

In any postcolonial discourse, language begets configurations of power. It is also an instrument for the fulfilment of democratic aspirations. At the height of colonialism, the use of language was a measure of culture control and the language of the masters played an essential role in the process of colonization. As of now it has come to be recognized as a strategy for an egalitarian society where men irrespective of culture and sect have the right and the capacity to force changes in league with its basic rights and desires. The postcolonial voice can decide to resist imperial linguistic domination in two ways -- by rejecting the language of the colonizer or by subverting the empire by writing back in a European language. In his Clarendon Lectures Part III, Oxford, 1996, Thiong'o speaks of the need for subaltern communities to move out of their straitjackets of linguistic and cultural insulation to fight against their oppressors. Thiong'o speaks of the cave as a metaphor, which begets ignorance and illusion. An escape from it is the true way to knowledge and any subsequent venture into the real:

The original allegory appears in a crucial section of *The Republic*, where Plato is discussing the practicality of his ideal state and the qualities and attributes required of the philosopher king. The narrator is Socrates. Glaucon and his circle are the participatory listeners to his outline and details of the ideal republic. At one point, Socrates asks them to imagine an underground chamber like a cave, with a long entrance as wide as the cave and open to the daylight. In the cave are men who have been prisoners all their lives. Indeed, their feet and necks have been chained so that they cannot turn their heads. They can only look straight ahead. At some distance behind them, burns a fire--the source of light--but between the entrance to the cave and the source of light is a screen. Thus, for the prisoners in the cave, every object, even their own bodies, appear only as shadows thrown by the fire on the wall opposite to

them. It is clear that for such prisoners the shadows become the whole truth until, some of them are somehow able to escape from the cave and see the Sun that endows with visibility all objects of sight. Socrates highlights their ascent from the realm of the illusionary to that of absolute knowledge, the form of the good, and the necessity of their eventual descent back among the cave dwellers to help light away the shadows and illusions of their existence. The rest of the allegory involves the relationship between the few who have escaped into truth and reality and the rest of the prisoners in the cave.

And again,

It will need the strenuous and continuous presence of the men of knowledge eventually to persuade the dwellers in the shadows to turn to the light. It is not a mechanical journey into knowledge. In fact, it is in the allegory of the cave where we see Plato's dialectic at work: the play of opposites in the journey of reason to absolute knowledge. (Clarendon Lectures III, Oxford 1996)

The process of disseminating truth is a complicated one and involves first the selection of a medium. Even then the intellectuals may come under attack from their readers and listeners. It is important to understand at this point the issues arising out of authority through language and the way the latter has been managed as a bulwark against any proper build up of resistance to oppression and material exploitation by the colonizers. Thiong'o calls back his impressions of humanity subjugated and harassed by the dominant powers that be, even disallowed to understand each other and so remain cloistered for the best part of their lives. This was to finally convince them of their own unworthiness in challenging the iron hands of misrule. But, he is optimistic that if the apparatus of language is put to the use of resistance, subjugated

humanity across the world stands to gain much. In fact the intellectual who is trained in the Ivy League Universities across the world can offer the best way to a resistance simulacrum, since he is aware of the interpretative strategies of the masters and can turn the same to the use of the oppressors. But most importantly, he can enable his men to come to terms with the most advanced ideas of the West, its technological and financial infrastructures which finally is what is going to be important in the running of the country.

Soyinka also proposes almost the same commitment from the intellectual. But, his vision of an Africa abundantly powerful in its financial and democratic resources, calls for a language, which holds forth the promise of a dialogue between two opposed cultures, traditions, outlooks and ways of life.

In his essay 'The Dialogues of Cultures' essays presented at the Center for European Integration Studies, Bonn, 1999, he begins his summative assessments of the cordon sanitaire against cultural movements.

These restrictive practices, he explains, are the result of anomalies, xenophobia, mistrust, fear and the like. Some may be accrued to religious purism.

And to what end is such a rigid-and often brutal-regimen of conformism? Obviously the elimination of identity and pluralism- a time tested mechanism of control, the suppression of individual will, choice, initiative, in short-the project of Power and Authoritarianism.... What, however, has been the lesson of human development? Simply that, in the long run, cultural boundaries have the virtue of porosity, the ability to let in foreign matter, and that culture itself has certain penetrating attributes of its own that enable it to find a vulnerable entry zone through the skin of the most hermetic carapace that has been

moulded around the pristine existence of any human community [...]

(Dialogue of Cultures)

Caution has to be exercised against so much of cultural despotism- the officiating of one cultural practice over the will and desires of another to dismantle and ostracize it. Hence, the language of discourse and indeed of any cultural discourse is supremely relevant. For Soyinka, his own language is a measure of his commitment to this truth. As a writer, he shoves off no cultural determinants. Instead, he shows his reluctance to disfavor the complex hobnobbing in discrete human experiences. For him the important question to be answered is whether the writer is in league with his ideological formulations, his social and human vision and above all else provokes a new and absolutely unfathomed aesthetic formulation that will make sure that man is not bothered by fissures any longer. As a writer, committed to the society of his age, looking at the present and its lacunas with umpteen discomfiture, the need to resolve and remake the social and human parameters has not left his vanguard. This is especially necessary in all dehumanized regimes of the world where divisions and breaks is the norm, rather than the exception. One of the ways, says Soyinka again, of a strangulating hegemonic enterprise is to ensure human social communities value the ideal of cultural osmosis and organism. But even in places where boundaries in class have been reduced and at least blurred to indistinction, the disjointing syndrome crops up again and again, re-surfaces even in the harshest repressions and must be confronted.

The history of animosities between cultures and people has been many times in and through language. Not so many years ago says Soyinka the greatest ambition of the Puerto Rican was to assimilate his culture and society with that of American society and to this effect he learned the English language and also tried to speak the

same like Americans (ADO 137). Now of course, the illusion no longer persists. Today, the Puerto Rican retains their Spanish accents and have even compelled the state to broadcast programmes on radio and the television in their native Spanish. Some years ago the Britons also vehemently opposed the imposition on them of the French language and made a united effort to see that their own languages that is English is not tampered with. The Welsh have been also successful after violent political agitation to resuscitate and integrate their own language into the official blocks of their country. Canada is on the brink of secession on linguistic lines.

Africa also has been far from acknowledging the legitimacy of pluralism. Writers and political activists have been excluded from official recognition owing to their choice of languages that marked them as alien even in their own homeland. Soyinka recalls some of these instances from countries like Congo. Here the linguistically proficient spoke the official language of letters, French. But they also retained some of their local dialects. They admitted their own languages and some even used the same for communications. But this created the real problem. Their verbal patterns were distinctly and individualistically those belonging to their communities and to this effect they could not be assimilated into the dominant linguistic groups. The official establishment segregated them.

The only recourse to prevent such hostilities says Soyinka, was to not speak or communicate at all. But such a defensive position had its own drawbacks:

A non-verbal man, [...] is equivalent roughly, to a piece of inert utensil. To conclude: the degree of linguistic assimilation of any group within a community inversely affects the level of potential animosity, which the community can evoke against itself (ADO 137).

Soyinka could even recollect an incident that happened at Ibadan where he had been to collect scholarship forms. In his meanderings alone in the corridors of the Secretariat, he heard someone speak the 'furthers out Ibadan accent I had ever heard' (ADO 135). The speaker was a Caucasian, not even tanned. This was surprising in all probability, more so when the speaker belied all expectations to speak the language of the Blacks. Narrating the experience, Soyinka confirms that it is more often than not that the aural perceptions color the visual. Even when official recognition is bestowed to any language its markers are subjectively analyzed by the powers that be, coloring the approach and the experience which they signify so that even in selection and recognition a whole attitude of segregating them from us goes into play and presuppose the process of group-identification:

And more pertinently, the executors of government decisions are the very members of the community whose subjective definitions of aliens have been created by this very process (ADO 135).

In all civilized parlance therefore language is the mark of distinguishing one people from other and the process for the same has been built into human social consciousness through a selective discourse of segregation, building up in the process a whole data of boundaries. And the end result of it all is that humanity more often than not end up being opposed to one another, fighting and pulling each other down, unable to restrict the animosities that has been so clearly manipulated and build up in the consciousness. Soyinka's obvious concern in making man come to speaking terms with each other is in promoting a restorative and opposing force to such dissensions and also to re-embark for a society where there may be unity and conjugality.

