybe a fish that would be stinking (p. 29).

In the last movement of the play, Maurya is obviously beyond grief and she seems to have resigned to fate. "They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me ..." (p.29). These are the words of a woman who has been driven to the wall, to a point zero where all initiatives become irrelevant. At the end of the play, Maurya pays tribute to death and says "what more can we want than that? No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied" (p. 30). We have before us a woman who has already resigned herself to fate, who has intentionally abandoned her will to live but examined differently, from another perspective, this resignation is an act of rebellion.

Maurya rebels against the repetitive cycle of misfortune which characterises life on her island. Her epilogue is an acceptance of the irreversibility of this cycle but her abandonment of religion and of her will to live—two values on which she has always depended and which disappoint her at the most crucial moments — is an expression of revolt. It is unusual for an individual to willingly submit to death as Maurya does, by doing so she is making a statement that life is worthless and that it is futile to attempt to improve it.

Madmen and Specialists invites parallels with Riders to the Sea at several levels but the most central parallel would seem to be the fact that the existential rebels in both plays - Maurya and Old Man - embrace a nihilistic and contradictory philosophy which accepts the irreversibility of the cycle of frustration in their community and at the same time revolts against the bleakness of existence generally. Irony, both plays reveal, is the stuff of existential drama.

Only the answering of two questions - What is As? Why As? - would perhaps seem to explain the pattern of this drama in Madmen and Specialists. The questions are at the root of the conflicts in the play and it is not accidental that the closing sections of Part One and the entire Part Two of the play are devoted to them. Bero in the play searches without any success for the meaning of As but its meaning, at least one aspect of it, would seem to lie in the following extended outburst by Old man and the accompanying antiphonal exchange with the mendicants:

As Is, and the system is its mainstay though it wears a hundred masks and a thousand outward forms. And because you are within the System, the cyst is the system that irritates, the foul gurgle of the cistern and are part of the material for re-formulating the mind of a man

into the necessity of the moment's political As, the moment's scientific As, metaphysic As, sociologic As, economic, recreative, ethical As, you - cannot-escape! There is but one constant in the life of the System and that constant is As. And what can you pit against the priesthood of that constant deity, its gossellers, its enforcement agency? And even if you say unto them, do I not know you, did I not know you in rompers, with leaky nose and smutty face? Did I not know you thereafter, know you in the haunt of cat-houses, did I not know you rifling the poor-boxes in the local church, did I not know you dissolving the night in fumes of human self-indulgence simply simply did I not know you, do you not defecate, fornicate, prevaricate when heaven and earth implore you to abdicate and are you not prey to headaches, indigestion, colds, disc displacement, in-growing toe-nail, dysentery, malaria, flat-foot, corns and childblains? Simply simply, do I not know you Man like me? Then shall they say unto you, I am chosen, restored, re-designated, and re-destined and further further shall they say unto you, you heresiarchs of the system arguing questioning querying weighing puzzling insisting rejecting upon you all shall we practise, without passion -

MENDICANTS: Practise...

OLD MAN: With no ill-will...

MENDICANTS: Practise...

OLD MAN: With good conscience...

MENDICANTS: Practise...

OLD MAN: That the end shall...

MENDICANTS: Practise...

OLD MAN: Justify the meanness.

MENDICANTS: Practise...

OLD MAN: Without emotion...
 MENDICANTS: Practise...
 OLD MAN: Without human ties... (pp. 271-272)

A close study of the foregoing would reveal that As is not just "A code. A word" (p. 253) but an epigrammatic symbol and metaphor which defines the attributes of the system and the existence of the individuals within the world that is broadly defined in the play. Taken apart, it describes a society that is fraught with corruption and complete inhumanity of man to man. As, we are told, "Abominates humanity" (p. 253); under it, society is marginalised into two classes - the under-privileged and the classes aisées and the latter because of its access to power and the centres of state control transforms itself into an oppressive machinery that is irredeemably insensitive and unsympathetic. The curious fact about As is that it is pervasive and inescapable. This, in one word is the meaning of Old Man's reference to a variety of As and his conclusion that "you-cannot-es-cape!" Aafaa, earlier in the play, had made a similar observation when he noted that "As is everywhere" (p. 243).

The pervasiveness and the continuous survival of As, that is, the system, is ensured by a pack of gossellers who enforce

its machinery. Even though they are human beings, their fanatic intoxication with As and the power and the false self-esteem that accompanies it make them completely inhuman. They become specialists in torture and in the art of deception and they practise, as the closing passages of the above excerpt reveal, without emotion and without human ties. The result is an oppressive society in which life becomes a drudgery.

The issue at stake in As is existence; under it, man is reduced to a low scale and existence becomes almost meaningless. The characters in Riders to the Sea are engaged in a battle with the sea which doles out a Greek gift of death to them on a regular basis. The equivalent of the sea in Madmen and Specialists is As and its impact is analogous to that of the sea in Riders to the Sea. The sea, we must remember, is a dual symbol of life and death. As in Madmen and Specialists also parades a similar contradictory personality. Its agents pretend to be human. They pay official visits to the handicapped, they reward workers with special commendations and long service awards and, above it all, they are experts in saccharine oratory but beneath this false facade is a picture of an exploited and suffering citizenry. We are here again at the threshold of the paradox which is central to existential drama.

Madmen and Specialists dramatises the foregoing circumstances and the starting point for this is the war which takes place at the background of the play. The cannibalism which marked the war is one of the indications of the anti-human character of As but the greater significance of the war is that it reveals the specific manner in which As affects individual lives within the society and the degree to which it turns existence into a problematic value.

For an understanding of the decadent nature of existence in this play, a study of the mendicants is necessary. The four of them are victims of As; they represent its de-humanizing impact. They were all at the battle-front and they got their afflictions in the course of the war but, instead of the government making proper arrangements for their survival, they arrange a mode of rehabilitation which would further emphasize their under-privileged status. The mendicants, at a broader level of significance, represent the lower class in the society. They are the exploited, the undertrodden and the underpaid. They work for the survival of the nation but they have nothing to show for their patriotism. Very early in the play, Aafaa, posing, declares: "In a way you may call us vultures. We clean up the mess made by others..." (p. 220). This is an apt

description of their condition. They are used by other characters to fulfil their own private desires, they are the underdogs of the drama - the "lowest" (p. 222) of the low.

Through them, it is also possible to understand the various stratagems that are employed by the system and its enforcers to ensure that the lower class does not suddenly become aware of its underprivileged status. The manner in which they are treated reveals the extent to which the methods of the oppressor are grounded in deception. One major method is the rehabilitation of the convalescents at the battle-front, the rehabilitation was intended to teach the mendicants everything but awareness. It is organised to reduce them to a non-thinking humanity, that is, a kind of humanity that has no mind of its own and is therefore entirely manipulable by the state.

Other methods include the payment of "overtime and risk allowance" (p.222) to workers; and promises of a better future. It must be put on record, for example, that the mendicants obey Bero's instructions because they believe he would eventually cure them of their afflictions. "It is", says the Cripple, "what makes me continue to obey the Specialist" (p.248). (p. 248). Gifts are also distributed to the under-privileged

to create the impression that they are loved by the privileged. A good example are the imported cigarettes which the First Lady gave the convalescents on her visit to the Home of the Disabled (changed by the Old Man with metaphorical emphasis to "Home for the De-balled"). The following excerpt outlines the other stratagems that are used to manipulate the mentality of the lower class:

CRIPPLE: You've been pushed in the background
too often.

GOYI: Always hidden away

CRIPPLE: (coily) Not that we're shy

GOYI: Always hidden away

CRIPPLE: We're more decent than most. Hn-hn, than most.

AAFAA: Hidden under pension schemes you are

GOYI: Tail-of-the-parade outings

AAFAA: Behind the big drum

CRIPPLE: Under royalty vists

AAFAA (graciously proffering his hand): You may
(Goyi kisses his hand).

CRIPPLE: Imperial commendations

(Aafaa unfurls the scrolls, slaps his tongue
up and down).

CRIPPLE: Unveiling of the plaque...

GOYI: Commemoration occasion...

AAFAA: Certificates of merit...

GOYI: Long-service medals... (p. 269).

All these, in addition to long rhetorical speeches, are designed by the state to deceive the people and pave the way for the entrenchment of As. The mendicants, in conclusion, are the "heresiarchs of the system" upon whom the gossellers of the system practise without passion, without emotion and without human ties. All other characters in the play are also victims of this system.

But Bero assumes special significance not as a victim but as the physical embodiment of the system or as a gosseller of the system. put differently, he is the enforcement agent of As and, accordingly, his attitudes are in consonance with the personality of As already defined above. The first contradiction in his character lies in the fact that he is a medical doctor, a profession which entails the protection of human lives, but in the course of the drama, he is transformed from this agent of life into an agent of death. His movement from the Medical Corps to the Intelligence Section is a good illustration of this transformation.

To be sure, he is a product of the brutality of war, and a living illustration of the perversion which an inhuman system imposes on the human psyche but he is also a victim of his own self-dogmatism. Like all sycophants of the system, he is determined to have power at all costs and it is indeed not surprising that his approach is reminiscent of Kongi (in Kongi's Harvest), Kasco, Kamini, Gunema, Tuboum (in A Play of Giants), Anikura and Emperor Boky (in Opera Wonyosi) - these are his kinsmen in Soyinka's dramatic universe. We have his own word for it:

Control, sister, control. Power comes from bending Nature to your will. The Specialist they called me, and a specialist is-well-a specialist. You analyse, you diagnose, you (He aims an imaginary gun) - prescribe (p. 237)

Bero, in his search for power, prescribes death; and so obsessed is he with this preoccupation that there is no trace of the human element in him and the play could be seen, on account of this, at a sociological level of interpretation, as an exploration of the subject of power. Other characters in the play are victims of Bero's excesses and, by implication, of the system.

Before joining the army, he had asked Si Bero, his sister, to look after his medical clinic and continue his practice. Si Bero gladly obliges and to make things easier, she engaged the services of Iya Agba and Iya Mate. These two, she explains, held Bero's life together while he was away; and she made promises to them which she hopes to fulfil whenever Bero returns.

But he disappoints her on his return. He is no longer the Bero she used to know and the differences between them become clear immediately they meet. Si Bero, happy to see him, appears with a gourd of palm wine. She pours the wine on the ground in front of the doorstep and tries to unlace her brother's boots. This action is meant to celebrate Bero's survival, and it emphasizes Si Bero's significance as an agent of life but Bero steps back and prevents her from unlacing his boots. This indicates that Bero no longer identifies with such celebrative animist rituals as the wetting of earth with wine, the symbol of life and fecundity. His statement reveals his current preoccupation:

Bare feet, wet earth. We've wetted your good earth with something more potent than that, you know. (p. 234).

As the scene progresses, Si Bero begins to realise the changes in her brother. She tells him

We heard terrible things. So much evil.
Then I would console myself that I
earned the balance by carrying on your
work. One thing cancels out another
(p. 236).

The truth which she eventually discovers is that her redemptive and humanitarian actions do not cancel out her brother's association with the evil at the battle-front. In fact, her brother is very much responsible for the terrible things and the evil they heard about and he is so involved in this new vocation that he can no longer return to his former one. This new reality is too discomfoting for Si Bero; hence, she looks at her brother "with increasing horror and disbelief" and as "she turns and runs towards the Old women who receive her at the door of the hut, Bero goes on into the clinic..." (p. 245).

This separation between a brother and his sister is another instance of the pervasive inhumanity of the socio-political system in the play. Si Bero is a victim of this system and her polar attitude illustrates her fate as she is transformed from a self-assured and active young woman into a

remorseful and quiet one. In Part one, she is active and duty-conscious, but she is completely outside the field of action in Part Two and when she appears later, we are told that she is "roused from sleep" (p.273). Iya Mate assures her before the drama winds to a close that "No harm will come" (p. 273) to her, but it is obvious that she is a loser. She not only loses the energy and the optimism, which she ploughed into Bero's work, she also loses her father, her store and all the weeds she had diligently collected. Thus, in spite of her good-nature, she bears the pains of the resolution of the play. The play ends without offering her any ray of hope.

The earth-mothers - Iya Agba and Iya Mate - may possess powers which place them beyond the reach of As but their encounters with Bero further illustrates the stubbornness of his conviction and the omnipresent and unyielding temperament of As. On one occasion, Bero proscribes the earth-mothers and in response, Iya Agba questions his logic and reminds him that earth, which they represent, cannot be banned because "Even on the road to damnation a man must rest his foot somewhere" (p. 260). Yet Bero remains adamant. The system which he represents is totalitarian and it does not apportion privileges in the display of its power.

The priest is a straight-forward individual committed to the Christian values of optimism and humanism but his sudden encounter with Bero and the degeneration of the system overwhelms him. The knowledge that cannibalism has become a way of life completely contradicts his own persuasions and, as he flees in fright from Bero, it is doubtful if he would ever remain the same again.

The Old Man is a victim in the sense that his family is fragmented by the contradictions that are engendered by the pervasive brutality of the system. His children, Si Bero and Bero, are divided into two different worlds and an impregnable wall suddenly arises between them and seals up any hope of reconciliation. The result is that the filial sentiment which had hitherto unified this family disappears and each member of the family becomes a unit on its own, with an uncompromisable individuality. Bero, for example, is now a member of another family called "the Intelligence section" and his loyalty is to this family and not to his natural family, and the interesting point to note is that he now relates with his natural family with the codes, the inhuman codes of his adopted one. This is the reason why it is possible for him to treat his father on purely official terms. His interest in his father, he says,

is "strictly that of a specialist" (p. 262), his father is no longer a human being but "simply another organism, another mould or strain under the lens..." (p. 262). The Bero family is, like the Maurya family in Riders to the Sea, an archetype and it can be assumed that its experiences are typical of the experiences which other families in the society in the play are undergoing.

Madmen and Specialists lends itself to a variety of interpretations. It can be seen as an exploration of the subject of obsession with power or as a commentary on the inhumanity and the far-reaching dysfunctions of war but it seems that the most candid interpretation of the play is to view it as an existential drama. Existence is the issue at stake in the play, in it, we are presented with a society in which war, deception, oppression, tyranny, the devitalization of the human element, the fragmentation of the family unit and the individual psyche and the abuse of earth and all redemptive and regenerative values are the established patterns of living and because these patterns are in the name of a mystifying engima called As, pervasive and endless, existence itself becomes a risky pre-occupation, and man, as in Riders to the Sea, is faced with the prospect of death and annihilation.

Old Man has already been described as a victim of this system but he is more important as a rebel. He is, in other words, the existential rebel of this drama and his rebellion is in two parts. In the first part, he confronts the gossellers and the enforcers of the inhuman system in the play with the evidence of their recklessness. After reading a letter from Bero about the carnage at the battle-front, he suddenly "got all worked up. It can't be, he shouted. And then he leapt up and said - right out of the blue - we've got to legalize cannibalism" (p. 239). To achieve this aspiration, he decides to join the army and at one dinner at the battle-front, he served the military officers human flesh:

Your faces, gentlemen, your faces.
 You should see your faces. And your
 mouths are hanging open. You're drool-
 ing but I am not exactly sure why. Is
 there really much difference? All
 intelligent animals kill only for food,
 you know, and you are intelligent
 animals. Eat-eat-eat-eat-eat-Eat! (p.254).

The officers first rushed out and vomited, annoyed at Old man's macabre humour, but afterwards they said he had done them a favour. They said so because they eventually realised that here lies the key to the power which they seek. As usual, Bero articulates their thoughts.

It was the first step to power you understand. Power in its purest sense. The end of inhibitions. The conquest of the weakness of your too human flesh with all its sentiment (p. 241).

Bero is bent on knowing the meaning of As, "the new god and the old" (p. 241) in whose name Old Man blessed the meat at the dinner because he assumes that it is the key to power but he and his colleagues misconstrue Old Man's action.

His intention is not to flatter their ego but to accuse them of cannibalism. He adds that "Never admit you are recidivist once you've tasted the favourite food of As" (p.254). In other words, the officers, because of their cannibalism, are already beyond redemption, completely criminal, and incapable of any good. It must also be noted that Old Man describes the system as As, it seems possible that Wole Soyinka is referring here to As, the Norse god of Asgard, but the point to remember is that this god as personified by the socio-political configurations in Madmen and Specialists is portrayed as cannibalistic and inhuman.

The second part of Old Man's rebellion is directed at the victims of the excesses of the system; that is, the mendicants, the underprivileged, and the occupants of the nadir of the social hierarchy. He enlightens them about their

condition and conscientizes them to such a degree that they would be able to confront the system. This rebellion, like the preceding one, took place at the battle-front where Old Man worked among the convalescents. His

assignment was to help the wounded readjust to the pieces and remnants of their bodies. Physically. Teach them to make baskets if they still had fingers. To use their mouths to ply needles if they had none, or to use it to sing if their vocal chords had not been shot away. Teach them to amuse themselves, make something of themselves (p. 242).

In other words, Old Man's assignment was to rehabilitate the convalescents in such a way that they would be able to fit into the As super-structure and retain their place within it but because of his own aversion to this structure, he chooses instead to teach them to "think, think, THINK! (p. 242). Thinking, we must note, is dreaded by the apostles of the system because it is the first step to awareness and revolt, two attitudes which run counter to their own desires.

By making thought the thrust of his lessons, Old Man invites parallels with Socrates and it is not surprising to learn from Bero that he is fond of quoting this Greek Philosopher. Old Man's fate is also reminiscent of Socrates and this is further illustrated by the fact that Bero, before

the end of the play, offers Old Man some poisonous berries; a variant of Socrates' hemlock. The Greek was convicted for "not believing in the gods in which the polis believes and of introducing other, new divinities" and "of corrupting the young", ¹⁵⁰ similar remarks would apply to Old Man.

The gist of his lessons to the undertrodden could be garnered from the role-playing sequences of the mendicants and chiefly from his alphabetical definition of As from A to I:

- A. Acceptance. Adjustment of Ego to the Acceptance of As.
- B. Blindness in As. AS is all-seeing. All shall see in As who render themselves blind to all else.
- C. Contentment. A full belly.
- D. Divinity. Destiny. Destiny is the Duty of Divinity. D-D-D. Destiny in 3-Dimensions.
- E. Epilepsy. Taken by the Spirit. For the Divinity to have control, the flock must be without control.
- F. Fulfils. As fulfils. (But Goyi, another mendicant, prefers As farts).
- G. Godhead. As is Godhead.
- H. Humanity. Humanity the Ultimate Sacrifice to As, the eternal oblation on the altar of As.

I. I am I, thus sayeth As.¹⁵¹

Reduced to a sentence, the meaning of the foregoing is that As is a pervasive, omniscient and omnipotent system which sacrifices humanity and throws its victims into an epileptic fit. It pretends to fulfil but the truth is that it farts and emits a bromidic smell and the only way to survive under it is to remain blind and to accept its supremacy. The recitation of this lesson by Aafaa and his colleagues would seem to indicate that it is well taught and mastered. Thus, Old Man exposes them to the maniacal personality of the system under which they live. To conscientize them against this system and elevate their status, he implores them to develop the gift of self-disgust. That is, they must develop a sense of personal importance and rather than whine and lament about their condition, they must continue to discriminate in their choices:

Remember, even if you have nothing
left but your vermin, discriminate
between one bug and the next (p. 243).

