

Chapter – I

General Introduction

This research attempts to study the resistance practice in post-colonial theatre vis-a-vis ritual performance. Moreover, this study analyses Wole Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides* from the post-colonial perspective focusing on the ritual performance as a tool to resist with colonial figure. *The Bacchae of Euripides* is an adaptation of Euripides' *The Bacchae* which is based on Greek myth. But Soyinka contemporizes this play to the political, social, and cultural circumstances of post-independence era of Nigeria. Soyinka's version of *The Bacchae* highlights slave characters, adds two wedding scenes, dance, and ritual performances and also shows the glorious ending in order to link it with Yoruba tradition in Nigerian context. The researcher thinks, it is necessary to define some of the specific terms and phrases that are going to be used with specific meaning in the present study. Mainly, this study revolves around the terms such as resistance, ritual and performance in relation to post- colonial theatre.

Webster's New International Dictionary (1954) defines "Resistance as an act or an instance of resisting ; opposition, passive or active " (2120). In general term, resistance is an act of resisting to another or opposition either it is active or passive in form. To be specific, resistance is the central textual strategy in the post- colonial scenario. Though, the resistance theory got a vogue after the collapse of western political domination, the notion of resistance is multifaceted. Radke and Stam opine "resistance is itself an exercise of power as a projection of alternative truth" (53). Resistance to power is resistance to specific strategies by which power are patterned. Both power and resistance are understood as productive expression, which have the capacity to facilitate human freedoms.

Resistance has become a major area of contestation in post-colonial discourse. Resistance is taken to posit the standpoint of the third world writers. Discourse of resistance emerged as a reaction to colonialist representation and consumption that the representation persists. Post-colonial textual resistance has taken many forms; nevertheless resistance notion emerged along with the western project of modernization over third world countries. In this context Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin opine as:

Representation and resistance are very broad arenas within which much of drama of colonialist relation and post-colonial examination and subversion of those relations has taken place. Representation and resistance are such broad areas of contestation in post-colonial discourse. (85)

They relate the resistance movement with the colonial project. Post-colonial literature is a result of interaction between the imperial culture and the complex indigenous cultural practices. Resistance has various forms and parametres. In this context, Stephen Slemon opines “[. . .] resistance literature, in this definition can thus be seen as that category of literary writing which emerges as an integral part of an organized struggle or resistance for national liberation” (qtd. in Ashcroft et. al 1995:107).

Now to deal with the meaning of “ritual”, Webster’s Dictionary of the English Language (1983) defines “ritual as an established or prescribed procedure for a religious or other rite; a system of religious; observance of set forms in public worship. This is very narrow definition of ritual in the sense that it incorporates only religious activities. In broader sense, ritual includes both types of meaning that is

religious and secular. Ritual includes range of activities from day to day life to sacred events that are performed in religious ceremony.

The relationship between ritual and drama is a keystone of theatre history and dramatic analysis. Both drama and ritual deal with social relationship, and both do so in the most direct way possible, through the enactment of those relationships by living people. God may be held by believers to be present in different form such as the wafer and wine. Ritual is rooted in theatre from the time of antiquity to the present day world.

Ritual is becoming popular to the contemporary theatre of the non-western world. It has its own specialties due to which it attracts the attention of the west. Since it is debatable issue between the west and the non-west it explores the indigenous tradition and performances of the societies in theatre. The theatre anthropologist Victor Turner argues that “ritual forms the basis of all theatre activity (as well as other sports of worldly action and interaction)” (55). Thus, ritual becomes determining factor of the particular theatrical tradition of that society.

The word performance refers to the act of performing or the carrying out or execution of action. It is an act of performing a ceremony. It includes musical, dramatic, and other entertainment. Performance is a broad term which incorporates range of activities. Performance, in literature, mostly related to dramatic events which require spectators as well as performers.

In the words of Richard Schechner “a performance is an activity done by an individual or group in the presence of and for another individual or group. [. . .] performance on certain acknowledged qualities of live theatre, the most stable being the audience-performer interaction”(22). Thus, performance is related to the theatrical activities that are performed in the theatre.

In post-colonial ritual based theatre, ritual performance can function as a powerful means of resistance to the colonial discourse, canon and agent. Counter discourse has various forms but in theatre performance itself can become a tool of counter- discursive. Ritual performance includes dance, song, music, chant, ritualized feasting, ceremony, sacrifice of indigenous tradition. Ritual based drama can function as a resistance to the canon by valorizing own indigenous tradition over colonial culture.

Post-colonial dramas resist imperialism and its effects in different forms in terms of degree. In some plays one can find violent resistance whereas in other plays resistance may be silent or symptomatic. Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins opine “theatre texts from around the post-colonial world as well as ways to interpret the strategies by which playwrights, actors, directors, musicians and designers rework a historical movement or a character or an imperial text or even a theatre building” (1). They clarify that post-colonial dramas are the reinterpretation of the colonial texts of historical past which are analyzed from different perspectives.

Post-colonialism addresses reaction to colonialism in a context that is not necessarily determined by temporal constraints. Post-colonial plays, novels, verse and films then become textual and cultural expressions of resistance to colonization. Therefore, post-colonialism is both a textual effect and a reading strategy. Its theoretical practice often operates on two levels attempting at once to elucidate the post-coloniality which inheres in certain texts, and to unveil and deconstruct any continuing colonialist power structure and institution.

Most post-colonial criticism overlooks drama because of its apparently impure form. In drama, play script is only a part of theatre other is the performance which is difficult to document in post-colonialism. Therefore, performance plays the vital role

of resistance in post-colonial drama. In performance also there lies secular and other ritual performance. There is debate about language, interpretation of subject formation, representation, and forms of resistance; this marginalization of drama suggests a considerable gap in post-colonial studies. Therefore, Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins opine “there are three parameters that address post-colonial performance: dramatic language (vocal and visual, as expressed through the performing body), the arrangement theatrical space and time, and the manipulation of narrative and performative conventions of drama” (9).

Obviously, this research analyses Soyinka’s *The Bacchae of Euripides* from aforementioned perspective. This version of the play was written in post-independence era of Nigeria in 1973. This play is subtitled as “A Communion Rite” Which is an adaptation of Euripides’ *The Bacchae*. This play is not a form of translation rather cultural transgression. This version of the play alters many events and different scenes in order to link with Yoruba tradition. The most crucial distinction between the Greek and Yoruba version of *The Bacchae* is the ending. Euripides ends with retribution whereas Soyinka ends with regeneration, sacrifice and communal ritual.

This research claims that Wole Soyinka’s *The Bacchae of Euripides* is a significant post-colonial revision of the former text of Euripides. “This play, incorporates Yoruba cosmology in its rewriting of dramatic form and hybridizing genres to refuse the primacy of the western tragic mode” (Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins 1996:39). In the same way, Andrea J. Nouryeh in his commentary argues that "Soyinka, therefore, seems to be challenging the English and classicist reading of Euripides' text from the 1950s and 1960s that may obscure certain aspects of the original rather than present text itself" (165). He further states as:

Soyinka's adaptation would enhance the theatre's experimental agenda [...] it would be seen in production more than as a literary appropriation of Euripides' play that reflects the playwright's Nigerian roots. It is a series of physical as well as verbal responses to its source text where Soyinka's choice of setting and stage directions, inserted bits of stage business, alternation of makeup and role of the chorus are dependent upon contemporary performance modes [...]. (160)

Thus, it is concluded that this version is especially for the performance rather than play script for the reader. This version of the play is not only resistance to the canon but also sever threat to the tyrannical rulers and leadership of Nigerian who have largely abdicated rights and freedom of people and their indigenous culture.

Now it is worthwhile to mention brief sketch of this thesis. This thesis comprises four chapters; the subsequent paragraphs will provide a brief outline of the present study. A short synopsis of the entire works has been attempted to figure out in this chapter. This chapter also deals with the significance of Wole Soyinka and his contribution. For this purpose, his biographical account and other creations that seem to be contributed to the present issue will be taken into consideration.

The second chapter of the present study will be concentrated on discussing the theoretical modality that is going to be applied in the present study. This chapter will provide enough information about elements of ritual in post-colonial theatre. Moreover, this chapter will describe ritual theatre in detail in relation to post-colonial scenario focusing on African and Yoruba theatre condition of Nigeria.

The third chapter will analyze the text so as to prove the major issues that have been raised in the hypothesis of the present study. Some abstraction and dialogue of the text, different critics as well as theoretical standpoint of the writer himself will be

taken into consideration to prove the main issue of the present study. As the study makes hypothesis that Soyinka modifies purist version of classical master narrative of Euripides' *The Bacchae*, opens up a space for the performance of local histories, indigenous culture, songs and dances of Yoruba tradition to resist the dominant convention of contemporary western theatre which leaves its ritual roots behind. In order to prove this hypothesis the researcher will analyze both the version of the play and find the point of departure. This chapter will serve as a core of the present research.

The fourth chapter will conclude the present study of Soyinka's play *The Bacchae of Euripides*. Based on the detailed discussion of preceding chapters, it would conclude the explanation and argument put forward in the preceding chapters thus shows the resistance through ritual performance.

The interpretation of Soyinka's play *The Bacchae of Euripides* is a demanding one in the sense that it invites interpretation from various aspects, but this research is delimited within the ritual performance of the play from the post-colonial perspectives. However, the main subject matter of the play is based on myths; it will be dealt in relation to ritual elements. This research does not focus on mythical aspect rather it is entirely based on post-colonial interpretation of the play.

