



POSTCOLONIAL ELEMENTS IN WOLE SOYINKA'S KONGI'S HARVEST

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Abstract: In the play, Kongi's Harvest, Wole Soyinka analyses and critiques the period of disharmony in postcolonial African society. The play is based on the circumstances of postcolonial Africa and the political figures who presided during that period. The play also discusses how Africans started to colonize themselves, although the colonial authorities had left. The paper discusses that poor administration, corruption, and colonial mindsets carried over into the postcolonial era are to blame for the decolonization of Africa's states, which have become increasingly impoverished. Because of this, it is found that even after colonization in Africa ended, the colonizers left their proxy colonizers behind to pick up where they left off.

Key Words: Postcolonial, corruption, repression, autocracy, colonizers

Wole Soyinka is a renowned Nigerian author who set high standards for Nigeria's culture and heritage and received a Noble Prize in 1986. Soyinka is a suitable ambassador for Nigeria, a nation that has experienced numerous political changes. His nation's diverse socio-economic and community patterns are the ideal backdrop for his plays. Soyinka's literature has aspects of Yoruba culture not just because he is of that culture but also because he has a strong interest in his people's practices, traditions, and ways. Postcolonial resistance found its true significance in Wole Soyinka's writings. He undertook aggressive political actions to combat the suffering caused by injustice, eviction, and brutality in the social, economic, and cultural domains.

In Kongi's Harvest, Soyinka powerfully depicts how Africans cannot rule themselves, or rather, how the postcolonial era rendered them unable to do so. The Europeans asserted that their mission was to teach and civilize the African people, but their efforts fell short. Africans have yet to be made well by Europeans, despite their best efforts. It is most likely since, before they left, the ruthless African leaders may have learned how to oppress people from their colonial masters. Right after the colonial rulers left, the topic of excellent management was always a significant challenge in African society. In the play, Soyinka explores African rulers' harsh reality and unjust treatment of their populations.

President Kongi's attempt to legitimate Kongism, a form of autocracy, in Isma is the play's subject. By repressing the populace and coercing them into accepting him as their leader, he ascended to power. Oba Danlola, the traditional leader of Isma, was imprisoned by him, and he had planned to present him with the new yam during the festival. This action was intended to signify the beginning of a new age (Kongism) and the public's acceptance of his dominance. The play then depicts the Isma people's opposition to President Kongi and his Aweris advisors.

Kongi disregards all laws but his own and upholds his own. He violates the established rules of nature and imposes his selfish order instead. In this context, Kongi is viewed as an indigenous colonizer who uses cruel means to enslave and incapacitate his people. He tries to play the part of a traditional African tyrant whose single notion is always correct, even though he is depicted as a modern African leader. The women are expected to come together and prepare yam for the monarch to consume before anybody else does during the annual yam festival in the country. Unfortunately, President Kongi turns down the king's traditional privilege and rite. He decides to take control of the king's meals and entertainment and is not allowed to do king his ritual and customary duties. He then intends to bring public and societal shame upon the king.

Kongi, who aspires to rule Isma, is brutal and highly ambitious. He selected various organizations to develop his public image. The Carpenter's Brigade is one of them. Carpenter's Brigade's anthem of appreciation compares Kongi to Christ and addresses him as Savior.

For Kongi is our father

And Kongi is our man

Kongi is our mother
 Kongi is our man
 And Kongi is our Saviour
 Redeemer, prince of power
 For Isma and for Kongi
 We're proud to live or die! (Collected Plays 2, 116)

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"The song refers to Kongi as the mother and the savior of Isma people, but in reality, it is nothing but an illusion. Such type of song is created to make the propaganda only and to cheat the innocent and illiterate people of Isma land" (Londhe & Panade, 2014: 54). Here, it is crucial to understand that some people are still devoted to the tyrant and revere him as a deity despite the persecution they endure at the hands of the tyrant. Therefore, this is Africa's primary issue; certain sycophants consistently support and adhere to corrupt leaders. The country's carpenters swear loyalty to their oppressive deity and commit to serving him no matter what. On this view, it is possible to say that Africans have a way of helping a dictator oppress them.

In Kongi's Harvest, postcolonial dictatorship emerges as the displacement of the anti-colonial resistance onto the domestic scene, as the new nationalist leadership scouts around for new enemy, once the colonialist has been dealt with. The play revolves around the question of how best to incorporate the annual yam festival into the new postcolonial institutional setup. (Mesiska, 2007:82)

Kongi has chosen Organizing Secretary, a wise and competent man, to oversee everything in his quest to seize power. Whose primary goal is to foster an environment where the people of Isma think that a kind King is in-charge and that he would transform society for the better and advance Isma's development. Secretary has tried legal and unlawful techniques for this objective. To instill a sense of terror in the people's minds, he publicly hanged certain opponents of Kongi. Spies are kept around to provide information about the situation. The Organising Secretary is pro-bribery, and inmates' wives are frequently allowed to see them in prison in exchange for payment. Kongi and his administrative staff adopt these strategies. As a result, rather than positively working with the authorities, Kongi used them to build up his reputation and assassinate anyone who stood in his way. Soyinka commented on the current leaders' then-office holders through the organizing secretary's persona. In one instance, he advises the Reformed Aweri Fraternity over the portrayal of Kongi-"The leader's image for the next Five-Year Development Plan will be that of a benevolent father of the nation. This will be strongly projected at tomorrow's Harvest Festival which has been chosen as the official start to the Five Year Plan. The Key-word is Harmony. Total Harmony."(Collected Plays 2, 76)