Old Man illustrates his lessons with examples, songs and promises. During the visit of the First Lady to the Home for the De-balled, he waded into the mendicants for accepting

the imported cigarettes which she brought them and he taught them a rebellious ballad in which the Head of State and his wife are ridiculed and the hollowness of their humanity is rudely suggested. Following this is a song which demands the triumph of democracy; its import lies in its categorical rejection of the existing socio-political formations; a variant of it is sung later by the Cripple, Here, he rejects promises and demands for his dues. To ensure the success of his classes and perhaps also to underscore their seriousness, Old Man promises the mendicants "top billing" (p. 268); that is, he would ensure that they get "to the top of the (social) ladder" (p. 268). He also promises to take them on a world tour namely "A Travelling Exhibition of As Grotesques" (p. 268).

In sum, it may be assumed that the bottom line of his lessons is to turn them into rebels and encourage a proletarian revolution which would jettison the As superstructure and replace it with a democratic and human system but, on the contrary, the thrust of Old Man's rebellion is not change but the acceptance of the existing superstructure even in spite of its celebrated shortcomings. This position is graphically stated in the first letter of As "A. As is Acceptance,

Adjustment. Adjustment of Ego to the Acceptance of As" (p. 246). Elsewhere, the same lesson is defined with greater precision: "As chooses, man accepts" (p. 244).

Hence, the system which the Old Man inveighs against is also the philosophy in which his rebellion is situated. The oppressive system in the play is called As. Old Man's redemptive philosophy is also called As. As then is a Janus-like phenomenon, it is the old god and the new; and its values are respectively personified by Bero and Old Man. The caveat must be added however that the reading of the catechism of As may not be as literal as this, and perhaps there is a problem in the construction of the drama which the playwright was unable totally to solve. The earlier unpublished versions of the play may be helpful in this respect but for now, let it be noted that Old Man's contradictory interpretation of As does not translate into an affirmation of As and its oppressive structures, it is, instead, a sarcastic interrogation of its evils.

Old Man's attitude is borne out of the awareness that the As-system in the play cannot be changed. It is so pervasive, so totalitarian and so decisive at the level of human

relations, and its apostles are so irredeemably cruel, that a reversal of it and the kind of change that may be desired by the underprivileged becomes inconceivable. The fate of the underprivileged and the entire society, Old Man seems to insist, is irreversible. This is evident for example; in the theme song of the play:

As Was-Is-Now - As Ever Shall Be...
 Bi o ti wa
 Ni yio se wa
 Bi o ti wa
 Ni yio se wa
 Bi o ti wa l'atete ko se (p. 244).

This song is the central motif of the play and it brings the entire drama to an apt, philosophical close and, because of its sadistic and nihilistic tone, it pushes the play in the direction of the Theatre of the Absurd and also highlights the closeness between Riders to the Sea and Madmen and Specialists and perhaps between Synge's vision of the human condition and Soyinka's. At the end of Riders to the Sea, Maurya, after having witnessed the futility of all her attempts to stem the tide of the viciousness of nature, gives up and states that "No man can be living for ever". Her resignation conveys the same meaning as the theme song of Madmen and Specialists, namely,

that human experience is a repetitive cycle of misfortune and there is nothing man can do to change it.

The difference between Maurya and Old Man, however, is that while Maurya is pushed to this realisation by the failure of her rebellion, Old Man had been aware of it at the very beginning of his rebellion and hence he makes it the cornerstone of his lessons to the mendicants. The underlying assumption, perhaps, is that, if the underprivileged are aware of their circumstances, it would be easier for them to cope with the system and therefore lead a more meaningful life and because this contradicts the intentions of the enforcers of the system, it is still, in itself, a gesture of revolt.

But in spite of its heightened awareness and foresight, Old Man's rebellion, like that of other existential rebels, fails to achieve its aim and in the kind of ironic fashion that is peculiar with this play, it is Old Man's own son, Bero, who is the agent of his failure. Bero, defending the very system which his father opposes, arrests his father, incarcerates him, offers him poison, ridicules him in the presence of his pupils and eventually kills him. In addition, he takes his pupils away from him, turns them against him and, through a calculated sadism, mocks the ideals with which he had conscientized them.

Reduced to a concrete level, the confrontation between Old Man and Bero is a confrontation between good and evil respectively. Old Man demands the jettisoning of the mania and the inhumanity of As whereas Bero insists on the opposite; and while Old Man engenders hope in the mendicants and trains them to develop a sense of dignity, Bero promises death and accordingly parades death-images. This confrontation is dramatised in Part Two of the play but the ground had already been prepared for it in Part one, at a symbolic level, by the earth-mothers. We are referring here to the scene where Iya Agba and Iya Mate examine the berries which had been found by Si Bero. It is eventually discovered that the berries are the poisonous types and Si Bero immediately offers to throw them in the fire:

IYA MATE: Do nothing of the sort. You don't learn good things unless you learn evil.

SI BERO: But it's poison

IYA MATE: It grows

IYA AGBA: Rain falls on it

IYA MATE: It sucks the dew

IYA AGBA: It lives

IYA MATE: It dies

- IYA AGBA: Same as any other. An-hn, same as any other.
- SI BERO: That means I still have to find the right one.
- IYA AGBA: It will be in the same place. They grow together most of the time.
- SI BERO: I'll go tomorrow.
- IYA MATE: Take some rest. Or... is he on his way home?
- SI BERO: There is no news at all. I am beginning to...
- IYA AGBA: Beginning to worry like every foolish woman. He'll come back. He and his father. There is too much binds them down here. They will take root with their spirit, not with their bodies on some unblessed soil... (pp. 225-226).

The sudden shift of the emphasis of conversation from the berries to Bero and his father in the above excerpt should be noted. It must not be considered accidental and cosmetic but as an extension of the symbolism of the berries. Bero and his father are like the berries. The one is good, the other is poisonous, yet both of them grow and work together in the same place, but their uses are different and it is this that accounts for much of the acrimony in the play.

Bero's opposition to Old Man's idealism is refractory and unrelenting. Thus, the old refuses to give way to the new,

and evil circumvents good. In the final analysis, Old Man, like all existential rebels, is compelled to resign and admit the supremacy of As just as Maurya accepts the invincibility of the sea. "Let us taste", he says, "just what makes a heretic tick" (p. 276) and immediately after this statement of resignation, Bero shoots him and thus, As, the old god, reigns supreme and the cycle of oppression continues.

Old Man is a victim and a martyr but he is a martyr without the prospect of vindication. The mendicants live at the end of play but it is not certain that they would perpetuate Old Man's ideals. This is the fate of the existential rebel. His idealism often crumbles in the face of overwhelming circumstances but not before asserting its righteous indignation.

Conclusion

Our task in this chapter has been to show that Synge and Soyinka are modernists through an examination of their plays in relation to the theatre of revolt. This theatre asserts itself in both instances more decisively at the level of form than content, but perhaps the thrust of modernism is in the alternative vision it recommends and not necessarily in its external apparatus.

Synge and Soyinka aver that society and existence itself

are moribund and therefore in need of mundification, cross-questioning and overhauling, if life must return to normal and regain its sanity. At the centre of their plays are rebel-characters, authorial interventions and artifacts which function as vehicles of revolt and change and even though they are almost always pessimistic, the rebellion is useful if only for its epiphanic value.

It is also observed that Synge and Soyinka, like the rebel-characters in their plays, are rebels in their own personal circumstances. It is as if they consummate their creative instinct by living out in real life the very drama which they envision as art. The exact senses in which this is so has already been discussed in detail in the body of the chapter. Suffice it to add that whereas Synge was a quiet, largely intellectual, rebel, perhaps due to his own reticent nature; Soyinka, on the other hand, is the fiery type, vocal and assertive and unlike Synge, fond of politics and the histrionics which accompany it.

In sum, the modernism of both writers does not cancel their Irishness and Africanness respectively. It is useful only insofar as it emphasizes the universality of their works and what they share in common, in terms of sensibility, with the international community of writers.

NOTES

¹Thomas Kilroy, "Synge and Modernism" Maurice Harmon (ed.), J.M. Synge: Centenary Papers, 1971 (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1972), p. 174.

²Ibid., p. 170.

³This statement is made here as a point of analysis, without any intention to exhume the controversy over the hegemony of the text which characterises much of pro- and anti-Deconstructionist scholarship.

⁴John Millington Synge, Plays, Poems and Prose (London and Melbourne: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1988), pp. 107-108.

⁵See note 2.

⁶Chinweizu, "Prodigals, Come Home!" Okike, No.4, Dec. 1973, p. 6.

⁷Ibid., p. 8.

⁸Eric Bentley, The Modern Theatre: A Study of Dramatists and the Drama (London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1950), p. 154.

⁹G.D. Josipovici, "Hawthorne's Modernity" Critical Quarterly, Vol. 8 No. 4, Winter 1966, p. 351.

¹⁰J.I.M. Stewart, Eight Modern Writers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 2.

¹¹Virginia Woolf, "Mrs Bennett and Mrs. Brown" (1924) Collected Essays Vol. 1 (London, 1966) quoted in Malcolm Bradbury, The Social Context of Modern English Literature (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), p. 85.

- ¹²Quoted in Malcolm Bradbury, p. 86.
- ¹³Marshal Cohen, "Notes on Modernist Art" New Literary History, Vol. III No. 1, Autumn 1971, p. 215.
- ¹⁴Maurice Beebe, "Editor's Introduction" Journal of Modern Literature, 1, 1971, pp. 644-645.
- ¹⁵Malcolm Bradbury, p. 85.
- ¹⁶John Gassner, Directions in Modern Theatre and Drama (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., March, 1966), p.4.
- ¹⁷Duncan Williams, To be or Not to Be: A Question of Survival (Oxford: Pergamon Press Ltd., 1976), p. 31.
- ¹⁸Phillip Thody, Albert Camus 1913-1960 (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1961), p. 137.
- ¹⁹Malcolm Bradbury, "Struggling Westward: America and the Coming of Modernism (II)" Encounter, Feb. 1983, Vol. LX No.2, p. 57.
- ²⁰Stephen Spender, The Struggle of the Modern (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1963), pp. 222 et seq.
- ²¹Kenneth Neill Cameron (ed.) Romantic Rebels: Essays on Shelley and his Circle (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. vi. For further information on Romanticism, see;
- Frank Kermode, John Hollander et. al. (eds.), The Oxford Anthology of English Literature Volume II (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 3-786.
- Lilian R. Furst, Romanticism (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1976), 84pp.

Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony Second Edition (transl. from the Italian by Angus Davidson) (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 502pp.

²²Theodosius Dobzhansky, Mankind Evolving: The Evolution of the Human Species (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 346.

²³On Nietzsche, see Walter Kaufman, The Portable Nietzsche (Newly translated, edited, and with a critical introduction and notes by Walter Kaufman) (New York: The Viking Press, 1963), 687pp.

Bertrand Russell, A History of Western Philosophy (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1984), pp. 728-739.

Richard White, "Art and the Individual in Nietzsche's Birth of Tragedy" British Journal of Aesthetics, Vol. 28 No.1, Winter 1988, pp. 59-67.

Arthur Danto, "Nietzsche" D.J. O'Connor, A Critical History of Western Philosophy (New York: The Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1964), pp. 384-401.

²⁴Frederick J. Hoffman, Freudianism and the Literary Mind, Second Edition (Louisiana: Louisiana University Press, 1957).

John B. Vickery, The Literary Impact of the Golden Bough (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973).

Maynard Solomon (ed.) Marxism and Art: Essays Classic and Contemporary (New York: Vintage Books, 1974).

John Burt Foster Jr., Heirs to Dionysus: A Nietzschean Current in Literary Modernism (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981).

²⁵Irving Howe (ed.), p. 23.

²⁶John Burt Foster Jr., p. 5.

- ²⁷ Bertrand Russell, p. 739.
- ²⁸ Kaufman, p. 8.
- ²⁹ Arnold Toynbee quoted in Duncan Williams, p. 10.
- ³⁰ Martin Buber quoted in David Holbrook, "Pornography and Death", Critical Quarterly, Vol. 14, No 1, Spring 1972, p. 32.
- ³¹ Glynn Harmon, Human Memory and Knowledge: A Systems Approach (London: Greenwood Press, 1973), p. ix.
- ³² Jose Ortega Gasset, The Dehumanization of Art and Other Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 191.
- ³³ Karl Popper, The Open Society and its Enemies, Fifth edition (London, 1966), Vol. 1, p. 70.
- ³⁴ Alvin Toffler, Future Shock (London: The Bodley Head, 1975).
- ³⁵ George Eckstein, "Heading for Apocalypse?" Dialogue, Vol. II, No. 2, 1978, pp. 21-26.
- ³⁶ Julian L. Simon, "What to Expect in the Year 2000" Dialogue, No. 54, 4/1981, pp. 2-7.
- ³⁷ Marvin Cetron and Thomas O' Toole, Encounters with the Future: A Forecast of Life into the 21st Century (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1982), 306pp.
- ³⁸ The Global 2000 report was requested in 1977 by President Jimmy Carter of the United States and it was put together by the Council on Environmental Quality, the Department of State and 11 U.S. Agencies and submitted to the President in 1980. Its main argument as articulated by Julian L. Simon, who questions its total pessimism (see note 36), is that

If present trends continue, the world in 2000 will be more crowded, more polluted, less stable ecologically and more vulnerable to disruption than the world we live in now. Serious stresses involving population, resources and environment are clearly visible ahead. Despite greater material output, the world's people will be poorer in many ways than they are today. (Simon, p. 3) cf. Anthony Burgess' The Wanting Seed, a futuristic novel which shows humanity going from one strategy of desperation to another.

³⁹ Robert L. Heilbroner, An Inquiry into the Human Prospect (New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc., 1974); also see his "The Human Prospect" Dialogue, Vol. II, No.2, 1978, pp. 12-20. Heilbroner takes a pessimistic view of mankind's chances for civilized survival, and situates his prediction of doom in three areas: overpopulation, waste of natural resources, and extravagant use of energy, but he offers a solution, namely, that man should abandon the spirit of Prometheus with which he has hitherto subjugated nature to his will and adopt that of Atlas:

If man is to rescue life, he must first rescue the future from the angry condemnation of the present. Here the spirit of conquest and aspiration will not serve. It is Atlas, resolutely bearing his burden, that gives us the example we seek. If within us the spirit of Atlas falters, there perishes the determination to preserve humanity at all cost and any cost, forever (see "The Human Prospect") p. 20.

Many critics have refuted Heilbroner's arguments on several counts but the most notable contribution would seem to be that of George Eckstein who accuses Heilbroner of exaggeration, extrapolation and extreme selectivity in analysis (see note 35). The efforts of all these futurists may not be without value but there are those like Stephen Spender who frown at the idea of futurism. Spender argues that it is,

in any case, inevitably a misnomer. We do not and cannot know what the future will be. (See Stephen Spender, The Struggle of the Modern, p. 80).

⁴⁰ Fernando de Rojas, "Celestina", Eric Bentley (ed.), The Classic Theatre (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959), pp. 94-95.

⁴¹ Kaufman, p. 39.

⁴² Nathan A. Scott Jr., "The Name and Nature of our Period-Style" G.B. Tennyson and Edward E. Ericson Jr., Religion and Modern Literature: Essays in Theory and Criticism (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), p. 132.

⁴³ Yuri Davydov, Myth, Philosophy, Avant-Gardism: Philosophic Myth-Making and the Literary Avant-Gardism (Moscow: Raduga Publishers, 1978), p. 27.

⁴⁴ Jose Ortega y Gasset, The Revolt of the Masses (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1961), p.134.

⁴⁵ Frederick R. Karl and Leo Hamalian (eds.), The Existential Imagination: From de Sade to Sartre (London: Pan Books Ltd., 1974), p. 18.

⁴⁶ Teilhard de Chardin, The Phenomenon of Man (New York: Harper and Row, 1959).

⁴⁷ Jose Ortega y Gasset, The Revolt of the Masses, p. 138.

⁴⁸ John Paul II, John Paul II in Mexico: His collected speeches (London, 1979), p. 74f. quoted in Grahame Clark, The Identity of Man (as seen by an archaeologist) (London and New York: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1983), p. 149.

⁴⁹ Robert Brustein, Revolution as Theatre: Notes on the New Radical Style (New York: Liveright, 1971), p.4.

⁵⁰Malcolm Bradbury, The Social Context of Modern English Literature, pp. 14-15.

⁵¹Arnold Brown, "The Age of Osiris: A World in Transition" Dialogue, No 51, 1/1981, pp. 2-4.

⁵²Ben Turok (ed.) Revolutionary Thought in the Twentieth Century (London: Zed Press, 1980), p. 1.

⁵³Marvin Cetron and Thomas O'Toole, p. 3.

⁵⁴Virginia Wetherbee, "The Golden Age of Eccentricity" The American Scholar, Spring 1986, p. 211: "The more it changes, the more it is the same thing".

⁵⁵Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1972), p. 151. For further discussion of the modern world and its crises, see the following:

Theodosius Dobzhansky, Mankind Evolving: The Evolution of the Human species (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975).

Erich Fromm, The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1964).

Duncan Williams, Trousered Apes (London: Churchill Press, 1971; New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1972).

_____, To be or Not to Be: A Question of Survival (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1976).

G. Rattray Taylor, Rethink (London: Secker and Warburg, 1972).

Hugh Montefiore, Can Man Survive? (London: Collins, 1969).

Jon Wynne-Tyson, The Civilised Alternative: A Pattern for Protest (Fontwell, Sussex: Centaur Press, 1972).

⁵⁶J.I.M. Stewart, Eight Modern Writers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), Relying heavily on biographical and sociological data, Stewart examines the craft and vision of Thomas Hardy, Henry James, George Bernard Shaw, Joseph Conrad, Rudyard Kipling, William Butler Yeats, James Joyce and D.H. Lawrence. He observes that these writers are concerned with the gradual disappearance of man as man. Largely descriptive of the temperament of their works is W.B. Yeats' contention in "The Second Coming" (1919) that man is

Turning and turning in the widening gyre,
The falcon cannot hear the falconer.
Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold,
Mere anarchy is loos'd upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed and
Everywhere the ceremony of innocence is
drowned... (p. 365).

⁵⁷Malcolm Bradbury, The Social Context of Modern English Literature (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971).

There (are) two important words, from two different disciplines, which we associate with our age: one is modernization, which is a sociological notion, and the other is modernism, which is a literary and artistic notion. This book seeks to put them into relation (p. xxiii).