Wole Soyinka and his Contribution

Wole Soyinka (b. 1934), the first African to win the Nobel prize in literature has established himself as one of the most compelling literary figure in the continent. Soyinka is generally considered Africa's greatest living playwright. Most of his plays emphasize the interaction between the will of gods and will of human beings, often trapping the truth of men and women against the truth of the gods. Post-coloniality,

fate, suffering, ritual, sacrifice, ambivalence are the main subject matters of Soyinka's plays. His plays arouse the deep interest in man and in man's relations to the universe.

Soyinka is often regarded as a universal man: poet, playwright, novelist, critic, teacher, actor, translator, politician and publisher. He went to university college Ibadan, and then to Leeds university, England, in 1956. He joined the new drama at the Royal Court Theatre, London, where he became a play reader in 1957-9. Most of his plays offered a critique of pre-colonial history while diminishing the cultural significance of the colonial period. They are concerned about the need of sacrifice for purification of the society. He views that the role of the god Ogun who has suffered for the purification of the society.

Soyinka's plays are based on the beliefs of his Yoruba background, and its characters are the Yoruba gods. He uses Yoruba songs and translated it into English and adopts old ritual and dances to produce particular dramatic effects on the modern stage, yet they carry a caustic commentary upon violence and corruption in the society. Although, he uses Yoruba myth, religion and employs traditional masks, drums and dances, he expresses modern themes in cotemporary African setting. Soyinka has a vision of the transformation of the physicality of space and time in the act of performance. In particular, he explores the significance Ogun, the god of iron, war and creative force- in the Yoruba pantheon. Soyinka sees him as the embodiment of contradiction; he is the original sacrifice the one who dared chaos and abyss. In this context *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre* defines "many of Soyinka's themes are foreshadowed in this complex work: the notion of three parallel and interlocking worlds of the past, the present and the future; the need for sacrifice; the role of the artist in society; the presences of the god, Ogun"(348).

Soyinka explores the Greek theme of fate, sacrifice and inevitability in the African contexts. His play *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975) reworks a moment in Nigeria's colonial past from inside the Yoruba metaphysics. The main issue of the play is ritual suicide. Soyinka's famous play, *The Road* (1965) satirizes the corruption and hypocrisy of the Shehu Shagari regime. *Kongi's Harvest* (1966) is about the abuse of power and the tyrant's ability to corrupt a whole people. *The Swamp Dwellers* (1961), a tale of perilous dependence on the favor of the gods. *The Strong Breed* (1963), a play of expiation, all takes place in Africa. *The Lion and The Jewel* (1963) offers a cosmic view of Nigerian attitudes towards European values left over from the colonial period, *A Dance of the Forest* (1960) was written to celebrate Nigerian independence, but it also alerted people to Nigeria's past violence and warned against its return. In the early 1960s he published *The Trials of Brother Jero*, a satirical comedy recounting the adventures of a mendicant Christian preacher.

Nigeria went through a bitter civil war (1967-70) that nearly tore the country apart. Soyinka's political sympathies led to a term in prison, where he was placed in solitary confinement. He was not only thrown into jail by two successive governments but he was eventually forced into exile (1971-75). Soyinka composed his adaptation of *The Bacchae* during his exile in Britain. In the same period he published a famous book *Myth, Literature and the African world*.

Soyinka's writing blends African with European culture traditions, the high seriousness of modernist elite literature, and the typically African popular theatre. He is actively committed to social justice, an outspoken personality among the public figure, deeply engaged in the main political issues of his country and African, and he has become a symbol for human values throughout the continent. It is apparent that he

has his roots in the myths of Yoruba culture and folklore and he has adopted a number of classic plays to suit the African context.

The Yoruba have long practiced the arts of drama, and Soyinka is an heir of that tradition. For the Yoruba, every aspect of culture is religious. It simply is worship or celebration or healing or teaching and religion is thoroughly cultural. In Africa, the notion of “the aesthetic” as a distinct category of experience is unthinkable. No Yoruba arts can be identified as part of the human realm as distinct from that of the gods and spirits. Soyinka continues to proclaim the continuity of Yoruba tradition and its ability to survive the traumas of history but he plays the role of protector too.

Chapter - II

Politics and Poetics of Post-colonial Theatre

Ritual

The word ritual is derived from Latin *ritus*, which means rite or religious ceremony. Ritual exhibits two different kinds of ritual namely, sacred or rite-oriented and secular-oriented rituals. Rite-oriented ritual shows clearly in those performances linked with rites of passage and the festivals or ceremonies connected with them. Secular-oriented ritual defines those performances the subject matter of which are social-oriented as similar to social drama. Webster's New International Dictionary defines ritual as:

- (a) The form or forms of conducting worship, especially as established by tradition or by sacerdotal prescription; religious ceremonial. Ritual is regarded as of paramount importance in primitive and polytheistic religions. Sacrifices, mimetic dances, processions and plays, mysteries, games, ordeals and feasts are the chief acts of early public ritual.
- (b) A code or forms of ceremonies observed, as by an organization or upon any ceremonial occasion; as the ritual of the freemasons.
- (c) A book containing the rites or ceremonial forms to be observed by an organization, as church. (2154)

Thus, ritual means all the ceremonies and performances that are religious as well as secular.

Ritual is something that makes transformation possible. It includes range of activities from day to day life to sacred events that are performed in religious ceremony. It accommodates macro to micro events of the society. Robert Rappaport, a ritual theorist focuses on:

The non-rational aspects of ritual remind us that ritual not only symbolizes but it embodies. It connects the body to the symbols, the emotions to the mind. This is to say that in its very form ritual does not merely symbolize but embodies the social contact, and as such is the fundamental social act-that upon which society is founded. (qted in Richard A Quantz 1999:3)

This definition makes us clear that the ultimate symbols of ritual are symbols of identity and social solidarity can be strengthened through the embodiment potential of ritual. In the same way, Catherine Bell opines that:

Ritual theories, across academic disciplines and methods have agreed on three characteristics of ritual activities. First, ritual action is communal, involving groups of people who gain social solidarity through their participation. Second the action is traditional and understood as carrying on ways of acting established in the past. Third ritual is rooted in beliefs in divine beings. (qted in Bell, Elizabeth 2008:128)

This is very rigid and narrow definition of ritual, which includes sacred activities, and ceremonies of the past.

Similarly, Richard Schechner defines "Ritual is one of several activities related to theatre, the others are play, games, sports, dance and music" (7). Therefore, ritual is a broad term, which includes the activities of social events to the sacred one.

Ritual is closely related with performance in other words ritual action is performative. Since, ritual is performed in front of audience; the actors' bodies are as important to the meaning of the action as their words and frequently even more important. The body's movements, mein, and posture are central elements to a

performance. Goffman argues "performance is embodied action has more implications than merely public expression of honor; it also connects the body and the mind in a manner that helps fill the numinous with the emotional impact that successful ritual creates" (qtd in Richard A Quantz,1999:6). For Turner there are two kinds of symbolic performance: one is confirmatory and called "ceremony" and the other is transformative and called "ritual". This creates the appearances of two distinct phenomena with varying effects. Webster's New International Dictionary defines performance as:

- (a) The act of performing; the carrying out or execution in action; execution in a set or formal manner or with technical or artistic skill, as the performance of a duty, a play or a piece of music;
- (b) an act of performing, esp. of performing in a formal or ceremonies manner or of performing the function required of one; a deed; feat; esp. one executed in public or in a manner to attract attention, hence, a public entertainment or exhibition of skill; a presentation of a play; as to attend a performance. (1818)

The above definition makes it clear that performance is an execution of any action with artistic manner. There can be many activities related with the performance.

In the words of Richard Schechner "a performance is an activity done by an individual or group in the presence of and for another individual or group. [...] performance on certain acknowledged qualities of live theatre, the most stable being the audience-performer interaction" (22). So performance is related with dramatic events and action performed by an actor in theatre.

Turner sees "a universal evolution of performance following a 'liminal' to 'liminoid' pattern, where 'liminal' is more presentational and 'liminoid' is more representational." (55) He furthermore argues as:

Liminal performances occur in technologically simpler societies, which lead to the rather problematic evolutionist argument that suggests the advancement of humanity from a primitive, uncivilized state towards western, industrialized perfection. (55)

Therefore, Turner clarifies that there is universal of performance since its antiquity to the present day world. But the pattern is different from simpler societies to more complex one. From the above explanation one can conclude that ritual performance includes all the activities of secular ritual to sacred one. It incorporates music, songs, dance, chant, ritualized feasting, ceremonies, body movement and all sorts of ritualistic activities.

Ritual Theatre

The term ritual becomes more popular in the non-western world more specifically with the countries like, India, Sri-Lanka, many countries of Africa and the Caribbean world. Ritual theatre attracts the most attention of the west because of its difference. Ritual seems to be controversial term between the west and non west. It uses certain symbols and culture specific performance which is practicing in their indigenous tradition since the time of antiquity, but it may not be familiar with the western audience.

Theatre is a form of communication like other arts between the performers and the spectators. Communication is also an essential aspect of ritual because it is inherent in all its symbols, which speak to those who know how to listen. Symbols are

not the product rather it is process oriented which is cultural specific. In this context, J. Ndukaku Amankulor in his beginning part of article states as:

In many societies the cultural form known as theatre goes together with religious and cultural practices. Theatre, as performance intended for the education, enlightenment of the public functions as an extension of the mythology and cultural conventions associated with a particular group or community as well as artistic activity which other people outside the group derive pleasure from seeing. (45)

In this way, ritual and performance are related with specific context on particular community and environment from which anyone can take benefit from it.

There are different views regarding the relationship between ritual and drama and many differing opinions about the origin of drama for instance, Africa. Some critics who follow the opinion of the Turner advocate that contemporary drama grow out of rituals while others maintain that the two developed simultaneously. Ritual and drama are often similar in their transformative translational qualities but they are emphatically not the same. Western drama is based on the principles of Aristotelian mimesis where as African drama is not. Ritual based drama use traditional enactments, folk culture and specific systems of communications in order to resist the imposed values and practices.

The theatre anthropologist Victor Turner argues "ritual forms the basis of all theatre activity (as well as other sorts of worldly action and interaction)"(13).

Therefore, ritual becomes significant determining factor in theatre. Furthermore, victor Turner forwards his argument as:

Theatre is one of the many inheritors of that great multifaceted system of preindustrial ritual which embraces ideas and images of cosmos and chaos, interdigitates clowns and their foolery with gods and their solemnity, and uses all the sensory codes, to produce symphonies in more than music: the intertwining of dance, body languages of many kinds, song, chant, architectural forms (temples, amphitheatres), incense, burnt offerings, ritualized feasting and drinking, painting, body painting, body marking of many kinds, including circumcision and scarification, the application of lotions and drinking of potions, the enacting of mythic and heroic plots drawn from oral traditions." (12)

Here, Turner opines that ritual performance is rooted in preindustrial societies. In such a situation, theatre includes all performative action from religious to secular one. The movement of character, body painting, dance, ritualized feasting, chant, music, ceremony and sacrifice are some examples of performance in theatre though it may include many more. These performances are distinct from the dominant performances that happen in the contemporary western theatre.

Ritual tends to prefer presentational actions like showing, telling, dancing, drumming, singing and other forms of communication that maintain some distance between performer and subject over representational actions like imitation, impersonation and other form of mimesis that suggest the unity of performer and subject. Whatever performative tropes it uses, ritual is always efficacious for the community and enacted for a particular audience to preserve the order and meaning of anything from harvests to marriage, birth and death.

Ritual and theatrical conventions are taken for granted in non-western performance situations but it is highly questioned in contemporary western theatre. In

western theatre ritual is often taken as negative connotations of primitive, superstitious, and unscientific behaviour associated with savage people which has no place in the industrialized high-technological western world of today. The negative associations of ritual, though not explicitly emphasized by anthropologists, are nonetheless implied in their writings, which for the most part deal with traditional societies in Africa, Asia and other places where religious ritual and theatre still co-exist. In these lines, J.Ndukaku Amankulor states as:

The anthropologists coined the phrase "ritual theatre" or "ritual drama" as a convenient label for distinguishing the "otherness" of non-western performance traditions. This coinage changed the course of world performance studies as theatre scholars adopted the phrase, some what uncritically, specifically to describe or evaluate non-western theatre and to isolate ritual in performance and theatre criticism. (46)

Above explanations, make us clear that ritual drama is interconnected with the non-western world which explores their own indigenous tradition and performances.

Ritual has for too long been considered as the most conservative and repetitive kind of performance, especially in Africa. The African world is rich in its ritual, myth and indigenous tradition. These countries largely use indigenous songs, dance, stories, ceremonies and festivals. Indigenous African theatre is communally produced by an entire village or the cultic association contained in it. It is performed during cultural ceremonies of festivals. Although the religious phase is distinct from the artistic, both are integrated within the environment of festivity and celebration during which the performance takes place.

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country of its twenty language groups among them four predominant are Yoruba, Ibo, Hausa and Fulani. In the pre-colonial

period, Nigeria was home to several rich culture. It has its strong roots in ritual, myth, tradition and festivals. Yoruba culture emanated from the southwestern region of Nigeria, centered around the city of Ife (11th – 15th centuries). This old Oyo culture from which contemporary Yoruba culture descends was a complex monarchical society, spread through several important cities. This is the kingdom that the Portuguese discovered when they arrived in the city of Benin in the fifteenth century. Ibo culture was less centrally organized and stretched in a series of villages through the southeastern part of Nigeria.

European colonization of Nigeria began around the slave trade when the Portuguese started in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The British Royal Niger company established trade with various Ibo and Yoruba leaders in the 1840s. Britain formed the colony and protectorate of Nigeria under a governor-general in 1914. Nigeria gained independence in 1960, but the strains between various regions and ethnic group have not been readily resolved. Nigeria has been beset by a series of brutal military regimes upto 1990. In 1999, the government of Nigeria was returned to civilian control with free elections.

The area now known as Nigeria was the home of a variety of cultures prior to becoming a British colony and many of the performance practices of these cultures are visible in contemporary Nigeria theatre and drama. The festival of *Egungun*, which has been performed at least since the fourteenth century, attempts to establish a communication between the living and the dead. In it, masked and costumed celebrates proceed to a sacred grove, where the accumulated troubles of the village are removed by a "carrier". The persistence of this ritual is acknowledged by Wole Soyinka's play *Death and the king's Horseman*, which in various direct and indirect ways engages with the *Egungun* narrative.

Yoruba ritual is also known for the dynamic character of its gods-obatala, the god of creation; Ogun, the god of creativity; Sango, the god of lightning and for the use of masquerade as a central feature of ritual. One of the most popular theatrical forms in Nigeria is the Yoruba Traveling Theatre. This form of theatre takes the shape of series of short skits, involving both dialogue and song, framed by a musical opening and number.

Traditional Yoruba Theatre developed into a court masque from the ritual play of *Egungun*. By the middle of the eighteenth century, professional artists had organized a traveling theatre. During the golden age of the Oyi Empire, the troupes travelled widely entertaining princes and "caboceers" in all the principalities of the empire as well as performing to large audience during the annual Egungun festival. The theatre has to face series of problems in the period of colonization. It suffered at the hands of the Christian Missionaries who moved into the country from the south towards the second half of the nineteenth century.

Traditional Yoruba Theatre uses masque performance. The special characteristics of the Masque are the chant, the dance and the drama. The chant is sung in a high-pitched voice. Its subjects vary from the Oriki or praise chants of individual persons, settlements and totems, to sketches of village character. The dance, which includes acrobatics, can be ritually or socially significant, depending on the type and nature of drama. Joel Adedeji in his article "Traditional Yoruba Theatre" categorizes "Every Masque performance is a result of the participation of four artists' guilds: the carver (agbegilere), the costumier (alaran), the drummer (alubata), and the balla-deer (akunyangba)" (60). Joel remarks the mark is the graphic and symbolic illustration of the theme and action of the drama (60).

The costume is an extension of the personality of the dramatists personae, and is selectively realistic. It is worn over the labala, which is the conventional Egungun outfit and the remaining vesting of the ritual link between the theatre and the cults. Joel Adedeji opines "the bata draws from the traditional orchestral accompaniment to the ensemble. The chieftain is believed to have a ritual affinity with Sango and Egungun" (61). Every performance required the active participation of a chorus of women to lead songs and refrains. There is also a non-professional "chorus" made up of woman spectators who join in the songs which are, in most cases familiar.

The characterization is the most important aspect of Yoruba dramatic art and has certain distinctive features. Characters are divided into two conventional roles of tragic and comic. The drama consists of episodes and tableaux. There is no continuous narrated story. Visual elements are usually emphasized at the expense of systematic dialogue and plot. The plots are fixed and they are usually based on oral tradition and are therefore, familiar to both actor and spectator.

Every performance is a variety show consisting of dance, spectacle and revue. A special order is followed in every program. The performance opens with an "open glee". This consists of the ijuba, the homage and the pledge, followed by a period of dancing, acrobatics and ballad-singing. Joel Adedeji opines "the spectacle follows on interlude of pure drumming and consists mainly of pantomime and illusion. Choral chants and drum dialogue are its essential characteristics" (62). Dialogue and choral songs are mixed, displaying the cosmic spirit of the Yoruba. The performance usually ends with the masque of the Bride which becomes a dance procession around the community.

Yoruba aesthetics is necessary in order to understand such theatre fully. A work of art is believed to have aesthetic value to the extent that it communicates an

intelligible message. The aesthetics of the Yoruba theatre are the total integration, the gestalt of all the art forms in one performance. This means that theatrical pleasure can be derived only when the essence of the total performance is meaningful. There is compatibility among all Yoruba art forms and cultural manifestations. Joel Adedeji opines:

"The psychology, and medieval practice to construct a complete system. It is the fusion of all these elements that forms Yoruba aesthetic theory. The fusion is established by myth, a state of mind which conditions the individual as well as the group to adopt a system of belief and a way of life. The solutions to problems are left to these with specialized knowledge and to the direct intervention of the gods". (63)

Myths are things that never happened but always are. So far as the Yoruba Myth is concerned Wole Soyinka weaves African myth into the idea of tragedy. To explain how African theatre can reenact African myth, Soyinka himself has written several essays dealing with the mythic sources of Yoruba ritual. From the essay "The fourth Stage: Through the Mysteries of Ogun to the Origin of Yoruba Tragedy", Soyinka implements the ideas that the gods are the final measure of eternity as humans are of earthly transience for the Yoruba people. The Yoruba is not like a European man, concerned with the purely conceptual aspects of time; rather they are concretely realized in their own life, religion and sensitivity. Yoruba culture separates the cosmos into the human world and world of the deities. At the same time, the human world itself contains manifestation of the ancestors, the living and the unborn, which are also, however, separated from one another, and these human worlds as a whole are separated from the realm of the gods. The gulf between areas of existence

Soyinka calls transition or the transitional either. Since, according to tradition, the gods were once completely and unhappily separated from human beings and many Yoruba myths are stories about the efforts made to cross these gulfs. Ogun, the god of iron and of metallic lore and artistry, was the first to succeed in conquering the transition. He crossed the gulf to the human world by extracting iron from one earth and thus providing the human world with one source of its weapons and its tools. Ogun is also, Soyinka explains, "the god of creativity, guardian of the road, explorer, hunter, god of war, Custodian of the sacred oath". Therefore, Ogun was first suffering deity, first creative energy, the first challenger and conqueror of transition. African Yoruba people live with individual's myths, the myth of Ogun. They believe in ritual sacrificial act to reenact the suffering of deities who co-exist with each other.

Rituals are regarded very important on each aspect of human life. Whether it is in life or after death, the rituals are very much essential in each religious life. Yoruba mythology is a way of life, so the rituals play vital role among the Yoruba people. The human life is a combination of two facts as birth and death. In both situations of life, rituals play very important role whether it is to support everyday life or the deceased life after death. Yoruba people believe that performing rituals help us to avoid all kinds of obstacles and mishaps, so they pray to the gods and perform rituals, which are taken as very useful things for fulfilling their wishes. Yoruba people do observe much more rituals sacrifice and they believe without doubt that the rituals are like offering medicines for the survivors' ones which heal thumbed suffering and problems they face. They want smooth and nice life while they are alive and they strongly believe and lay stress on freedom and better rebirth or life after the sacrifice.

In postcolonial ritual based theatre, ritual performance can function as a powerful means of resistance to the colonial discourse, canon and agent. Counter

discourse has various forms but in theatre performance itself can become a tool of counter-discursive. Ritual performance includes dance, song, music, chant, ritualized feasting, ceremony, sacrifices of indigenous tradition. Ritual based drama can function as a resistance to the canon by valorizing their own indigenous tradition over colonial culture.

In post-colonial drama dance functions as a powerful means of resistance to the colonizer. Dance and body politics has special attention on the theatre. It foregrounds the proxemic relations between characters, spectators and features of the set. In such a context it returns the power of the past to the people and serves as liberating force and harmony among them. It often denaturalizes theatre's signifying practices by disrupting narrative sequence and genre. Dance could function as socialized harmony and appropriate the new world with its portent of bounteous harvest. Particularly, in contemporary drama, the dance emerges as a locus of struggle in producing and representing individual and cultural identity.

Dance is particularly important not only as a celebration of the physical but also as a performed statement of transformation or possession. "In many cases, the spirits are actually conjured through dancing, assisted by the power of the drum which is first felt in the dancer's feet as they contact the earth" (Helen Gilbert & Joanne Tompkins 1996: 62). The dance acts as a Shaman exorcizing evil. It is also an occasion for the exchange of cultural capital between tribes and for the contestation of white dominated space. There are various kinds of dance since it differs from one culture to another.

Song, music, chants and other effective forms of communication have special signification in ritual theatre. Such traditional enactments served for ritual occasions to heighten the sacredness and specialty of the particular event. "In many African and

Afro Caribbean rituals, the rhythm of the drum functions as principal forces guiding the action which shapes the dance and song and helps summon spiritual power." (Gilbert and Tompkins 1996: 64). In postcolonial theatre song and music enhance a mood or effect on the audience. Indigenous song and music recalls pre-contact methods of communication and affirms the continued validity of oral tradition and helps to break the bonds of conventional representation.

Hybrid song and music often function to protest the domination of the coloniser's musical tradition. The folk opera tradition of Nigeria is a popular form of dramatizing events musically. It introduced Yoruba dance and music to the form. It represents one of the first attempts to restore pre-contact traditions to Nigeria theatre. In this context, Gilbert and Tompkins opine "folk opera's resistance to domination by western conventions lies in the music's maintenance of a variety of performance tradition that would otherwise be lost as well as in its syncretic combination of traditional forms" (196).

Similarly indigenous tradition, ritualized feasting ceremony, festivals carnival, sacrifice have special signification on ritual theatrical tradition. These forms resist the culture of colonizer and valorize their own tradition.

Colonialism pervaded most parts of the world. So post-colonial plays are from Australia, Canada, India, Ireland, New Zealand, many countries of Africa, parts of South East Asia and the Caribbean world. Along with the beginning of colonization, European established their culture and civilization in the form of dramatic mode. Wright says "In 1682, for instance, a play house was established in Jamaica and functioned until slaves were freed in 1838" (qtd in Helen Gilbert 1937:6). The Jamaican theatre was not designed for the indigenous people or transported slaves

rather it was built for entertainment of the British officers. In colonial period many dramas were performed to prolong their colonial rule.

Ola Rotimi, a Nigerian playwright, maintains that "drama is the best artistic medium for Africa because it is not alien in form; as is the novel (qtd in Helen Gilbert 1996:8). This argument clarifies that drama is the best genre of literature in African world to represent their own values and tradition along with their community.

None of us escapes the legacy of a colonial past and its traces in our academic practice even if whatever the resistance is there. There are problems with identifying sites of colonial resistance. In post-colonialism subject is influenced and overwhelmed by the power of colonial past. Hybridity, mimicry, multiculturalism are the features of colonial legacy. Arguing against the fixity of essentialist signification that Said's study of orientalism suggests, Bhabha proposes a mixed economy of not only power and pleasure (156). He describes mimicry as a trope of partial presence that marks a threatening social difference only to reveal the excesses and slippages of colonial power and knowledge. "The means of mimicry, he explains is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority" (Bhaba 129).

Often post-colonial literatures refuse closure to stress the provisionality of post-colonial identities, reinforcing Helen Tiffin's comment that "Decolonization is process, not arrival" (1987:17). The absence of a 'conclusion' to decolonizing project does not represent failure; rather it points to the recombinant ways in which colonized subjects now define themselves, situated with in the hybrid forms of various cultural systems, such subjects can usefully exploit what Diana Brydon calls contamination (1990), where by the influence from several cultures can be figured as positive rather than negative, as for instance, is miscegenation.

Inter-culturalism in theatre emerged along with the concept of postmodernism. Inter-culturalism and postmodernism intersect at the point of ahistorical, acultural synthesis that can also be perceived to be neo-colonial. Theatre anthropologists and interculturalists have examined the theatre forms and styles of other cultures and often embraced the possibilities inherent in adopting them for use in a western context. Theatre anthropologist Victor Turner, Eugenio Barba, and Richard Schechner are designed to enumerate the similarities between all cultures without recognizing their highly significant differences. In this style of analysis, several plays and or theatre cultures are usually compared in order to highlight the likeness in various rituals or practices.

Intercultural theatre creates hybrid form drawing upon a more or less conscious and voluntary mixing of performance tradition traceable to distinct cultural areas. The hybridization is very often such that the original forms can no longer be distinguished. The experiments of Taymor, Emig or Pinder, who adopted elements of the Balinese theatre for American audience (qtd in Pastis Pavis, from Snow, 1986), the creations of Brook, Mnouchkine or Barba, drawing upon Indian or Japanese traditions, belong to this category (Pavis, 8). Intercultural theatre includes the works of Robert Wilson, Peter Brook, and Suzuki Tadashi.

In Post-colonial times, after national independence, the evolution and confirmative of the own cultural identity naturally became one of the most important tasks of theatre. Therefore theatre turns its back on the products of the colonial culture and returns to its own traditions. A development of this kind occurred in Nigeria and led to the Yorubal folk tradition. This is a theatrical form that refers back to the Alarinjo traveling theatre tradition that can be traced back in Yoruba culture as far as the sixteenth century.

There are a few numbers of Nigerian dramatists who deliberately turn the elements of Greek classical theatre in the context of post-independence Nigeria. John pepper Clark, a Nigerian poet and playwright produced his first play *Song of a Goat* demonstrating "in title and action, that a tragic mode might be as indigenously African as it was Greek" (qtd Okpewho:42). Similarly, Wole Soyinka works with the form of drama as it has evolved in European theatre history, and he also writes in English. But he tries these elements of western culture to elements of African culture, themes and characters of Yoruba history, mythology and religion, poetic devices from orally transmitted poems and the methods of characterization and structure that are employed in traditional rituals, such as the "obatala festival". In this way he combines elements of European and African tradition quite freely. Unlike many other African writers, Soyinka does not employ elements of his own culture to romanticize pre-colonial history and traditions of that era. In Soyinka's drama, African culture does not solely appear in place of the European but he tries to correct the dehumanizing tendencies of European culture.

Chapter – III

Ritual Resistance in Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides*

Critical Synopsis

Wole Soyinka's adaptation *The Bacchae of Euripides* can be seen as a significant post-colonial revision of Euripides's *The Bacchae*. Soyinka's version contemporizes the text into social, cultural and temporal settings of post-independence era of Nigeria. Soyinka valorizes the theme of tyranny and freedom over the reason and emotion. He clarifies that any tyrant has to die before the public for their cruel deed. Since, it stages so convincingly the destruction of a tyrant by supernatural forces. In this play, Pentheus is easily refigured as an agent of colonialism and Dionysus is presented as a god of liberty, freedom of nation, will of public and indigenous culture or deity.

The subtitle "A communion Rite" is essential, since communion and sacrifice have an inevitable relationship in Soyinka's play. He tries to ensure the fertility myth that a scapegoat must be sacrificed to the gods. This idea of sacrifice does not occur in Euripides's play but it is brought out in Soyinka's version. Euripides ends his play with retribution, not communion or regeneration but Soyinka's version ends with sacrifice and communal ritual which unifies political and religious theme. The transformation of Pentheus's head into a fountain of blood transubstantiated into wine is a depiction of the renewal of life and unification of the community that his sacrifice made possible; it is brought with a disquieting negation of Agave's voice as a grieving mother.

The change in characterization is another significant revision of the former play *The Bacchae*. The Greek god Dionysos has been slightly modified and made as more vibrant to represent Yoruba god, Ogun. Ogun in Yoruba is considered as a god

of creativity, guardian of the road, god of metallic lore and artistry. Moreover, he is an explorer, hunter, and god of war and custodian of the sacred oath. Another significant change in Soyinka's version is in chorus. Euripides created one chorus for his drama, but this adaptation contains one chorus of slaves and another of bacchantes. The slaves are predominantly men and the bacchantes mostly women. Black Africans lead the choruses, and the slave leader speak eloquently of the liberty with Dionysos, representing all social classes, especially foreign slaves. Other minor characters that represent lower class such as herdsman, floggers, and vestals are also included in this version.

Inclusion of different scenes is another important revision of the play. Soyinka's version includes two different wedding scenes, different ceremonies and performances in order to explore indigenous Yoruba tradition. Soyinka wrote this play when he was exiled in England by the Nigerian government. So this text has been targeted for the continual colonial government of Nigeria. This play clearly shows the victory of public freedom over the tyrant or despotic figure.

Among the many deviations from its canonical model *The Bacchae of Euripides* foregrounds dance as a motif of disjunction with the original text. The play's dances take many forms, their variety and multiplicity reinforcing the importance of movement as a signifying practice. The dance has been presented for the sake of liberation which returns the power of the past to the people. Along with the dance, music, songs, chanting of Yoruba tradition have been highlighted throughout the play.

Interpretation of the Text

Soyinka's version of the play *The Bacchae of Euripides* valorizes the ritual aspects of Yoruba tradition in the background of Greek ritual. Though, this text is

based on Greek mythology but Soyinka modifies it into the social, cultural and political context of post independence era of Nigeria. Through this play, Wole Soyinka tries to establish the concept of ritual theatre that is typically practiced in Africa especially in Yorubean community of Nigeria. In this version, Soyinka transforms the retribution aspect of Greek and western tragic mode into sacrificial aspect of Yoruba tradition.

Now, the researcher thinks that it is necessary to analyze Soyinka's version from the post-colonial point of view. Soyinka has modified the Greek version of *The Bacchae* from preface to end. In his preface Soyinka states as:

The slaves, and the Bacchantes, should be as mixed a Cast as is possible, testifying to their varied origins. Solely because of the "hollering" style suggested for the Slave Leader's solo in the play it is recommended that this character be fully negroid. (234)

Soyinka, of course highlights the native aspect of Africa by choosing slave characters. There is a slave leader who lead the chorus and maintain prime role in the play. The slave who is fully Negro suggests that the character represents the voice of Nigeria. The chorus in Soyinka's version represents the slaves and the bacchantes which are not in the case of Euripides version. There is no doubt that the identification of the slave leader as a black man has something of a back nationalist impulse behind it, and this brings us back to the context within which this play was composed. In this reference, Isidore Okpewho states as "this puts a counter-hegemonic slant to the representation of the slave leader, who is given the privilege of leading the combined multinational chorus in singing praises to Dionysus with epithets and line from the Oriki of black African god" (37).

Soyinka's play opens to a road "lined by the bodies of crucified slaves mostly in the skeletal stage (235)". The slaves are condemned to death for a variety of petty labour infraction on a grain farm evidently belonging to the royal household. In his introduction, Soyinka also points to the mining industry as a major employer of servile labor keeping alive the imperial war machine. The harsh conditions under which these slaves work are evidenced by periodic incidences of revolt. In this version of the play, he mentions that slaves were facing brutal troubles. In which one must be chosen every year as scapegoat in the Eleusinian mysteries.

Herdsmen: Which of us is the victim this year?

Slave: That old man of the king's household. The old who looks after the dogs.

Herdsmen: [Shrugs]: He's old enough to die.

Leader: He had better survival. (236)

They are discussing against the tradition that was practiced in their ritual. There was the tendency that in every year, a slave has to sacrifice annually for the purification of the society. Such brutality puts in some perspective the dangers faced by the slaves in Soyinka's play. Among such slaves one must be chosen every year as scapegoat in the Eleusinian mysteries. And now it is the turn of the old black slave who has to be sacrificed in the holy place, mountain of Kithairon for the sake of liturgical purpose. It can be argued that such rules of sacrificing slave is not justifiable. These dialogues are entirely coined by Soyinka in his version of the play which was not there in Euripides version.

Leader: Why us? Why always us?

Herdsmen: Why not?

Leader: Because the rites bring us nothing!

Let those who profit bear the burden of the old year dying.

These characters are discussing about the justification for the case of slave. They say that in the name of unknown ritual tradition they should not only be the victim of death. It is the turn of king and noble class for the case of sacrifice. Till now, only the slaves are victimized and marginalized and are treated not as human being but as a thing. That is why, they are trying to revolt against such tradition which does not bring anything for the blacks. It seems that their time is over and it is the turn of king to sacrifice before the god for the sake of community.

Throughout the play there is confrontation between Pentheus, a young king of Thebes and Dionysus, a Greek god. The conflict is in the divine quality of Dionysus. Pentheus does not regard Dionysus as a god and he only supports for Appolo. He sees there is some local quality in Dionysos and believes that he is a son of mortal woman, Semale. So, Pentheus is in one side and represents tyrannical aspect. In another side there are Tiresias, Cadmus, Agave, Slaves and Bacchantes.

Soyinka's conflation of Ogun with Dionysos illustrates his taking ownership of the myth and using it for highlighting Yoruba tradition. Dionysos is no longer a deity for this present day world but Ogun, a deity who still is worshipped among Yoruba people and is singularly important to the playwright himself. Ogun in Yoruba represents as "God of creativity, guardian of the road, god of Metallic lore and artistry, explorer, hunter, god of war, custodian of the sacred oath"(Myth: 140). Soyinka has chosen Ogun as his patron deity throughout his writings. It is apparent that he molds Yoruba tradition to suit his artistic purposes. In his version of *The Bacchae* Soyinka has presented Dionysos as more vibrant, symbolic and more

sacrificial. There is close attachment between Dionysos and slaves in his version whereas there is no such situation in Euripides's version. The Chorus who includes slave leader and other slave characters always praise and support for African Dionysos. In the play the slave leader is summoning to Dionysos:

Leader: come, god

Of seven paths; oil, wine, blood, spring, rain, sap and sperm, O dirge
of shadows, dark – shod feet

Seven-ply crossroads, hands of cam wood. Breath of indigo, O god of
the seven roads farm, hill, forge, breath, field of battle Death and the
re-creative flint [...].(295)

There are three deities in Yourba tradition: Ogun, Obatala and Sango. Sango stands for retribution whereas Obatala is the placid essence of creation. Ogun is known for the creative urge and instinct, the essence of creativity. Wole Soyinka says Ogun stands for a transcendental, humane but rigidly restorative justice (Myth: 141). In aforementioned summoning the slave leader is addressing to Dionysos but it is actually Ogun. The slave leader is calling the god Ogun by giving different adjectives and says that he is ultimately only one to help them. They are in a trouble situation so that the god should show his presence and help them. The god, Ogun has special connotation in yourba myth. Ogun emerged from the seven paths and seven roads who is the recreative force and has revolutionary spirit. Ogun as the eternal actor of the tragic rites, first as the unresisting mouthpiece of the god, uttering visions symbolic of the transitional gulf, interpreting the dead power within whose essence he is emerged as agent of the Choric will. Soyinka says that "for the Yoruba, the gods are the final measure of eternity, as humans are of earthy transience" (The fourth stage: 143).

There are various deviations from the original Greek version of *The Bacchae* to the Soyinka's version of *The Bacchae*. This adaptation would enhance the theatre's experimental agenda. Soyinka is giving focus to setting and stage directions, alternation of the make up and role of the chorus and so on. In these lines Okepe who argues that "Soyinka challenges to the "inadequacies" in the canonical text and outlook of race that African society and leadership have abdicated" (52). Soyinka's adaptation of this text is directly linked to the social, political and religious context of the post-independence era of Nigeria. By including slave character and exploring indigenous aspect of Nigeria, he wants to revolt against the tyrannical government of Nigeria. This government was solely responsible for his exile into England.

Soyinka is exploring Yoruba culture and tradition by privileging slave leader as a spokesman for the god. Soyinka's Dionysos is more like Ogun which is not in the case of Euripides' *The Bacchae*.

Leader: [breaking loose after the priests' retreat]

Welcome the new god! Thrice welcome the new order!.....

From the same responsive source intermingle strains of the music of Dionysos. It swells inwards to the attentive listeners. The vestal in the arms of Dionysos stirs, responding. She lowers herself to the ground slowly, moves into a dance to the music. As the dance takes her close to the slave leader he moves away with her, the dance soon embraces all the vestals and slaves. (240)

These stage directions convey that the marginalized characters like vestals, slave and slave leader and bacchantes are dancing with Dionysos. There is no hierarchy as such in Euripides's version of *The Bacchae*. Wole Soyinka gives full power to the slave characters and provided with the prime role. Dionysos was

supposed to be a great and supreme divine god in Greek period. But in Yorubian tradition the god Ogun has special connotation with the slaves. Here, slaves do not mean only the slave characters but they represent the native people and their saying is the voice of Nigeria. They are dancing with the god, Dionysos and blurring the hierarchy and revolting against tyrannical world of Pentheus.