As an anti-imperialistic and post-colonial, Soyinka sees so much of verbiage on language and segregation as another example of colonial dissimulation, a camouflage aimed at keeping nationalist and humanistic drives against imperialism at bay. This also makes sure that through a false reportage and addresses to the victimized through the socially recognized intellectuals of the oppressed nations, the common masses believe that all is hunky dory with languages and by extension with the official policy of recognition meant to ameliorate unhappy dignities among the so called aliens.

Like all other social parameters, language is a lived phenomenon and a social construct. It is subverted politically to further hegemony. An opposite and more creative form of linguistic apparatus would deny this possibility of segregation; make language the midwife of politicizing, redundant. Soyinka while advocating the need for a language of assimilation makes it a point that for all purposes, Kiswahili be made the continental language. Obviously, there can be dissensions amongst the academia and the political mandarins about such a move. Soyinka's indulgence of Kiswahili is however merely for its overall functionality and has nothing to do with denying the freedom of expressions that is traditionally available to all self-respecting linguistic communities of the pan African Diaspora. Such a pragmatic initiative is necessary and more so important in forging coalesced and united linguistic societies to challenge the outlandish and coercive artificial boundaries foisted on the oppressed "by the colonial powers by so arbitrary and greed oriented directions" (ADO 137).

The colonial attempt to solidify and aggravate the already existing boundaries between the ethnic and groups of the continent has to be resisted. Soyinka confirms

that patience, even in such sham manipulation is fidgety, blunt and dangerously detrimental to all attempts at cohesiveness.

I have no patience with any national strategy which in any way, overt or covert, solidifies the meaningless colonial boundaries which have created and are still creating such havoc on the continent among African nations and peoples [...]. I believe that the nation state as an ideal belongs to the last century. To consolidate untenable geographical boundaries with the linguistic is not merely stagnating in essence and effect; it is sterile and regressive. Obviously, this is a standpoint from which my concepts of a linguistic strategy stem. (ADO 137)

The necessity to challenge subversive ploys of the colonial regimes is the need of the hour. It is equally important to figure out the sociological configurations of life, the patterns of human social survival, which in repressive colonies, is through exploitation, coercion, inequality and oppression. Afterall, divisions along linguistic and ethnic lines are meant to keep people down and out. But, investigation of linguistic boundaries must also expose the very process involved in the making of identities and the imposing of the same at the wake of man's garrulity and superficial information.

In any case however such boundaries must not mislead the people for long and if recourse is made to reach to the roots of any social organization and its way of creating discourses, common grounds for an expressive identification and goal similarity is not hard to fathom. Ultimately, such discoveries are also a necessary coming into being of the powers of the mind and to this end it is a new mode of liberation, in and through the consciousness.

It is a process of the mind, which transcends the emotional content of separation or unification, and forges, in whatever field it can, the psychological, cultural and political tools for a healthy social entity. (ADO 138)

But how is this bond amongst people to be declared and clarified. That remains the basic priority with Soyinka. In Africa, there is not one paramount linguistic pattern or a monoculture. The experience of the Diaspora is even more complicated by the presence within its boundaries of colonial influences and similitude of linguistic diversities. Despite such apparent odds, it is possible to take cue from the works of men like Frantz Fanon, DuBois, Nelson Mandela and above all the great Elizabethan, Shakespeare whose works create dangerously new modes of linguistic and spoken genres. The Elizabethan caved in the outlandish and obsolete modes of human experience to forge new similitude of moral, spiritual and psychological action to mark the coming into being of a synthetic, revolutionary culture. But there was also Mahatma Gandhi who voiced his concern at the linguistic trap in which the colonial product finds itself. Gandhi's language, simple and easily graspable, expressing the home-spun truths of honest labor, commitment and duty towards the motherland, culling incidents from the folklore and the mythological patterns of India's rich historical culture was a medium for a nationalistic discourse, a medium also to reincarnate the new Indian, a throw back to the parochial Euro centric medium for expression brought by the colonialist.

But, apart from this, Soyinka's motivating indulgence to incorporate the treasures of England's and France's linguistic wealth with those of Africa was to an extent driven home at the Second Congress of Negro Writers and Artists in Rome, 1959 where the following resolutions were passed

(1) that free and liberated black Africa should not adopt any European or other language as a national language

(2) that one African language should be chosen and all Africans would learn this national language beside their own regional language

(3) that a team of linguists be instructed to enrich this language as rapidly as possible, with the terminology for expression of modern philosophy, science and technology (ADO 140)

At the same conference the Malagasy poet, Rabemanjara expressed his disgust and triumph at the linguistic cleft in which the colonial writer found himself:

Truly our conference is one of language thieves. These crimes, at least, we have committed ourselves. We have stolen from our masters this treasure of identity, the vehicle of their thought, the golden key to their soul, the magic sesame which opens wide the door of their secrets, the forbidden cave where they have hidden the loot taken from our fathers and for which we must demand a reckoning. (ADO 140)

Soyinka knows that it is not easy for the Africans learn a particular language as the national language, especially when regional and group solidarities are manifest in-which in Soyinka's own words represents a ' political claustrophobic, and therefore explosive social capsule' (ADO 142)

Soyinka re-emphasizes the point that to persist with the colonial policy of allowing each linguistic community go about in formulating its own language divide is to expound the crisis, and thereby aggravate the culturally divisive colonial

orientation. The logical development of, or complimentary phase to the revolutionary assault on the colonial framework is to evolve a new medium of communication.

Soyinka's dramas suggest a tentative resolution of linguistic barriers. As they move between the past and the present, they enact a symbiotic parallel with other dynamic aspects of the African society, which retains the memory of the past even today. In doing so, they answer the needs felt by the dramatists and writers of Africa to bridge the continent's present with her past and also because the society of the continent, with its cultural beliefs of tradition in incessant change and modulation, accepting and coagulating innovative semantic variations, is a pragmatic one, and progressive also. All are based on the recognition of the need for the earth, society, individual, and even the gods to seek renewal as a condition of growth and life.

One aspect of this relationship is confrontational-past against the present; indigenous traditional mores with that superimposed from without in the form of colonialism; linguistic communities and confidantes, uncomfortable with change and innovation and the urgency of the latter in giving form and shape to a new Africa which would take a position of honor among the committee of nations.

Soyinka's dramas allow for the meeting of two cultures, people, civilizations, discourses and modes of human social experience, the mythological and the mundane, orature and the written word, objectivity and subjective experience to forge out of them an extraterrestrial dimension, not lived separately, to shape up a hybrid, vital, complex and intermingled world. In a forceful upheaval of modern style, the boundaries between languages have been enraptured, and then the fields separated by these barriers have been shaped literally from beneath the surface, to their most amazing formulations.

Soyinka's use of ritual, affects change through the act of transfiguration or sacrifice, because the victim or the carrier as Soyinka calls him, is the dual inhabitant of two realms: he or she is like Esu –messenger, horseman, bridge –who moves between the human and the divine. So too does the hero belong to two worlds and act as the bridge from one to the other. The hero again would not be able to take his people with him if he were to neglect his past altogether and so that his audience or chorus or the society of which he is a part understands him, he begins the process of change keeping in mind that for his people, tradition is a living force, though susceptible to change and modulation. In turn, he is also the pragmatic beginner, the vision of a new human and social world that builds its foundations upon the vital, fermenting and vigorous moorings of an ancestral world. But, when he fails in the process, or his lacunas are exposed, the community is still empowered to gather out of such grievances, the benediction of a new and salubrious awareness, and changes still. Thus alteration is in the very ethos of African culture, because it involves leaving a familiar world, and a transition into an uncertain world. Soyinka's linguistic genres, relies on this recognition of boundaries, and the process which his dramas exemplify, of transcending them to force newer insights is through juxtapositions, as has been said before. But the technique of sabotaging the center also involves a few other methods. In this connection, it is important to remember that Soyinka's theatre being what it is, rooted in his own culture is also influenced by other dramatic oeuvres from Europe- specially the theatrical techniques of Bakhtin and Artaud.