To achieve this goal, Bradbury begins his study with a preface in which he outlines the connections between literature and sociology, he observes that "literature is a social product" (p. xi) and modern literature has been particularly so. Sometime around 1880, says Bradbury, the social situation of the artist began to change. "His very way of life was becoming different. He felt himself becoming more marginal and isolated" (p. xxxiii) and his writings became coloured with "a mood of imaginative unease" (p. xxxiv), "shock, disturbance and crisis" (p. 14):

In most of the writers of the decade, the detachment of the author, the devaluation of his heroes, the loss of a sense of logic in history or society, are manifest. The world created is one growing less rational, less ordered, more impermanent, more disposed to boredom, loneliness, uncertainty and despair, and it is a world of new mores, new consciousness, new social conflicts (p. 97).

cf. Samuel O. Asein. "The Twentieth Century: The Modernist Tradition," Richar Taylor (ed.) Background Lectures in English Literature (Benin City: Ethiope Publishing Corporation, 1977). Asein's conclusions invite parallels with Bradbury's.

⁵⁸ Stephen Spender, The Struggle of the Modern (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1963). Spender, in an attempt to explain the modernist phenomenon and the personality of its proponents, makes fairly elaborate differentiations between those he calls 'contemporaries and moderns', 'recognizers and non-recognizers', 'traditionalists and neo-traditionalists', 'traditionalists and revolutionary traditionalists'. He observes that "the confrontation of the past with present (sic) is the fundamental aim of modernism" (p. 80) and "the movements of modern literature and art-the 'isms' - are programmes of techniques for expressing this whole view of the past-future confrontation" (p. 83). His description of the moderns is noteworthy:

The moderns are therefore those who start off by thinking that human nature has changed; or if not human nature, then the relationship of the individual to the environment, forever being metamorphosized by science, which has altered so completely that there is an effective illusion of change which in fact causes human beings to behave as though they were different. This change, recorded by the seismographic senses of the artist, has also to change all the relations within arrangements of words or marks on canvas which make a poem or novel, or a painting (p.xiii).

⁵⁹Bamber Gascoigne, Twentieth-Century Drama (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1974).

⁶⁰Travis Bogard and William I Oliver (eds.), Modern Drama: Essays in Criticism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965).

⁶¹Robert W. Corrigan (ed.) Theatre in the Twentieth Century (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1963).

⁶²Robert Brustein, Theatre of Revolt (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1965).

⁶³William Blake, "Milton: Book the First" Frank Kermode, John Hollander et. al. The Oxford Anthology of English Literature Vol. II (New York, London, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1980), p.99.

⁶⁴Anton Chekhov, "The Seagull", Plays (Transl. and with an introduction by Elisaveta Fen) (England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1981), p. 137.

⁶⁵Duncan Williams, To be or Not to Be, p. 123.

⁶⁶Quoted in Stuart Barton Babbage, "An Awareness of Solitude" G.B. Tennyson and Edward Ericson Jr. (eds.), Religion and Modern Literature: Essays in Theory and Criticism (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Coy., 1975), p. 162.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 163.

⁶⁸T.S. Eliot, The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950 (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, 1952), p. 342.

⁶⁹Franz Kafka, The Castle (transl. by Willa and Edwin Muir (London: Secker and Warburg, 1930; N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), p. 421.

- ⁷⁰ Samuel Beckett, Waiting for Godot (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1986), p. 41.
- ⁷¹ Quoted in M.L. Rosenthal, The Modern Poet: A Critical Introduction (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1960), p.9.
- ⁷² Erich Fromm, The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil (N.Y.: Harper and Row Publishers, 1964).
- ⁷³ Duncan Williams, To be or Not to Be, p. 32.
- ⁷⁴ D.D. William Barry, Heralds of Revolt: Studies in Modern Literature and Dogma (Port Washington; N.Y./London: Kennikat Press, 1971), p. 380.
- ⁷⁵ Wilhelm Emrich, The Literary Revolution and Modern Society and Other Essays (Transl. by Alexander and Elizabeth Henderson) (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1971), p.33.
- ⁷⁶ Nathan A. Scott Jr., "The Name and Nature of our Period-Style" in G.B. Tennyson and Edward E. Ericson Jr., pp. 126 & 136.
- ⁷⁷ Frederick R. Karl and Leo Hamalian (eds.), p. 15.
- ⁷⁸ David Daiches, "Literature and Belief" in G.B. Tennyson and Edward E. Ericson Jr., pp. 76-84. Daiches explains that the modern writer is operating in an age which has no common background of beliefs and attitudes; as a result, he is compelled to erect a personal universe and scheme of beliefs, and, when he does, he tends to appear obscure to his own contemporaries. Many modern writers cannot be enjoyed "without preparation" and without "homework". The fault, however, is "not of the poet but of his age" (p.82).
- ⁷⁹ J.V. Cunningham, "Tradition and Modernity": Wallace Stevens" in Irving Howe (ed.), Literary Modernism (New York: Fawcett World Library, 1967), p. 286.

⁸⁰Irving Howe, Literary Modernism, see the introduction.

⁸¹See note 58.

⁸²Eric Bentley, The Modern Theatre: A Study of Dramatists and the Drama, p. xv.

⁸³Paul Fussell, "Modernism, Adversary Culture, and Edmund Blunden" The Sewanee Review Vol. XCIV, No.4, Fall 1986, pp. 583-601. Fussell differentiates between two terms, modern and modernist. A modern writer, he says, confesses an indebtedness to received traditions and sees no need to reject the past and erect his own framework of values. Edward Thomas, Robert Frost, Edwin Muir, Louis MacNeice, Conrad Aiken and Elizabeth Bishop are good examples. The modernist, in contrast, is a rebel and an iconoclast. He rejects the past and declares war on "the received, the philistine, the bourgeois, the sentimental, and the democratic" (p. 583). Take Oscar Wilde, T.E. Hulme, James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, D.H. Lawrence, William Carlos Williams, E.E. Cummings and Wyndham Lewis. 1922, says Fussell, is the "modernist annus mirabilis".

⁸⁴Nathan A. Scott Jr., p. 135.

⁸⁵Howard Stein, "The Uncomfortable Theater", Dialogue Vol. 8, 1975 No.2, pp. 24-25.

⁸⁶J.R. Taylor, The Angry Theatre: New British Drama (New York, 1969).

⁸⁷See Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd Revised, updated edition (New York: Anchor Books, 1969).

⁸⁸George Wellwarth, The Theatre of Protest and Paradox (New York: New York University Press, 1971).

⁸⁹Robert Brustein, Theatre of Revolt, p. 415.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 11.

⁹¹Alvin Toffler, p. 375.

⁹²Maurice B. Benn, The Drama of Revolt: A Critical Study of Georg Buchner (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1976), p. 1.

⁹³Phillip H. Rhein, Albert Camus (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1969), p. 28.

⁹⁴For details of their individual contributions see Desmond Clark (ed.), The Changing Face of Literature: A discussion and evaluation of developments over the past fifty Years. Proceedings of thirty-eighth International P.E.N. Congress, Dublin, 12-18, Sept., 1971 (Dublin: The Irish P.E.N. Centre Ireland, 1972), pp. 72-93.

⁹⁵Albert Camus, The Rebel (Translated by Anthony Bower) (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., (transl. from the French by Justin O'Brien) (England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1975), p. 54; here Camus writes that "revolt gives life its value. Spread out over the whole length of a life, it restores its majesty to that life".

⁹⁶Albert Camus, The Rebel, p. 28.

⁹⁷J. Bowyer Bell, On Revolt: Strategies of National Liberation (Cambridge, Mass. and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1976).

Michael Crowder, Revolt in Bussa: A Study of British 'Native Admin.' in Nigerian Borgu, 1902-1935 (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1973).

Ted Robert Gurr, Why Men Rebel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

⁹⁸ Camus first play, he wrote it with three University friends - Bourgeois, Poignant and Jeanne-Paul Sicard; though an early work, it anticipates the main philosophical directions of Camus' later career.

⁹⁹ Phillip Thody, Albert Camus 1913-1960 (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1961). Thody argues that the book seems to "summarise or reproduce the conclusions of a number of thinkers whom Camus had read" (p. 143), particularly Karl Popper's The Open Society and its Enemies, Koestler's Darkness at Noon and Father Delubac's Le Drame de l'Humanisme athée. For further information on Camus, see

E. Freeman, The Theatre of Albert Camus: A Critical Study (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1971);

Phillip H. Rhein, Albert Camus (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1969).

¹⁰⁰ See note 62.

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Ann Saddlemyer, Synge and Modern Comedy (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1968), p. 31.

¹⁰² John Millington Synge, p. 219.

¹⁰³ Randall Jarrell, "The End of the Line" in Irving Howe (ed.); pp. 158-166.

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Kilroy in Maurice Harmon (ed.), p. 171.

¹⁰⁵ The manner in which books influence the creative intellect is remarkable; O'Neill also read Nietzsche's Thus Spake Zarathustra and this contact with Nietzsche sowed the seeds of the rebellion which dominate his works.

¹⁰⁶ Shaw was noted for his loquacity. Brustein says "One wishes that at sometime in his life, Shaw learned the virtue of silence" (Theatre of Revolt, p. 184), cf. Samuel Lipman, "Pshaw!" The American Scholar Autumn 1982, p. 513²

For George Bernard Shaw, in the beginning was the word, and the word was always with him. Indeed, for an admiring public, he was the very word incarnate his whole life long... all that is certain is that he was a one-man Public Broadcasting Service...

¹⁰⁷ D.W. Harding, "A Note on Nostalgia" Scrutiny, Vol. 1, May 1932, pp. 8-19.

¹⁰⁸ Yemi Ogunbiyi, "Toast To Our Own W.S." Dapo Adelugba (ed.), Before Our Very Eyes: Tribute to Wole Soyinka (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 1987), p. 54.

¹⁰⁹ Robert Brustein, Theatre of Revolt, p. 17.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 18.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 20.

¹¹² Michael Meyer in Henrik Ibsen, Brand (transl. by Michael Meyer, Introduction by W.H. Auden) (Garden City, N.Y. Doubleday and Coy. Inc., 1960), p. 19.

¹¹³ Robert Brustein, Theatre of Revolt, p. 22.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 25-26.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 22.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

118 Ibid., p. 26.

119 Ibid., p. 23.

120 Ibid., p. 24.

121 Ibid., p. 25.

122 Ibid.

123 Ibid., p. 24.

124 Ibid., p. 23.

125 Alan Price, Synge and Anglo-Irish Drama (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1961), p. 129.

126 Ibid.

127 John Millington Synge, "The Tinker's Wedding" in Plays, Poems and Prose, p. 45. All references to the text are to this edition and all page references from the same source will be given in brackets following the citations.

128 Nicholas Grene, Synge: A Critical Study of the Plays (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1975), pp. 103-104.

129 Alan Price, p. 127.

130 Vivian Mercier, "The Tinker's Wedding" S.B. Bushrui (ed.), Sunshine and the Moon's Delight: A Centenary Tribute to J.M. Synge 1871-1909 (Gerrards Cross, Bucks: Colin Smythe Ltd., Lebanon: American University of Beirut, 1972), p. 81.

131 T.R. Henn (ed.), The Plays and Poems of J.M. Synge (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1963), pp. 43-44.

¹³² Denis Donoghue, "Too Immoral for Dublin: Synge's The Tinker's Wedding" Irish Writing, 30 (1955), pp. 56-62.

¹³³ Quoted in David Greene and Edward M. Stephens, J.M. Synge 1871-1909 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), p. 181.

¹³⁴ David Greene, "The Tinker's Wedding, a Reevaluation" PMLA, LXII, September, 1947, pp. 824-827.

¹³⁵ Maurice Bourgeois, John Millington Synge and the Irish Theatre (London: Benjamin Blom, 1965), p. 180.

¹³⁶ Daniel Corkery, Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1966), pp. 149-152.

¹³⁷ Wole Soyinka, "Opera Wonyosi" in Six Plays (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 1988), pp. 295-407. All other references to the text are to this edition and all page references from the same source will be given in brackets following the citations.

¹³⁸ Bertrand Russell, Power (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1975), pp. 8-9. For discussions of power in Soyinka's works, see

Dapo Adelugba, "Citadels of Power in Kongi's Harvest": An Approach to the Soyinkaresque World view", paper presented at the African Literature Seminar (Symposium on Soyinka) jointly organized by the Departments of English and Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan, Sunday, May 13, 1973; also in University of Ibadan, Department of Theatre Arts Occasional Publication, Vol. 3, No. 6, 1981, pp. 1-16.

Okpure Oboke, "The Power Triangle in Wole Soyinka's Kongi's Harvest and Madmen and Specialists" Nigerian Journal of the Humanities, No. 4, Sept., 1980, pp. 132-143.

¹³⁹ This is of course a debatable position. The decision to save Macheath at the end of the play may have been informed by the necessity to conform with the demands of the form of the play since Comic Operas usually have a happy ending.

140 Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Homecoming (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd. 1978), p. 65.

141 Biodun Jeyifo, "Drama and the Social Order: Two Reviews" Positive Review No. 1, 1977; also see his The Truthful Lie: Essays in a Sociology of African Drama (London: New Beacon Books, 1985), p. 87.

142 Yemi Ogunbiyi, "Opera Wonyosi: A Study of Soyinka's Opera Wonyosi" Nigeria Magazine, Nos. 128-129, 1979, p. 8.

143 Olu Obafemi, "Theatre of Agitation: Soyinka's Opera Wonyosi" African Theatre Review, Vol. 1, No. 3, April 1987, pp. 53-54 and p. 63.

144 Biodun Jeyifo, "Drama and the Social Order: Two Reviews", p. 22.

145 Robert Brustein, Theatre of Revolt, p. 26. Henceforth all page references from the same source will be given in brackets following the citations.

146 Laurence Kitchin, Drama in the Sixties: Form and Interpretation (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1974), p. 46.

147 See note 146.

148 John Millington Synge, "Riders to the Sea" in Plays, Poems and Prose, pp. 18-30. All references to the play are to this edition.

149 Wole Soyinka, "Madmen and Specialists" Collected Plays 2 (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 215-276. All page references to the play are to this edition.

150 Quoted in M.I. Finley, The Ancient Greeks (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1981), pp. 135-136.

151 See Oyin Ogunba, The Movement of Transition: A Study of the Plays of Wole Soyinka (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1975), pp. 201-202.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The study of John Millington Synge and Wole Soyinka that has been done in this thesis attempts to come to terms with both dramatists and their backgrounds. More importantly, we argue that Synge and Soyinka's worlds, in spite of their geographical loci and apparent differences, are fundamentally united by the same patterns and this unity makes itself felt in many aspects of human experience, often between individuals and structures which are of different spatial and social origins. Synge and Soyinka, for example, are of different nationalities and backgrounds but the final impression that emerges from a study of their works is that both writers, in spite of their individual differences, are artistically of a similar stock both in terms of thought and style and to some degree in terms of technique.

The major thrust of the present exercise lies in its comparative discussion of Synge and Soyinka from a variety of standpoints as an extension of what hitherto exists in Synge-Soyinka scholarship. In the earlier research efforts in the field notably those of James Gibbs¹ and Atabo Oko,² the good intentions of the researchers are beclouded by their failure

to concentrate enough on both dramatists insofar as Synge and Soyinka are discussed, in both instances, alongside other dramatists. Gibbs' and Oko's efforts are also somewhat hidebound by the fact that they discuss only the theme of nationalism in both writers but in the present thesis, we have taken on other issues - death, language, modernism and revolt and hence, we may claim that our thesis extends Synge-Soyinka scholarship in new directions.

A cursory reading might suggest that the choice of themes in this thesis is arbitrary. Truly, there are many themes that offered themselves for scholarly consideration when we think of the work of each of these dramatists but the four themes chosen, from among a wide range of options surfaced on account of the forcefulness with which they relate to the pith and marrow of Synge's and Soyinka's works and the insistent manner in which they impinged on our sensibilities during the period of the formulation of the research design.

Beyond this, the thesis also takes account of the current attitude in literary and theatre criticism as articulated variously by Isidore Okpewho,³ Dan Izevbaye⁴ and Frederic Lolliee,⁵ that literature should be lifted out of its provincial

limits and turned into a global enterprise. As August Schlegel explains,

We see numbers of men, and even whole nations, so fettered by the conventions of education and habits of life, that, even in the appreciation of the fine arts, they cannot shake them off. Nothing to them appears natural, appropriate or beautiful, which is alien to their own language, manners and social relations. With this exclusive mode of seeing and feeling, it is no doubt possible to attain, by means of cultivation, to great nicety of discrimination within the narrow circle to which it limits and circumscribes them. But no man can be a true critic or connoisseur without universality of mind, without that flexibility which enables him, by renouncing all personal predilections and blind habits, to adapt himself to the peculiarities of other ages and nations - to feel them, as it were from their proper central point...⁶

This need for a universality of thought and attitude is particularly necessary in African literature and drama, marked as it is by attempts to emphasize and celebrate the provincial aspects of literature. This provincialism is a product of the attempt by Nigerian and African artists to convince the Western world, contrary to the assumptions of colonialism, that they themselves are gifted with a sense of art and that Africa is not culturally barren, as Western critics tend to opine. This is, no doubt, a legitimate pre-occupation

especially when we consider the fact that Africans were, for centuries, victims of various brands of colonialism which sought to de-emphasize their own humanity and superiorise Western modes of thought and action.

Since the attainment of independence by many African nations, it became inevitable that the art and culture of the continent should be devoted to a dismantling and the repudiation of these colonial prejudices. The problem we encounter here is that, although the point about the cultural validity of Nigerian/African art has already been well made, many African literary scholars still choose to concentrate on it. This amounts to the flogging of a dead horse and a disregard for the more important topical happenings in the continent and in the discipline.

There is a need to depart from this exclusivist and somewhat racial mode of criticism and adopt a comparative and cosmopolitan stance and already a respect for this has been expressed and demonstrated by scholar-critics like Dan Izevbaye, Abiola Irele, Biodun Jeyifo, Chidi Amuta and Ropo Sekoŋi. In this thesis, we have also attempted to eschew provincialism and explore the gains of the broader and more fruitful universal

approach to literature. There is no attempt here to celebrate tribal, racial and theoretical effigies.

The thesis can therefore be seen, in part, as an expression of the cosmopolitan nature of drama and, in particular, of Synge's and Soyinka's creativity. Other Synge-Soyinka scholars have remarked upon this fact but the point requires further replication and belabouring because of its relative freshness.

Equally important is our attempt to arrive at a comprehensive discourse which does not concentrate exclusively on theatre and drama per se but which also embraces several allied epistemological fields - religion, philosophy, aesthetics, politics and sociology. Apart from revealing the closeness between theatre and these other disciplines and how the use of extra-dramatic concepts may lead to a richer study of phenomena, our eclectic theoretical approach is intended to lead to a more rounded study of dramatic literature and theatre.

This approach has made it necessary to state our conceptual and theoretical framework chapter by chapter as we move progressively forward in our multi-perspective study of Synge and Soyinka. Our empirical and theoretical approach receives an echo in the statements of Chidi Amuta in his The Theory of African Literature. Chidi Amuta complains that

A common denominator of African literary scholarship, as we indicated earlier, is a disturbing theoretical anaemia. It is true that the meta-critical intelligence can group the critical practices of leading scholars of African literature in terms of the values and world views they express and represent, but it is difficult to see them as products of definable schools of critical thought informed by any consistent theoretical foci.