Soyinka's version of *The Bacchae* is an effort as a translation of culture, not of text. Since he worked from previous published translations by Murray and Arrowsmith (as he tells us in a prefatory note), he has obviously given as much of his energy to reconstructing the ethos of the play as to manipulating the language of it. It would therefore make sense to see Soyinka's effort within such contexts of understanding of cultural translation as those articulated by scholars of anthropologists and new historians. Slave leader: A god goes by many names. I have long been a spokesperson for the god. (246).

The slave leader who enjoys a privileged position as an African "brother" could hardly have made such a claim. He is already acting as the god's mouthpiece well in advance of his fellow slaves: beginning with "The god in me" and ending with "I am Dionysos". He experiences directly the epiphany of the god and participates in the well orchestrated rites of his passion, it is clear they are quietly being taken through the road of initiation leading to the point where true wisdom consists in recognizing how little one really knows. Hence, the old slave, who more than the others has continued to express his reservations about the new order and especially about the god who tricks them into false illusions of freedom, progress from gentle intimations of the power of these nameless forces we call "spirits" or "gods". Soyinka's slaves, however, transform the appeal to Dionysos into a determined

summons to the battle for freedom, more in the spirit of Ogun than of his Phrygian twin, Soyinka explores indigenous songs and focuses on the freedom of the slaves.

The central conflict of the play lies in the middle part where Pentheus gives command to his soldier for chaining Dionysos. He blasphemes Dionysos as scapegoat of ritual. But Tiresias and Cadmus try to convince Pentheus with their several words and moral messages. Ultimately, they are unable to persuade him and driven out from the royal palace and moved towards the sacred place of mount Kithairon. There is violent confrontation between the god Dionysos and Pentheus. All the slaves and Bacchanets are in favour of Dionysos. Pentheus always gives order and command to Diouysos. The slave characters and bacchantes try to defend with Pentheus. Here, Pentheus can be connotated with the colonizer and slaves with colonized. It is obvious that in colonial text the colonizer is using various means in order to dominate the colonizers. But there is series of resistance from the part of Dionysos and the slaves. Pentheus even slap on the face of slave leader.

Old slave: we wondered [...] about the hut of holy man....you would not [...] really want it destroyed?

[For reply Pentheus fetches him a slap which knocks him flat]

Pentheus: Slave! Is that language simple enough even for slave? Something is wrong with the old man of this city. It affects freemen and slave alike [...]

Do you slave defy me? [263]

In the above dialogues, Pentheus is giving threatening to the slave character. He not only scolds to the slave leader but also slaps on his face. Pentheus is recognized as colonizer and the slaves are recognized as colonized. In colonialism, the colonizer always dominates and makes troubles to the colonizers. Colonizers are

always facing severe danger, threatening and humiliation in that situation. Wole Soyinka in his version of *The Bacchae* links this play with the contemporary context of post-colonial Nigeria. He modifies the Greek version of Euripides where Pentheus represents as an ancient Greek who has boast of civilization whereas slave represents barbarians and regarded as native people of Nigeria. Soyinka links each and every situation with the post-colonial context of Nigeria in order to resist the militant political leader who always indulges with their own self will and does not concern with the public will.

Pentheus: You insult me? You must be raving! [to the Guards]

He insults your king. He insults Thebes. Load him with chains! The man is insane. Chain him I say! Weight him down with Chains.

I'll show you who has the power here. (264)

Pentheus is showing his violent attitude to Dionysos. For him Dionysos is insane and he must be chained. But the slave leader's comment that "Pentheus" means "chain". When the guards captured Dionysos, they held long staves with devices that encircled the god's neck. Then, placed in a harness, his arms, head, and legs bound, Dionysos was hoisted high in the air. Pentheus ordered the iron grilles taken from the pyramids and placed upright to block any exit from the dungeon for god or for the slaves. The members of the slave chorus commented on the action by banging their chains against the blocks groaning at the harness of Pentheus' decisions, or scampering from one block to another while delivering their lines. As the slaves heard the music and Chanting of the approaching bacchantes, they became more and more active. They all try to resist through chanting. "As Dionysos is chained, his Bacchantes begin a noise, a kind of ululating which is found among some African and

Oriental people and signifies great distress, warning or agitation sometimes all combined"(271).

These stage directions are entirely created by Soyinka in his version of the play. The chorus start agitation to the young king Pentheus for the liberation of Dionysos. In this context, Pentheus is a tyrannical government of Nigeria and the god is public or their indigenous culture. So, the revolt is between the colonizer and the colonized.

If we compare and contrast the portrayal of Pentheus both in Euripides and Soyinka's version, we can find many differences. Pentheus has been presented more tyrannical and despotic figure in Soyinka's version than Euripides' version. In Euripides version Pentheus is simply portrait as a stubborn young king who do not respect the god Dionysos and insults Tiresias and Cadmus and tires to dominate the public will. But in Soyinka's version of the play Pentheus has been depicted as a despotic figure and as like vampire who only sucks the blood of the slaves and blasphemes to the god. All the characters of the play dislike Pentheus.

The performance like chanting has very special connotation in ritual theatre. It explores the indigenous aspect of their culture and tradition. It can also be used as a powerful weapon for resisting to any tyrannical figure. Wole Soyinka has used so many chants throughout this version of the play but it was not there in Euripides' version. In this context, Soyinka in his preface states as "I must also mention the debt to my own *Idanre*, a passion poem of Ogun, elder brother to Dionysos. From the long poem I have also lifted entire lines especially in the praise chants." The chants utter by slave characters and a few bacchantes are entirely produced by Soyinka. We can claim that chanting has power to resist with the any kinds of despotic figure. In

Soyinka's versions of *The Bacchae*, the slave characters are uttering several chanting dialogues to resist with Pentheus for the welfare of Dionysos:

1st Bacchante: [...]

Blessed are the dancers whose hearts are purified. Who tread on the hill in the holy dance of god?

Blessed are they who keep the rites of the earth mother. Who bear the thyrsus, who wields the holy word of god? Blessed are all who wear the ivy crown of god.

Blessed, blessed are they: Dionysos is their god.

This praise chanting to the god highlights the importance and Significance of the god. It explores the inevitability of the slaves and the bacchantes who are praying the god Dionysos. They are becoming purified with the praying to god in the holy place like mount kithairon. It also says that the earth is the mother who gave birth to their god.

Most important is the fact that Soyinka uses the Yoruba god Ogun as a close analog to Dionysos. In fact, both gods may have sprung from similar roots; yet, while Soyinka's Dionysos is clearly indebted to Ogun. Soyinka does call him Dionysos. Other clues are in performance than in reading can contribute to his African character.

Similarly with chanting the performance like dancing, songs and music have very special connotation in post-colonial theatre. They can be used as a powerful means to resist with the despotic figure. Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins argue that "In the theatre, the actor's body is major physical symbol: it is distinguished from other such symbols by its capacity to offer a multifarious complex of meanings, the body signifies through its appearance and its action" (203). We can view that the body

is the site of knowledge, power and the site of resistance. It entails the possibility of a counter- strategic representation.

In Soyinka's version of *The Bacchae*, dance has been used as a major motif in order to resist with despotic power. There lies series of dancing scene from the beginning to the end of the play. The dancing returns the power that Pentheus's cruel governance had denied them. It has been used as significant tool for the liberation. Gilbert and Tompkins opine as "*The Bacchae of Euripides* suggests the variety of (performative) powers commanded by Ogun, the Yoruba god on whom Soyinka Dionysos is modeled" (40). The dancing also blurs the hierarchy between and among the characters:

[...] From the same responsive source, intermingled strains of the music of Dionysos. It swells inwards to the attentive listeners, the vestal in the arms of Dionysos. She lowers herself to the ground slowly, moves into a dance to the music. As the dance takes her close to the slave leader the dance soon embraces all the vestals and slave. [...].
240)

Of course, these stage directions written after the words of slave leader are Soyinka's invention in his version of the play. Here, all the marginalized characters such as slave, slave leader, and vestal dance with their god Dionysos which is modeled as Ogun of Yoruba. There is no hierarchy as such, but there was distinct hierarchy in Euripides's version. In Greek version there were neither slave characters nor there was chorus dance with the marginalized ones. The above stage direction setting clearly expresses that the music of Dionysos can be heard on the stage and vestal soon comes near to Dionysos. They dance along with the slave leader in choral manner. They do not feel any hesitation so it blurs the hierarchy between the god and

indigenous people of Nigeria. Another scene of dancing is quite remarkable to elaborate the importance of dancing.

Dionysos: [drawing back]: Dance for me

Tiresias: Dance for Dionysos

Tiresias: That's like asking the elephant to fly. I've never danced in all my life. [The Music of Dionysos is heard, Tiresias stands entranced for some moments then moves naturally into the rhythm, continues to dance[...].244

Euripides Dionysos also likes dancing but he never demands but Soyinka's Dionysos who is modeled as Ogun of Yoruba always prefers dancing. Here, Dionysos requests Tiresias to dance for the sake of him but Tiresias expresses his uneasiness and inability in dancing, but all of sudden the music of Ogun is heard which has such a power that nobody can escape from dancing. The divine power that inherent in music of Yoruba tradition motivates Tiresias to dance though he does not know how to dance well. With this information we know that the music and dance has especial power that is inherited in Yoruba tradition and this connotation has some deeper significance which is also one of the features of Yorubian ritual theater. There is another scene of dancing between Tiresias and Kadmos in Soyinka's version of the play in order to highlight the significance of dancing in Yorubian tradition.

Tiresias: Give me your hand? When you step into the dance you'll lose all your silly motions. You accept, and that's the real stature of man.

You are immersed in the richest essence of all- your inner essence.

This is what the dance of Dionysos brings forth form you; this is the meaning of the dance. Follow the motion of my feet and dance

kadmos. We will dance all the way to the hills. One-Two-Back, One-

Two-Back, kadmos [obeys him]! I am a man, nothing more. I do not scoff at the will of heaven. (255)

So dance is deeply rooted in the tradition of Dionysos. Tiresias is giving direction to Kadmus for dancing. He says that dance liberates us from narrow or silly state of emotion to freedom of will. We can understand that dance is inevitable for the worship of god in yourbian tradition. The movements of the body express our inner emotion and anxiety and we can liberate us and become self attainment. At the later part of the play another dance takes place that is called a maypole dance. A maypole dance is decorated pole that people dance round in ceremonies. This dance has taken place to celebrate the death of lion shaped man (who is actually Pentheus) in the mount kithairon by his own mother Agave and her sister.

[She takes the thyrsus in both hands and whirls it. The maenads chose and catch the ribbons as they unfurl and float outwards. With Agave in the centre, a maypole dance evolves naturally from their position. It is a soft graceful dance.] 302

All the choruses including the slaves, bacchantes and Agave involve in maypole dance. They dance as a celebration of the death of lion shaped man. This is very soft, graceful dance which becomes more frenzied as she realizes the implications of the dancing.

In Soynika's version of the play "The most impressive form of dance, however, is the earthquake that the slaves and Dionysos are able to summon up on stage, conjuring visually and aurally the remarkable force that can easily be channeled into political upheaval. (Gilbert and Tompkins: 39).

The performance of songs and music in ritual theatre explores the indigenous aspect of culture. The songs and music whatever perform in drama makes the drama

more lively and symbolic. Soyinka's adaptation would enhance the theatre's experimental agenda. It would be seen in production more than as a literary appropriation. The music of this movement is equally significant. These elements are mostly used by the contemporary African dramatists. They have dutifully incorporated from indigenous theatre, and here in the gospel scene it is clear whose music is being foregrounded. Soyinka, of course, acknowledges the varied national (or ethnic) origins of the conjoint chorus by striking some balance between "original strings and timbrels". The commanding personality and performance style of the slave cultures largely ancillary in this celebration of the revolutionary spirit.

Soyinka makes increasingly nuanced changes to the text of these songs, giving steady prominence to the theme of freedom and to the cultural and religious context within which this may be more vividly realized. The cultural context is represented by the personality of the slave leader. Soyinka throws in ideas that accentuate the theme of liberation in the revolutionary consciousness of the slave leader.

The performance aspect of chant adds an interesting edge to the personality of the slave leader. The cultural environment revealed by the gospel scene helps us further appreciate the play's theological context and thus the textual adjustments imposed by the slave leader as mouthpiece of Ogun. When he invites the Bacchantes to join him in acknowledging the god, he begins by testing their familiarity with the idiom of initiation. Part of the slave leader's magic is his language, which progresses by subtly lacing the salute to Dionysos with phrase and ideas taken from the mythology of Ogun. The slave leader constantly utters the chanting which is taken from Soyinka's poem to Ogun:

Music: it has the strange quality. The nearest familiar example is the theme song of Zorba the Greek – with its strange mixture of nostalgia,

violence, and death [...] the lines are chanted not sung, to musical accomplishment [...]. (248)

Of course, in Yourbian mythology music has a strange quality. Though, it was equally there in ancient Greek tradition. It can links the gulf between the dead people and the living people. Whatever chants utter by the slave characters and the Bacchantes convey certain message and revolutionary sprit against king Pentheus.

Leader: Tribute to the holy hills of Ethiopia. Caves of the unborn, and the dark ancestral spirits. Home of primal drums round which the dead and living.

Dance. I praise the throbbing beat of the hide.

The squeal and the wail of flutes [...].(248)

These lines by the slave leader are entirely invented by Wole Soyinka in his version of *The Bacchae*. These sayings explore the Yoruba mythology. Yoruba metaphysic believes on the presumption of holistic and integrated nations. It not only covers the world of living and the world of unborn, but also covers the fourth areas of human existence which Soyinka labels "the abyss of transitions" (Myth: 26). To borrow the words of Soyinka himself, "Less understood and explored in the fourth stage, the dark continuum of transistor where occur the inner transmutations of essence-ideal and maturity. It houses the ultimate expression of cosmic will" (Myth: 26) .Such Yoruba word- view in revealed in the life of Ogun, a god of Yoruba cosmology. Furthermore, in this version the slaves and the Bacchantes beats drums, chant oriki and flok opera and heard the music of Dionysus frequently while dancing they dance in choral manner.

Soyinka's play inserts two mimed wedding scenes conjured by Ogun\Dionysos which are intended to be a lesson to Pentheus, who is blind to their meanings. First

wedding is a traditional but cold and formal one and the second is warm, loving image of Christ turning water into communion wine. There are more hints in stage direction which supports the performance aspect of Soyinka.

[In the direction in which he points, a scene lights up. Wedding Scene, music the bridal procession enters, masked. The mask is the half-mask. [...] The wedding feast begins and dancers perform their dance. The bridegroom grows more and more uncomfortable. The serving girl carries on a quite flirtation with him, doesn't wait for his cup to empty before refilling it [...].

(285)

In the first scene, a bridegroom who refuses the wedding conventions of the west dance to Dionysos' tune, which prompts his would be father in-law to abruptly call off the marriage. The father-in-law, more concerned with the trappings of wealth and imitation of western social and political fashions, is distinguished from the bridegroom, whose association with the local provides a moral for the scene.

This stage direction clarifies the fact that whole Soyinka is more concerned with the ritual performance in theatre. These are entirely created by Wole Soyinka which was not there in Euripides' version. Here, he highlights masque and other ritualistic theatrical tradition. In fact, in the first wedding Scene the bride prefers dance from his own tradition and does not prefers the western dance.

The second mime enacts the Biblical miracle of the marriage at Cana from the New Testament. In this scene the refilling of the wine jugs represents the renewal of spiritual energies that must also accompany an Ogunion philosophy of life, the philosophy that Pentheus has denied. Both scenes sustain images of horror and excess; the linking signifier of the wine intensifies Dionysos' insistence on balance in

life, which will help maintain individual integrity and for more significant in the Yoruba culture, communal integrity.

Soyinka gives us ample notice of the celebrative agenda of his version of the play. The complementarity of death and life that equally characterizes Ogun and Dionysos may be adequately symbolized by the collocation of tomb and vine. But Euripides's play is mournful in its beginning and later in its ending. Soyinka in his opening set seems to invite us to witness the hard earned but nonetheless plentiful blessings of his god of harvest "rust" and "ripeness". The play will be less a tragedy than a "communion rite" as the subtitle says. But Euripides's play is fully tragic because it ends with retribution, not communion and degradation.

The most important difference between Euripides' version and Soyinka's version is the ending. Norma Bishop argues as "The subtitle "A communion Rite" is essential since communion and sacrifice have an inevitable relation in Soyinka's play" (71). Soyinka has modified the classical Greek tragedy into a communion rite in Nigerian context. He draws on the ancient Greek notion that to ensure the fertility of the crops, a scapegoat must be sacrificed does not occur in Euripides's play. It is brought out in Soyinka's version. At first, the chosen scapegoat is not the king but an old slave. Of major importance to Soyinka's theme is the transference from sacrificing the slave to sacrificing the king. As the rebellious slave leader argues, "why us? Why always us? [...] the rites bring us nothing. Let those to whom the profits go bear the burden of the old year dying" (237). The responsibility for the ritual is thus transferred from the elite to the masses, who adopt Bacchus as their god and reject the "state religion" that demands their sacrifice. Through communal participation, they enhance their social power, as Soyinka emphasizes in his introduction to the play. By drinking the king's blood, the community as a whole partakes of his power and all are

revitalized and unified. This view of communal participation is latent in Euripides's version. So "Soyinka's idea of sacrifice and communal ritual unifies political and religious themes: (Norma Bishop: 72).

Both Euripides and Soyinka deal with the problem of stale, empty ritual traditions. Cadmus and Tiresias represent the inherited wisdom of the elders. Pentheus, on the other hand is an iconoclast who would rather trust his own wisdom (Apollo is the only god he worships) and not accept anything foreign, strange, or undignified. He tries to suppress Dionysian ritual, but this attempt only leads to its extreme expression as the god demands his due.

The theme of ritual and emotion in *The Bacchae* eventually spills over into the sphere of political and social reality. The question is who will be in control? Recognizing the power of strong emotion, Pentheus tries to suppress these Dionysian rites based on religious emotion. Yet, it is Pentheus' own internal chaos that causes him to see corruption in others, despite Tiresias' comment. Pentheus cannot understand how people can enjoy festive release without corruption. His own sense of corruption destroys him. These entire themes are there in Euripides's version. Soyinka also recognizes this problem of Pentheus and emphasizes it by having him say "I shall have order! Let the city know at once, Pentheus is here to give back order and Sanity" (291). Yet Pentheus violates order by striking the old slave, which the crowd knows to be an abomination" (292).

In not recognizing Semale's worth the women too reflect Pentheus's madness and kingdom's disorder. Dionysos turns the women into vicious, wild beasts, and so maddens Agave that she cannot recognize her own son, Pentheus. Thus the principle of order is used to extract vengeance. Pentheus is pulled down from the treetops and

torn apart like a beast. Agave mounts Pentheus's head high above the doorpost, only to bring it down later when she discovers her errors.

The concluding scene of this adaptation beginning with the possessed Agave's account of her killing of the mountain lion was the most controversial one in this production. After returning from the place of Mt. Kithairan with the dead body, she calls everyone for the celebration.

Agave: All must share in my glory. I summon you all to a feast of celebration.

Old slave: A feast[...]? Oh Agave

Slave Leader: To eat of this [...] lion, Agave?

Agave: This bull, lion, this swift mountain goat [...] 301.

These dialogues are entirely created by Soyinka in his version of the play. Here, Agave is requesting for the celebration of the death of lion shaped Pentheus who was killed in the mountain. This performance is like festival and carnival which is especially found in ritual based theatre like South Africa and other non-western countries. After the conversation all the characters involve in a maypole dancing. This is a soft graceful dance which is danced in circular position. They say that the death of lion is their victory over the cruelty. They praise for the Dionysos / Ogun who leads liberation for them. The fragility of reason is clearly evident in Agave, Pentheus's mother, whose madness is her punishment and the medium of Pentheus's punishment. In Euripides's version, the return of her sanity only makes things worse, but is Soyinka's she sees better because of her former insanity. Cadmus cries out, "Why us?" and she replies. "Why not ?" (307).

Wole Soyinka's Conclusion to *The Bacchae* differed considerably from that of Euripides. Euripides's sacrificial ritual ends in merciless destruction of the royal family,

Dionysos: [...] Agave, too that polluted creature,

Must go into perpetual banishment.

And Cadmus, you too must endure your lot

Your form will change, so you become dragon. [...] (The Bacchae: 28)

In Euripides version, Pentheus dismembered, Agave banished and Cadmus and his wife doomed to become serpents leading barbarian host. The people of Thebes are sentenced by Dionysos to slavery in other lands for blaspheming him and threatening him with violence. All have come to a horrified realization of Dionysos's divinity, but realization comes too late. Cadmus seeks pity from Dionysos, but Agave recognizes that Dionysos is necessity, in the hand of fate and cannot be propitiated. Pity in Euripides world can exist only among these doomed mortals. Soyinka said "The Bacchae a very uneven and in many ways, rather a crude play." (qtd. In Isidore Okpewho: 48)

Soyinka's ending is totally different from Euripides' conclusion. His version ends with stage direction. The stage seems to be symbolic.

[The theme of music of Dionusos befits, welling up and filling the stage with god's presence. A powerful red glow shines suddenly as if from within the head of Pentheus[...]

Tiresias sees the blood and nothing the blood [...]

Slowly, dream like, they all move towards the fountain, cup their hands and drink [...].(307)

Although Dionysos does not appear in Soyinka's final scene, his music, red glows, and a wine fountain, wonderful and terrible, spurt from Pentheus's head. Thus the cycle is complete. Pentheus, the rejecter of Dionysos, has become the source of Dionysos. In this version, unlike that of Euripides, there is no need for pity because no one suffers without finding some positive resolution.

In Soyinka's play, the final image is a red glow from Pentheus's head which Cadmos interprets to be blood. Agave soon discovers the blood to be wine and everyone takes a restorative drink. The tragedy of the situation is undermined. The ritual also demonstrates the importance of rejuvenating other emotions and energies through Pentheus's death, an event which represents community good and the restoration of harmony, rather than the tragic fate that death usually signifies:

"After being located outside the community during his tyrannical rule, Pentheus is finally repositioned within that community; he is the centre of their communion, the symbol of their victory over the old regime and of their power to transform what remains into a new, more human, well-being and renewal in which all can share" (qtd Gilbert and Tompkins: 41).

The poetry of the play's last scene underscores a new kind of fecundity-blood as nourishment for the kithairan, a king's blood that will unite men and women, slaves and freeman with their masters. Pentheus really dies like Christ for the good of humankind and his head becomes a fountain of blood turned into wine, a "barbaric banquet". Thus ritual allows each celebrant to be unified with each other and with their god. Soyinka's vision about individual sacrifice for the good of the community that was part of traditional culture among the Yoruba, Ijo and Obo people is revealed.

Thus, Wole Soyinka's play blurs the hierarchy between tragedy and comedy. This play ends with communion rite, everyone takes restorative drinks and enjoys with a great celebration. That's why this version of the play modifies the classical master narratives Greek text and connotes it into ritualistic context of Yoruba tradition.

Chapter- IV

Conclusion

Resistance has become a dominant mode of literary expression among the writers of the third world countries after the advent of post-colonialism. It is because the single monolithic colonial practices of the west ushered them to do so for the purpose of postulating their cultural identity. Soyinka is a well-known non-western author who always valorizes his own native culture and tradition through his texts. In his writings he symptomatically presents his resistance feelings to the colonial text.

In post-colonialism, rewriting a canonical text is one way of rendering of canon. The researcher finds out that Soyinka's adaptation of *the Bacchae* can be regarded as the most important post-colonial revision of the text. Soyinka contemporizes the classical text into the social, political and historical context of post independence era of Nigeria. While undergoing research the researcher goes through the hypothesis and proves that Soyinka is resisting to the tyrannical government of Nigeria through ritual. Here, the ritual foregrounds the traditional Greek ritual and vitalizes the significance of Yorubian tradition in the post-independence era of Nigeria.

Africa has a culture and a history different from the Greek. The statement that the Greek paradigm as a universal model is proved to be false. African ritual is an integral part of the African theater. African traditional dramas are participative and celebrative. It is also total because it combines many arts forms, music, poetry, dance, acting, miming mask, painting, singing, dialogue etc. hence speech is not dominant as in the mainstream European theatre. All these features are found in Soyinka's version of the play.

Soyinka subtitled his version of the play as “A Communion Rite” which is entirely created by him. In Soyinka’s play communion and sacrifice have an inevitable relation. The major difference between the Greek version and the Nigerian version of *The Bacchae* is ending. Euripides ends his play with retribution, not communion or regeneration whereas Soyinka’s play ends with the idea of sacrifice and communion rituals. Soyinka’s version of the play proves the message that any tyrant has to die before the public for their cruel deed. Since, it stages so convincingly the destruction of a tyrant by supernatural forces. In this play, Pentheus is easily refigured as an agent of colonialism and Dionysos / Ogun is presented as a god of liberty, freedom of nation and public will and indigenous culture.

Soyinka’s version of *the Bacchae* is a series of modification from Euripides’s *The Bacchae*. Soyinka highlights the native aspect of Africa by choosing slave characters. He also gives the prime role to the slave. Soyinka’s chorus of the play includes the slave and the bacchantes. Soyinka’s slave leader is a largely spokesperson of the god Dionysos / Ogun. The slave leader always talks about liberation along with the god. Soyinka’s Dionysos is more like Ogun of Yoruba who is more vibrant in Yoruba tradition. In Yoruba tradition, Ogun is considered as a god of creativity, guardian of the road, god of metallic lore and artistry. Soyinka is an heir of that tradition that is why he valorizes Yoruba ritual and tradition throughout this version of the play.

This version of the play includes indigenous songs, dances, stories, wedding ceremonies and other ritual performances to highlight African native culture. By including all these things Soyinka wants to establish the concept of ritual theatre that was typically practiced in African context. This play also focuses that there are similarities as well as differences between the Greek ritual and Yoruba ritual.

Therefore, ritual drama that is drama as a cleansing, binding and re-creative force is not possible in the European world but it has survived in the African world where the “Cosmic Whole” has not yet been narrowed. Soyinka conclusion is that ritual drama thus conceived provides a basis for a redefinition of tragedy in terms of cultural experiences. This version of the play blurs the hierarchy between tragedy and comedy. The fully tragic drama of Euripides is converted into a communal, a sacrificial and celebrative play.

Inclusion of dance, chanting, music and songs of Yoruba tradition are essential aspect of revision of the former play. Chanting has very special connotation in their culture and tradition. Wole Soyinka has included many praise chants throughout this version and most of the lines are taken from his own *Idanre*, a poem of Ogun. Similarly, the performances like singing, dancing and music have mutual connection in post- colonial theatre. It can be used as a powerful means to resist with the despotic figure in ritual theatre.

In Soyinka’s version of *the Bacchae* dance has been used as a major motif in order to resist with despotic power. Throughout the play, dance has taken place in many forms and varieties of situations. The dancing returns the power of the past to the people, the power that Pentheus’s cruel governance had denied them. So dance is deeply rooted in the tradition of Ogun. It is supposed that dancing liberates us from narrow or silly state of emotion to freedom of will. Similarly, Songs and music incorporated by Soyinka explores the indigenous aspect of Yoruba culture. So, Soyinka adaptation would enhance theatrical experimental agenda. This version is more for performance than reading as it was there in Greek version.

Thus, Soyinka’s version of *the Bachhae of Euripides* is a post-colonial revision of the classical Greek text of Euripides’s *The Bacchae*. Through this version

Soyinka highlights ritual aspects and performance of Yoruba tradition to establish ritual theatre. Likewise it is equally resistant against the militant government of Nigeria through the tyrannical ruler, like Pentheus.

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