Bakhtin's struggle against the abstraction of literature creates a strong structural analogy to Antonin Artaud's conception of theater, which has also been inspired by the vision of transcending textual-based theater. Artaud's theater of cruelty aims to lead the individual back to theater's archaic roots of self-constitution. However,

Bakhtin and Artaud approach the issue of textual representation from opposite sides; since Bakhtin favors the spoken word, his critique is directed against the abstract literacy of books, thus making a reference to the theatrical. The aim of Artaud's critique, on the other hand, is aimed at the Western tradition of theater itself, as it doubts its textual and literal foundation. Yet both sides show a particular interest in the dialectics of the body as a basic medium of aesthetic and ethic innovation. While Bakhtin develops the concept of the grotesque body, Artaud requires the artists to traumatize their bodies methodologically.

A discussion of Bakhtin and Artaud's re-conception of theatrical representation requires both a theoretical and a practical perspective. A theoretical perspective allows us to study the basic mechanics of the visual and the verbal apart from the language and body in theatrical representation. A practical perspective, such as that of Bakhtin and Artaud, may help to better understand forms of performing arts that are highly body-orientated, such as those of late Soviet and Post-soviet arts and culture.

Throughout the modern theater movement - including Strindberg, Mejerhol'd, Brecht and, of course, Artaud - one finds a general tendency to subvert, or even eliminate, constitutional elements of theater. In order to understand the modern conception of theater, it is helpful to recall some of the media-theoretical basics of ancient Greek theater. What Friedrich Nietzsche's late-romantic view calls the spirit of music, responsible for the birth of tragedy, can be traced back to the alphabetization in ancient Greece. Theater was one of the phenomena resulting from the invention of the phonetic alphabet, and as such it functioned as an amplifier of the cognitive, emotional and sensory effects of alphabetization, ensuring that all members of Athenian society, regardless of whether they were literate or illiterate,

would acquire and internalize these effects. Kerckhove has summarized these effects as follows:

- 1) Theater turns visuality into an autonomous medium. It helps to develop a focused and distanced vision able to function independently from other senses or sensations. Whereas the sort of visuality required in daily life is always integrated into the blend of other sensations, the visual perception learned in the theater is removed from this context, as it is purely one-directional (Kerckhove, Substance 27).
- 2) Theater removes the senses from the contents of knowledge and the forms of memory. At first glance, this may seem paradoxical, because we are used to contrasting the sensations and emotional qualities of dramatic activity with the evident rationality of the written word. However, rational abstraction can also be found in the theater, because it is here that people first began to cultivate the typical Western habit of dividing sense into meaning and sensation. Theater seems to have been invented to enhance the separation of the mind from the senses, to teach us to divide mind and body. (Kerckhove, Substance 29)
- 3) In traditional theatre, there is the possibility of a detachment on the part of the audience. The audience always knows that the actor is a mere performer and his words are mere articulations of texts. The actor himself enacts his scenes without any particular attention to the sensations of words. Consequently, in modern theater, as it is understood in Europe, the body and knowledge, the somatic and semantics of it are separate from each other. In an epic on the other hand, the narrator embody the sentiments created by his words. He is aware of the immense possibility of sounds and attempts to

communicate their emotional state to the listeners. The narrator himself embodies the story and allows the same for his listeners. In writing tragedies, a rational interpretation always has to precede the action itself. In theater, the performance of language loses its direct physical foundation. In traditional epic narration, body and text appear as a unity, an integrated whole; there is no external text. In addition, the function of the ancient chorus is defined by the transformation of all spontaneous emotional and somatic reactions of the spectators into a state of self-observation. These separations of language, text and knowledge do not necessarily mean the loss of an archaic unity; still, they have to be viewed as a basic precondition for the understanding of somatic and semantics as two independent systems that each have their own dynamics. The independent status of seeing, and the separation of semantics and somatic, of knowledge and life, have a fundamental impact on the position of the individual in the world. In a world dominated by hearing, perception is always located in the middle of reality itself. This is why oral culture makes no categorical discrimination between subject and object, between self and other. Writing and the theater provide the cognitive precondition for taking a step back and observing from a distance. It is no longer the world that flows through the human being; now, in contrast, the individual turns the world into the object of his or her theoretical and practical interests (Kerckhove, Substance 30)

One thing that all the different manifestations of modern theater have in common is the desire to eliminate these conceptual elements, since these are fundamentally linked to the birth of tragedy that came out of writing.

In his essay on linguistics, The Word in the Novel, Bakhtin repeats, to some extent, Plato's skeptical discussion of writing, voice and oral communication, paying particular attention to the physical foundation of speaking. (62,64) Under this equation, language communicates the mental and emotional stress of the human spirit- its excitement, cry and desire to express what it feels. This obviously means that language itself, or at least the written word is not sufficient enough in bringing out what the individual understands. There is always a void between what the individual knows and what he finally puts in words. Hence Bakhtin points to the "sensation of verbal activity" - a "sensation that involves both the organism and the activity of creating meaning". He speaks of a "concrete unity" of "the flesh," of "the spirit of the word," and of the unity "of the active soul and body" (The Word 62, 64)

Bakhtin understood that the true and proper language of theatre must incorporate the voice, with its particular tones and intonations. At the same time, he rejected the traditional form of theater in Europe because it originated from writing and only worked to internalize literacy. Bakhtin's concept of dialogue and dialogism is therefore different from its traditional conception. He rejects dialogue "as a compositional form of speech" (The Word 92). Moreover, traditional dialogues promote social and economic hierarchies. It promotes various forms of differentiation, such as I versus the Other, internal versus external, observing versus acting. This is the starting point for Bakhtin's criticism of traditional dramatic dialogue, which moves towards the conception of an "immanent," "inner," and even "natural" dialogism (The Word 92).

There are three areas in which Bakhtinian dialogism goes against the fundamental

conditions of traditional theatricality and representation. 1) In a traditional dramatic enactment, an actor has his own individual perspective to things, different from others. Bakhtin however believes that an actor is always under the influence of his environment “bonded inseparably with the response, the motivated repartee” (The Word 94)

2) In traditional theater dialogue, there is a difference between individual utterance and objective context. For Bakhtin, however, all dialogue partners are inevitably dominated by context:

The repartee is formed within the context of the entire dialogue that exists; it is formed and assigned meaning to by one's own (the speaker's) and the other's (the partner's) utterances. Self and Other cannot separate the repartee from this mixed context of utterances without losing its meaning and tone. It is an organic component of an undifferentiated whole” (The Word 97).

Bakhtin also believes that it should be the project of theatre to take language back to its relevance with the spirit of man. This so-called “inner dialogism” is located in the depth of every word, regardless of the specific dialogue situation: “Every word is directed towards an answer and cannot escape the far-reaching influence of the anticipated repartee” (The Word 93).

Bakhtin discovers this inner dialogism in literature, in the written text. A word may penetrate the concept of an object and gain a deeper meaning out of it. A word may do so by transforming its own semantic and syntactic structure. The existence of ambiguity even in a written text proves that it is possible for words to sink deep into an object and dissect its social, intellectual and emotional parameters beyond what

appears externally. The changing dialogical orientation seems to become an event of the word itself, vitalizing and dramatizing the word in all its elements (The Word 97). This inner ambiguity makes language a corporal process. This third element clearly reveals the function of dialogue, and also the references to theater in Bakhtin's argumentation: theatricality works to translate literature back into life. Hence, Bakhtinian theater tries to eliminate the effects of literacy in favor of an oral, spoken and corporal form of social community.

Bakhtin deals with theater more extensively and directly in Rabelais and His World. Here, he discusses various forms of theaters in the late Middle Ages and early modern times, such as mystery plays, scholastic dramas, commedia dell'arte, diableries, and street theater. But, it is his concept of market place theatre that is of relevance here.

The theatre of the market place is set "without stage, in the middle of life itself" (Rabelais 291). Here, "there is no separation into participants (actors) and spectators; they all play together, [...] no dividing line exists between theater performance and real life" (Rabelais 292). The spectator is no longer a distanced observer, but becomes an actor of a dramatic situation himself. This element of the market proves to be an aesthetic principle of Rabelais' text.

Also, in a market place theatre, the theatrical space is created by sounds and cries of actors and spectators interacting with each other and their environment. These cries include everything: the cries of merchants and dealers advertising their wares, curses, puns, swearing, praise, science and philosophy. In such a theatrical arena, images and visual effects have less importance. Important are the pragmatics of the actors and spectators.