Literary study as one of the disciplines devoted to the specialized understanding of the different aspects of human society needs a rigorous theoretical thrust if it is to be taken as seriously as the other disciplines from which it differs only in terms of the ontological peculiarity of its object of study ...

The wilful suspending of the instinct for rigorous theorizing is the most conspicuous mark of underdevelopment in the field of African cultural scholarship in general and literary criticism in particular.⁷

One particular area which other scholars may wish to investigate, beyond this thesis, relates to the points of convergence and divergence between the cultural and literary backgrounds of Synge and Soyinka namely the Anglo-Irish National Literary and Dramatic Movement and the Modern Nigerian Theatre 'movement' of the pre-Independence and post-Independence eras. We observe that these two events share a similar historical and sociological tradition and this is perhaps responsible for the similarity of method and intention that is

further observable in the works of their writers - not only between Synge and Soyinka but also between say, Yeats and Soyinka, Yeats and J.P. Clark, Yeats and Femi Osofisan, Lady Gregory and Wale Ogunyemi, and Sean O'Casey and Ola Rotimi, to name a few examples.

C.L. Innes,⁸ Obi Maduakor⁹ and Sister Eileen Sweeney¹⁰ have attempted to validate this proposition through their comparative studies of aspects of Irish and African literature. We may also note that the Abbey Theatre seems to find a Nigerian parallel in the Mbari movement of the 1960s; and Chinweizu, Soyinka's arch-critic, would seem to be the Nigerian version of Arthur Griffith. Thematically, the Anglo-Irish movement and the modern Nigerian Theatre follow similar patterns progressing from an interrogation of colonialism to a nationalist phase and finally arriving at a post-colonial amazement at the indifference with which the dreams of the preceding phase have been botched by their very authors. It would be instructive to examine also the relevance and the implications of the Irish experience for the Nigerian theatre and vice-versa.

But for now, our purpose has been to examine the treatments, the manifestations and the implications of the four themes of death, nationalism, language and revolt in the plays of Synge and Soyinka. These themes have been examined, in preceding chapters, with copious textual illustrations, and if, in retrospect, our analysis seems to appear eclectic, it is probably because we have tried to be accommodative of varying impressions and thoughts. This is, we make bold to assert, a just tribute to Synge and Soyinka, for their works reveal a synthesizing intelligence which is the product of widely-sourced impulses and which, for that reason, negates narrow critical appreciation.

In Chapter One, we defined the purpose and nature of the study and clarified our theoretical approach. Here, Synge and Soyinka are discussed with particular reference to their skills and accomplishments. It is observed that both writers have been largely misunderstood by their compatriots and critics in general but that, by the sheer force of inimitable talent and luck, they have both been able to rise above the various forces of hatred, envy, interpersonal frictions and official indignation which have threatened the very foundations

of their careers. A study of both dramatists, we argued, promises to be rewarding. The point was also made that the present thesis is a follow-up to our M.A. Project Essay written on the same authors in 1987; that this is so is a confirmation of the earlier claim that Synge-Soyinka scholarship provides, for the scholar, a wide range of research opportunities.

In Chapter Two, we examined both writers' treatment of the theme of death and it is noted that they both present death, as in classical and Elizabethan tragedies, as the reductio ad absurdum of existence. In their portraiture of this phenomenon, they explore the iconographies of death existent in their individual traditional backgrounds. The specific picture in their plays is that of characters who struggle to evade the prospect of death but whose lives ultimately lead in the very direction of dissolution. This picture seems to form the core of the tragic philosophy of Synge and Soyinka and it is one of the numerous aspects in which they share kinship with modern writers insofar as modern literature is concerned with the devitalization of man and the triumph of death.

But whereas Synge's concern with death has an autobiographical basis, as it is partly an expression of Synge's

continuous attempt to resolve the mortality-crisis in which he found himself, Soyinka's iconography of death is largely an intellectual process; that is, a kind of thanatodicea - a philosophy of life predicated on a study of the place of death in human experience.

In Chapter Three, we try to re-evaluate the charges of anti-nationalism that have been levelled against both writers and it is contended that these charges are not validated by concrete historical and artistic facts. Besides, they are nothing but the specious decantations of a group of ideologues who, in both Ireland and Nigeria, at one time assigned themselves the unsolicited role of guardians of public taste. The unfortunate thing is that these ideologues legislated over art from a politically sentimental perspective and it is for this reason that their views remain suspicious.

We added the caveat that the national controversy is more polemical and decisive in Synge's case to the degree that it was perennial and also to the degree that it resulted in riots, physical combats and legal tussles. Soyinka's nationalism, on the contrary, is more or less generally accepted; the voices of dissent here constitute a mere minority, only periodically vocal and largely treated as circus freaks. Our

conclusion is that, while there is a need to justify Synge's nationalism against arguments to the contrary, what ought to be done in Soyinka's case is to question the tendency to pigeon-hole him into the two convenient extremes of nationalism and anti-nationalism.

Both writers are nationalist insofar as their works draw their themes and inspiration and their flora and fauna from the Irish and Nigerian landscapes respectively; but this is done without any ideological affiliations since Synge and Soyinka are primarily concerned with objective truth, the kernel of higher nationalism.

In Chapter Four, we noted that Synge and Soyinka are masters of language both in terms of their manipulation and exploration of its varied aspects and also in terms of how they have both attempted to resolve the language dilemma of their respective countries. Many scholars have commented on this but requiring further academic attention is the ability of both writers to stretch language beyond its traditional frontiers as a vehicle of thought, and elevate it into high art in form of symbolic action, discourse and performance. Evidences of this abound in their plays.

We argued in our discussion that perhaps the most important value of a linguistic reading of their works resides neither

in its adulation of both writers' linguistic skills nor in its revelation of the semiotic range of their works but in the fact that it compels us to contemplate the theatrical communication of their plays. We observed that Synge's and Soyinka's language, by the fact of its peculiarity, imposes special demands on the theatrician and that these demands must be carefully considered if the plays are to be effectively realised on stage.

No reader or theatre worker, it is argued, should approach Synge's and Soyinka's plays, particularly with regards to their language, with pre-conceived notions of aesthetics and appreciation. Synge and Soyinka's art permits no such fixed a priori evaluation. Their works are protean and their language continuously evokes a myriad of impulses and impressions, whether it is encountered on the page or in the dynamic arena of the stage. The emphasis that is placed on the theatrical aspect of Synge and Soyinka's works in this chapter is important since, ultimately, both writers are theatre artists and the true test of their plays would lie in the area of performance. Synge and Soyinka may have been portrayed in the entire thesis as philosophers, as social visionaries and as aestheticians

but they are also, in the main, theatre artists. Their plays are eloquent on their authors' awareness of theatre architectonics and stage possibilities.

In Chapter Five, we argued that Synge and Soyinka are rebels in the sense that their works and personalities reveal a radical, iconoclastic temperament and vision which entail the dismantling of conventional orthodoxies, social and existential, and beneath this is a humanistic search for a saner world and an abiding justice for humanity.

In such works as Riders to the Sea and Madmen and Specialists, Synge and Soyinka question, respectively the very foundations of existence and rebel through authorial characters like Maurya and Old Man against those social and metaphysical conditions which threaten to annihilate man and convert his experience into a melange of hysteria and jeremiad. In works like Opera Wonyosi and The Tinker's Wedding, their satirical lenses shift slightly and attention is focussed on man as a social being. Here, what interests both writers are such peccadillos as power-mania, corruption, bribery and religious hypocrisy - that is, those little acts of vanity which highlight the physical and animalistic aspects of man. Synge and Soyinka laugh at these but their laughter, far from

being sadistic, is corrective and iconoclastic.

Synge and Soyinka, contrary to pervasive assumption, are not totally pessimistic about the fate of man nor are they atheistic. Instead, their works reveal a belief that man may ultimately survive if only he would re-examine himself and purify his personality. Both dramatists do not argue that God is irrelevant as the absence of messianic revolt in their works would seem to indicate but they insist that man's concern for God and religion should be genuine and not coloured by the hypocrisy of Synge's priests and the wanton self-dramatization of Soyinka's prophets.

Taken together, the four themes discussed highlight Synge and Soyinka's individuality, their attachment to local circumstances, and their universal relevance. They also reveal the nature of Synge and Soyinka's socio-political and artistic vision and their method of conveying this. The themes of death, revolt and nationalism achieve the former while the chapter on language illustrates the latter. Under the first three themes, Synge and Soyinka are discussed as they engage with the issues of survival, the place of man in his society and man's attempts to combat and manage the multiple contradictions which assail him.

The chapter on death and the sub-section on Existential revolt portray both writers as philosophers; the former defines an existential problem which the latter reiterates and resolves with empirical illustrations. While the chapter on death reveals the futility of existence and its enigmatic nature, the discussion of existential revolt reveals the specific manner in which Synge and Soyinka rebel against this metaphysical anguish and seek to erect an alternative scheme of survival in which man rejects orthodox patterns and relies, as Maurya does in Riders to the Sea and Old Man in Madmen and Specialists, on his own resources.

The philosophical temperament of both writers discussed here is complemented by an equally strong social vision and an engagement with sociological issues at a serious level of commitment. This is the point which our chapter on Nationalism and the section on social revolt attempt to emphasize. In both instances, we discuss Synge and Soyinka's satiric and iconoclastic temperament and the degree to which this compels them to caterwaul against those aspects of society which they consider inimical to the survival of the human estate.

In addition, the thesis has also attempted to discern the significance of both writers in the larger tradition of dramaturgy; first, by emphasizing their modernism and second, by discussing them in relation to other writers.

We now feel confident enough to declare that Synge and Soyinka are universal and timeless writers. They speak for all peoples and for all times. Their thematic leaning is towards the plight and the survival of man in a world that is characterized by the irreconcilable and irresolvable disjunction between dream and reality, between the past, the present and the future, between the state and the individual and between God and man. They paint a grim landscape: that of humanity tottering on the brink of a bottomless well, a point zero where apocalypse becomes a reality. But despite their tragic portraiture of man, as evident in our chapter on death and in our discussion of existential revolt, Synge and Soyinka are equally capable of the luxury of comedy; they detach themselves from time to time from man's jeremiad and engage in the re-assuring and psychologizing business of laughing.

Their tragedies confront us with the gradual debilitation of the human estate while their comedies put a restraining hand on our anxieties. The emergent thematic equilibrium

of their works, therefore, is a humanistic statement, a reassurance that man, in spite of the vicissitudes of fate may yet arrive at the portals of victory. This statement is often couched in privatist, metaphorical and symbolic codes; it is implicit rather than explicit, philosophical rather than propagandist, and consequently those, like the ultra-nationalists of Synge's time and of Soyinka's Nigerian society of the sixties, who look up to our two writers for facile mathematical resolutions of the human dilemma are often disappointed.

In their iconography of man's misfortune, Synge and Soyinka accuse man of being the architect of his own curse due to his avarice, cupidity, autolatry, hypocrisy and complete refusal to heed the lessons of time and history. Hence, the concomitant, albeit characteristically ambiguous, philosophical ethic of their plays is that man is the only being capable of resurrecting his own essence. Their characters lend us eyes through which we may comprehend our own imperfections. They are archetypes, theoretically far yet immediate for their lives touch ours, their anxieties move us and in contemplating their fate we are equally reminded of our own humanity and imperfections. It is this ability to frame the

human question in its manifold complexities that makes Synge and Soyinka universal. It is, indeed, not surprising that their works have received expression in languages other than theirs.

Their universal intelligence however, has 'a local habitation and a name'. The greatest writers, as Shaw pointed out, are most local in being most universal and Synge and Soyinka are no exceptions. Their works draw sustenance and motivation from the indigenous landscape - its heritage, sociology and psychology. This authenticates their works as patriotic pieces. But beyond this, Synge and Soyinka transcend national boundaries and espouse internationalism; inherent in their locality is the universal, both being mutually inter-connected, feeding and clarifying each other

Their creative attitude is, however, often seen as ambiguous, involving, as it does, a dual, apparently contradictory process of affirmation and rejection. They affirm the cosmogonic values of their heritage and confess the cosmopolitan range of their creative education but cognate with this is an iconoclastic exposition of the socio-political and economic contradictions of their local and universal heritage. Put differently, Synge and Soyinka

are rebels, completely incapable of cant and hypocrisy. The degree to which this is so has been discussed in our chapters on Nationalism and Modernism and Revolt.

Let it be noted that beneath their iconoclasm is a preference for objectivity which strengthens their vision and enhances their credentials as thought-makers, but this, ironically, has also been partly responsible, as the chapter on nationalism shows, for the negative reception of their works. But as years went by, unsympathetic critics of their works were often compelled by the force of overwhelming positive evidence to re-consider their initial objections.

Value judgements are contentious issues in literary criticism, especially in a study of two or more major dramatists as is attempted here. It is even more so when the two dramatists have already attained legendary status, as is the case with Synge and Soyinka. Yet, we feel compelled to report that throughout our study of Synge and Soyinka we have in almost all instances been forcibly struck by the fact that the latter appears richer, more varied and engaging. This is stated not to impugn Synge's integrity but to establish that each writer still retains his own stamp of identity despite all the similarities between both of them. We are of the view

that Synge lacks Soyinka's scope and versatility. In any case, there is a limit to a comparison of the works of a man who had only thirty-nine years to live and those of one who has already had a span of fifty-five. But that Synge's works, exiguous as they are, could be compared with Soyinka's large oeuvre is an index of the strength of his genius.

It remains to be seen whether literary excellence is a function of volume. Literary history parades a long list of prolific writers - Jokai, Vrchlicky, Camille Lemonnier, Kotzebue, Krazewski, Gleisch, Restif de la Bretonne and Madame de Genlis. It may also be remembered that Lope de Vega wrote eighteen hundred plays and four hundred and fifty autos. Balzac produced an average of four to five volumes annually for nineteen years. Between 1847 and 1879, Trollope wrote forty-five books. Didymus wrote six thousand treatises, Alexandre Hardy produced six hundred tragi-comedies. Marquis de Foudras was so productive that he wrote about thirty volumes in a year and Belleforest once boasted that he had a mill for producing books. But where are they all today in the echelons of literature? That Synge, with only seven plays, has succeeded in re-defining the frontiers of drama is a

strong confirmation of the depth of his perception and skill. He belongs to that category of taciturn geniuses - Joe Orton, Georg Buchner and Thornton Wilder-whose personalities are so richly endowed that contact with them forcibly reminds us of our own inadequacies.

We have also observed that Synge and Soyinka are innovative and avant-garde in their thoughts and modes and this, perhaps, has been largely responsible for the negative reception of their plays, particularly in the case of Synge who wrote within a fiercely ideological context which was situated on ex cathedra moral and political conventions. Although there was no official law of censorship in Ireland until 1921, there existed throughout the Irish Literary Renaissance a fanatical unofficial policing of the creative arts by self-congratulating politicians, ideologues and aesthetes. The chapter on Nationalism has already discussed the scope and implications of the activities of this class of Irishmen but the point is worth repeating that Synge suffered their ire most because, of all the Irish writers of the period, he was the most different, the most avant-garde.

His The Playboy of the Western World generated riotous behaviour in the theatre; The Well of the Saints and In the Shadow of the Glen were similarly denounced; Riders to the Sea was merely tolerated and the production of The Tinkers' Wedding had to be discouraged because of the play's undisguised anti-clericalism. These strictures against Synge's plays raise fundamental issues of aesthetics, of the sociology of literature and, most importantly, of censorship.

Censorship, it is worth noting, has had a chequered history in the arts. Freud, Heine, Voltaire, Shaw, Maxim Gorky, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, James Joyce, Rabelais, Hugo, Ibsen, Baudelaire, Moliere, Manet and more recently Umberto Eco and Salman Rushdie are examples of artists who, like Synge, have been arraigned and convicted at the court of public or official opinion because they dared to perceive reality with a lens that is different from and sharper than that of the general populace. But at a more critical level of investigation, it appears that those who condemn artists are themselves usually guilty of the same ethical shortcomings which they accuse artists of. Hence, censorship becomes a hypocritical act.

The example of the Roman Catholic Church is useful. This church has often banned books and excommunicated writers whose views are considered sensual, mystical or heretical; that is, antithetical to its own ecumenical intentions. In 1557, for example, Casanova's Memoirs, Flaubert's Madame Bovary, Boccaccio's Decameron and several other books were outlawed by Pope Paul IV in the Index Librorum Expurgatorius of that year but, sanctimonious as the Catholic Church is, it is not itself free of the same ethical shortcomings on whose basis it indicts authors and their books.

The contradiction that we encounter here is archetypal and it provides a good analogy for the Irish experience to the degree that those who accused Synge of immorality and unIrishness were themselves corrupt and less committed to the Irish and humanist cause. It is only just that history has vindicated Synge; today, his works which were once rejected have become part of the heritage of Irish and world literature and theatre.

Like Synge, Soyinka has also been strongly indicted by unsympathetic critics. In 1960, his A Dance of the Forests gave him a stormy beginning as critics descended on the play and dismissed it as an artistic enigma. In 1965, Soyinka's

entry into the Commonwealth Arts Festival was by a sleight of hand through a London production of The Road; different entries - Duro Ladipo's Oba Koso and John Ekwerre's production of J.P. Clark's Song of A Goat - had already been selected to represent Nigeria. It is not as if Soyinka's play was not good enough, the refusal to select his play is representative of the kind of cold shoulder which brilliant people often receive from many of their compatriots at different times.

During the 1960s, for example, Soyinka was called all kind of abusive names. He was also harrassed by the thugs of the ruling Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) because of the directness of his satirical barbs in such sketches as "The Republican", "The New Republican", and Before the Blackout. Throughout the Nigerian Civil war (1966-1969), Soyinka was persecuted by many newspapers and institutions. And when he produced Madmen and Specialists in Nigeria in January 1971 (Ibadan) and April 1971 (Ife), the play was received with mixed feelings, although it had been lauded at the time of its creation in 1970 in Waterford, Connecticut and in New York in the United States of America.

But like Synge, Soyinka has managed to survive these attacks on his talent and career. Between 1971 and 1975,

during the period of his self-exile, he cleared the doubts about his talents through such works as Jero's Metamorphosis, Death and the King's Horseman and The Bacchae of Euripides. These works advanced his dramatic career and within a decade after his return from exile, he has been able to establish his reputation as a serious dramatist so firmly that when he won the Nobel prize in 1986, it came as a surprise to no one. Soyinka, like Synge, is a dramatist of the first rank. On the basis of The Man Died (1972) or Death and the King's Horseman (1974) alone, as one critic remarked,¹¹ he deserves to be a Nobel Laureate. In much the same manner, J.M. Synge lives for ever with his poetry, prose and seven plays.

NOTES

¹ James Gibbs, "Drama and Nationalism: A Study of Ibsen, Synge and Soyinka", unpublished M.Litt. Dissertation, University of Bristol, 1972.

² Atabo Oko, "A Study of Nationalism in the Plays of Wole Soyinka, Derek Walcott and J.M. Synge", unpublished M.A. Dissertation, University of Ibadan, 1980.

³ Isidore Okpewho, "Comparatism and Separatism in African literature" World Literature Today, Vol. 55, No. 1, Winter 1981 pp. 10-33.