Again in another incident, he says to all the supporters of Kongi-

All we want is some way of persuading King Danlola to bring the New Yam to Kongi with his own hands. I have organized the rest-- the agricultural show to select the prize- winning Yam, the feast, the bazaar, the music, the dance. Only one thing is missing-- Oba Danlola. And gentlemen, that problem is yours. Kongi desires that the King performs all his customary spiritual functions, only this time, that he perform them to him, our leader. Kongi must preside as the Spirit of Harvest, in pursuance of the Five-Year Development Plan.(Collected Plays 2, 77)

Reformed Aweri Fraternity, which works to improve its leader's reputation, has also been appointed by Kongi. Forth Aweri explains their assignment:

I think I see something of the Leader's vision of this harmony. To replace the old superstitious festival by a state ceremony governed by the principle of Enlightened Ritualism. It is therefore essential that Oba Danlola, his bitterest opponent, appear in full antiquated splendour surrounded by his Aweri Conclave of Elders who beyond the outward trappings of pomp and ceremony and a regular supply of snuff, have no other interest in the running of the state...The period of the isolated saws and wisdoms is over, suspended by a more systematic formulation of comprehensive philosophies--Our function, for the benefit of those who still do not know it...And Danlola, the regressive autocrat, will with his own hands present the Leader with the New Yam, thereby acknowledging the Supremacy of the State over his former areas of authority spiritual or secular. From then on, the state will adopt towards him and to all similar institutions the policy of the glamorized fossilism.(Collected Plays 2, 81)

He has also drawn up plans for the projects he intends to carry out once he becomes king. These projects include the Kongi Airport, Kongi Refineries, Kongi Dam, Kongi University, and Kongi Terminus. These items unmistakably demonstrate his obsession with cultivating his identity and reputation. He is misleading the Isma people who lack literacy by doing this. Furthermore, doing this will help create a positive perception of Africa and Isma. The tactics that Kongi employed to overthrow the Danlola and the rule of the former King,

Danlola, are major plot points that shed information on the nature of the African people. Kongi's Reformed Aweri Council, which is the modern equivalent of the newly disbanded traditional royal council, still needs to have the autonomy enjoyed by its traditional counterpart, as it operates solely on the whim. Consequently, it is impossible to claim that Oba Danlola is the Isma people's alternative leader by attacking the Kongi.

Oba Danlola is depicted as adhering to traditional roots, and his troops make fun of the Kongi and his method throughout the play. However, Danlola is not also shown as the ideal leader for the development of Isma land. Nevertheless, the people of Isma are overly superstitious since they will not dare speak a word against King Danlola because they think that Danlola possesses spiritual power and God will judge them if they do so. Danlola has dominated the country for many years by taking advantage of the characteristics of African people. However, instead of working to develop the area, he has increased corruption throughout all facets of society and the government. Those in his immediate vicinity, notably Old Aweri people, took pride in holding positions of authority and forbade commoners from contacting the King. Every task can be completed in society with a bribe. Hence, under this circumstance, people anticipate that come and alter the system, but Kongi, the potential monarch, gives the Isma people an illusion of hope. He has placed more emphasis on planning than on contributing to society meaningfully. Furthermore, he designated Reformed Aweri Community to create the Five Year Development Plan. The inclusive development of society was something that Kongi aimed for, but these so-called Aweri people are not intelligent; instead, they are just pretending to be. In the sessions, they do not talk, yet occasionally they do, and most of the time, they worry about eating. It demonstrates their avaricious mentality and desire to be close to the Kongi.

Soyinka successfully depicted the image of an African nation in his play by using the scenario of Isma Land after it gained independence, where he attempted to learn about African cultural values from Danlola and Kongi. Sadly these leaders still needed to uphold the commitment they once had the fancy of Kongi... In Kongi's Harvest, postcolonial dictatorship emerges as the displacement of the anti-colonial resistance onto the domestic scene, as the new nationalist leadership scouts around for new enemies once the colonialist has been dealt with. The play revolves around the question of how best to incorporate the annual yam festival into the new postcolonial institutional setup. (Mesiska, 2007:82)

The study primarily concentrated on how oppressive systems and personal preferences contributed to the colonization of indigenous peoples. The study's conclusions showed that to maintain their hold on power longer, African tyrants lacked empathy for other Africans. Tyranny was prominently portrayed in Kongi's Harvest in the true sense, and the play explores how the rule of force was given precedence over the rule of law. The text provided a vivid examination of the savagery of the established order as well as the invasion of the privacy of traditional institutions and cultural etiquette. While going through all of this and interpreting it intellectually and culturally, it was found that Africans themselves had a hand in the continent's problems, suggesting that the European colonizers were not only to blame for the continent's problems. As a result, it is crucial to have significant insight into how Africans can personally own their mistakes and cease blaming Europe for their terror. Africa should thus think quickly and come up with solutions to its problems instead of complaining or blaming others for its hardship. As a result, Soyinka powerfully illustrates through the figure of Kongi the foolishness and viciousness of the African monarchs who frequently enslave their subjects. In this way, a favourable picture of indigenous colonization is presented.

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