The speaker always declares his solidarity with the crowd on the market place. He is not separate from it, he does not teach it, he does not expose it, and he does not frighten it; he laughs together with it. His speech does not even have a touch of sinister seriousness, of fear, reverence and humility. It is the cheerful, fearless, open and uninhibited speech of the marketplace, unrestricted by taboos and conventions (Rabelais 299).

In this acoustic space, language loses its distinctive denotations. The marketplace is dominated by semantic inversions and travesties. Everything becomes an object for puns, for reversals of semantic opposites, for disguises, jokes, deceptions, illusions (Bakhtin). Everything here has to do with language as a pure performing act and the comic and grotesque activities of producing words. As Bakhtin shows in an example taken from *commedia dell'arte*: "The articulation of a complicated word is staged like a birth" (Rabelais 391), and: "The borders between body and world are removed" (Rabelais 344, 350).

Bakhtin however praises the theatre of the market for another reason. This is the motif of book trading. Book trading in Bakhtin's concept is not an economic enterprise for trading of knowledges. Rather, it suggests the flow of knowledges, ideas and beliefs from books into life. Bakhtin repeatedly describes how, in the marketplace, the abstract and exclusive medical, philosophical or theological book-knowledge can be at last proved and criticized on a corporal level.

What's more, it is not the individual body that appears as the final basement of abstract book-knowledge, but the marketplace turns into a space where all those bodies separated by degrees of literacy merge once again into the whole of a social

body; here a total body-drama takes place in which every individual body participates as an unfinished grotesque unit:

In that solemn self-organization of the people [...] individuals feel themselves to be an inseparable part of the collective, members of the body of the masses. In this unity, the individual body begins to lose itself, and it almost becomes possible to change bodies, to be reborn [...]. Through this, people feel its concrete, sensory, physical unity (Rabelais 281).

The main elements of Bakhtin's conception can also be found in Artaud's theater, yet with a much different stress. At first glance, Artaud seems to define theater language in a way that is very similar to Bakhtin. Artaud makes a strict survey of traditional dialogue. According to him, dialogue - whether written or spoken - does not belong on the stage, it belongs into the book. This is why theater has its own reserved place in manuals of literature history as a form of articulated language. According to him, a theatrical stage is a physical and concrete place that has to be filled. Such an area demands that it has a language of its own and this language is different from the one employed for other discourses.

Artaud describes the proper language of theatre as concrete language. It is also to be differentiated from the word.

Conventional theater according to Artaud is a theatre of the word. But a true language of the stage includes something more than the word. It is everything manifested on the stage materially, and that is initially oriented towards sensations, rather than towards the mind and verbal language. To Artaud, the task of theater is

not to work out the psychosocial effects of literacy but --as to Bakhtin-- to reconstitute language as a physical event:

[...] as language is born on the stage, acquiring its effectiveness through this spontaneous emergence. [...] without taking the indirect path through the word [...] should be the theater itself rather than the written and spoken play (Theatre 49).

As in the marketplace theatre of Bakhtin, in the theater of Artaud words are used not for the clear expression of ideas. In Artaud's dramas, words are meant to interrogate, disconcert and subvert all relations between the objects themselves and their forms and their meanings. In this sense, they are anarchistic. Meanings become displaced and inverted. The shock of this theater is not produced by action, as in traditional theater, but through the merging of fact and fiction on stage. According to Artaud, theater does not deal with "the unexpected [...] in situations, but in objects that [...] change from a mental vision to being real" (Theatre 53).

One also finds that Artaud bridges the divide that marks off the actor from the spectators. In Artaud's theatre one sees the viewers and the players in the same arena. Artaud abolishes the stage and the auditorium. This means that the spectator is now at the center of the play and is a part of the action that engulfs him. Between spectators and play, between actors and spectators, a direct relationship now emerges. The audience knows that it can be in a position where the actor is and so, cannot be fully detached from the players themselves. This reintegration of stage and auditorium leads to two phenomena that have already been addressed in Bakhtin's conception: First, there is the tendency towards systematic depersonalization that Artaud discovered in Balinese theater, and that he considers to

be fundamental to his so-called theater of cruelty. The declared aim of this theater of cruelty is to return to a theater of the masses.

The second phenomenon concerns the transformation of the theatrical space from a visual into an acoustic space, into a space filled by language, noise and shouting. However, in Artaud's conception, this transformation is carried out much more carefully and in a more reflected way than in Bakhtin's initial idea. Artaud talks about the "shouts, moaning, vision, surprises, various bombshells" that must fill the stage; about "a permanent sound scene; sounds, noises and shouts need to be chosen first for their quality of vibration, and "only then for what they may represent" (Theatre 98). He emphasizes the intonation of language, while disqualifying its syntactical aspect: "A shout, uttered at one end, should reach the other, while being amplified and modulated from one mouth to the next" (Theatre 115) For Artaud, "theater is the [...] only place in the world and the last extensive means available to us for reaching the organism directly" (Theatre 97).

As in Bakhtin's marketplace theater, Artaud's stage language, which had been alienated by writing, returns to its corporal foundation. Consequently, Artaud wants language to express what is normally does not. Language must be such as provokes an irritant to the dormant senses. It must capture humanity's inward want to blend with its own spirits. Literacy as such is an assortment of mere symbols. By itself, it is nothing significant.

Despite the closeness of Bakhtin and Artaud's conceptions of theater, there is one important respect in which they clearly differ. Bakhtin holds the utopian belief that the theater of the marketplace may return the alienated verbal language to its corporal roots, thus reconstituting both an intact speech body and an intact social

body. Artaud acknowledges that the body of language can only be represented on stage as “dismembered and broken up in space” (Theatre 97).

The difference between the organic language body of the Bakhtinian marketplace and the dismembered language on the stage of Artaud's theater of cruelty leads to a further separation. Although the concept of fear plays an important role for both Bakhtin and Artaud, to Bakhtin, the grotesque body action of Carnavalesque Theater fulfills the cathartic function of overcoming a cosmic fear that is buried in the soul of all members of the community. This is very different from Artaud's conception of fear. The theater of cruelty attempts to bring back on stage and reawaken among the spectators, the great metaphysical fears on which ancient theater was based. The fear that Artaud wishes to recall in his theater of cruelty may be the deep shock that stems from the irreversibility of the separation between somatics and semantics, of body and mind --in other words, the shock about the irreversibility of literary psychosocial effects.

But, while Soyinka restores to the theatre its acoustics, using the stage area for the intermixing of voices, shouts, gestures etc, he also clarifies that another possibility to theatrical space is in the use of dance to propel a communal sensitivity. In most of the plays of Soyinka, one finds dances and other movements. Now, dance can be regarded as a classic case of negotiation. In the case of Africa, it is not only a part of its culture, but also rather an essential component of its togetherness, its opposition to authority and a challenge to rules.

To begin this discussion, taking The Road, at the first go makes a few things said about Soyinka already clear. The Road is important among Soyinka's plays. It achieves an unequivocal success in the union of theme and dramatic technique, an

experiment, which he had carried in A Dance of the Forests. In balancing of message and method, which says D.S.Izevbaye, “a successful communication, not in the sense of something immediately and wholly understood, but in the sense of a play which satisfies our sense of dramatic rightness” (Critical Perspectives 91). The tension in this play is not only made up of the linguistic devices employed herein, but due to the dichotomy that pertains to the fissure between what is seen and what is heard.

The setting of the drama is itself awkward. Its semantic overtures are noted through the employment of mime and setting. The road, the dominant symbol of the play connects the spiritual, the mundane and the satirical, while the sprawling motionless figures lying on the stage around the Askident Store, reminds one of death.

Among the characters of the play, Samson particularly revels in easy and affable wit, bludgeoning confident looking words, to unleash a whole non-serious attitudinizing.

SALUBI: Six o’ clock I bet .I don’t know how it is, but no matter when I go to sleep, I wake up when it strikes six .Now that is a miracle.

(He gets out his chewing stick, begins to chew on it.)

SAMSON: There is a miracle somewhere but not what you say. Maybe the sight of you using a chewing stick (The Road 2).

Samson’s term “miracle” is a comic subterfuge. It undercuts the seriousness with which Salubi has used the word. Similarly, when the Professor uses the same word.

his ludicrous dress and bearings, paves an anticipatory lightness of tone in the whole manner of its apprehension by the audience.

Almost a miracle [...] dawn provides the greatest miracle but this [...] in this dawn has exceeded its promise (The Road 8).