⁴ D.S. Izevbaye, "The African Experience of Comparative Literature," S.O. Asein (ed.), Comparative Approaches to Modern African Literature (Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, 1982), pp. 1-8.

⁵ Frederic Loliée, A Short History of Comparative Literature: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day (Translated by M. Douglas Power) (New York/London: Kennikat Press, 1970).

⁶ August Wilhelm von Schlegel, "Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature", Bernard F. Dukore (ed.), Dramatic Theory and Criticism: Greeks to Grotowski (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1974), p. 493.

⁷ Chidi Amuta, The Theory of African Literature: Implications for Practical Criticism (London and New Jersey: Institute for African Alternatives, Zed Books Ltd., 1989), p. 5.

⁸ C.L. Innes, "Through the Looking Glass. Africa and Irish Nationalist Writing", Eldred Jones (ed.) African Literature Today, No. 9 (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1978), pp. 10-23.

⁹ Obi Maduakor, "On the Poetry of War: Yeats and J.P. Clark," S.O. Asein (ed.) Comparative Approaches to Modern African Literature, pp. 94-103.

¹⁰Sister Eileen Sweeney, "The Irish Literary Revival and the Nigerian Literary Movement in the sixties," S.O. Asein (ed.), pp. 104-116.

¹¹Dapo Adelugba, in an interview with NTA Abeokuta shortly after the announcement of Soyinka's Nobel prize in October 1986.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

BIBLIOGRAPHYPRIMARY SOURCESJ. M. SYNGE

Saddlemeyer, Ann (ed.) J.M. Synge: Plays. London: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Synge, John M. Translations (Robin Skelton ed.). Dublin: Dolman Press, 1961.

—————. Four Plays and The Aran Islands (Robin Skelton ed.). London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

—————. The Autobiography of J.M. Synge. London: Oxford University Press, 1965.

—————. Plays, Poems and Prose. London and Melbourne: Dent, 1988.

The Synge Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College Dublin. (Nicholas Grene, Compiler). Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1971.

WOLE SOYINKA

Soyinka, Wole. "The Future of African Writing", The Horn, 4(1), 1960, pp. 10-16.

—————. "From a Common Back Cloth: A Reassessment of the African Literary Image". American Scholar, 32, Summer 1963, pp. 387-397.

—————. "And After the Narcissist?" Africa Forum, 1(4), Spring, 1966, pp. 53-64.

- _____. "The Writer in a Modern African State".
Transition, 6(31), June/July 1967, pp. 11-13.
- _____. Collected Plays 2. London: Oxford
University Press, 1974.
- _____. "Neo-Tarzanism: The Poetics of Pseudo-
Tradition" Transition (Accra), 48, 1975, pp. 38-44.
- _____. "Drama and the Revolutionary Ideal", Karen
L. Morell (ed.), In Person: Achebe, Awoonor and
Soyinka. Seattle, Washington: Institute for Compara-
tive and Foreign Area Studies, University of
Washington, 1975, pp. 61-88.
- _____. Ogun Abibiman, London: Rex Collings, 1976.
- _____. Idanre and Other Poems. London: Eyre Methuen,
1977.
- _____. Myth, Literature and the African World.
London: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- _____. "Theatre and the Emergence of the African Film
Industry" Alfred E. Opubor and Onuora Nwuneli (eds.).
The Development and Growth of the Film Industry in
Nigeria. Lagos: National Council for Arts and Culture,
1979, pp. 97-103.
- _____. Poems from Prison. London: Rex Collings Ltd.,
1981.
- _____. "Towards a True Theatre" Yemi Ogunbiyi (ed.)
Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: a critical sourcebook.
Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 1981, pp. 457-461.
- _____. "Theatre in African Traditional Culture:
Survival patterns" Richard Olaniyan (ed.) African
History and Culture. Lagos: Longman Group Ltd., 1982,
pp. 237-249.

- • "Shakespeare and the Living Dramatist".
Shakespeare Survey, Vol. 36, 1983, pp. 1-10.
- • The Critic and Society: Barthes, Leftocracy
and Other Mythologies. Ife: University of Ife Press,
1982.
- • Unlimited Liability Company. Lagos: Ewuro
Productions Label E.W.P. 001, 1983, disc record.
- • Collected Plays 1. London: Oxford University
Press, 1984.
- • "Nobel Lecture 1986: This Past Must Address
its Present". Sweden: The Nobel Foundation, 1986,
Mimeograph, 20pp.
- • Art, Dialogue and Outrage. Ibadan: New Horn
Press, 1988.
- • "Mad dogs and peppersoup" The Guardian,
Sunday, Jan. 31, 1988, p.7.
- • "Of Cartoon and National Honour" The Guardian,
Sunday, Jan. 31, 1988, p.7.
- • "Power and Creative Strategies" The Punch,
Wednesday, May 4, 1988. p. 10.
- • "At the touch of a button" The Guardian,
Thursday, July 7, 1988, p. 12.
- • "Proscription or Dialogue: A Simple Choice"
The Punch Wednesday, July 27, 1988, p.7.
- • Ake: The Years of Childhood. Ibadan:
Spectrum Books Ltd., 1988.

- • "The Fifth Horseman" The Guardian,
Thursday, February 23, 1989, p. 7.
- • Six Plays. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 1988.
- • Isara: Voyage Round 'Essay'. Ibadan:
Fountain Publications, 1989.

SECONDARY SOURCES

BOOKS

- Abd-ru-shin. In the Light of Truth: The Grail Message
Vol. II Third edition. Vomperberg: Alexander
Bernhardt Publishing Co., 1979.
- Abrahamsson, H. The Origin of Death: Studies in African
Mythology (Stud. ethnogr. Upsal. 3). Uppsala:
Almqvist and Wicksells, 1951.
- Adamov, Arthur, Ici et Maintenant. Paris: Gallimard, 1964.
- Adedeji, Joel. Nationalism and the Nigerian National Theatre
Munger Africana Library Notes, No. 54. Pasadena:
California Institute of Technology, 1980.
- Adelugba, Dapo (ed.) Studies on Synge. Ibadan: Ibadan
University Press; 1977.
- (ed.). Before Our Very Eyes. Ibadan: Spectrum
Books Ltd., 1987.
- Agetua, John (ed.) Interviews with Six Nigerian Writers.
Benin City: Bendel Newspapers Corporation, 1974/75.

- Alvarez, Alfred. The Savage God: A Study of Suicide. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1940.
- Aries, Philippe. Western Attitudes Toward DEATH: From the Middle Ages to the Present (Transl. by Patricia M. Ranum). Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins Press, 1974. Later expanded and entitled The Hour of Our Death. New York: A. Knopf, 1981.
- Artaud, Antonin. The Theatre and Its Double (transl. by Mary Richards). New York: Grove Press Inc., 1958.
- Asgarally, Issa. Littérature et Révolte. Ile Maurice: Editions le Flamboyant, 1985.
- Astrachan, Sam. An End to Dying. London: Barrie, 1958.
- Ayandele, E.A. The Educated Elite in the Nigerian Society. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1979.
- Azikiwe, Nnamdi, Renascent Africa. London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd., 1968.
- Babcock, Kendrick Charles. The Rise of American Nationality: 1811-1819. New York and Evanston: Harper and Row Publishers, J and J Harper Editions, 1968.
- Banham, Martin (with Clive Wake). African Theatre Today. London: Pitman Publishing Ltd., 1976.
- Barbotin, Edmond. The Humanity of Man. New York: Orbis Books, 1975.
- Barry, William D.D. Heralds of Revolt: Studies in Modern Literature and Dogma. Port Washington, New York, London: Kennikat Press, 1971.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. The Coming of Age (transl. by Patrick O'Brian). New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1972.

- Becker, Ernest. The Denial of Death. New York: The Free Press, 1973.
- Beier, Ulli. Origin of Life and Death: African Myths. London: Heinemann, 1966.
- Bell, J. Bowyer. On Revolt: Strategies of National Liberation. Cambridge, Mass and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1976.
- Bendann, E. Death Customs: An Analytical Study of Burial Rites. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930.
- Benn, Maurice B. The Drama of Revolt: A Critical Study of Georg Buchner. London: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Benson, Eugene. J.M. Synge. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1982.
- Bentley, Eric. The Modern Theatre: A Study of Dramatists and the Drama. London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1950.
- Bevington, David. Action is Eloquence: Shakespeare's Language as Gesture. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- Biesanz, John and Mavis Biesanz. Modern Society: An Introduction to Social Science. Second Edition New Jersey, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1959.
- Block, B. and Trager, G.L. Outline of Linguistic Analysis. Baltimore: Linguistic Society of America/Waverly Press, 1942.
- Bloomfield, Leonard. Language. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1950.
- Bogard, Travis and William I. Oliver (eds.) Modern Drama: Essays in Criticism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.

- Boisdeffre, Pierre de. Une Histoire Vivante de la Littérature d'Aujourd'hui 1939-1960. Paris: Le Livre Contemporain, 1959.
- Bolinger, Dwight. Aspects of Language. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1968.
- Booth, James. Writers and Politics in Nigeria. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981.
- Borklund, Elmer. Contemporary Literary Critics. London: St. James Press, N.Y.: St Martin's Press, 1977.
- Bosanquet, Bernard. Social and International Ideals: Being Studies in Patriotism. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1968.
- Bourgeois, Maurice. John Millington Synge and the Irish Theatre. London: Benjamin Blom, 1965.
- Bowle, John. The Nationalist Idea. London: Ampersand Ltd., 1955.
- Boyd, Ernest. Ireland's Literary Renaissance. Dublin: Allen Figgis, 1968.
- Bradbury, Malcolm. The Social Context of Modern English Literature. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971.
- Brockett, Oscar G. The Theatre: An Introduction Fourth edition. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979.
- Brown, John Russell. Theatre Language: A Study of Arden, Osborne, Pinter and Wesker. London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1972.
- Brown, Norman O. Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytic Meaning of History. New York: Viking Books, 1959.
- Brown, Roger. Words and Things. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1959.
- Brustein, Robert. The Theatre of Revolt. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1965.

- . Revolution as Theatre: Notes on the New Radical Style. New York: Liveright, 1971.
- Burke, Kenneth. A Grammar of Motives. New York: Prentice Hall Inc., 1945.
- Cameron, Kenneth Neil (ed.) Romantic Rebels: Essays on Shelley and his Circle. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973.
- Campbell, Joseph (ed.) The Portable Jung. New York: Viking, 1971.
- . Man and Time. New York: Pantheon, 1957.
- Camus, Albert. Resistance, Rebellion and Death (Translated by Justin O'Brien). New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961.
- . The Rebel (Translated by Anthony Bower). Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1962.
- . The Myth of Sisyphus. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979.
- Carr, Edward Hallett. Nationalism and After. London: St Martin's Press Inc. and Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1945.
- Carroll, John B. Language and Thought. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1964.
- Carson, Rachel. The Sea Around Us. New York: The New American Library, 1960.
- Cassirer, Ernst. Language and Myth. New York: Dover Publications, 1953.
- Caudwell, Christopher. Illusion and Reality: A Study of the Sources of Poetry. London: Laurence and Wishart, 1946.
- . Studies and Further Studies in a Dying Culture. New York and London: Monthly Review Press, Modern Reader edition, 1972.

- Cetron, Marvin and Thomas O'Toole. Encounters with the Future: A Forecast of Life into the Twenty-first Century. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1982.
- Chadwick, Munro H. The Nationalities of Europe and The Growth of National Ideologies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966.
- Chase, Stuart (in collaboration with Marian Tyler Chase). Power of Words. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1954.
- Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Ihechukwu Madubuike. Toward the Decolonization of African Literature Vol. 1, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980.
- Chomsky, Noam. Syntactic Structures. The Hague: Mouton, 1957.
- Choron, Jacques. Modern Man and Mortality. New York: Macmillan, 1964.
- . Death and Western Thought. New York: Collier Books, 1963.
- Clark, Eburn. Hubert Ogunde: The Making of Nigerian Theatre. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Clarke, Desmond (ed.) The Changing Face of Literature: A discussion and evaluation of developments over the past fifty years. Proceedings of thirty-eighth International P.E.N. Congress, Dublin 12-18, September, 1971. Dublin: The Irish P.E.N. Centre, Ireland, 1972.
- Clark, Grahame. The Identity of Man. London and New York: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1983.
- Clark, William Smith. The Early Irish Stage: The Beginnings to 1720. London: Oxford University Press, 1955.
- Cobban, Alfred. National Self-determination. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944.

- Coggin, Phillip A. Technology and Man: The Nature and Organisation of Technology in Modern Society. Exeter: A Wheaton and Coy. Ltd., 1980.
- Coleman, James S. Nigeria: Background to Nationalism. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1971.
- Collison, Robert and Mary. Dictionary of Foreign Quotations. London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1980.
- Cook, David. African Literature: A Critical View. London: Longman, 1980.
- Corkery, Daniel. Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature. Cork: The Mercier Press, 1966.
- Corrigan, Robert W. (ed.) Theatre in the Twentieth Century. New York: Grove Press Inc., 1963.
- _____. Masterpieces of Modern Central European Theatre: Five Plays. New York: Collier Books, 1967.
- Cox, Harold. Later Life: The Realities of Aging. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1984.
- Coxhead, Elizabeth. Lady Gregory: A Literary Portrait second edition. London: Secker and Warburg, 1966.
- _____. Daughters of Erin. London: Secker and Warburg, 1965.
- Da Free John. Easy Death: Talks and Essays on the Inherent and Ultimate Transcendence of Death and Everything Else. (Compiled and edited with an introduction and commentary by Georg. Feuerstein). Clearlake, California: Dawn Horse Press, 1983.
- Davidson, Basil. Which Way Africa?: The Search for a New Society. 3rd ed. England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1971.

- Davydov, Yuri. Myth, Philosophy, Avant-gardism: Philosophic Myth-Making and the Literary Avant-gardism. Moscow: Raduga Publishers, 1978.
- Derrida, Jacques. Writing and Difference. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.
- Deutsch, Karl. Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality. Second ed. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: 1975.
- Dobzhansky, Theodosius. Mankind Evolving: The Evolution of the Human Species. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975.
- Dixon, Peter. Rhetoric. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1971.
- Drinkwater, John. Patriotism in Literature. London: Williams and Norgate, 1924.
- Dublin, L.L. Suicide: A Sociological and Statistical Study. New York: Ronald Press, 1963.
- Ducasse, C.J. The belief in a life after death, Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1961.
- Duerden, Denis. The Invisible Present: African Art and Literature. New York: Harper and Row, 1975.
- Duerden, Denis and Cosmo Pieterse. African Writers Talking. London: Heinemann, 1975.
- Dukore, Bernard F. Dramatic Theory and Criticism: Greeks to Grotowski. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974.
- Durkheim, Emile. Suicide: A Study in Sociology. (Transl. by J.A. Spaulding and G. Simpson). New York: The Free Press, 1951.
- Eagleton, Terry. Literary Theory: An Introduction. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1986.

- Edgeworth, Maria. Castle Rackrent (Edited with an introduction by George Watson). Oxford: Oxford University Press 1977.
- Ekwensi, Cyprian (ed.) Festac Anthology of Nigerian New Writing. Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, 1977.
- Elam, Keir. The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama. London and New York: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1980.
- Eliot, T.S. The Waste Land and Other Poems. London: Faber and Faber, 15th Impression, MCMLXII.
- The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1952.
- To Criticize the Critic and Other Writings. London: Faber and Faber, 1965.
- Ellis-Fermor, Una. The Irish Dramatic Movement. Second ed. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1967.
- Ellman, Richard and Charles Fiedelson Jr. (eds). The Modern Tradition: Backgrounds of Modern Literature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Embler, Weller. Metaphor and Meaning. Deland, Fla: Everett/Edwards, 1966.
- Emrich, Wilhelm, The Literary Revolution and Modern Society and Other Essays (Transl. by Alexander and Elizabeth Henderson). New York: Fredrick Ungar Publishing Co., 1971. 1981.
- Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 18. Chicago/London/Toronto/Geneva/Sydney/Tokyo/Manila/Seoul: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1981.
- Entwistle, William J. Aspects of Language. London: Faber and Faber, Mcmliii.
- Erikson, Erik H. Identity: Youth and Crisis. New York: W.W. Norton, 1968.

- Esslin, Martin. The Theatre of the Absurd. New York: Anchor Books, 1969.
- Evans, Gareth Llyod. The Language of Modern Drama. London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd.; New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, Totowa, 1977.
- Evans, W.E.D. The Chemistry of Death. Springfield, Ill: Charles C. Thomas, 1963.
- Evans-Wentz, W.Y. (transl.) The Tibetan Book of the Dead. New York: Oxford University Press, 1960.
- Farberow, Norman L. Taboo Topics. New York: Atherton Press, 1963.
- Faulkner, William. The Sound and the Fury. London: Penguin in association with Chatto and Windus, 1971.
- Fay, Frank J. Towards a National Theatre: Dramatic Criticism (edited with an introduction by Robert Hogan). Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1970.
- Feifel, H. (ed.), The Meaning of Death. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959.
- Fielder, Leslie Aaron. Love and Death in the American Novel. New York: Criterion Books, 1960.
- Finley, M.I. The Ancient Greeks. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1981.
- Fischer, Ernst. The Necessity of Art (transl. by Anna Bostock). London: Penguin Books, 1970.
- Flanagan, Thomas. The Irish Novelists 1800-1850. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959.
- Fleischmann, Wolfgang B. (ed.) Encyclopaedia of World Literature in the Twentieth Century Vol. 3, O-z. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1971.

- Forster, John Burt Jr. Heirs to Dionysus: A Nietzschean Current in Literary Modernism. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Fowler, Roger (ed.) Essays on Style and Language: Linguistic and Critical Approaches to Literary Style. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970.
- Fraisse, P. The Psychology of Time. (Transl. by Jennifer Lieth). New York: Harper and Row, 1963.
- Freeman, E. The Theatre of Albert Camus: A Critical Study. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1971.
- Freud, Sigmund. The Problem of Lay Analyses. New York: Brentano's Publisher, 1927.
- An Outline of Psychoanalysis. New York: Norton, 1949.
- Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol. XVII. London: Hogarth, 1955.
- Frisch, Karl von. Bees, Their Vision, Chemical Senses and Language. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1950.
- Fromkin, V. and R. Rodman. An Introduction to Language. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974.
- Fromm, Erich. The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1964.
- Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957.
- Furst, Lilian R. Romanticism. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1976.
- Gascoigne, Bamber. Twentieth-Century Drama. London: Hutchinson University Library, 1974.

- Gasner, John. Masters of the Drama (Third revised and enlarged edition). New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1954.
- Directions in Modern Theatre and Drama.
New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966.
- Gakwandi, Arthur Shatto. The Novel and Contemporary Experience in Africa. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1977.
- Gates Jr., Henry Louis (ed.) Black Literature and Literary Theory. New York and London: Methuen Inc., 1984.
- Geiger, Don. The Sound, Sense, and Performance of Literature. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foreman and Coy., 1963.
- Gesell, Arnold and F.L. Ilg. The Child from five to ten. New York: Harper and Bros., 1946.
- Gibbs, James. Wole Soyinka. London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1986.
- (ed.) Critical Perspectives on Wole Soyinka. Washington: Three Continents Press, Inc., 1980.
- et.al. (eds.) Wole Soyinka: A Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources. London: Greenwood Press, 1986.
- Giglioli, Pier Paolo (ed.). Language and Social Context. England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1977.
- Gillian, Garth. From Sign to Symbol. Sussex: The Harvester Press, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1982.
- Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss. Awareness of Dying. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966.
- Glicksberg, Charles I. The Tragic Vision in Twentieth Century Literature. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press; London and Amsterdam: Feffer and Simons, Inc., 1968.

- The Ironic Vision in Modern Literature.
The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969.
- Goldberg, Isaac. The Wonder of Words: An Introduction to Language. London: Peter Owen Ltd.; MCMLVIII.
- Greene, David H. and Edward M. Stephens. J.M. Synge 1871-1909.
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959.
- Gregory, Lady Augusta. Our Irish Theatre. Dublin: Ellis-Fermor, 1954.
- Greene, Nicholas, Synge: A Critical Study of the Plays.
London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1975.
- Grigson Geoffrey (ed.) The Concise Encyclopaedia of Modern World Literature. London: Hutchinson and Co., 1963.
- Gugelberger, Georg M. (ed.) Marxism and African Literature.
New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1986.
- Gunther, John. Death Be Not Proud. New York: Harper and Bros., 1949.
- Gurr, Ted. Robert. Why Men Rebel. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.
- Haim, Sylvia G. (ed.) Arab Nationalism: An Anthology.
Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976.
- Hall, R.A. An Essay on Language. New York: Chilton Books, 1968.
- Hamalian, Leo and Edmond L. Volpe (eds.), Ten Modern Short Novels. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1958.
- Harmon, Glynn. Human Memory and Knowledge: A Systems Approach.
London: Greenwood Press, 1973.
- Harmon, Maurice (ed.), J.M. Synge: Centenary Papers 1971.
Dublin: Dolmen Press Ltd., 1972.

- Hartnoll, Phyllis (ed.). The Oxford Companion to the Theatre. London: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Hassan, Ihab H. The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Post-modern Literature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Hayes, Carlton J.H. Essays on Nationalism. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966.
- The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism. New York: Russell and Russell, 1968.
- Hayford, J.E. Casely, Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation. Second edition, with a new Introduction. by F. Nnabuenyi Ugonna. London: Frank Cass and Company. Ltd., 1969.
- Heidegger, Martin. An Introduction to Metaphysics (Transl. by Ralph Manheim). New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.
- Heilbroner, Robert L. An Inquiry into the Human Prospect. New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc., 1974.
- Henn, T.R. (ed.) The Plays and Poems of J.M. Synge. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1963.
- Henn, T.R. The Harvest of Tragedy. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1956.
- Heywood, Christopher (ed.). Perspectives on African Literature. London: Heinemann, 1979.
- Hinchliffe, Arnold P. Modern Verse Drama. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1977.
- Hinsley, F.H. Nationalism and the International System. New York: Oceana Publications Inc., 1973.
- Hocking, W.E. The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience. New York: Harper and Bros., 1957.

- Hoffman, Frederick J. Freudianism and the Literary Mind
2nd edition. Louisiana: Louisiana State University
Press, 1957.
- , The Mortal No: Death and the Modern Imagination.
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964.
- Hogan, Robert and James Kilroy. Laying the Foundations 1902-
1904. Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1976.
- Hogan, Robert and Michael J. O'Neill (ed.). Joseph Holloway's
Irish Theatre Vol. One, 1926-1931. California:
Proscenium Press, 1968.
- Hogan, Jeremiah J. The English Language in Ireland. Dublin:
Educational Co. of Ireland, 1926.
- Hollister, Warren (ed.) Landmark of the Western Heritage
Vol. 1. New York: John Wiley and Sons Ltd., 1955.
- Holmes, Janet and J.P. Pride (eds.). Sociolinguistics.
England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1982.
- Hoodin, J.P. The Dilemma of Being Modern. London: Routledge,
1956.
- Hooper, Walter (ed.). Selected Literary Essays by C.S. Lewis.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.
- Howe, Irving (ed.). Literary Modernism. New York: Fawcett
Premier Book, 1967.
- Hunter, Frederick J. The Power of Dramatic Form. New York:
Exposition Press, 1974.
- Hyde, Douglas. A Literary History of Ireland: From Earliest
Times to the Present Day. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899.
- Ikeda, Daisaku. Dialogue on Life Vol. II: Buddhist Perspectives
On the Eternity of Life. Tokyo: Nichiren Shoshu
International Center, 1977.

- Ikime, Obaro (ed.) Groundwork of Nigerian History. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Nigerian Ltd., 1980.
- Illich, Ivan. Deschooling Society. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1972.
- Innes, C.L. Child or Savage: Irish and African Nationalist Literatures. Washington: Three Continents Press, 1987.
- Jacobi, Jolande (ed.). C.G. Jung: Psychological Reflections. New York: Harper and Row, 1961.
- Jaspers, Karl. Existentialism and Humanism (Translated by E.E. Ashton). New York: Russell F. Moore Company, 1952.
- *Man in the Modern Age (trans. Eden and Cedar Paul). Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1957.
- Jeffares, Norman A. W.B. Yeats: Man and Poet. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1949.
- . Anglo-Irish Literature. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1982.
- and K.G.W. Cross (eds). In Excited Reverie. London: Macmillan Ltd., 1965.
- Jeyifo, Biodun. The Truthful Lie: Essays on a Sociology of African Drama. London: New Beacon Books Ltd., 1985.
- Johnston, Denis. John Millington Synge. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1965.
- Jones, Eldred. Othello's Countrymen: The African in English Renaissance Drama. London: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- . The Writing of Wole Soyinka. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1983.
- , Eustace Palmer and Marjorie Jones (eds.). ALT 17: The Question of Language in African Literature Today. London: James Currey, 1989.

- Jorgensen, Paul A. Redeeming Shakespeare's Words. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962.
- Jung, C.G. Psychological Reflections (Jolande Jacobi (ed.)). New York: Harper and Row, 1961.
- Kafka, Franz. The Castle (transl. by Willa and Edwin Muir). London: Secker and Warburg, 1930, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930.
- Kant, Immanuel. The Critique of Judgement (transl. James Creed Meredith). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952.
- KAPO. Kongi's Harvest, Production programme, Lagos, Jan.1, 87.
- Karl, Frederick R. and Leo Hamalian (eds.) The Existential Imagination: From de Sade to Sartre. London: Pan Books Ltd., 1974.
- Kastenbaum, Robert. Death, Society and Human Experience (2nd ed.). St. Louis: Mosby, 1981.
- and Ruth Aisenberg. The Psychology of Death London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1974.
- Katrak, Ketu H. Wole Soyinka and Modern Tragedy: A Study of Dramatic Theory and Practice. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986.
- Kaufmann, Walter (ed.). The Portable Nietzsche. New York: The Viking Press, 1963.
- . Existentialism: from Dostoevsky to Sartre. New York: The World Publishing Company, 1972.
- Kedourie, Elie (ed.) Nationalism in Asia and Africa. New York and Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1970.
- Kedourie, Elie. Nationalism. London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd., 1960.

- Kennedy, Andrew K. Six Dramatists in Search of a Language. London: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- Kermode, Frank. The Sense of an Ending. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- , John Hollander et. al. (eds.). The Oxford Anthology of English Literature Vol. II. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- Kierkegaard, Soren. Either/Or 2 vols. (Translated by David Swenson and Lillian Swenson). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946.
- , The Sickness Unto Death. (transl. by Walter Lowrie). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946.
- , The Journals of Soren Kierkegaard (Transl. by Alexander Dru). London and New York: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1951.
- Kilroy, James. The 'Playboy' Riots. Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1971.
- King, Bruce (ed.). Introduction to Nigerian Literature. Lagos & London: University of Lagos and Evans Brothers Ltd., 1971.
- King, Mary C. The Drama of J.M. Synge. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1985.
- Kirby, E.T. (ed.), Total Theatre: A Critical Anthology. New York: E.P. Dutton and Co. Inc. 1969.
- Kitchin, Laurence. Mid-Century Drama. London: Faber and Faber, 1962.
- , Drama in the Sixties: Form and Interpretation. London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1975.
- Kitto, H.D.F. Form and Meaning in Drama. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1971.

- Knott, Eleanor and Gerald Murphy. Early Irish Literature. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966.
- Kohn, Hans. Nationalism as group consciousness. New York: Macmillan, 1964.
- Korzybski, Alfred. The Manhood of Humanity. Conn.: Inter Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing Co., 1950.
- Kubler-Ross, Elisabeth. On Death and Dying. New York: Macmillan, 1969.
- Kuhler, W. The Mentality of Apes (2nd ed.). New York: Harcourt Brace, 1927.
- Kunitz, Stanley J. and Howard Haycraft (eds). Twentieth Century Authors. New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1942.
- Kurrik, Maire Jaanus. Literature and Negation. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979.
- Laforgue, Jules. Selected Writings of Jules Laforgue (ed. and transl. by William Jay Smith). New York: Grove Press, 1956.
- Lamont, C. The Illusion of Immortality. New York: Philosophical Library, 1956.
- Langer, Lawrence L. The Age of Atrocity: Death in Modern Literature. Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.
- Laski, Harold J. Nationalism and the Future of Civilization. London: C.A. Watts and Co. Ltd., 1932.
- . A Grammar of Politics. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982.

- Laurence, Margaret. Long Drum and Cannons. London: Macmillan, 1968.
- Lederer, Ivo J. and Peter F. Sugar. Nationalism in Eastern Europe. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1971.
- Legouis, Emile and Loius Cazamian. A History of English Literature (Revised edition) (Translated from French by Helen Douglas Irvine). London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1972.
- Lepp, Ignace. Death and Its Mysteries. New York: Macmillan, 1972.
- Lewald, Ernest H. (ed.). The Cry of Home: Cultural Nationalism and the Modern Writer. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1972.
- Lindenberger, Herbert. Historical Drama: The Relation of Literature to Society. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975.
- Lindfors, Bernth. Folklore in Nigerian Literature. New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1973.
- (ed.). Research Priorities in African Literatures. Munchen, N.Y., London, Paris: Hans Zell Publishers, 1984.
- Loliee, Frederic. A Short History of Comparative Literature: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day (transl. by M. Douglas Power). New York/London: Kennikat Press, 1970.
- Lucas, F.L. Style. London: Pan Books Ltd., 1964.
- Lumley, Frederick. New Trends in Twentieth Century Drama: A Survey Since Ibsen and Shaw. London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1969.
- Lynd, Robert. Old and New Masters. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1919.

- Lyons, F.S.L. Ireland Since the Famine. London: Collins and Fontana, 1981.
- MacDonagh, Thomas. Literature in Ireland: Studies (in) Irish and Anglo-Irish. Dublin: The Talbot Press Ltd., n.d.
- Macmillan, W.W. Africa Emergent. Rev. ed. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1949.
- Mahood, M.M. Shakespeare's Wordplay. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1957.
- Malone, Andrew E. Irish Drama. London: Benjamin Blom, 1965.
- Mann, Thomas. Essays of Three Decades (Transl. by T.H. Lowe-Porter). New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947.
- Death in Venice. London: Penguin in association with Secker and Warburg, 1967.
- Marcuse, Herbert. Counter-revolution and Revolt. London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1972.
- Max Schur, M.D. Freud: Living and Dying. London: The Hogarth Press, 1972.
- Maxwell, D.E.S. and S.B. Bushrui (eds.) W.B. Yeats 1865-1965: Centenary Essays on the Art of W.B. Yeats. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1965.
- McCann, Sean (Compiler). The Wit of the Irish. London: Sphere Books Ltd., 1970.
- Megara, Gaudence. Vittorio Alfieri: Forerunner of Italian Nationalism. New York: Columbia University Press, 1930.
- Mercier, Vivian. The Irish Comic Tradition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.

- Merringer, J. The Gods of Pre-historic Man. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1960.
- Metwally, Abdalla A. Studies in Modern Drama. Beirut: Beirut Arab University, 1971.
- Mikhail, E.H. Dissertations on Anglo-Irish Drama: A Bibliography of Studies 1870-1970. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1973.
- Milroy, James. The Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins. London: Andre Deutsch Ltd., 1977.
- Minogue, K.R. Nationalism. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1969.
- Minot, Stephen. Three Genres: The Writing of Poetry, Fiction and Drama 4th ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1988.
- Mitford, Jessica. The American Way of Death. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1963.
- Montefiore, Hugh, Can Men Survive? London: Collins, 1969.
- Moody, Raymond.A. Life After Life. Covington, Ga: Mockingbird Books, 1975.
- Moody, T.W. and F.X. Martin (eds.). The Course of Irish History. Cork: The Mercier Press, 1967.
- Moore, Gerald. Wole Soyinka. Ibadan: Evans Brothers Ltd., 1971.
- Twelve African Writers. London: Hutchinson, 1980.
- Moriarty, David M. The Loss of Loved Ones. Springfield, III: Charles C. Thomas, 1967.
- Mphahlele, Ezekiel. The African Image. London: Faber and Faber, 1962.
- Munnichs, J.M.A. Old Age and Finitude. Basel, Switzerland and New York: Karger, 1966.

- Murphy, Daniel J. The Perception of Synge's Plays in Ireland and America: 1907-1912. New York: Greenwood Press, 1975.
- Ngara, Emmanuel. Art and Ideology in the African Novel: A Study of the Influence of Marxism on African Writing. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1987.
- Nationalities and Subject Races: Report of Conference Held in Caxton Hall, Westminster, June 28-30, 1910. London: P.S. King and Son, 1911.
- Nicol, Davidson (ed.) Africanus Horton: The Dawn of Nationalism in Modern Africa - Extracts from the Political, educational and scientific writings of J.A.B. Horton M.D. 1835-1883. London and Harlow: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1969.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner (transl. by Walter Kaufmann), New York: Vintage Books, 1967.
- Nkosi, Lewis. Tasks and Masks: Themes and Styles of African Literature. United Kingdom: Longman Group Ltd., 1981.
- Nobel Foundation and the Swedish Academy. Nobel Prize Library: Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Rabindranath Tagore, Sigrid Undset, W.B. Yeats. New York: Alexis Gregory and California: CRM Publishing, 1971.
- Novikov, Vassilly, Artistic Truth and the Dialectics of Creative Work. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981.
- Nwoko, Somayina G. Nigeria: Path to Nationalism. Ibadan Ogunsina Printing Works, 1982.
- Nyerere, Julius, Freedom and Unity - Uhuru na umoja, a selection from writings and speeches 1962-65. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- O'Brien, Conor, C. and Maire. A Concise History of Ireland. London: Thames and Hudson, 1972.

- O'Connor, D. J. A Critical History of Western Philosophy. New York: The Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan Publishers; 1964.
- Ogden, C.K. and Ivor Armstrong Richards. The Meaning of Meaning. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1923.
- Ogunba, Oyin and Abiola Irele (eds.) Theatre in Africa. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1978.
- Ogunba, Oyin. The Movement of Transition. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1975.
- * Literary Art and Literary Creativity in Contemporary Africa. Ife: University of Ife Press, 1979.
- Ogunbiyi, Yemi. Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: a Critical Source-book. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 1981.
- Ogunde, Kunle. A Time to Live A Time To Die. Lagos: The World Productions, 1983.
- O'Hanlon, Thomas J. The Irish: Portrait of a People. London: Andre Deutsch, 1976.
- Olaniyan, Richard (ed.) African History and Culture. Lagos: Longman Group Ltd., 1982.
- Olatunji, Olatunde O. Features of Yoruba Oral Poetry. Ibadan: University Press Ltd., 1984.
- Ong, Walter J. The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History. New York: Simon the Schuster, 1970.
- Opubor, Alred E. and Onuora Nwuneli (eds.). The Development and Growth of the Film Industry in Nigeria. Lagos: National Council for Arts and Culture, 1979.
- Osundare, Niyi. Village Voices. Ibadan: Evans Brothers Nig. Publishers Ltd., 1984.

- Ricard, Alain. Theatre and Nationalism: Wole Soyinka and LeRoi Jones (transl. Femi Osofisan). Ife: University of Ife Press, 1983.
- Richards, I.A. Philosophy of Rhetoric. London: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Ricoeur, Paul. The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language. (Transl. by Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and S.J. John Costello). London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978. ✓
- Robertson, John M. Patriotism and Empire Third Edition. London: Grant Richards, 1900.
- Rodgers, W.R. Ireland in Colour. London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1963.
- Roscoe, Adrian A. Mother is Gold: A Study in West African Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.
- Rosenthal, M.L. The Modern Poets: A Critical Introduction. New York: Oxford University Press, 1960.
- Royal Institute of International Affairs, Nationalism, A Report by a Study Group of Members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1939.
- Rozenzweig, Franz. Understanding the Sick and the Healthy. ed. by N.N. Glatzer. New York: Noonday Press, 1953.
- Russell, Bertrand. Power. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1975.
- Sacks, Sheldon (ed.). On Metaphor. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980. ✓
- Saddlemeyer, Ann. J.M. Synge and Modern Comedy. Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1968.

- Seton-Watson, Hugh. Nationalism and Communism: Essays, 1946-1963. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1964.
- Seymour, St. John D. Anglo-Irish Literature 1200-1582. London: Cambridge University Press, 1929.
- Seymour-Smith, Martin. Who's Who in Twentieth Century Literature. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976.
- Shaffer, Boyd C. Nationalism: Interpreters and Interpretation. Washington D.C.: Publication No. 20, Service Center for Teachers of History, American Historical Association, 1959.
- _____. Nationalism: Myth and Reality. London: Victor Gollancz, 1955.
- Shaw, Bernard. Advice to a Young Critic: Letters 1894-1928. ed. by E.J. West. London: Peter Owen Ltd., MCM/LVI.
- Shillito, Edward. Nationalism: Man's Other Religion. London: Student Christian Movement Press, March, 1933.
- Silvert, K.H. (ed.). Expectant Peoples: Nationalism and Development (by the American Universities Field Staff) with a preface by Kenneth W. Thompson, New York: Vintage Books, 1963.
- Sithole, Ndabeningi. African Nationalism 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- Sitwell, Sacheverell. Journey to the Ends of Time. New York: Random House, 1959.
- Skelton, Robin. J.M. Synge and His World. New York: The Viking Press, 1974.
- _____. The Writings of J.M. Synge. London: Thames and Hudson, 1971.
- _____. (ed). J. M. Synge: Four Plays and The Aran Islands. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

- _____ : Remembering Synge: A Poem in Homage for the Centenary of his birth, 16 April, 1971. Dublin: The Dolmen Press Ltd., 1971.
- Smith, Anthony D. Theories of Nationalism. London: Gerald Dickworth and Company Ltd., 1971.
- Smythe, Colin (ed.). Seventy Years: Being the Autobiography of Lady Gregory. Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe Ltd., 1974.
- Snyder, Louis L. German Nationalism: The Tragedy of a People - Extremism Contra Liberalism in Modern German History 2nd edition. Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1969.
- _____ (ed.). The Dynamics of Nationalism: Readings In Its Meaning and Development. Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1964.
- Solomon, Maynard (ed.). Marxism and Art: Essays Classic and Contemporary. New York: Vintage Books, 1974.
- Spencer, John (ed.) Language in Africa. (Papers of the Leverhulme Conference on Universities and the Language Problems of Tropical Africa, held at University College, Ibadan). London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1963.
- Spencer, Theodore. Death and Elizabethan Tragedy. New York: Pageant Books, 1960.
- Spender, Stephen. The Struggle of the Modern. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1963.
- Steinberg, Erwin R. (ed.) Stream of Consciousness Technique in the Modern Novel. Port Washington, New York, London: Kennikat Press, 1979.
- Stewart, Garrett. Death Sentences: Styles of Dying in British Fiction. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: Harvard University Press, 1984.