But when the same Professor uses the word 'wonder', the possibility of taking him non-seriously proves costly. In this case the word becomes illustrative of a non-conventional world-view.

PROF. Come then, I have a new wonder to show youa madness where a motorcar throws itself against a tree –Ggram! And showers of crystal flying on his broken souls.

Samson (*suddenly alarmed*). Wait! What was that about an accident? (The Road 36)

Samson, an important character in the play is like the audience naturally flabbergasted. Like his audience, he had taken the Professor literally. But his expectations are proved false. There is certainly a gulf between their worlds, between the use of language by one and that by another, which perforce also hoodwinks any fertile complacency. The two discourses, completely at odds with each other does not permit any normal osmosis of thought and unless human understanding itself is made to look out for newer modes of apprehension, straitjacket analysis of the semantic contours of language proves a lost foil.

PROFESSOR: I would say your problem is straightforward. You are in some kind of difficulty.

SAMSON: You have stated it exactly, sir.

Professor. In fact, one might almost say that you are about to pass through a crisis of decisions

SAMSON: Ah, I don't know that one Professor (The Road 180).

The words of the Professor, a complex variation of bombastic and inflated rhetoric "might almost say" and a pseudo professional lingo "a crisis of decisions", unhinges any recovery from Samson and his end, quipping conventional one liners are flat, indecisive and proletarian "Ah, I don't know that one Professor."

Moreover when Samson uses the phrase "that one"(The Road), he is to all certainty making an attempt to bridge the linguistic divide between Nigerian pidgin English and its standard colloquial manner. But the divergence between the Professor's linguistic apparatus and that of Samson, and indeed that of others grow incessantly while the Professor trail his own logic, indifferent to the effect of his own words.

Prof. How could you? You are illiterate. It is lucky for you that I watch over you, all of you (The Road 180).

The only response from Samson at this point is to go back again to his faltering convictions and remind the Professor to his original purpose: "Yes Sir, Er, about our problem Sir" (The Road 180).

There seems no end to this vaudeville routine, this quick fissions and recommencing of linguistic oddities.

SAMSON: Professor, what I mean is, how can a man cut off part of himself like that. Just look at him. He is not complete without a motor lorry.

PROFESSOR. He is not [*turns to stare at Kotonu*] What sort of animal is he?

SAMSON: Animal? I mean to say Professor! [...] Look Professor, the road won't be the same again without him.

PROFESSOR: He was a road mender too?

SAMSON: Sir? But I told you he is a driver (The Road 180-181).

The Professor's monologues appear idiosyncratic, not only because his logic is perceived from the straight forward Christian doctrine of Incarnation but due also to the common man's orientation to not look beyond surface semantics, the parole to seek out the langue, the subconscious blueprint of all repository wisdom. The Professor admits of the dangers in the Quest. But, he is willing to take a chance. True knowledge is not to be found in the ordinary ways of life. One needs to cross the demarcated line between life and death to break his way into wisdom.

The mad Professor obviously sees beyond mere literalness and though he is a maverick, his speeches, seen in the context of his discovery of the "Word" signifies his celebration of "death" as a precursor to all meaningful existence there is. This discovery made possible through refracting the mere literalness of the word "Bend" assumes its connotational suggestiveness in his uprooting the sign of "Bend" as a mere word with its associational domain in the parole. Soyinka uses a word to ascertain its silences, deconstructing so to speak the normative order, proposing a dialectics of separation while unhinging the truth of cardinal significance.

Besides, when the Professor speaks of the "Word" as discernible where the ascent is broken and the winged secret plummets back to earth, he is suggestive of the Ogboni thought on him. The ascent is the spirit's aspiration towards its maker.

Olorun the father, while the plummeting back to earth is the return to Ogboni, the earth, and the mother of all life. What this may forespeak is the interconnectedness of life and death for the Yoruba and is indeed a primal basis of all oriental thought and Eastern philosophies.

One way through which the cumulative experience of the Professor reaches its benediction and fruitfulness is then through the use of the metaphor, conjoining images and spaces divergent from one another to fish out meanings and semantic densities. The Professor's metaphors belong primarily to the world of the drivers and his figuration of the state of the road is a controlling strategy promulgative of the discrete nature of the human experience apart from its definition of the physical circumstances of life. But it above all resists assimilation into convenient scores of totalistic perspectives and so becomes perilous and insidious, tempting covert analysis.

Be the road! Coil yourself in dreams, lay flat in treachery and deceit and at the moment of a trusting step, rear your head and strike the traveler in confidence, swallow him whole, or break him on the earth (The Road 228).

The Professor alludes to the imagery of the snake in his final moments. He tells his listeners to follow a way of life that is profusely decrepit. It apparently projects treachery and deceit as valedictory to wisdom. Nonetheless, the Professor's words are an emissary to free will and the seductive torments of knowledge, encompassing evil. This riddle like apparatus in the linguistic contours of the Professor's speech is both perplexing and liberating, both for nullifying placid social expectations while streamlining new ways of seeing things.

Like metaphor, it is a presence of ambivalence. But as Sanda of the Beatification Boy says there is after all method in this madness and so logic of its own. But even in this play, there is this amalgam of the pidgin and the authentic prose, and while the setting of the play with its market places, its hustle and bustle of daily chores is completely African in its smells and sounds, the opening scene is itself a commentary on the hybrid nature of African economic and cultural life as seen by the dramatist.

Sanda the educated Nigerian with his passion for magazines and statistical data, is the quintessential liberal whose quotes from Shakespeare's *Lear* is juxtaposed with what he knows about the uneasy social parameters of his land.

BARBER. Those overnight millionaires then, how do you think they do it?

SANDA. Cocaine 419 swindle. Godfathering or mothering armed forces. Or after a career with police. Or with the Army, if you are lucky to grab a political post. Then you retire at forty --as a General who has never fought a war. Or you start your own church, or mosque. That's getting more and more popular (Beatification 240).

Sanda employs images of the army, church and the police to comment on the lecherous middle class who have lost all principles in the wake of the country's freedom. The rapidity with which religious and political symbols are made to bear the moral and human burnt infecting the entire country, suggests large-scale loss of values and the quick sliding of culturally accepted institutions. The Barber returns Sanda's verbal quips with strong negative or positives and knows of the political corruption infecting the country. The minstrel's songs are again African in their inspiration and build up. But their satirical overtones, with music, coming from the

barrel of guns, juxtaposes guns with the eye in an obnoxious reminder of the impeachment of human innocence through mechanical gadgets. Through a subsequent follow-up of animal imageries, hens and eggs, itching back and scratching the rather perverse and obscene nature of human exploitations are rendered quick and fast.

Soyinka's manner of narration also incorporates the proverb, which as an extension of the metaphor ties an old saying to a new context thus producing a valid cryptogram for the real life experience. In this model of the proverb, the dictum, is equated with art, which curiously, is distinguished from the experience to which it brought to bear upon. The level at which the change takes place in the process, is generally placed outside the literary act itself, that is in reality. But the drama creates a social world of its own kind and the proverb in consequence is a reflection on that reality. In Achebe, the narrator highlights his own presence with a gratuitous aside and distances the reader from the action. In Soyinka, and particularly in his dramas, the proverbial wisdom incorporates the audience and does not refer to them as if they are foreign to the speaker.

So when Mama Put in the play The Beatification of Area Boy says that "Shells have no name to them" and that "a dead man has no name" (247), she lambastes those who have ruined her family and her society through violence. But, she is taking all her listeners to her viewpoint. Hence her extensive use traditional wisdom where misfortunes are equated with disease, "But that proved only the beginning of the seven plagues"(247), is not resisted by the audience, but accepted as a possible version of the social and moral violence, which has made their lives so disgusting and unpalatable.

But the most significant of linguistic processes is to be figured out in the application of the Creole which is what the characters like the trader uses when communicating with his audience. It has to be borne in mind, that the use of corrupted English and impure grammatical structures, is Soyinka's way of controverting the essential claims of Negritude. It is at the same time his way of speaking against the exclusivist tendencies and the fears of acculturation, which looks upon the presence of the English language in Africa, as being absolutely other, and necessarily threatening the native tongues. Soyinka, however does not refuse to cross or mix. In short, the line between the two apparent opposites is, *mutatis mutandis*, a heady mix that conjoins without violence the two racial groups, Europeans and the Africans, a postmodern celebration of doubleness and an apparent embarrassment that blurs the line of demarcation.

For Wole Soyinka then, the albino and the bat represent the special spiritual force of those who are different from the others. At times such figures are also given as 'abiku', another favorite of Soyinka's --the one who will not stay, the child who dies and is repeatedly reborn only to die again.

The application of creolised English becomes reassuringly pleasing and even vibrant in the feisty color and gaiety of African life it proposes, a celebration of the nation's spirit of energy that stayed buoyed despite the aggravating spoils of social and economic life in post-colonial Africa. So when the cyclist explains his reasons for using his favored vehicle this is what he has got to say:

CYCLIST. Na in make I go borrow my brother's bicycle self because man no fit trust public transport again. You wait for bus all day and then, when one molue finally arrive eh, then Somalia war go begin. Shirt and trouser

wey you done wash and iron to blow employer mind or scatter girlfriend in sense- (Hisses)-e become like rag for second hand bosikana (food -shack) market.

TRADER: Oh, na me you dey tell tory? Na drama for that bus stop -(Points)- everyday, every morning going for work or evening time after work. Everyone for oneself, man or woman, old or young, nobody cares. One third body inside, one leg outside, reminder under luggage and other people's body .I done see big man -e fat plenty -dam squeeze am so hard, e` shit inside in trousers. (Beatification 256)

The protean variations of linguistic reference, the shuttling back and forth from creolisations to standard dialects, perforce shatter expectations, all the more why the play seem to suggest that its characters are always up to something and the African social world far from being a closed universe with type rules is a constantly changing presence, and its laws, are as enigmatic as nature itself .The best manner of this exemplification is the linguistic reportire of the Barber and the Trader both of whom, offer their individual reference points from which to look upon such a modern convenience as the bicycle.

TRADER. I thought it was a case of an optical illusion

I don't recall a journey in a time -machine.

There is something fishy here, or else a miracle

To see a Lagos body on a bicycle (Beatification 258)

The stringency of the play's narrative patterns, uncompromising in its moral and humanistic ethos, expectedly vigorous in pulling offenders down, entertains

The image of people pressed against each other in a public place is ludicrous. If the pressure is great, the volume will be less. This is only a Pressure People can even shit in their trousers because of such pressure. There could be no better way than proclamations coming from one of law's own men.

Judge. Don't be so parochial, man! The majesty of the law discriminates, but is impartial. It recognizes neither friend nor foe, strangers or relations. Majesty! Ma-jes-ty (*Beatific smile*)(Beatification 288)

But more importantly, the songs incorporated in the plays, as it is done herein inverts subtle military logic and commands by subverting the very structural status quo of left-right indented into a different parameter. It builds upon the accepted paradigms for music and cohorts satire with the finer logic of observations, and its poetic cadences inbuilt into them is subversive and startling in so far as the logic of structure is itself a commentary on the irrationality and vacuity of man's moral vision. Contradictions of the expected inarguably enfeeble normative solicitations and so force realizations of what is least feasible –

Prisoner 1. My friends come gather round

[.....]

A Pendulum to mimic.

The ruling minds are static

But the balls are swinging frantic (Beatification 293, 294 295)

Adjustments on the social front are matters of physical dynamics; the associations of dig and sound appear unnatural for conjoining reminiscences of agriculture and by covert extension, graveyards functions carried on stealthily. Juxtaposing imageries of static minds with frantically swinging balls are perversely sexual.

It is not the expression, or so it is established, but rather an interpretation of the expression, done conventionally, that is dismissed as absurd or vacuous. Confronted with sentence patterns such as these, it is imperative to go for 'nonce-interpretations' and dismiss literal analysis for figurative ones. Yet there is nothing in the definitions of these words that exclude their occurrence in the context. That ruling minds should be static, and not unsettling or fuzzy is not a factual impossibility. Again, the left and right movements of the waist are its deviation from normal positions. But, they indicate flexibility of the body muscles and a healthy physique. In the case of society, such adjustments in moral principles not only become forced, but in fact unwanted and so avoidable. The juxtaposing of the "Left" with the "Right" brings images of political organizations that take up antipodal moral positions depending on their closeness to power and money. But the word Left has other connotations also, and especially in the case of Africa, highlights the emaciated financial prowess of the masses.

From Zia with Love, interrogates dictatorial hegemony, with its overriding violence and massacres of human life and liberty and stretches the limits of dialogic language. The resultant anxiety it defines, confabulates to set in a continuum the misapplications of rule the world over. Its images are those of blood and sweat, of prisoners heckled and beaten up in dingy confinements, the uneasy sounds of bayonets and military boots, of a social world whose logic is one of smokescreen manipulations, of advance and retreat under cover, of unsure glances thrown at each other, while its dialogue combines Soyinka's usual fascination for the Creole with those of his European dialogic emphasis.

Soyinka's tandem use of Yorubic vocabularies, and cultural symbols, producing a continuous osmosis between European spoken forms and the native tongue,

heightens through unconventional entry points, the balletic balance of tension, of a culture, which while conscious of the colonial eavesdropping of its social and economic configurations, has kept alive a normative linguistic nationality through allusions to myths and idioms of its own. A pertinent instance of this conjugality, of language as a midwife between the prescriptive values of Europe and the tentative, though less magisterial forms of Yoruba tongue is when Miguel invites the Warder of his prison house to deliver a communiqué to his mother and the Warder's response is an exciting cocktail of available forms, suggestive of the blacks and the whites sharing the one topographical and geographical landscape of Africa.

WARDER. Look, you people, I no know if you get interest, but er [...] (*Nods towards Miguel*) [...] e' look like to sat you get the means to do something for yourselves. (*He digs into his pocket*) [...].

DETIBA. What is that?

WARDER. You hear of bandufu before? (*Zia* 144)

In Soyinka's plays, Yoruba proverbs extend the range of the metaphor. It puts ancient wisdom to new contexts, thereby producing a valid cryptogram for a real life experience:

SEBE: One does not get to know the forest by climbing only the trees in his village. The learning process is what keeps us afloat and alive, Commander. (*Zia* 153-154) 54

Foucault conceptualizes the need to augment tradition and individual talent in his views of transition: "our sentences spring out of the uniqueness of our precarious existence, using words that are older than all memory" (*Order* 90).

But, for Mudimbe, the real nature of the African social life is a midway between the inherited episteme of the West and traditional African life, between an underdeveloped past and developed future, where past loyalties, forged in forsaken villages, are in the process of dissolving. In Soyinka, neither the past nor the present is of unqualified good or evil. Also, his present is not a diffused space characterized by "marginality" (Mudimbe, *Invention of Africa* 4).

That the present is important needs no surer guarantee in Soyinka's play since the language of purity and exclusion, is opposed by the figures of mixing and contradiction, best summed up as paradoxes, and oxymorons.

We see this clearly when the Wing Commander, together with Sebe and other attendant militia, pens a chorus forewarning anyone who messes with the army and overhauls their consignment. The commander sees the action of the army in and through a series of constructs:

WING COMM. State assignment / For state consignment / State machinery /
For state chicanery (*Zia* 156).

The confluence of "assignment" with "consignment," "machinery" with "chicanery," turns poetic logic into a social aberration. The rapidity with which social particulars alternate is to undo precisely what it claims to achieve- the wisdom of verse for a detached look at what is real. The audience is as much responsible for a sabotage of the present misrule, as is the author. Soyinka merely drives a wedge between the audiences' smooth vulnerability to appearances and the incubus that lies beneath.

The Dance of the Forests, one of Soyinka's most ambiguous looking plays, says Derek Wright is the "most uncentered of works" (*Revisited* 81) and combines dance

and dialogue, music and mime .Its language has large polyphonic shifts from an elevated Shakespearean English, for the timeless mythologized world of the forests, to earthy, vernacular invective for Murete and Rola to gnomic incantation in the final numinous masque.

The opening formality of the play befits the occasions surrounding it –the “Gathering of the Tribes”, and the “Welcome of the Dead”- means of effecting a communion between different levels of existence, the living the dead and the unborn:

Only such may regain

Voice auditional as are summoned when their link

With the living has fully repeated its nature (Dance 4-5).

That there is much that is pompous in it is beyond doubt and a quick reference of what results from this hauteur, the rising of the Dead Man and the Dead Woman, as victims of man’s past cruelties underplays the fallow seriousness of tone, immediately setting off a parallel between a callous official line and its relational human impetus. The Dead Woman’s response to so much high falutin verbal artillery is a devastating echoing of Lear’s:

What is it to them from whom I descended-if that is why thy shun me now

(Dance 80)

The Woman’s linguistic operation is one of abstractions, and quite rightly so for she is a spirit after all, a fact none knows better than she herself.

The world is big, but the dead are bigger {...] (Dance 80).

Demoke the artist is one with the operations of fire, carving and smelting. “But I

wish to be saved from death by burning. Living I would rather not watch my body dissolve like alloy. There must be happier deaths”

ROLA: Like what.

DEMOKE: A Fall from a great Height (Dance 19)

The continuous tense in which the verbs of actions are manifest, contradicted and opposed through the difference between the long vowel sounds and their short consonants work to mirror the dilemmas of Demoke's self between an act of being and moving, and by continuity belonging to the world of the spirit, and one that ends with a break which would be ending in probably the same result. As an artist cohabiting a mundane and metaphysical world, his choice of words are in perfect bondage with his mental self and act of becoming which dovetails a recognition of the material base of art and the supernatural inspiration of creation.

Like the Yeatsian artist whose travails in the animist world is a recognition of the human contortions involved in living and the scorching nature of the libidinal energy as suffocating, the spirit world is an acknowledgement of the need of the artist to carve out of the flesh the involved in living and the scorching nature of the libidinal energy as suffocating, the spirit world is an acknowledgement of the need of the artist to carve out of the flesh the embalment of the divine.

But similarly coalesced within the ambit of its image making syncretism, is Soyinka's deferential, the fourth stage, holding in its volcanic maelstrom, the potential transudation of materiality into the spirit. Proverbs, and their reflection form another crux for the movement of transition between an old wizened world and its modern application. Proverbs install cultural distinctiveness into writing and acts as a interweaving interpretative mode where the reportage is in standard English

though a simultaneous movement along the continuum in the dialogue of the characters is favored. Language in this process undergoes a stage of becoming. It may also be said that there is a social contest here for which the language variation is synecdoche. For the predominant discourse signs are the emblems of power that is monumental, patriarchal, and supports an officially sanctioned nationalism. But Soyinka's use of variation and syncretism halts such a monist and official nationalism.

DEMOKE. Let me anoint

The head and do you, my master trim the bulge
 Of his great bottom. The squirrel that dances on
 A broken branch, must watch whose jaws are open
 Down below. Thrice I said I would behead it
 Where my feet would go no further. Thrice,
 Oremole, slave, fawner on Eshuoro laughed...
 I plucked him down! (Dance 27)

The movement of this verse, along point and counterpoint, creates an apparent balance though the markers of a slide or an eruption of tension creeps incrementally, until the verse itself can no longer hold the antithesis and ends abruptly in "I plucked him down". But even here, the language forges ahead to combine an African wisdom with the linguistic conventionalities of European drama.

For Catherine Belsey, one of the traits of the interrogative text is the absence of an unified subject of enunciation with whom the reader can easily identify (Critical Practice 91). Barring the unusual use of a narrator, as in Arthur Miller's A View from the Bridge (1955), it is the norm of the theater not to have a protagonist serving directly as the subject of enunciation because no one character can say "I"

exclusively. On the other hand, audience identification with various characters is natural, and eventually a hero or a villain can be treated in a more or a less sympathetic fashion, thus inviting more or less of the audience's sympathy.

Soyinka's splitting of the subject is central to the issue of change. In this process, the illusion of an unified subject is dismissed as because the social order of which the narrator is a part is no longer a stable one and the experience presented is a complex summation where the discursive patterns of each identities merges, contradicts and confabulates similar or discrete other identities. For Soyinka, none of the discourses presented is complete in its authenticity and the reasons why they should be taken for granted is therefore dismissed completely.

Besley's formulation of Lacan's approach to the subject conveys the essence of Soyinka's patterns for his reader, clarifying the manner in which the Nigerian dramatist fashions his discursive polyphonies to elicit a narrative matrix out of an equal participation.

It is this contradiction in the subject –between the conscious self, which is conscious in so far as it is able to feature in discourse, and the self which is only partially represented there –which constitutes the source of possible change. The child's submission to the discursive practices of society is challenged by the existence of another self, which is not synonymous with the subject of the discourse.

The source of possible change in Soyinka's work then is tied to the form of the interrogative text and the way it discounts the narrative subject in formulating the only possible counter to experience. The plurality of Soyinka's world is the reason for this and by extension all experience is a grit to the writers' mill. Obviously, the

social and ethnic world of which the writer is a part is responsible for such an articulation of difference.

To return once more to the text, Demoke's narrations are acceptable for the hesitancy, and discomfiture it presents of a man seeking to convince and speaking to one such as the audience, who is also eager to hear of Oremole's culpability. But if Demoke is lacking in equanimity, the proselytizations and catechisms of the Dead Man do not lack conviction and his future sojourn on this earth proves his prophecy true. When he addresses the Court Physician he has this to say:

Unborn generations will be cannibals' most worshipped physician. Unborn generations will, as we have done eat up one another. (Dance 49)

The present is a legacy of the past and so none better or worse for it, and a air of certainty to the Dead Man's perambulations is however the answer of the Court Historian

War is the only constancy that past ages affords us [...]. The cause is only the accident, your Majesty, and war is the destiny (Dance 50).

The arguments of the historian cannot be taken at its face value. Its ambivalence is proven when the historian takes up contradictory positions; now condoning war for its blood shed and then ascribing to its violence as opposed to the conventional beta noire it is often made to be in antiwar protests – a fact established through historical allusions, which rendered through the refracted vision of the historian takes on an aesthetically sound position. Subjective art with its fundamental absence of truth absolutes is a human construct. It lampoons linear aesthetic formulations as professing undiluted factual perspectives.

I have here the whole history of Troy [...] the magnificence of the destruction of a beautiful city [...] Would Troy, if it were standing today lay claim to preservation in the annals of history if a thousand valiant Greeks had not been slaughtered before its gates, and a hundred thousand Trojans within her walls?
(Dance 51)

A last word must be said about Soyinka's performance stylistics in The Dance, because it remains one of the most demanding of his plays. Soyinka's challenge in the play was to provide settings and sceneries, which could affect transitions from one world atmosphere to the other in the most seamless of manner. That Soyinka was able to do this may be ascertained from the following facts.

The formal elaboration of the opening scene, that of the "Gathering of the Tribes" and the "Welcome of the Dead", instantaneously confirms the importance of the celebrations while a separately lit back scene affords an easy transition to the voluptuous rapture of Mata Kharibu's court, its epic splendour and gargantuan gorgeousness.

Even the sceneries confirm to Soyinka's evolutionary dynamics of play constructing; the forest presents drab natural imageries. Its sound effects are those of beaters and engine noise; supernatural and mysterious for the timeless worlds of the spirits which is coextensive with the former but charged with mystery, power, and significance.

The characters chosen from four different planes of reality appear as themselves in many instances. But they have to invariably put on necessary costumes, make-ups and even gestures to indicate that they belong to other spheres and are therefore

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cross boundaries, which is the nature of their change.

In the mundane forests, one meets three orders of beings: present day humans; two revenants who are instantaneously recognized as such and in certain scenes, Murete the tree imp, who belongs to the spirit world. The numinous forest show other variations of the spirit world –the revenants as ghosts, and as incarnations and a few other spirits who put on masks. The other forest dwellers are symbolically garbed. Their movements are abstract and not well defined, which is the way as it should be since their physical dynamics cannot have an equal conformity with the exactness of human behavior. Yet their movements occur at a deeper level of metaphorical insight- through dance and other choreographed movements, characterized by kinetic distortions. Their motions are slow normally, but acquire speed and velocity when the occasion is of conflict and agitations.

The intention of such presentations is to elicit from man a tortured awareness so that new beginnings are made and initiated. From such an insight alone might spring evolution, the only guidance to be offered by the guardians of the earth.

The title Opera Wonyosi, a play first performed at the University of Ife's convocation ceremony, plays on the meanings of the word 'opera' which in Yoruba and English means 'the fool buys'. Modelled on Bertolt Brecht's The Threepenny Opera, (1928), and John Gay's The Beggar's Opera (1728), the intention of the play is ironical and plays on the foolish assumptions of the rich who bought themselves expensive laces when the nation was reeling under severe financial and infrastructural constraints.

Like the Brechtian original, which incorporated songs and music, composed by Kurt Weil, this play, with a dash of "peppery relevance", (Relich, Critical

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Perspectives 128) the play is also a fable about Nigerian expatriate racketeers and "security advisors" in the twilight days of Bokassa's Central African Republic. The play is also a fable about Nigerian expatriate racketeers and security advisors in the twilight days of Bokassa's Central African Republic.

Like in Brecht's Opera, Soyinka's play involve songs. The play infact opens with one, entitled "Mack the Knife" (Opera 303), and originally rendered by Louis Armstrong. But in Soyinka's case, it use has been adopted to the Nigerian context and has the same qualitative reference as used in the original-acerbic words and haunting tones, witty, ironical and satirical references that allude to the moral and social perversions brought forth by the oil boom in the Nigeria of the day.

To speak a cliché, the common perceptions about beggars are that they beg. Soyinka extends and stretches this perception. The word in the play defines all of social upstarts and indeed the entire nation, which beg for a piece of action. But the other song of Mack the dagger wielder is even more starkly glum in its imagist contours -shark, teeth, razors, dead bodies, plague, Closed File, wraith, marble headstone all conjure to put up a world, that is inhuman, violent, and diseased. The phrase "Night flows dark and silent" equates night with oil and later with plague-the latter term is not merely a name for a disease, but a generalized reference to all perversions. Words used in this double-barreled sense interleave the play.

But a reading of the play also reminds one of Dryden and his work 'Mac Flecknoe.' Dryden entertained reasoned argument, refined technique, and invective to put public offences in perspective and amend vice through corrections. Soyinka too hits at public nuisance. His characters express spontaneity with perfidy. Anikura's demarcation of his political hinterland through heaps of garbage and clearly evident geographical divisions is proof enough of the pus infecting the body

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politic of the nation. But it is Anikura's stark formality and gravity of utterances that align him with the official line and in his own world, Anikura is only a image of the true looters, the bankrupt politicians who have done the country waste. He carries with him the authenticity of a Presbyterian Pulpit besides a Baconian practical sense and his forewarnings are not for others. But garbed in benevolence its purpose is to induce fear in the listener. At other times it is humor all the way.

ANIKURA. Our job is to induce charity in others [...]. You will be issued standard bowls [...]. You deposit the money, press a button and the false button opens and the coins fall in. It opens only one way. Don't try to tamper with it.

AHMED. As if I would dream such a thing.

ANIKURA. You will. But don't try to make your dreams come true. Or you'll find yourself doing the Cripple-and that won't be make-up either (Opera 309).

In the chorus "Big Man Chop cement: Cement chop Small Man", (Opera 311) the atmosphere is of deep physical exertions and sexual innuendoes –muscles, bloody labor and silver lining, a cacophony of congested chests as opposed to decongested ports, musical accessories in the dying accordion, feline delinquencies, "the cat is on the ball", fun that is a mere waste, dark insidious nights-the end of which is in the ships lying spent as symbols of human felony and overall spiritual depravations. The physical landscape involved in the picture is of material profusion –"twelve inches platform [...] the sky-scraping geezer"(Opera 312). But, juxtaposed with the material dandy who is "easy come, easy go". (Opera 312) it is also a summation of the moral emasculation of the African people that characterized the continent after the end of historical colonialism.

“This song sung by Anikura’s beggars is not meant to be sung naturally” says Etherton. “Instead the play stops, the people come on the stage, and the song is sung as a number in a pop concert” (Performance 272). The song addresses its message of to the audience. It however works as a double-edged sword: first as a commentary on the greed of the cement tycoon and then besmirching the limited greed of the laborer. But its use of words that can only be understood in Nigeria viz-“suzies” (406) for dashing woman, “Udoji,” (406) name for the Nigerian wages review commission are examples of linguistic appropriation, which as Bill Ashcroft says in The Empire Writes Back “are cross cultural because it negotiates a gap between worlds” (39). Language in this sense becomes a contested space in which the process of abrogation and appropriation takes place besides providing a ground for the interweaving of a heterogeneous linguistic continuum.

Language being a material practise, determined by a complex of social, economic and national conditions, is no longer acknowledged for itself in post-colonial literary practise. The notions of centrality and authenticity are questioned further and the so-called privileging of the margins becomes impendent. Language therefore exists not before the fact, nor after the fact, but in the fact. And to this end, an expression of the hybrid nature of the African and specifically Nigerian experience becomes coterminous with truth and the validity of life as lived.

Soyinka’s own language show that he made good use of a wide spectrum of linguistic cultures and negotiated a series of decisions concerning the pattern of language use. Soyinka’s listeners appreciate polyglossia and are ideally multilingual. An appropriate use of this language use is a metatheory, which as Ashcroft says, “takes linguistic variation as the substance rather than the periphery of language”(Ashcroft, The Empire 47). In doing so, the practise and the demonstration

evinced a way in which post-colonial orientation can confront received theoretical forms. To quote Ashcroft once more:

Where traditional theory posits the ideal speaker in order to deal with a language, which is grammatically consistent, a 'standard' language, which can be approached with the use of consistent and coherent structures, polydialectal theory reveals that the performance of speakers, with all the variations that must be taken into account, is the true subject of linguistics. (Ashcroft, The Empire 47)

This use to which language is put specifically and deliberately disturbs its attendant assumptions, particularly its binary structuration. This abrogation has also a political undertone to it since it subverts the assumptions on which the ceaseless pattern of conquest and domination has formed the fabric of European political discourse. Language used in this manner allows it to be understood. But it projects a semantic equality with what is given as the dominant discourse. In employing language in this manner, the work of language seizure is accomplished. But the adopted vehicle neither overwhelms nor transmutes the dominant discourse as given though such a way of making experience discrete symptomatizes the text, reading through its features the social, cultural and political forces that traverse it.

It may then be said that Soyinka's English is not tied to the imperial center in so far as it furthers the concept of difference through the curious tension of cultural revelation and silence and this makes it possible for him to construct his sense of a different place. Though like Achebe and others Soyinka does not favor parenthetical translations of individual words, for example, 'he took him into his obi (hut), he also does not intrude into his text which is after all inadequate. Soyinka leaves certain words untranslated, thus necessitating the relevance of returning back to them again

and again and actively engage with the horizons of culture in which these terms have meaning. Obviously, the meaning of the words are furnished at the end of the work and the reader can easily refer to these if he wants to, he still needs a knowledge of the culture and also a appreciation of its values to decipher the different codes it embodies.

Frantz Fanon describes the dialectic of language between the colonized and the colonizer bleakly. According to him, "the colonized is raised above jungle status [in the eyes of the colonizer] in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards" (Post-Colonial Web).

Fanon, who rejects the codified colonizer-colonized relationship, advocates total rejection of the standards of the colonizing culture including its language. Fanon believes that "a man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language" (qtd. in Rusell, Postcolonial Web). Fanon reasons that he who has taken up the language of the colonizer has accepted the world of the colonizer and therefore the standards of the colonizer.

Soyinka on the other hand uses the English language. But he negotiates a space between a pure European expression of the form and an Africanized structure of it. Language in his case becomes a means of crossing the bridge between communities and men. To take an example from Death and the King's Horseman, one can take the case of Elesin as a cue. Elesin, the communal hero moves between an outer apprehension of the world and an inner experience of his mental parameters. In this case, he exemplifies a mobile consciousness: which is a pregnant congruence between the inwardness and outwardness of the worlds of the text. In other words, this is an encounter between the inward consciousnesses of the protagonist(s) clashing with the outer world of the text. This collision of worlds makes the drama

problematic and complex. It at once provokes the question, which is 'is the tragic actor really responsible for his tragic outcome', how is his destiny determined? Finally, what would have happened if the outer world had not clashed with his inward one? With these forms of chaotic structuring, Soyinka's narrative is much in line with a poetics that initiates a narrative culture incongruent with the tradition set up by the African nationalist narrative tradition. One could easily say that Soyinka's plays tries to grapple with various forms of consciousness. Like other avant-garde narratives of its time, it writes down a history never written before in the literary circles of sub-Saharan Africa. It is transgressive and self-asserting in the Artaudian manner of Artaud, who in his *The Theatre and Its Double*, speaks of a violent poetics likely to shake the audience from its lethargic state.