- Stewart, J.I.M. Eight Modern Writers. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- Strachey, James et.al. The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1963.
- Strong, L.A.G. John Masefield. Essex: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1968.
- Sturt, M. The Psychology of Time. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1925.
- Styan, J.L. The Elements of Drama. Cambridge: CUP-Vikas Students' Edition, 1979.
- Modern drama in theory and practice 1: Realism and Naturalism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Surrateau, Jean-Rene. L'Idée Nationale de la Revolution a Nos Jours. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972.
- Synge, Samuel. Letters to my Daughter: Memories of John Millington Synge. Dublin and Cork: The Talbot Press Ltd., 1931.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. Nationalism. London: Macmillan Co. Ltd., 1917.
- Tanner, R.E.S. Transition in African Belief. New York: Mary Knoll, 1967.
- Tate, Allen (ed.). The Language of Poetry. New York: Russell and Russell, 1960.
- Taylor, G. Rattray. Rethink. London: Secker and Warburg, 1972.
- Teilhard de Chardin, P. The Phenomenon of Man. New York: Harper and Row, 1959.

- Tennyson, B.B. and Edward E. Ericson Jr. Religion and Modern Literature: Essays in Theory and Criticism. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975.
- The Webster Reference Dictionary of the English Language. (Encyclopedic edition). U.S.: Publishers United Guild, 1983, Vol.1.
- Thody, Phillip. Albert Camus 1913-1960. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1961.
- Thompson, Lawrence. Melville's Quarrel with God. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952.
- Thompson, G.W. Mirrors of Modernity. London: Draughtsman Publishing Co. Ltd., 1933.
- Thompson, Vincent Bakpelu. Africa and Unity: The Evolution of Pan-Africanism. London: Longman Group Ltd., 1977.
- Thwaite, Daniel. The Seething African Pot: A Study of Black Nationalism, 1882-1935. London: Constable and Co. Ltd., 1936.
- Tillich, Paul. The Courage To Be New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952.
- Tillyard, E.M.W. The Elizabethan World Picture. England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1979.
- Tirard, H.M. (Transl.) The Egyptian Book of the Dead. London: Oxford University Press, 1910. ✓
- Toffler, Alvin. Future Shock. London: The Bodley Head, 1975.
- Tolstoy, Leo. The Death of Ivan Ilych and other Stories/ (with an afterword by David Magarshack). New York: The New American Library of World Literature Inc., 1960.
- . The Religious Writings of Leo Tolstoy. New York: The Julian Press Inc., 1960.

- Toynbee, Arnold. Man's Concern with Death. London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1966.
- Toynbee, J.M.C. Death and Burial in the Roman World. London: Thames and Hudson, 1971.
- Traugott, Elizabeth Closs and Mary Louise Pratt. Linguistics for Students of Literature. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1980.
- Tucker, Martin. African in Modern Literature: A Survey of Contemporary Writing in English. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1967.
- Turok, Ben (ed.) Revolutionary Thought in the Twentieth Century. London: Zed Press, 1980.
- Unamuno, Miguel De. The Tragic Sense of Life. (Translated by Crawford Fritch). London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1921.
- Urban, Wilbur Marshall. Language and Reality: The Philosophy of Language and the Principles of Symbolism. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951.
- Vahanian, Gabriel. The Death of God. New York: George Braziller, 1961.
- Vickery, John B. The Literary Impact of "The Golden Bough". Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973.
- Wallace, Martin. The Irish: How They Live and Work. Great Britain: David and Charles Publishers Ltd., 1972.
- Wallace, Irving. The Seven Minutes. United Kingdom: New English Library Ltd., 1978.
- Ward, Barbara. Nationalism and Ideology. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1967.

- Wartenbaker, Leo T. Death of Man. New York: Random House, 1957.
- Wa Thiong'O, Ngugi. Homecoming. London: Heinemann, 1978.
- . Barrel of a Pen. London: New Beacon Books, 1983.
- . Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature. London: James Currey; Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya, 1987.
- Weber, F.P. Aspects of death and correlated aspects of Life in art, epigram and poetry. London: H.K. Lewis and Co. Ltd., 1922.
- Weiskrantz, L. (ed.) Animal Intelligence. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.
- Wellwarth, George. The Theatre of Protest and Paradox. New York: New York University Press, 1971.
- Weygandt, Cornelius. Irish Plays and Playwrights. Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, Inc., 1966.
- Whitaker, Thomas R. (ed.). Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Playboy of the Western World. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1969.
- White, Robert (ed.) The Study of Lives. New York: Atherton Press, 1963.
- Willet, John (ed.) Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic. New York: Hill and Wang, 1966.
- Williams, Desmond (ed.) The Irish Struggle 1916-1926. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966.
- Williams, Duncan. Trousered Apes. New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1972.
- . To be or Not to be: A Question of Survival. Oxford: Pergamon Press Ltd., 1976.

- Williams, Raymond. Drama from Ibsen to Brecht. New York: Penguin Books Ltd., 1976.
- . Marxism and Literature. London: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Wilmot, Patrick F. In Search of Nationhood: The Theory and Practice of Nationalism in Africa. Ibadan: Lantern Books, 1979.
- . The Right to Rebel: The phenomenology of student revolutionary consciousness. Oguta: Zim Pan African Publishers, 1986.
- Wilson, Richard Albert. The Miraculous Birth of Language. London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1949.
- Wright, Edgar (ed.). The Critical Evaluation of African Literature. London: Heinemann, 1973.
- Wynne-Tyson, Jon. The Civilised Alternative: A Pattern for Protest. Fontwell, Sussex: Centaur Press, 1972.
- Yeats, W.B. Plays and Controversies. London: Macmillan, 1923.
- . Autobiographies. London: Macmillan, 1955.
- . Dramatis Personae. Great Britain: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1936.
- . Ideas of Good and Evil. London: A.H. Bullen, n.d.
- y.Gasset, Jose Ortega. The Dehumanization of Art and Other Essays. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.
- . The Revolt of the Masses. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1961.

JOURNALS/ARTICLES

Abrams, M.H. "The Deconstructive Angel" Critical Inquiry, No. 3, Spring 1977, pp. 425-431.

Acquaye, Saka. "The Language Problem of the Developing African Theatre" African Arts/arts d'Afrique, II(1), Autumn 1968, pp. 58-59.

Adebisi, Abiodun. "Calling Solarin and Soyinka" Vanguard, Thursday, May 12, 1988, p. 6.

Adedeji, Joel. "The Strong Breed: An Aspect of Soyinka's Existential Imagination" Unpublished paper presented at the First Ibadan Seminar on African Literatures, 1977, 15pp.

_____. "The Theatre and Contemporary African Development" African Theatre Review, Vol. 1, No. 1, April 1985, pp. 32-45.

Adedoyin, Ademola and Innocent Eke. "Rebels Ready to Die: Nigeria's men of conscience". Newsweek, Lagos, Sept. 1988, Vol. 2, No. 7, pp. 11-12.

Adelugba, Dapo. "Wole Soyinka: A Birthday Letter and Other Essays" LACE Occasional Publications, 1(6), July, 13, 1984.

_____. "Language Use in African Theatre" unpublished paper presented at the Linguistics Association of Nigeria's Annual Conference, August 8, 1985.

Agu, Ogonna. "Soyinka won't be left alone". The Guardian, Wednesday, July 6, 1988, p. 13.

Albrecht, Milton C. "The Relationship of Literature and Society" American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 59, March 1954, pp. 425-436.

- Aliyu, Abdu. "An Open Letter to Wole Soyinka" National Concord, Tuesday, April 26, 1988, p. 3.
- Anon. "Notes from Correspondent: From the University College, Dar es Salaam" The Bulletin of the Association for African Literature in English Nos 1-4, 1964-1966, p. 36.
-
- "Wole Soyinka: The Man Finally Died" The Democrat, (No.2, April 1987), University of Ife, p. 5.
- Anyasi, Otuka. "Soyinka wants to save lives". The Guardian Tuesday, September 13, 1986, p. 10.
- Appiah, Anthony. "Soyinka and the Philosophy of Culture" P.O. Bodunrin (ed.) Philosophy in Africa: Trends and Perspectives. Ile-Ife: University of Ife, Press, 1985, pp. 250-263.
- Arinze, Dozie. "Silencing the Critics" The Guardian, Monday, March 21, 1988, p.9.
- Asanga, Siga (ed.). African Theatre Review: Special edition on Wole Soyinka, Vol. 1, No. 3, April, 1987.
- Asein, Samuel Omo. "Literature and Society in Lagos: Late 19th-early 20th Century". Nigeria Magazine, Nos. 117-118, 1975, pp. 22-23.
-
- "The Twentieth Century: The Modernist Tradition" Richard Taylor (ed.) Background Lectures in English Literature. Benin City: Ethiope Publishing Corporation, 1977, pp. 175-192.
-
- "Literature as History: Crisis, Violence, and Strategies of Commitment in Nigerian Writing" D.I. Nwoga (ed.). Literature and Modern West African Culture Benin City: Ethiope Publishing Corporation, 1978, pp. 97-116.

- Awoonor, Kofi. "Nationalism: Masks and Consciousness" Books Abroad, Vol. 45, No. 2, Spring 1971: Symposium on Nationalism and World Literature in Review, pp. pp. 207-211
- Awoyinka, Michael. "Soyinka may spend his Nobel Prize on making films" Sunday Concord, October 19, 1986, p.13.
- . "African Writers storm Lagos today to honour Soyinka" National Concord, Monday, May 2, 1988, p. 5.
- Ayling, Ronald. "Synge's First Love: Some South African Aspects" English Studies in Africa, 6(2), 1963, pp. pp. 173-185.
- Babarinsa, Dare. "They Who Dare" Newswatch, August 1, 1988, p. 13.
- Banham, Martin. "African Literature II: Nigerian Dramatists in English and the Traditional Nigerian Theatre" The Journal of Commonwealth Literature, No. 3, July, 1967, pp. 97-106.
- Barnes, T.R. "Yeats, Synge, Ibsen and Strindberg" Scrutiny, Vol. V, No. 3, December, 1936, pp. 257-262.
- Bellow, Saul. "The Creative Artist and His Audience: The Writer and the Audience" Perspectives, 9, Autumn 1954, pp. 98-99.
- Berger, Renato, "Nobel Prize to Wole Soyinka" Geneve-Afrique, 24, 2, 1986, pp. 149-150.
- Bierstedt, Robert. "The Limitations of Anthropological Methods in Sociology" American Journal of Sociology, Vol.54, 1958/49, pp. 27-28.
- Bowen, John. "You get what you pay for: You pay what you get". Gambit, Vol. 6, No. 24, 1974, pp. 77-83.

- Bradbury, Malcolm. "Literature and Sociology" Essays and Studies, 1970, pp. 88-89.
- . "Saul Bellow's The Victim" The Critical Quarterly Vol. 5, No. 2, Summer 1963, pp. 119-128.
- . "Struggling Westward: America and the Coming of Modernism (II)". Encounter, February, 1983, Vol. LX, No. 2, pp. 57-65.
- Brickner, Richard P. "Language and Man's Humanity" Dialogue, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1972, pp. 95-96.
- Brown, Arnold. "The Age of Osiris: A World in Transition" Dialogue, No. 51, 1/1981, pp. 2-4.
- Brustein, Robert. "Ibsen and Revolt" Tulane Drama Review, Vol. 7, No. 1, Fall 1962, pp. 113-154.
- Chinweizu, "Prodigals Come Home" Okike, 4, December, 1973, pp. 1-12.
- . "The Chinweizu Observatory: Afrocentrism and the Perception of the African Literary Heritage" (Contribution to the International Symposium on African Literatures, May 5, 1988, Lagos Nigeria). Sunday Vanguard June 5, 1988, pp. 7 and 15.
- Cigman, Gloria. "Language and Laughter". Essays and Studies 1971, pp. 101-122.
- Clurman, Harold. "The New Theatre" Dialogue, Vol. 5, 1972, No. 2, pp. 57-68.
- Cohen, Marshall, "Notes on Modernist Art" New Literary History, Vol. III, Autumn 1971, No. 1, pp. 215-223.
- Cornalli, P. "Studies in Physiognomic perception: VI. Differential effect of directional dynamics of pictured objects on real and apparent motion in artists and chemists" Journal of Psychology, Vol.49, 1960, pp.99-109.

- Cook, David. "Of the Strong Breed". Transition, 3(13), March-April, 1964, pp. 38-40.
- Crain, H. "Basic Concepts of Death in Children's Literature". Elementary English, 49, 1972, pp. 11-115.
- Crick, Bernard. "Writers and Politics" Critical Quarterly, Vol. 22, No. 2, Summer 1980, pp. 63-73.
- Curtis, L.P. "The Anglo-Irish predicament". Twentieth Century Studies: Ireland, No.4, Nov., 1970, pp.37-63.
- Dasenbrock, Reed Way. "Wole Soyinka's Nobel Prize" World Literature Today, Vol. 61, No.1, Winter 1967, pp. 5-9.
- De Molina, David Newton. "George Steiner's Language and Silence" The Critical Quarterly, Vol. II No. 4, Winter 1969, pp. 247-257.
- Dixon Jr. John W. "The Ontological Intransigence of the Aesthetic Fact" Comparative Literature Studies Special Issue II: Literature and Religion, II(2), 1966, pp. 247-257.
- Donoghue, Denis. "Synge: Riders to the Sea: A Study" University Review, No. 1, 1955, p. 57f.
- Dudek, Louis. "The Psychology of Literature". Canadian Literature, No. 72, Spring 1977, pp. 5-20.
- Ebeogu, Afam. "From Idanre to Ogun Abibiman: an Examination of Soyinka's Use of Ogun Images". The Journal of Commonwealth Literature, XV(1) August 1980, pp. 84-96.
- Ebhabha, S.E. "Letter to Wole Soyinka". The Guardian, Monday, March 14, 1988, p. 8.
- Eckstein, George, "Heading for Apocalypse? Dialogue, Vol II. 1978, No.2, pp. 21-26.

- Ekeledo, Sam. "Talk Shop for African Writers: Whose confab? Vanquard, Thursday, May 12, 1988, p. 8.
- Fackler, Herbert V. "J.M. Synge's Deidre of the Sorrows: Beauty Only". Modern Drama, XI(4), February 1969, pp. 404-409.
- Fairley, Barker. "The Modern Consciousness in English Literature". Essays and Studies, Vol. IX, pp. 126-144.
- Fennell, Desmond. "The Irish Language Movement: its achievements and its failure". Twentieth Century Studies: Ireland, No 4, November 1970, pp. 64-77.
- Feuser, Willfried. "The Emergence of Comparative Literature in Nigeria". Research in African Literatures II(1), Spring 1980, pp. 100-107.
- Flanagan, Thomas, "Yeats, Joyce and the Matter of Ireland" Critical Inquiry, 2(1), Autumn 1975, pp. 43-67.
- Frye, Northrop. "The Teaching, Learning and Study of Literature". Randolph Quirk and H.G. Widdowson (eds.) English in the World: Teaching and Learning the Language and Literatures. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 185-194.
- Furray, Michael. "Negritude and the Dakar Festival". The Bulletin of the Association for African Literature in English, No. 4, March 1966, pp. 1-2.
- Fussell, Paul. "Modernism, Adversary Culture, and Edmund Blunden". The Sewanee Review, Vol. XCIV, No.4, Fall 1986, pp. 583-601.
- Granz, Arthur. "J.M. Synge and the Drama of Art". Modern Drama X(1), May 1967, pp. 57-68.
- Gaskell, Ronald. "The Realism of J.M. Synge". Critical Quarterly 5(3), Autumn 1963, pp. 242-248.

- Gibbs, James. "The Origins of a A Dance of the Forest". Eldred Jones (ed.), African Literature Today No.8: Drama in Africa. London: Heinemann, 1981, pp. 66-71.
- "Grafting is an Ancient Art: The Relationship of African and European Elements in the Early Plays of Wole Soyinka". World Literature Written in English, 24(1), Summer 1984, pp. 87-89.
- "Larsony with a Difference: An Examination of a Paragraph from Toward the Decolonization of African Literature". Research in African Literatures, 17(1), Spring 1986, pp. 39-47.
- Greacen, Robert. "Contemporary Irish Writing: An Introductory Note". Life and Letters, 61(140), April, 1949, pp. 6-9-
- Grohs, Gerhard. "Difficulties of Cultural Emancipation in Africa". The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 14, No.1, 1976, pp. 65-78.
- Gulledge, J. (ed.) "Wole Soyinka Interview: Autobiography and the writer's craft". The Mail on Sunday, June 19, 1988, pp. 8-9.
- Handman, Max Sylvius. "The Sentiment of Nationalism" Political Science Quarterly, Vol. XXXVI, 1921, pp. 104-109.
- Harding, D.W. "A Note on Nostalgia" Scrutiny, Vol. 1, No. 1, May 1932, pp. 8-19.
- Hart, William. "Synge and the Christian Ethos: A Critical Examination of a recent book". STUDIES: An Irish Quarterly Review, LXI(241), Spring 1972, pp. 85-96.
- Hassan, Ihab. "POSTmodernISM: A Paracritical Bibliography". New Literary History, Vol. III, Autumn 1971, No.1, pp. 5-30.

- Hayes, J.M. "Nationalism: Historical Development". Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Vol. 6. New York: Macmillan, 1937, pp. 240-248.
- Heilbroner, Robert L. "The Human Prospect". Dialogue, Vol. II, 1978, No. 2, pp. 12-20.
- Howard, Roger. "Propaganda in the early Soviet and Contemporary Chinese Theatre". Theatre Quarterly (TQ), VII(27), 1977, pp. 53-60.
- Howe, Irving. "Literary Criticism and Literary Radicals". The American Scholar, Vol. 41, Winter 1971-72, No.1, pp. 113-120.
- Hulme, Hilda. "The English Language as a medium of Literary expression". Essays in Criticism, Vol. VIII, Jan. 1958, No. 1, pp. 68-78.
- Ilesanmi, Obafemi. "Soyinka and the Broadway Critics". The Guardian, Tuesday, March 8, 1988, p. 11.
- "African Literature and the Asiwaju Factor". The Guardian, Monday, March 6, 1989, p. 8.
- Iloegbunam, Chuks. "They Who Say No." Newswatch, Aug. 1, 1988, p. 9.
- Innes, C.L. "Through the Looking Glass: African and Irish Nationalist Writing". Eldred Jones (ed.), African Literature Today No. 9, London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1978, pp. 10-23.
- Irele, Abiola. "Tradition and the Yoruba Writers: D. O. Fagunwa, Amos Tutuola and Wole Soyinka" Adebisi Afolayan (ed.). Yoruba Language and Literature. Ife: University of Ife Press; Ibadan: University Press Ltd., 1982, pp. 95-117.
- "Negritude or Black Cultural Nationalism". The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol.3, No.3, 1965, pp. 321-348.

- Irobi, Esiaba. "Situating Soyinka". The African Guardian, Jan. 28, 1988, p. 37. ✓
- Iyasele, E.J. "Letter to Prof. Wble Soyinka". National Concord, Saturday, May 14, 1988, p. 2.
- Izevbaye, D.S. "Naming and the Character of African Fiction". Research in African Literatures, 12(2), Summer 1981, pp. 162-184.
- Jain, Jasbir. "The Unfolding of a Text: Soyinka's Death and the King's Horseman". Research in African Literatures, 17(2), Summer 1986, 252-260.
- Jeyifo, Biodun. "Soyinka as a Literary Critic and Theorist". ✓
The Guardian, Saturday, December 7, 1985, p. 13.
- . "What is the Will of Ogun?" The Guardian, ✓
Saturday, December 6, 1986; December 13, 1986;
Dec. 20, 1986; p. 13 and Jan. 10, 1987, p. 13.
- . "Between Soyinka and Ngugi: Femi Osofisan as Theorist and Critic", paper presented at the Department of Modern European Languages Staff Seminar Series, 1986/87, University of Ife (Obafemi Awolowo University), Thursday, Jan. 29, 1985, Humanities Block 1, Room 402.
- Jones, C.S. "In the midst of life ... Reflections on some biological aspects of death. E.A. Grollman (ed.) Explaining death to Children. Boston: Beacon Press, 1967, pp. 127-144.
- Jones, Eldred. "The Essential Soyinka" Bruce King (ed.), Introduction to Nigerian Literature. Lagos and London: University of Lagos and Evans Brothers Ltd., 1971, pp. 113-134.

- _____. "Wole Soyinka: Critical Approaches" Edgar Wright (ed.), The Critical Evaluation of African Literature. London: Heinemann, 1973, pp. 51-72.
- _____. "Progress and Civilization in the Work of Wole Soyinka" Christopher Heywood (ed.) Perspectives on African Literature. London: Heinemann, 1973, pp. 129-137.
- Jones, Gwyn. "Language, Style, and the Anglo-Welsh" Essays and Studies, 1953, pp. 102-114.
- Jones-Quatey, K.A.B. "The Problems of Language in the Development of the African Theatre" Okyeame, Vol. 4, No. 1, December, 1968, pp. 95-102.
- Josipovici, G.D. "Hawthorne's Modernity". Critical Quarterly, Vol.8, No. 4, Winter 1966, pp. 351-360.
- Kateb, George. "Politics and Modernity: The Strategies of Desperation". New Literary History, Vol. III, Autumn 1971, No. 1, pp. 93-111.
- Kevin, Neil. "Our English in Ireland: Abuse of Metaphor". Irish Ecclesiastical Record, 53, Jan. 1939, pp.19-29. ✓
- Kiberd, Declan. "The Letters of J.M. Synge". Irish Literary Supplement, 3(2), Fall 1984, p. 41.
- Kilroy, J.F. "The Playboy as Poet" PMLA, Vol. 83, 1968, pp. 439-442.
- Kohn, Hans. "A New Look at Nationalism". The Virginia Quarterly Review, Vol. 32, Summer 1956, pp. 321-332.
- Kostelanetz, Richard. "Dissecting the Twentieth Century". Dialogue, Vol. 10, No.2, 1977, pp. 58-66.
- Krautheimer, Richard. "Art and Society". Social Research, 5(3), September 1938, pp. 360-359.

- Kronenfeld, J.Z. "The Communalistic African and the Individualistic Westerner: Some Comments on Misleading Generalizations in Western Criticism of Soyinka and Achebe". Research in African Literatures, 6(2), Fall 1975, pp. 199-225.
- Leach, Clifford, "John Synge and The Drama of His Time". Modern Drama, XVI,(3 and 4), Dec. 1973, pp. 223-237.
- Lester, David. "Experimental and correlational studies of the fear of death". Psychological Bulletin, 1967, pp. 27-36.
- Leyburn, Ellen Douglas. "The Theme of Loneliness in the Plays of Synge". Modern Drama, 1(2), September, 1958.
- Lipman, Samuel. "Pshaw!" The American Scholar, Autumn 1982, pp. 84-90.
- Lodge, David. "The Modern, the Contemporary, and the Importance of Being Amis". Critical Quarterly, Vol. 5, No. 4, Winter 1963, pp. 335-354.
- Lyons, F.S.L. "James Joyce's Dublin". Twentieth Century Studies: Ireland, No 4, Nov. 1970, pp. 6-25.
- Macebuh, Stanley. "Poetics and the Mythic Imagination". Transition, (50), October, 1975, pp. 80-84.
- Maduakor, Obiajuru. "Soyinka as a Literary Critic". Research in African Literatures, 17(1), Spring 1986, pp. 1-38.
- Makward, Edris. "Why Not an African Prize?" ALA Bulletin, Vol. 13, Spring 1987, No.2, pp. 9-10.
- Mammah, Chris. "Soyinka, Achebe's books banned ... in Malawi" ANA Review, Vol. 4, No. 5, Nov. 1988, p. 24.
- Matthews, William. "Language in Love's Labour's Lost" Essays and Studies 1964: Shakespeare Quarter Centenary Edition, pp. 1-11.

- McClelland, D. "The Harlequin Complex" Robert White (ed.) The Study of Lives. New York: Atherton Press, 1963, pp. 94-119.
- Michie, Donald H. "Synge and His Critics" Modern Drama, XV, (4), March 1973, pp. 427-431.
- Miller, J. Hillis. "The Geneva School" (The Criticism of Marcel Raymond, Albert Beguin, Georges Poulet, Jean Rousset, Jean-Pierre Richard, and Jean Starobinski) Critical Quarterly, Vol. 8, No. 4, Winter 1966, pp. 305-321.
- Mitias, Michael H. "Art as a Social Institution". The Personalist LVI(3), Summer 1975, pp. 330-335.
- Mohammed, Yakubu, "Soyinka and Solarin" Newswatch, March 28, 1988, p. 4.
- Momoh, Tony. "What is man?" Daily Times, Tuesday, April 19, 1988, p. 18.
- Moore, Timothy E. and Reet Mae. "Who Dies and Who Cries: Death and Bereavement in Children's Literature". Journal of Communication, Autumn 1987, Vol. 37, No.4, pp. 52-64.
- Morgan, Douglas N. "Must Art Tell the Truth?" The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, XXVI(1), Fall 1967, p. 17f. ✓
- Nazareth, Peter. "From Nobel Prize to Noble Challenge" ALA Bulletin, Vol. 13, Summer 1987, No.3, pp.8-10.
- Newlin, Margaret. "The Suicide Bandwagon". The Critical Quarterly, Vol. 14, No.4, Winter 1972, pp. 367-378.
- Nwoga, Donatus. "Obscurity and Commitment in African Literature". Eldred Durosimi Jones (ed.) African Literature Today No.6, London: Heinemann, 1974, pp.26-45.

- Obafemi, Olu. "Revolutionary Aesthetics in Recent Nigerian Theatre". Eldred Jones (ed.), African Literature Today 12. New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1982, pp. 188-199.
- Obasi, Nnamdi. "Soyinka's triumph, Africa's pride". Sunday Concord, October 19, 1986, pp. 11-13.
- Obilade, Tony. "The Stylistic Function of Pidgin English in African Literature: Achebe and Soyinka". Research in African Literatures, 9(3), Winter 1978, pp. 433-444.
- O'Donoghue, Bernard. "Irish Humour and Verbal logic". Critical Quarterly, Vol. 24, No. 1, Spring 1982, pp. 33-40.
- Ogu, Julius. "Thematic Imagery and Dramaturgical Accent in Soyinka's Death and the King's Horseman". Nigerian Theatre Journal, 2, Nos 1 and 2, 1985, pp. 180-184.
- Ogunba, Oyin. "Language in an Age of Transition: Shakespeare and Soyinka". Journal of the Nigerian English Studies Association (JONESA) Vol. 6, No.1, May, 1974, pp. 107-118.
- Ogunbiyi, Yemi. "Opera Wonyosi: A Study of Soyinka's Opera Wonyosi". Nigerian Magazine, Nos. 128-129, 1979, pp. 3-14.
- Ogunrinade, Adelani. "Rebels with a cause". Sunday Sketch, March 20, 1988, p. 11.
- Ogunyemi, Chikwenye. "Iconoclasts Both: Wole Soyinka and LeRoi Jones". Eldred Jones (ed.). African Literature Today No. 9. London: Heinemann and New York: African Publishing Company, 1978, pp. 25-38.
- Oko, Atabo. "Women and Nationalism in the Nigerian Theatre" Chris Nwamuo (ed.) Theatre and Drama in National Development. Calabar: Map Publishers, Ltd., 1986, pp. 156-166.

- Okpewho, Isidore. "Comparatism and Separatism in African Literature" World Literature Today, 55(1), Winter 1981, pp. 10-33.
- Ola, Boye. "Soyinka tells African dictators to bow out" Vanguard, Wednesday, May 4, 1988, pp. 1 and 12.
- Oladokun, Victor. "Critics should leave Solarin and Soyinka alone". Sunday Concord, May 1, 1988, p. 8.
- Olafioye, Tayo, "Ideological Gerrymandering in African Literature: A View from the Opposition". Journal of African Studies, 12(2), Summer 1985, pp. 72-76.
- Olayiwola, Kunmi. "Soyinka scorns rule by guns" National Concord, Wednesday, May 4, 1988, pp. 1 and 10.
- Olusanya, Gabriel O. "The Nationalist Movement in Nigeria" Obaro Ikime (ed.) Groundwork of Nigerian History. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1980, pp. 545-569.
- Olusegun, Rufai M. "Semantic Extension as a feature of the Use of English in Nigeria: A Case Study of Wole Soyinka's Death and the King's Horseman" Ernest N. Emenyonu (ed.). Critical Theory and African Literature. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nig.) Ltd., 1987, pp. 247-260.
- Oluwole, Clem. "Death on the Leap". Sunday Standard, Feb. 28, 1988, p. 8.
- Omosebi, Funmi. "Soyinka, Solarin not Confusionists". The Guardian, March 21, 1988, p. 8.
- Omotoso, Kole, "Working for IBB" The Punch, Monday, Feb. 29, 1988, p. 13.
- Osofisan, Femi. "Ritual and the Revolutionary Ethos" Okike, / 22, 1982, pp. 72-81.
- _____. "Tiger on Stage: Wole Soyinka and Nigerian Theatre". Oyin Ogunba and Abiola Irele (eds.) Theatre in Africa. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1978, pp. 151-175. ✓

- Osundare, Niyi. "Caliban's Curse: The English Language and Nigeria's Underdevelopment". Ufahamu, XI, No.2, 1981, pp. 96-107.
- "The Poem as a Mytho-Linguistic Event: A Study of Soyinka's Abiku". Eldred Durosimi Jones, Eustace Palmer and Marjorie Jones (eds.). Oral and Written Poetry in African Literature Today 16. London: James Currey, Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1988, pp.97f.
- Oyegoke, Lekan. "African Literature in English (French, Portuguese): A Cultural Dilemma". Oye: Ogun Journal of Arts, Vol. 1, June 1988, pp. 46-53.
- Palmer, D.J. "The Unspeakable in Pursuit of the Uneatable: Language and Action in Titus Andronicus" The Critical Quarterly, Vol. 14, No.4, Winter 1972, pp. 320-329.
- Paulme, Denise. "Two Themes on the Origin of Death in West Africa" MAN, Vol.2, No.1, March 1967, pp. 48-61.
- Povey, John. "Soyinka: Nobel Laureate 1986". African Arts, XX(2), February 1987, p. 10.
- Probyn, Clive T. "Waiting for the Word: Samuel Beckett and Wole Soyinka" Ariel, 12(3), July 1981.
- Prouty, D. "Read About Death" Not Me!" Language Arts, 53, 1976, pp. 679-682.
- Rahimieh, Nasrin. "Iranian Reflections on Soyinka" ALA Bulletin, Vol. 13, Spring 1987, No.2, pp. 10-11.
- Reynolds, Lorna. "Collective Intellect: Yeats, Synge and Nietzsche". Essays and Studies 1973, pp. 83-98. ✓
- Revel, Jean-Francois. "Without Marx or Jesus: A New American Revolution" Dialogue, Vol.5, 1972 No.2, pp. 46-56.

- Romero, C. "Children, Death and Literature". Language Arts, 53, 1976, pp. 649-667.
- Sekoni, Ropo. "Metaphor as Basis of Form in Soyinka's Drama" Research in African Literatures, Vol 14, No. 1, February 1983, pp. 45-57.
- Sellin, Eric. "Nationalism and the Development of Neo-African Literatures" Books Abroad, Vol. 45, No. 2, Spring 1971: Symposium on Nationalism and World Literature in Review, pp. 199-207.
- Simon, Julian L. "What to Expect in the Year 2000". Dialogue, No. 54, 4/1981, pp. 2-7.
- Skurnik, Walter A.E. "Léopold Sédar Senghor and African Socialism". The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1965, pp. 349-369.
- Sowande, Bode. "Diary of a Writer: A Cultural Visit to Paris 1-6" Vanguard, Lagos, May 8, 15, 22, 29; June 5, 12, 1988, p. 7.
- Stein, Howard. "The Uncomfortable Theater" Dialogue, Vol. 8, 1975, No. 2, pp. 24-38.
- Summers, Barbara with Malaika Adero. "African Nobel Laureate" Africa Report, (Vol. 32, No 4, (July-August, 1987), pp. 46-47.
- Szabolsci, Miklos. "Avant-garde, Neo-avant garde, Modernism: Questions and Suggestions". New Literary History, Vol. III, Autumn 1971, No.1, pp. 49-70.
- Tambiah, S.J. "The magical power of words". MAN: The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol.3, 2, June, 1968, pp. 175-208.
- Tetteh-Lartey, Alex. "Soyinka on BBC". ALA Bulletin, Vol. 13, Winter 1987, No 1, p. 21.

- Thomas, Lewis. "Language and Human Communication" Dialogue, Vol. 8, 1975, No. 3/4. pp. 28-33.
- Thompson, Tunde. "Before the Men Die". The Guardian, Sunday, March 6, 1988, p. 7.
- Uka, Kalu. "Drama in Nigerian Society". Cyprian Ekwensi (ed.). Nigerian New Writing. Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, 1977, pp. 177-187.
- "Wole Soyinka's Theatre: One View" The Guardian, Saturday, September 21, 1985, p. 21.
- Unoh, Solomon O. "Topical Issues in the Study of Language Development". Journal of Language Arts and Communication (J.L.A.C), Vol.2, Nos. 3 and 4, April/October, 1981, pp. 1-16.
- Van Laan, Thomas. "Form as Agent in Synge's Riders to the Sea" Drama Survey, Winter 1964, 3(3), pp. 352-366.
- Wali, Obiajunwa. "The Dead End of African Literature?" Transition, 4(10), September 1963, pp. 13-15.
- Ward, A.C. "Language and the Community". Essays and Studies, 1961, pp. 66-80.
- Wetherbee, Virginia. "The Golden Age of Eccentricity" The American Scholar, Spring 1986, pp. 208-220.
- Williams, Adebayo. "The Mythic Imagination and Social Theories: Soyinka and Euripedes as Political Thinkers" Okike, XVII, pp. 36-44.
- "The Autumn of Patriots?" Newswatch, March 28, 1988, p. 4.
- "Alfred Nobel Dismembered". Newswatch, March 20, 1989, p. 38.

Williams, Raymond. "Tragic Despair and Revolt". Critical Quarterly, Vol. 5, No.2, Summer 1963, pp. 103-115.

Woods, Anthony S.; "Synge, J.M." Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft (eds.). Twentieth Century Authors. New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1942, p. 1380.

"Wole Soyinka bares his mind". Sunday Times, July 5, 1987. p. 18.

Zilboorg, Gregory. "Fear of Death". Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 1943, 12, pp. 465-475.

Zimmerman, Everett. "Language and Character in Defoe's Roxana". Essays in Criticism, Vol. XXI, July 1971, No, 3, pp. 227-235.

Theses/Dissertations

Abati, Reuben, "J.M. Synge and Wole Soyinka: A Comparative Study", unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Ibadan, 1987.

Adelugba, Dapo "Nationalism and the Awakening National Theatre of Nigeria", unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of California, California, Los Angeles (UCLA), 1964.

Gakwandi, Arthur. "The African Novel in English and The Politics of Independence", M.Litt. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, June, 1971.

Laoussou, Naibe Lawman, "Irish Nationalism in John Millington Synge's Drama", unpublished dissertation, Diplome d'Etudes Superieures (D.E.S.) d'Anglais, Universite Marien Ngouabi, Brazaville, Congo, 1988.

Okon, Atabo. "A Study of Nationalism in the Plays of Wole Soyinka, Derek Walcott and J.M. Synge", unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Ibadan, 1980.

—————. "The Concept of Nationalism and National Identity in Aspects of the Dramatic Works of Wole Soyinka and Derek Walcott", unpublished M.Phil dissertation, University of Ibadan, 1981.

Osofisan, Babafemi. "The Origins of Drama in West Africa: a study of the development of drama from the traditional forms to the modern theatre in English and French", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Ibadan, December 1973.

Ugonna, Frederick Nnabuenyi. "The Influence of African Nationalism on African Literature, 1900-1960, with special reference to Casely Hayford's Ethiopia Unbound", unpublished M. A. dissertation, University of Ibadan, January, 1971.

Magazines/Newspapers

African Concord (London), No. 121, December, 1986.

—————, Vol. 2 No. 29, 17 October 1988.

Daily Times (Lagos), Monday, February 15, 1988.

Newswatch (Lagos), February 18, 1985.

—————, December 22, 1986.

Prime People (Lagos), Vol. 2 No. 17, Sept. 25-Oct.1, 1987.

—————, Vol. 2 No. 8, Dec. 11-17, 1987.

Quality, Vol. 2, No. 20, (Lagos), October 20, 1988.

Sunday Tribune (Ibadan), February 14, 1988.

Sunday Vanguard (Lagos), June 5, 1988.

The African Guardian (Lagos), October 30, 1986.

—————, March 21, 1988.

The Guardian (Lagos), Sunday, February 24, 1988.

The Republic (Lagos), Saturday, May 14, 1988.

Times International, Vol. 10, No. 49, September 13, 1988.

Top News, Vol. 1, No. 11, (Lagos), 31st Aug. - 6th Sept.
1988.

Weekend Concord (Lagos), Saturday, March 4, 1989.

—————, Saturday, March 11, 1989.

West Africa (London), October 27, 1986.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY