

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

**Excremental Vision: A Comparative Study of
Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* and Soyinka's *The Interpreters***

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Letter of Approval

This thesis titled "Excremental Vision: A Comparative Study of Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* and Soyinka's *The Interpreters*," submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Raj Kumar Baral, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

To read Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* and Soyinka's *The Interpreters* is to decode the meaning of excremental vision which Swift exploits by using excremental images to satirize the malpractices and wrongheadedness of British colonizers in Ireland and Soyinka to look at Nigerian government which is not different from white colonial administration. Swift's frequent movement from tale through digression to further digression and allusions refers to the lawlessness in the ruling of Britishers and its effect on learning, religion, rationality, and philosophy. Soyinka with images of shit and faeces hits at the cancerous effects of post-colonial hegemony in post-Independent Nigeria. His characters like Sekoni and Sagoe are disillusioned because of their project killed by the forces of corruption. His post-colonial project presents post-independent Nigeria of 1960s as same as white colonial administration since malfunctionings prevail as the legacy of colonial administration.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Swift as a writer

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), the satirist, received the best education which the Ireland of the English governing class had to offer. In 1674 he was sent to Kilkenny School and thereafter in the spring of 1682 to Trinity College, Dublin, where he took the degree of B.A. in 1686. He was still in residence at Trinity College and on the point of receiving the Master's degree when violence, in the wake of England's Bloodless Revolution of 1688, broke out in Ireland, "threatening English rule and bringing normal life in Dublin to a stop" (Davis 11). Early in 1689 Swift, along with his many friends, crossed the Irish Sea to England, "where his prospects, however dim, were at least better than they could possibly be in Ireland" at such a time (Quintana 1-2).

The ten-year period which dates from his arrival in England was an important event for his career development because then that time he came to intellectual maturity, took stock of his own situation in the world and in consequence determined upon a life in the Church, and after a none-too-successful wooing of the Muse discovered that his true vein lay in prose satire.

In Ireland, he had composed an ode in celebration of King William's triumphs. Ode—in the form made popular by Abraham Cowley—now continued to attract him, though towards the end of these experiments "he turned to the heroic couplet" (4). But though he found himself thwarted for the moment in his efforts at poetry, he had been gathering in a "wealth of new experiences, social and intellectual" (4). He had gone up to Oxford and received the M.A. in 1692. Editorial work on Temple's essays, letters and diplomatic memoirs was sharpening his stylistic sense and giving him an understanding of how a modern and "well-informed mind" ranged over theories having to do with art, human culture, political behavior and the rise and fall of civilization (12). He made a

beginning on the prose satire ultimately to be entitled *A Tale of a Tub*—the sections thereof "concerned with corruptions in religion" and the effect of English government over the Irish people (13).

Jonathan Swift's life, character, and writing are "distinguished not merely by the normal tensions and contrasts of human experience, but by the powerful clash of violently opposed forces" (Ross and Woolley xi). Further, in his case at least, it has always been not only difficult but finally impossible, to read the author out of the works and treat the texts as free-standing objects, complicated by authorial intention, biographical complexities, or historical relationships. F.R. Leavis in his essay on "The Irony of Swift" properly seeks to clear his discussion from focusing unawares on the kind of man that Swift was and to stop "well on this side pathology" (85). Yet the same critic invokes Swift's "insane egotism that reinforced the savagery" which he finds in parts of the writing (99).

At the opposite extreme, some readers have been impelled to place Swift's writing in a "wholly biographical or psychological context" (xiii). His powerful if perplexing character has fascinated later generations, just as it strongly attracted, or made bitter enemies of, those who met him in life. In common with other men of his time, and several members of his own circle such as Addison, Steele, or Pope, who lived in the first age of English culture from which letters and personal papers survive in relative plenty, Swift left extensive documentation of his private life. The information appears to delineate an inner life peculiarly susceptible to theoretical analysis using the psychology of this century. Rashly moving backwards and forwards between such records and Swift's works, or parts of them, readers of such a taste have emphasized the "disturbing texture of Swift's writing, and sought explanations for this undoubted literary quality in

corresponding disorders of his personality" (25). He is not, of course, alone in having his art judged by appeals to anal fixation and technical notions on the far side of pathology.

Clear and open as the appeal of the writing is, there are areas of deep unfamiliarity for the modern reader, "not only in political doctrines, allusions, and content related to the life and concerns of a past time", but "more seriously involving rhetorical and critical principles, a context of past literature accessible and living to Swift's contemporary readers" (12). Much of this has been opened up to us by the extensive commentary on his works. There is a constant struggle, though, between immediate, personal response to Swift's text and a historical modification of this response.

The circumstances of Swift's birth and earliest years neatly illustrate the critical problems. He was the posthumous child of his father, and perhaps even more traumatic experience followed. He tells this story himself in the paragraphs he wrote in his early sixties or later under title "Family of Swift" and which has been given in part, the misleading modern title *Fragment of Autobiography to 1714*:

[. . .] when he was a year old, and event happened to him that seems unusual; for his nurse who was a woman of Whitehaven, being under an absolute necessity of seeing one of her relations, who was then extremely sick, and from whom she expected a legacy; and being at the same time extremely fond of the infant, she stole him on shipboard unknown to his mother and uncle, and carried him with her to Whitehaven, where he continued for almost three years [. . .]. The nurse was so careful of him that before he returned he had learnt to spell, and by the time that he was three years old he could read any chapter in the Bible. (qtd. in Davis 108)

All this must have had an effect on Swift's character, feelings, and ideas.

Biographers are in duty bound to flesh out the psycho-drama, but the readers of Swift's

works are not condemned to the long chain of inference. On the other hand, two immediate consequences flowed from Swift's parentage: his birth in Dublin and his family heritage fated him to be one of the English of Ireland. As an Anglo-Irish writer he "received an irrevocable cultural stamp, a set of preoccupations, a social and historical role; certain more speculative characteristics, linguistic, tactical, and imaginative, may also ensue" (xiv). The second important consequence of his origins was the family connection that led, after a rather old-fashioned course of study at Trinity College, Dublin, to Swift's employment as his secretary by Sir William Temple at Moor Park for the best part of the decade from 1689 to 1699.

It is not too much to say that "practically every political, moral, and literary doctrine that Swift held may be traced to the formative presence of Temple" (14). At first sight this would seem to confirm a historicist reading of Swift's work, but what actually in Swift's hands became of those doctrines, and even of the literary professionalism, the principles of unity of sentence and construction of paragraph that his service taught him, is another matter, and the measure of his art as a writer. The transcription of "Temple's own works and the correction of them under the author's instructions, perhaps by dictation, formed part of the literary training Swift received in Temple's circle" (xvii).

The comparative discussion of cultures based on wide reading of the available accounts, however inaccurate, of China, Peru, the Arab world, as well as the ancient world of the Mediterranean basin, and the modern world of Northern Europe, is the main claim Temple has to originality. Swift, a lifelong reader of books of travels, "made only indirect but pervasive use of such comparisons of culture" (Koon 32). He also seems to have ingrained in him two rooted notions of Temple's. These are the profound belief that "human nature everywhere and in all ages is the same and that the true end of the study of history is moral philosophy" (16). Temple's essays are scattered with the seeds of

ideas which Swift develops in his own works, and traits of style he made his own, in all "bettering his instruction" (xv).

From his years of working under Temple, Swift drew his preoccupation with history itself. Temple sketched *An Introduction to the History of England*, published in 1694 from a manuscript written out by Swift as a small endeavor intended to invite and encourage some worthy spirit and true love of the country to produce the good general history of England, the want of which Temple considered "a disgrace to English learning" (xv). Temple's superficial piece expresses his scorn at the dirt and rubbish of such barbarous times. The transcendental vision of history as a record of God's intervention in human affairs, a puritan belief which Swift ridicules in *A Tale of a Tub*, has in Temple's work given way to generalizations, laws and maxims, illustrated by historical events. Swift's aim was to produce a smooth chronicle of events with character analysis, not detailing sources though he worked reasonably hard on what "chronicles or compilations he read" (15). From this apprentice work comes the sure touch and digested information underlying the historical asides that strike the reader as playing an important part in his great satires such as *A Tale of a Tub*. In his early historical writing, he "cautiously embarks on a theory of mixed governments and the balance of power, the kind of generalization which, with brief historical illustrations, often gives firmness to his political pamphlets" (xiii). Many of his theoretical passages develop out of one of his fundamental political tenants, "Power, by the common maxim, always accompanying property" (33). This argument in his *History* links Swift, through Temple, with an important group of the seventeenth century English political and historical theorists known as 'classical republicans'.

One other aspect of history-writing is worth noting, which Swift clearly adopted from his years at Moor Park. He justifies the publication of Temples' letters by saying

that they give "a true account of story", they do not fulfill this function well if they only consist of "long dry subjects of business" (266). The true account sought by Temple and Swift is imaginative, giving the feel of events, actions while they are alive and breathing, imbued with psychological and rhetorical life, ordering differences of style in the letters according to the recipients. Temple himself only imperfectly realized these ambitions, but Swift embodied them in the *Journal to Stella*. Another straightforward use of this instinct for direct historical writing is the letter, "Swift to Alexander Pope 10 January 1721", and his "Epitaph" may be judged as a condensed piece of lapidary history.

More interesting are the rich variations Swift creates from the historical theme, extending to ironic subversion of the very genre of historical writing itself, which had entered so deeply into his artistic consciousness. *The Battle of the Books*, his earliest mature work, exploits the satirical possibilities of guying "contemporary history" as recorded in newspapers or perhaps practiced by Temple (36). *The Contests and Dissensions in Athens and Rome* takes the contemporary custom of studying ancient history and creates from this conventional interest, a mosaic that tests the reader's ingenuity. History as a living human concern, its pitfalls, excesses, blindness, is a profound concern in *A Tale of a Tub*, with its modern rhetoric, and joking citations of Herodotus and other ancient historians. This concern is continued in the similar complexity of *Gulliver's Travels*. Gulliver's performance as historian, in his discussions with the king of Brobdingnag, for example, is one of the witty and somber areas of the satire.

History, in fact, is a very good example of a fundamental organizing principle of Swift's entire literary achievement. This is the way in which traits of expression and style, threads or networks of ideas and preoccupations, run through his works, in prose and verse many stemming from his years at Moor Park. Such features may have a

"straightforward expression", and "a double or playful, satirical, devious, sometimes anarchic, embodiment" (51). The latter marks "Swift's deeply ironic and satirical cast of mind, a temper profoundly resistant to convention, at the same time as his didactic, preaching side as allied with a vulnerable idealism and passionate honesty" (xvi-xvii).

Swift's second formative heritage is his Irish context, i.e., his birth in Dublin. An appreciation of the complicated relationship in Swift's day between the metropolis and the Anglo-Irish periphery helps our understanding of the powerful complexity of Swift's writing, which is "at once a great contribution to the written culture in English, and also a dominant component of the Anglo-Irish tradition of literature and political rhetoric" (8). Swift's Ireland had been created by three cataclysmic events and a related fundamental change in Irish politics and government. The early seventeenth-century political struggle in England, which led to the outbreak of civil war, the execution of the king in 1649, and the overthrow of the monarchy, precipitated a formidable rebellion of the native Irish leaders against the English Government.

Swift was a political animal. His political tracts and poems, therefore, form a very substantial part of his achievement, and his preoccupation with politics and politicians ran all through his life. But just as, for him, history provided moral reflections for modern readers, so political actions, conflicts, and cries were located in a context of historical and moral argument. Swift's political tracts were "stylish contributions to actual controversy and gain weight from his reach of imagination and reference" (28). The relationship in such political writing, however, between immediate circumstances, events, persons, and intentions on the one hand, and on the other political doctrines, moral principles or lasting literary worth and enjoyment, is often strained. At the simplest level, Swift's very effective response to the current state of affairs and sometimes "the rebarbative subject-matter" drawn from insistent contemporary political

topics can defeat modern readers who are not specialists in the history of the time (96). This difficulty masks passages as good as anything he never wrote. Although such political concerns and references feature in many of his pieces, "his strictly political writing is chiefly distributed in three groups" (xxiii). Ross and Woolley further write:

Some early pieces were written as he was trying to make his way in London. Secondly, from October 1710 to summer 1714 [when] he wrote more than thirty weekly essays in the pro-Government *Examiner*, twenty or so other known prose pieces and pamphlets, and about thirteen verse broad sides; he may have written other fugitive pieces and was one of those through whom Harley, in a very modern way, managed his administration's publicity and public image [. . .]. Lastly, from 1720, Swift published sixty or so prose pieces directly concerned with Irish political affairs. (xxiii)

One of the great themes of his political writing up to 1714 is his support for a peaceful end to the great European war against Louis XIV and his French expansionism. *The Conduct of the Allies* remains Swift's most effective pamphlet in terms of actual political results. One of the most powerful feelings awakened in the reader by Swift's political rhetoric is a hatred of war. He writes, "It will, no doubt, be a mighty comfort to our grandchildren when they see a few hangs hang up in West Minister Hall, which cost an hundred millions whereof they are paying the arrears, and boasting, as beggars do, that their grandfathers were rich and great" (25).

Parallel with Swift's political concerns, runs another of his profound preoccupations, the demands of his religious belief and office. From the reign of Henry VIII, Swift argued, though not itself free from the overweening tendency of all political constituents and powers, the Church of England worked for the establishment of the

balance between King, Lord and Commons, and added its own force on the side of order, civilization, and peace. Charles II's restoration put "an end to the anti-monarchical and anti-church usurpation of the Cromwellians, and it was in this theory of the Restoration that Swift was educated" (xv). Moreover, he was not only the greatest man of letters in Ireland, but also the foremost Irish patriot, and "the most distinguished and vehemently articulate Churchman" (24).

Swift considered himself an Englishman dropped in Ireland but as a "fighter for human liberty, since he was outraged by the results of English misrule" (113). Once again he took up his pen to combat the Whigs, this time on behalf of the Irish. Gradually there collected around him the nucleus of an Irish party which gained popular support as a result of the six famous *Drapier Letters* (1724), where Swift protested the scandalous patent accorded William Wood for supplying Ireland with a coinage of copper halfpence. His "Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from Being a Burden to their Parents or the Country" (1729), by the expedient of eating them, further aroused the national spirit.

Swift's satire to critics is "without taste, pedants without imagination, and scientific experimenter without common senses has more than one face. Malice, there may have been but it was informed malice" (30). Swift invoked the rights and privileges of a small and enlightened class of society—a class whose obligation it was to make everlasting war against the innumerable forms of stupidity which the Augustan wits summed up in the single word dullness.

Temple's death on 27 January 1699 left Swift, as his sister put it "unprovided both of friend and living", but he had come into his full powers as a satirist, at that time (23). The *Tale of a Tube*, the *Battle of the Books*, and the *Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*, three satiric compositions linked together by their

common themes which were not appear from the press until 1704. The *Battle of the Books* was, in fact, a blow delivered in defense of Temple, whose essay "Upon Ancient and Modern Literature" had become the centre of a literary controversy then in progress. True enough, these early works do not possess the ready appeal of *Gulliver's Travels*. Nevertheless, their brilliance is not early exaggerated. They are triumphs of the satirist's art. *Gulliver's Travels* is a travel book; it is an imaginary voyage, a parody of a travel book; it is a take off on the imaginary voyage—"a parody of a parody" (12). To see it in some such ways and to watch Swift at work as he manipulates his extraordinarily complicated set of mirrors is not to lose sight of the "perennial qualities" of this greatest of all satire utopias or of Swift's guiding intuition (xv).

Swift's personal, political and religious circumstances were complex and galling, and he responded fully to their painful complexity, but also strove for clear ideas and true judgment. The power of his felling and the keenness of his thought do not produce some simple, single doctrine of confident resolution of doubts. In varied writing that still has the ability to move his readers, he continues to elicit equally varied, sometimes contradictory, responses. Through, such writing mixed with satire, Swift wants to unveil the misruling of English government in Ireland.

1.2 Soyinka as a writer

Wole Soyinka (b. 1934), the first African to win the Nobel Prize in Literature (1986), has established himself as one of the most compelling literary forces in the continent. He is often regarded as a universal man: poet, playwright, novelist, teacher, actor, translator, politician and publisher. Raised in a Christian environment, Soyinka attended University College, Ibaden and then to Leeds University, England in 1956. He involved in the new drama of the Royal Court Theatre, London, where he became a play reader in 1957-9.

Most of his works 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" (Moore 46). He views that the role of the artist in society is like the role of the god Ogun who has suffered for the purification of the society. His characters strive for the country but become the victim of the so-called independent government where malfunctioning prevail as the legacy of colonial administration.

Soyinka has a clear influence on many younger playwrights in Nigeria and has long been an "avowed social critic" and the conscience of the country during its many totalitarian regimes (Ousby 221). Through 1990s he has become even more active in various "national and humanitarian issues" that have significantly reduced his work in theatre (220). On several incidents he has gone into self imposed exile, most often in England and United States. In 1995-6 he was a visiting Professor of American Studies at Harvard University. Eventhough his plays have the richest imprint of African sensibility and American sensibility and symbolism of any dramatist and eventhough all express a deep awareness and love of African culture, many of his critics claim that the plays are

too often misunderstood especially among African themselves. As a result, non Africans tend to be the most ardent admirers of his works.

Soyinka is gifted with verbal inventiveness and an "ebullient imagination" (46). He has an uncompromising sense of justice and humanity. He not only criticizes the post colonial Nigerian government but he also satirizes pre-colonial African regimes. After working with the Royal Court Theatre, London, he founded 'The 1960 Marks' in Nigeria and later the 'Orisun Theatre'. In 1967, he was charged with "holding up a radio station and stealing two tapes", but was acquitted (222). Later in 1967, after the Nigerian Civil War broke out, he was detained and held in Kaduna Prison for over two years mostly in solitary confinement. He was badly treated inside the prison. When all of his friends inside the jail were vaccinated against meningitis, he was ignored. When he was suffering from serious vision problems, he was neglected by his jailers. He was denied reading and writing materials, but he manufactured his own ink and began to keep a prison diary, writing on toilet paper, cigarette packages, and in between the lines of the few books he secretly obtained. Each poem or fragment of journal he managed "to smuggle to the outside world became a literary event and a reassurance to his supporters that Soyinka still lived, despite rumors to the contrary" (Matlow 717).

Most of his works are based on the beliefs of his Yoruba background, and its characters are the Yoruba gods. He uses Yoruba songs translated into English and adopts old rituals and dances to produce particular dramatic effects on the modern age, yet they "carry a caustic commentary upon violence and corruption in the society" (717). Ian Ousby, a modern critic, says that "Soyinka tries to resolve issues of modern civil violence in terms of those Yoruba beliefs" (220). Although, he uses Yoruba myth, religion and employs traditional masks, drums and dance, he expresses modern themes in contemporary African settings. Myran Matlow studies Soyinka's works and views that

"they are able to satirize the darkness of men's hearts and old as well as new values" (717). He further opines that "Soyinka's protagonists are doomed to suffer like the God Ogun and his themes deal with the scapegoat, with man as a killer and with the return of the savage old gods" (717).

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 of Ogun—the god of iron, war and creative fire in the Yoruba pantheon. Soyinka sees him as "the embodiment of contradiction; he is the original sacrifice, the one who dared chaos and the abyss" (220). In connection with the concept of the co-existence of the three worlds of the dead, the living and the unborn, Soyinka "emphasizes the importance of masquerade for a new moral consciousness" (713).

Despite the fact that Soyinka's plays attack totalitarianism, opportunism, greed and oppressive authority, he has been accused, especially by the left, "of not being politically committed to any group" (46). His personal crusades against the exploitation of the common people and the country's natural resources, however, have been consistent and have kept him under continuous surveillance by government and police. A consistent pan Africanist (eventhough his earlier works, were conceived within a quite specific Yoruba world view), his later works, *Opera Wonyosi* (1981), and *A play of Giants* (1997) "clearly transcend such ethnic particularism" (716).

The Lion and the Jewel (1963), *Brother Jero* (1963), *The swamp Dwellers* (1965), and *The Strong Breed* (1964), the earlier more realistic plays, are the most popular in production. Conversely, the later plays tend to be much more surreal in style. The earlier plays evoke a relatively simple rural Nigerian locale, while the later plays "demand an instant transition of set and scenery from one symbolic world to another"

(235). The characters of his later plays tend to be abstractions or figures that inhabit different levels of reality.

In creating his plays, Soyinka has perfected a dramatic style that combines elements of both African and western theatrical art, a style that is lively and free. It is in this liveliness and freedom that "Soyinka's style most resembles Brecht's" (635). His plays often present reality as a timeless flow between past and present, between spirits and humans. Nothing is static in Soyinka's plays; "dynamic movement is his signature" (238).

Soyinka's drama has been an investigation of the political, religious, and other forces in Nigerian culture. *The Strong Breed*, one of Soyinka's five plays (1964), parallels the Christian passion tale "in a terrifying jungle hunt" and the "ritual sacrifice" of a native intellectual torn in his commitments between tribal custom and modern social progress (631). *The Swamp Dwellers*, next play within five plays collection is a drama of anger "at apparently senseless crop destruction and loss of faith" (631). It is a powerful play condemning African superstition. *A Dance of the Forests* is a complex symbolic play produced in 1960 at the Nigerian Independence celebration and featuring numerous characters, including a dead couple and a "carver" thrown together in the woods among spirits. In the play, Soyinka warned the newly independent Nigerian by saying the end of colonial rule doesn't mean an end to their country's problems. His later play *The Road* (1965) is a prize winner that is something of an African waiting for Godot. It satirizes the corruption and hypocrisy of the Shehu Shagari regime. *Kongi's Harvest* (1967) is a highly theatrical and poetic, if not always "lucid". This is a mixture of the plots and themes of *The Trials of Brother Jero* and *The Strong Breed*. *The Lion and Jewel* (1959) offers a comic view of Nigerian attitudes towards European values left over from the colonial period. His play *Death and King's Horseman* (1975) reworks a moment in

Nigeria's colonial past from inside the Yoruba metaphysics. It is about the "halting of the ritual suicide of the equerry of the Alafin of Oyo by the local British district officer in 1946 (131). Soyinka's first volume of collected poems, *Idanre and other Poems* (1967), is a significant guide to the direction of the author's work. He first made " his name as a writer of light satirical verse in poems like "Telephone conversation", "The Immigrant", and "The Other Immigrant", all of which has excluded from his collection" (Larson 81). A pre-occupation with more somber themes is represented by "Requiem" where he explores the continuing but tenuous relationship between the dead and the living in a series of "delicate" images.

Self-sacrifice—martyrdom is the next issue Soyinka deals with. Society often destroys its greatest benefactors; indeed it is ironically through the willingness of sensitive souls to offer martyrdom "if necessary that society advances" (816). This is the theme of the play *The Strong Breed* and the poem "The Dreamer", a poem based on the idea of the crucifixion. Commenting on *The Man Died: Prison Notes of Wole Soyinka* (1972), Charles R. Larson writes, " [It] is not so much the story of Wole Soyinka's own temporary death during the Nigerian Civil War but a personified account of Nigeria's fall from sanity, documented by one of the country's leading intellectuals" (73). Soyinka himself has described *The Interpreters* as "an attempt to capture particular moment in the lives of a generation which was trying to find its feet after independence" (qtd. in Morrison 753). It seems to mark Soyinka's discovery of a problematic relation between private and public destinies in the post colonial novel.

Following his release from prison at the end of the civil war, Soyinka visited United States, where he helped stage his *Madman and Specialists* (1970), a play he described "as dealing with the betrayal of vocation for the attraction of power in one form or another" (717).

In 1966, he was a joint winner of the John Whiting Drama Prize, in 1969 he was awarded the Jock Campbell prize and in 1973 an honorary doctorate from the University of Leeds. He was a co-editor from 1960-64 of the important journal *Black Orpheus* and edited an anthology, *Poems of Black African* (1975). He is not only most versatile and prolific but also the most politically involved of Anglophone African writers.

Soyinka's works are the attempt to formulate a meaning out of the contradictory forces that govern human life and actions. Ogun, who unites these two qualities without separating them, is an apt symbol since Soyinka himself creates a similar fusion in his work between African and European influences. European dramatic and poetic conventions are fused with African conventions and ways of thought to produce an original type of writing. He invokes the pantheon of Yoruba gods to forge a new ethic whose validity is not confined to Africa. He imbues English with a verse and an expansiveness which spring from the imagic nature of Yoruba speech. Remaining among such situations and techniques, he has become successful to expose the malfunctionings prevailed in Nigeria even after its independence.

2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction to Excremental Theory

Excremental theory, though lately developed, occupies a significant space in postcolonial discursive practice. Faecal rhetoric, exploited by writers has become an important mode of expressing and reproducing symbolic and material relation of group inferiority and superiority, whether the differentiation being made is based on racial, class or other group membership. The meaning attributed to faecal products vary as the circumstances alter in which the super-ordinate group deal with their own faecal wastes. The toiletry ideas and their toiletry habitus underpin the fashions in which multidimensional model allows us to think about the interrelation between material and symbolic factor, between corporeal entities and modes of rhetoric.

The realm of excrement, despite of its great value, has received relatively little criticism. The reasons for such relative neglect are because of the "indubitable fact of human life that individuals excrete" and because "faecal matters are always inherently political in character" (Inglis 207). But along with the development of Foucauldian notion of power, the critics have understood the role of human body symbolically and materially. Their orientation especially is focused on the issues like how powerful groups maintain their upper-hand over the bodies of less powerful through symbolic and material means or how such issues are observed through the lens of politics.

While talking about the faecal language and its power, we must not forget the role of language which primarily provides a platform to discourse. The effect that language creates depends on the way discourse is created. Sometimes it can be used as the source to differentiate super and sub-ordination. So we need to think about the nature of faecal language, which words and phrases are related to defecatory capacities and what roles do they play in the given modes of power. Basically powerful groups use

excremental language while they are in search of their material and symbolic superiority.

The symbolism of faecal inferiority takes two main forms:

In the first case, the groups under verbal assault are described in terms of their allegedly 'filthy' natures, labeled as being thoroughly 'excremental' in nature. In particular, their bodies are represented as being wholly faecally filthy in character [. . .]. In the second case, the alleged racial, national or class characteristics of a particular group can be represented as being neatly symbolized by their toiletry practices. Here the subordinate can be depicted as more faecally uncontrolled and excrementally libidinous than their apparent superiors. (208)

In this context, the inferior group's toiletry habits are taken as being dirtier than those of the superior groups. Contemporary British racist discourse claims the toilets of Indians and Pakistanis are filthy, "revolting dens of dirt" (209). It seems to the case in general that the toiletry practices of groups occupying subordinate positions within social and cultural space are particularly ripe source of denigration by groups occupying superior positions. In doing so, there is a politics to knowledge- production, but that ways of knowing are themselves mechanism of power, and implicitly that the work of exposing their function as such, constitutes an act of opposition to that power.

Norman O. Brown finds writers' preoccupation with anal rather than sexual matters, suspecting that, among critics "repression weighs more heavily on anality than of genitality" (180). Yet the early studies have certainly devoted their share of the discussion to "coprophilia" what Brown called "excremental vision" and what is now popularized as his "scatology" which has a formative and under-examined significance in the contemporary literature. Excrements, therefore not only function as a "naturalistic detail but as a governing trope in post-colonial literature" (Esty 23).

The use of excremental tropes can be observed in the works of celebrated scatologists James Joyce and Samuel Beckett who came into prominence as the writers of "second-wave" which runs roughly from the Easter Rising 1916 to the Irish Republic or during an era divided between anti-colonial national revival and post-colonial national disillusionment. Esty Writes, "They came after the Celtic revivalists and looked askance at increasingly rigid and cloying forms of Cultural nationalism" and they "satirize the tired convention of the Irish Renaissance" (24). African scatologists like Armah and Soyinka express their disillusionment about the lost promises of African independence and they question the political and aesthetic standards.

In postcolonial writing, to resist is not to reject but to write back the colonialists from the position of the margin in the same language the colonizers used while creating the colonial discourse of domination and discrimination. The writings that have been produced from the beginning of colonialism resisting and subverting the colonial discourse, ideologies, derogatory identities and tropes of the so-called marginalized people represent a part of resistance literature, of which mimicry, complicity, indigenization and assimilation are source of the outcomes.

The awakening and awareness intensified by 1950s and 60s in the colonies against the politics of exploitation and expansionism culminated in the political independence of most of the then colonial countries but the colonial hangover kept on dazzling the people. The nature of independence was nebulous that, instead of healing the agony and cultural anarchy, it rendered the formally colonized world in confusion, bewilderment and political instability nurtured by corruption and various malfunctionings. The aura of independence was too ephemeral to bring out significant changes considering the historical circumstances; it appears merely to be the transformation of power, the power with which Britain dominated the world history,

shifted to America and consequently new ideologies were formulated to hegemonize the world.

The world politics after the World War II opened up a new path for America to establish hegemonic control over the economy, bureaucracy, and cultures of the entire world. For this reason, "all postcolonial societies are still subject in one way or the other to overt or subtle forms of neocolonial political domination and independence has not solved this problem" (Bill Ashcroft et. al. 2). Colonial stereotypical representation of colonized people as barbaric, irrational, feminine, passionate, dirty etc. through the means of language, for different writers and critics is not digestible. They are always aware about the relation inherited between language and domination and are critical not to the English language or French language, so called standard language but "what the oppressors do with it, how they shape it to become a territory that limits and defines, how they make it a weapon that can shame, humiliate, colonize" (hooks 72). In this location, hooks opines to use the oppressor's language and turn it against itself. She argues, "We make our words a counter-hegemonic speech, liberating ourselves in language" (77).

Colonialism, nearly four centuries long political as well as cultural enterprise of Europe at its best crippled the cultural and political sovereignty of people and presented the derogatory picture of colonized people. The colonialism was an epidemic and its effects on humanity were cancerous. Therefore, to adverse the hitherto existing tropes of colonial period, especially their representation of colonized as dirty creature, brought up amidst excrements, critics have taken help of excrements "to examine the peculiarly rich life of scatology in texts that are already identifiable—by their immediate contexts and concerns—as postcolonial" (25).

The readers of Jonathan Swift know that in his analysis of human nature there is an emphasis on and attitude towards dirt and filths which are unique in western literature. For Brown, he is equal to Rabelais and Aristophanes in mere quantity of scatological imagery. The understanding of Swift and his vision of men as yahoo, and yahoo as excrementally filthy beyond all other animals begins with the recognition that Swift's anatomy of human nature, in its "entirely and at the most profound and profoundly disturbing level, can be called the excrement vision" (Brown 510).

The yahoos represent the raw core of human bestiality: but the essence of Swift's vision is the "recognition that the civilized man of western Europe not only remains yahoo but is worse than yahoo—a sort of animal to whose share, by what accident he could not conjecture" (516). In this context, it is obvious that the essence of yahoo is filthiness, a filthiness distinguishing them not from western European man but from all other animals. The next wonder of yahoo is its strange "disposition to Nastiness and dirt; whereas these appears to be a natural love of cleanliness in all other animals" (517). It is physically endowed with a very rank smell that is somewhat between "a weasel and a fox" (517), which heightened at mating time, is a positive attraction to the male of the species. The eating habits of yahoo are equally filthy: "there was nothing that rendered the yahoos more odious, than their undistinguishing appetite to devour everything that came in their way, whether hearts, Roots, Berries, corrupted flesh of animals, or all mingled together" (518).

Above all, the yahoos are distinguished from other animals by their attitude towards their own excrement. Excrement to the yahoos is no more waste products but a magic instrument for self expression and aggression. It is quite obvious that the excremental vision of the yahoo is substantially identical with the psychoanalytical doctrine of the extensive role of anal erotism in the formation of human culture. In Swift

we find "starling anticipations of Freudian theorems about anality, about sublimation, and about the universal neurosis of mankind" (514). According to Freudian theory, the human infant passes through a stage—the anal stage—as a result of which "the libido, the life energy of the body, gets concentrated in the anal zone" (518). This infantile stage of anal egotism takes the essential form of attaching symbolic meaning to the anal product. As a result of these symbolic equation the anal product acquires for the child the significance of being his own child or creation, which he may use either" to obtain narcissistic pleasure in play, or to obtain love from another (faces as gift), or to assert independence from another (faeces as property), or to commit aggression against another (faeces as weapon)" (518). Thus, some of the most important categories of social behavior originally are in the anal stage of infantile sexuality and never lost their connection with it. When infantile sexuality comes to its catastrophic end non-bodily cultural objects inherit the symbolism originally attached to the anal product:

[But] only as second best substitutes for the original. The category of property is not simply transferred from faces to money: on the contrary, money is faeces, because the anal erotism continues in the unconscious. The anal erotism has not been renounced or abandoned but repressed. (519)

Anal erotism, in Swift's language, is especially a human privilege. On the one hand, psychoanalysis would differ from Swift's implication that the strange disposition to nastiness and dirt is biologically given. It comes to the same thing to say that Swift errors in giving the yahoos no "pittance of Reason" and in assigning to reason only the transformation of the yahoo into the civilized man of Western Europe. Swift also anticipates Freud in emphasizing the connection between anal erotism and human

aggression. The yahoos' "filthiness is manifested primarily in excremental aggression" (215).

Even within particular societies, the nature of discourse of dirt, faecal matters and toiletry practice are relative over time. The ideas about faeces and how they should be managed change historically, and are not fixed immutably for ever. "The rhetoric of more powerful groups rest in the faecal denigration of the less powerful –dirty versus clean, regulated versus unregulated and a series of other binaries" (209). As Nikolas Rose argues, "we should see particular forms of discourse not as free-floating entities united to any social mooring, but as both generated by and rooted in complex networks of social relations" (55). Such relations are both expressive and constitutive of particular group and "institutional configurations, as these are embodied in both symbolic and material terms"(220). Thus, in the case of specifically faecal issues, it is the differing toiletry routine of the dominant grouping—how they regard their own wastes, what type of toiletry receptacles they use, and how they dispose of their excreta that underpin the fashion in which faecal rhetoric is utilized against the subordinate. If this is the case, it follows that scatological symbolism should not be regarded as an unchanging and ahistorical resource for ascription of superiority of one group over another, rather the meaning attached to faecal products vary as the circumstances alter in which the super-ordinate group deal with their own faecal wastes. Therefore, the changing rhetoric of filth of master groups must be systematically related to alterations in their symbolic and material life, in terms of the latter especially as regards the development of toiletry techniques among such subordinate groupings.

Warwick Anderson in his article "Excremental Colonization" has emphasized the crucial role played by clean bodies. He describes "the methods by which U.S. colonizers produced an image of Filipino natives as unsanitary and excremental" (25). His history

of this rhetorical and epidemiological debasement provides a good point of departure for the study of excremental image in postcolonial era, when shit begins to work counter discursively. In postcolonial writings, "shit can redress a history of debasement by displaying the failures of development and the contradiction of colonial discourse and, moreover by disrupting inherited associations of excrement with colonized or non-western populations" (26). To sum up, Anderson's essay addresses shit not so much as a material object but as a powerful discursive resource within a new symbolic order. Even Bakhtinian theory has proposed that obscene language bubbles up from below to challenge official or state discourse. For Mbembe vulgar images, including the excremental are "deployed by the state as part of its official display of power" (qtd. in Esty 30).

Shit has long been read according to psychoanalytic and mythic models. Such readings traditionally focus on experiences of childhood sexuality but literary reading of postcolonial texts tend to interpret tropes like shit in terms of specific historical and political events. The classic source of the excremental vision in Anglophone literature was Jonathan Swift, "The modest proponent of Irish cannibalism" who turns scatology to his immediate purposes as an economic patriot when he tries to account for "an immense number of human excrements at the doors and steps of the streets of Dublin. Some observers have identified these excrements as of British not Irish-issue planted on Dublin streets as evidence of local digestion in order to disprove the Irish clamour of poverty" (28).

He has used digestive and excremental terms to expose economic misrule in Ireland. He not only has criticized neglectful British but also has attacked the Irish for their backwardness. Since he has become successful to link scatology with failed development he stands "as a precursor to the excremental writers of postcolonial Africa

and Ireland" (28). The rhetoric of empire, as David Spurr has noted, includes an arsenal of debasement tropes that describe colonized population as dirty bodies, linking them to filth, shit, and disorder (76-91). Warwick Anderson, too, points out that "tropical colonial possession came to represent the lower strata both geographically and physiologically that tended to reinforce the idea of unclean, base native" (652). Such habits and thoughts were integral to the colonizer's rationalization and abstractions of native excrement. The toilet, for Anderson is a powerful symbol of technological and developmental superiority and that has the corollary effect of intensifying, via a newly potent scientific language, the negative valence of shit (29). He suggests that American health officials in the Philippines were "themselves victims of the objects" given by a fascination with shit, waste and pollution.

The colonial setting witnesses the intersection of different excremental tropes, with both native and colonizer subject to debasement. Shit circulates as a crucial sign in this field because it is, as Mary Douglas's formulation would have it, a kind of dirt, or "matter out of place" (36). On the one hand, excremental language seeks to debase a rejected population, but on other hand, what is rejected can also confound. If, shit often functions as sign of the actively denigrated native in the colonial era, it also comes to function in the decolonization era, as a sign of actively repudiated ex-colonizer, the unwanted residue of a sometimes violent political expulsion.

Writers like Soyinka has redirected the symbolic association of excrement inherited from colonial discourse, turning scatology to the new task of representing postcolonial disillusionment. If shit, according to infantile logic, is a form of property or money, Soyinka reveals money and property as a form of shit. But excrement is not merely a device borrowed from neither classical satire, nor simply a neo-Freudian depth

charge but it is also, as Emmanuel Obiechina opines "an element of local oral traditions and an ordinary part of material condition in urban Africa" (125).

The essential formula of toiletry insult is that they are "faecally filthy while we are excrementally cleanly" (214). The analysis shows the specific ways in which we claim to be clean, on the basis of our toiletry habitus, and how their toiletry habitus is imputed to lack just such qualities. Many toiletry terminologies are employed by super-ordinate grouping over subordinate ones and they are related to the historical development of attitudes towards the defecatory capacities of the human body that developed in the west over the long period of time, culminating in the attitude towards such matter characteristics of the bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century. There was the trend about abusing one's enemies in ways that drew upon faecal imagery, as this was a common mode of rhetoric in the medieval period. Medieval and Renaissance literature is full of unexpurgated examples of this kind of talk but the creation of a novel symbolic and practical toiletry nexus, part of what we have dubbed the bourgeois toiletry habitus, meant that from about the eighteenth century, new forms of defecatory abuse became possible. Medieval enemies could berate each other's faecal filthiness but neither could assert their own defecatory superiority on the basis of having superior means of hiding faecas from view and clearing them away. If we observe the past, "in medieval society, from lord to peasant, was basically subject to the same forms of faecal disposal" (215). But from the eighteenth century onwards, certain groups had precisely that resource and they could claim that:

Their defecatory practice was superior—more cleanly, less filthy than that of other groups. The source of this superiority that the derogating group could claim both that (a) their bodies were cleanly (in contradistinction to the filthiness of the other's body), and (b) their life

style was cleanly because it involved defecation occurring in private spaces, in contradistinction to practices of public defecation that hitherto had been accepted for all, but which were now disdained by elites. (215)

By the middle of nineteenth century, the living condition of the proletariat, and thus by extension the proletariat itself, had from the point of view of "the bourgeois toiletry habitus, become dysfunctionally filthy, in both moral and hygenic terms" (214). In the hygenic sense, the proletariat was failed to be a ripe source of diseased and in the moral sense, the proletariat was filthy in that it was seen to be disorderly, unruly, and failing to correspond to the conditions of a disciplined workforce.

Its unordered nature truly made it matter out of place, in the contemporary middle class imaginary. This led to increasing calls for proletarian areas and by extension proletarian bodies too—to be rendered cleanly. In defecatory terms, this meant the provision of water closet and sewerage facilities in proletarian areas. The clear trend at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the next, part of massive state projects aimed at recasting urban space, was to towards the water closet becoming the major form of disposal in proletarian housing (Burnett 77). In pursuit of the long-term interests of the bourgeoisie, the state instigated processes which led to the relinquishing of bourgeois faecal superiority over the labouring classes. The result of this was that in bourgeois eyes the proletarian body and dwelling had to be "acknowledged as equally salubrious as their bourgeois counterpart" (218). Therefore, bourgeois rhetoric of condemnation of the life style of the working classes by the twentieth century increasing could have little or no recourse to excremental imagery. The great faecal divide between bourgeoisie and proletariat was abolished and excremental abuse could no longer figure as an essential mode of bourgeois superiority. However, the exercise of class distinction found new rhetorical tropes.

By the mid of the twentieth century, denigration of the working classes was being carried out more in terms of their "alleged physiological characteristics" (217). The groups that now were on the receiving end of faecal derogation were those who move to Britain in the waves of post-war immigration after World War II. The white proletariat, now safely enclosed within an apparently unimpeachable toiletry habitus that guaranteed its own faecal cleanliness. It was on this basis that certain section of the white working class described non –white groups in the detrimental fashion.

In general, writers use excremental language to indicate the failures of colonial development, the corruption of neo-political politics, and the residual quality of postcolonial nationalism. But beyond its more straightforward functions as a counter-discursive trop, scatology also marks one of the central representational problems in postcolonial literature. African writers exploit excremental rhetoric on their own textual practice to destabilize the process inherited convention of novelistic discourse and inherited forms of personal and national identity. Postcolonial scatology gives full literacy expression to the predicament of the writer in a new nation. It "turns contexts into text, transforming the external conditions of possibility into the thematic precipitate fictional experiment, condensing the agonizing struggle of aesthetics and politics into the figure of excrement" (55-56).

Excremental language resisters the tension between narratives devoted to national destiny and narrative devoted to the ethical or aesthetic consolidation of the subject. If national allegory attempts to realign human and historical time, to repair the colonized subject's fragmented history in a fantasy of restored identity, then "excremental satire casts doubt on that factory and opens up the gap between subject and nation" (49). In times of disillusionment or ambivalence about nationalist excess, postcolonial scatologists adopt the "matter out of place" formula. Excremental satire expresses the

partial misconception of postcolonial nationalism. Historically, these factors in the west have been the toiletry habitus of the nineteenth century bourgeoisie which has been at the center of unfolding forms of rhetorical abuse of groups defined as others. In the twentieth century, this habitus was extended such that the white working class entered into its conditions of thought and practice, therefore, provides racist groups within that community with ideological ammunition in their derogation of non-white groups.

Scatological satire, from Swift to Beckett to Soyinka, seems to be motivated and shaped by its practitioners' recognition of their own implication in ethical, aesthetic, or political failure. I take this point as fundamental to an analysis of excremental motifs because excrement's primary symbolic value—as both psychoanalytic and anthropological theory would suggest "is that it marks the fuzzy boundary between inside and outside, between the self and the not-self" (34). Psychoanalysis codified but didn't invent this reading: "Shit, the first extension of the self, is also the first instancing to the other" (qtd. in Esty 34). It makes sense in this light that shit figures "complicate moral and political binaries by diffusing guilt and shame" (36). The self-implicating dimension of excremental literature has been visible on the ethical plan at least since Swift. What the new currency of scatology in postcolonial cultures suggests is that excremental satire is also an index of national or collective self-implication in folly or excess. Such a hypothesis begins, at least, to explain the close correlation between excremental writing and antinationalist critique in African and Irish literature.

The writers have deployed excrementalism as a literary mode of self-reproach on different levels: through a complication of binaristic anticolonial politics; good native and bad imperialist, by recognition that local form of exploitation and "excess have emerged" and "through the complication of a simplistic anti-comprador position" by the recognition that intellectuals are themselves implicated in neocolonial failure (34). The

literature of disillusionment brings excremental motifs with their "symbolic disturbance of inside/outside models" to bear on African societies as they move from an era of heroic decolonization to the "Postlapsarian realities of stalled revolution" (35). Excremental language is invoked by novelists in order to diffuse guilt and shame. At the level both of national politics and of individual ethics, excremental writing tends toward complex models of systematic guilt, rather than toward the sharp absolutions and resolutions that attend moral or political binaries. In Soyinka, for instance, scatological satire attaches shame to previously immune classes including detached artists who are, by apparent inaction, is "to blame for the execrable state of affairs in the postcolony" (207). Shit, as wielded by novelists like Swift and Soyinka is a perfectly precise instrument for "recording a tragically imprecise kind of predicament" (35).

Thus Soyinka, while slinging mud at the new commercial and bureaucratic elites of Nigeria and their neo-colonial sponsors take pains to scrutinize those who would exempt themselves from the public site of corruption. Emmanuel Obiechina has shrewdly observed that "Soyinka used flexible third-person narration to direct satiric commentary at their own protagonists" (122). Excremental language casts doubt reflexively onto Soyinka's callow interpreters.

Excremental satire throws national allegory into doubt and insists that the reconsolidation of an ethical subject is not, in itself, a workable basis for "socially utopian or historically transcendent fiction" (43). Fredric Jameson argued that "third world texts tended to use allegorical logic to align private and public destinies, coordinating libidinal personal plots with political, collective plots" (qtd. in Esty 43).

The moments, where scatology deflates nationalism in Irish literature, suggest with new force the correlation of textual and political concerns. In Lioyd's view, nationalism itself is a political form which "constitutes a baleful residue of colonialism"

(55). It seems fitting in this light that postcolonial writers use excremental terms to confront the problems inherent in building a new political culture from the institutional by product and ideological residue of an alien regime. But if new nationalisms in Ireland and Africa are, in Partha Chatterjee's term "derivative discourses", they have also been potent, and necessary forms of collective identity. In this sense, such discourses are both authentic and inauthentic, both local and alien, both "self" and "other" (46). Hence, the prominence in this symbolic field of that primary excremental formula functions under self and not-self. In times of disillusionment or ambivalence about nationalist excess, postcolonial scatologists are, in a sense, adapting the "matter out of place" formula. Excremental satire, in other words, expresses the partial misconception of postcolonial nationalism.

Scatological excess in both African and postcolonial fiction seems to direct itself not only against the transcendent clean body of Warwick Anderson's colonial modernity but against the canons of decorum, economy and "post-Jamesonian rationality in the English language novel" (54). Whether in comic or satiric mode, writers like Soyinka, Beckett, and Joyce display the vulgar body of the ex-"native" in a way that sends up both colonial discourse and literary convention. Insofar as these texts tend to yoke graphic treatment of Bakhtin's lower bodily strata to excessive, digressive, stylistically adventurous forms of narrative, they constitute an implied challenge to the standards of modern fiction.

Irish representations of the vulgar body were certainly taken in England as a violation of literary taste. Anglophone postcolonial writers have revived oral, traditional, and vernacular forms that revise the English novel, it is also true that "traditional and vernacular forms often contain frank bodily images that challenge the sanitized and bourgeoisified canons of modern of modern European taste" (54). The linkage between

the corporeally vulgar and the formally gratuitous is cinched by the metaphoric of excremental waste. Textual or literary surplus becomes not just a vulgar fetish but a masterful device in the hands of writers like Swift or Soyinka, who remind us that excremental excess is both a discursive weapon and an occasion for artistic virtuosity. Discursive and scatological excess, then together, for what Bakhtin would describe as radical literary energy—an energy sharpened by the contrast between shit's signification of, on the one hand, "symbolic excess" and on the other, "material under privilege" (55).

The excremental vision exploited by Swift and Soyinka generates irony and that irony becomes political. Political irony as described by Beerendra Pandey, "arises from the said and unsaid. The unsaid is related to the repressed, marginalized and colonized; it is not just the unsaid, but the unsayable within the hegemonic, homogenous discourse" (50). Pandey further adds that "just as the uncanny is never surmounted, the repressed is similarly related to the said in a dialectic, uncanny fashion; it can be seen as at once constitutive and discursive structure or controlling intention including ironical ones, but the ironist may approach and play with the uncontrollable" (50). Political irony, which functions to rehearse and yet to revise the white stereotyping by the whites leads the blacks to mediate between two opposite poles: if the stereotyping by the whites leads the blacks to the sad reality of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, the ability to see is a quality that many people in majority cultures lack. They can't get enough "distant from themselves to turn the irony inward, that is, to laugh at their own whiteness" (50). Irony, in this sense, "maps the micropolitics of the power relations by linking itself inextricably to the issues of race, class, gender or sexuality"(50).

Thus, irony happens because of the presence of discursive communicates and its discursive presence comes about in interpretation whether arising from the ironist's intention or from the space between the said and unsaid. It comes into being in "social

spaces where different ideologies and culture meet, dash, grapple with each other often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power" (qtd. in Hutcheon 93). In ironic discourse, the political meaning in the whole communicative process is not only altered and distorted but also made possible by those different micro political power relations to which each of us differently belongs and from the basis of the expectations, assumptions, and preconception that we bring to the complex processing of language in use.

Swift exposes the nationalistic pieties of Ireland with political irony. In all his political irony in both England and Ireland he made full use of his personal dislikes to destroy the public reputation of the leaders of the opposing party. His method is to adopt the role of a cold impartial examiner, patiently and thoroughly exposing the wretched and corrupt state of his victims. And Soyinka's political irony signals both the material underprivilege of the masses and the wasteful overconsumption of fat neocolonial elites with their malfunctionings in post-independent setting of Nigeria.

3. Textual Analysis

3.1 Excremental Vision in Swift's *A Tale of a Tub*

The oppressors generally assumed that the oppressed can never speak effectively without outside help –that their position always and necessarily forces them into a state of dependency on others. But contrary to the assumption, the most oppressed among the various nations unevenly victimized by British colonialism in eighteenth century Ireland and its citizens were not simply silent and passive recipients of help from others but did in fact speak for themselves on a number of occasions and in a variety of ways, in words as well as in deeds. The Irish people as a whole were quiet about their subjection to the Penal laws, but they made their dissatisfaction known in other ways: through the versified expressions of violation and loss, through the accounts of native historians' intent upon correcting misinterpretation of the Irish perpetuated by their British counterparts and through acts of rebellion and social unrest.

Jonathan Swift, a legendary excremental writer of eighteenth century Ireland, in *A Tale of a Tub*, by exploiting excremental vision has spoken against the forces of anarchy, discontents of colonizer's ruling, the then education, philosophy, rationality of human beings, the politics and culture and for those extreme aspects of eighteenth century Irish society that resisted all forms of rational explanation and verbal closure. The exposure of the "mechanisms of sexual sublimation" and the whimsical title which is explained as the sailors' practice of throwing out an empty tub to a whale to occupy its attention and divert it from attacking the ship allow us to understand Swift as one who adamantly rejected those "mechanisms"(Swift 70). Ross and Woolley argue he "picks holes in the weak sides of religion and Government" along with academic and linguistic repression which enable the supposedly civilizing process of rationalization and

normalization to take place on a historical level: which conceal from view the unassimilable vis-à-vis the established institutions of polite society (18).

He realized the inevitability of constant negativity, the repeated outcries against the "circumstance of the existence" (46). This realization made him even more strident in his enunciations as well as more overwhelmed by a sense of the sheer hopelessness. So, he is of trying to get his point across, given the power of sublimating mechanisms to turn shit into the products of high culture and to replace aberration or pervasive disease with the varied forms of normalcy.

In the *Tale* only a few words are written to describe the first years in which the church was true to Christianity, and the entire reformation in which Martyn makes his compromise is summed up in one paragraph. The rest of the allegory details each folly of the Catholics and Dissenters with great relish. Far more wit and energy is used and pleasure taken in condemning those that fall short of the ideal than those who struggle to recreate it. Swift dwells on the negative, offering little forgiveness for the sinners and faint praise for the reformers. Once the ideal is lost, all he finds worth commenting on are the faults. Because of the narrator's pessimism, the best and the worst of mankind are intermixed, as if to show that humans have great potential, but being human also means that it can never be reached. And if the most sublime element of humans is based in the mind, particularly intelligent thought, then the worst is rooted in the physical, i.e. bodily functions. When the narrator makes such conclusions as "the gift of BELCHING" being "the noblest Act of a Rational Creature", his combining of the highest and lowest aspects of mankind is a reflection of his disappointment that the two must exist together and thereby limit the rise into the intellectual (73). Because he dwells on the worst, not only does he remind the reader of the most base acts of humans, but he writes that it is the

greatest we can expect to ever achieve. He implies that the physical is behind most all of our actions, including war:

Having to no purpose used all peaceable Endeavors, the collected part of the Semen, raised and enflamed, became adust, converted to choler, turned head upon the spinal duct, and ascended to the brain. The very same principle that influences a bully to *break* the windows of a whore who has jilted him, naturally stirs up a great prince to raise mighty armies and dream of nothing but sieges, battles, and victories. (78)

Because it is impossible to reach the intellectual greatness of the past, he concentrates on the worst of the body; as if that is all we can never depend on and might as well be the reasoning behind all we do.

The path that leads to intellectual achievement is very narrow and leaves no room for digression, "Thus, wit has its walks and purlieus, out of which it may not stray the breadth of an hair, upon peril of being lost" (19). And though a few do attempt to follow it, they can never reach the sublime state that once existed, and every day that passes only limits their potential even more. The narrator does try to guide his readers by making the correct path clear, but he has little expectation that they will heed his advice. He can only see the loss of once was, so he invariably focuses on man's inescapable decline into hopelessness. Even if he did desire to "write in the manner of the great classics" he admires rather than just criticizing others for not doing so it would be pointless (26). As he sees it, anything he composes could never rival the historical texts because he is so separated from them. He has intensely studied their works and culture, but any attempt to imitate them must fall short of the original. And if his talent can't be used to add to the glory of the classics and motherland then it might as well be used to condemn the moderns and the exploiter of the nation. If all writing is ultimately a corruption of that

which preceded it, as the narrator seems to believe, then it is better to write of something that is despised rather than revered.

A Tale of a Tub appears to be nothing more than a prank, due to all of the digressions and unintelligible passages that are inserted. In this case, Swift states that he is giving his readers exactly what they want, because mankind "receives much greater advantage by being *diverted* than *instructed*; his epidemical diseases being *fastidiousity, amorphity, and oscitation*" and happiness "is a perpetual possession of being well deceived" (59,83). Swift views this as the exact problem that is running in current learning, and puts it under the readers' nose to frustrate them with the same method they are prompting. More than its appearance, the text's digressions upon digressions makes us to think about the inevitable issue of loss relating it with Irish circumstantialities—the English colony in Ireland and the variety of horrors visited upon the colonists including stabbing, throat-cutting, disemboweling, and womb-ripping, hanging, mass burning in dwellings or churches and mass drowning.

The satire holds the present against an "idea of past perfection", and the comparison always shows the modern to be lacking (61). Here, by past perfection he refers to the free and independent Ireland before its colonization and the lacking to the modern is related to the lacking of mercy with colonizers who are very cruel to the Irish people. In the text, the church adulterates religion; moderns, the ancients; critics, the author; Britishers, the Irish. The narrator of Swift's text seems to believe that the moment a great work or idea is put forth, it can be pure, but will always degrade with time. Because it is impossible to return to this former state, there is a heavy "sense of disappointment" that weighs down the more transparent wit and satire (50). But no matter how many quips or crude attacks Swift makes the purpose of the story is not just

to laugh at the expense of others, but to mourn the fall of an ideal that can never exist again which is because of the unwanted misruling of English government.

The structure of the *Tale* is modeled after the shredding of historical texts by modern thought. The narrator is firmly on the side of the Ancients, and views any deviation from classical works to be degenerative. So the author repeatedly jumps from the allegory of the three brothers to commentaries on critics, digressions and madness to mock the method of his contemporaries. The digressions are just as important as the allegory because he considers them to constitute a major part of all that is wrong with learned society. As he sees it, "[. . .] we are wholly indebted to *systems* and *abstracts*, in which the *modern* fathers of learning, like prudent usurers, spent their sweat for the ease of us their children. For *labor* is the seed of idleness, and it is the peculiar happiness of our noble age to gather the fruit" (70).

But rather than properly appreciating the gifts of those texts, the moderns reject the study of the Greek and Latin languages.

Swift, in section III, by "Edinburgh streets" refers to the apartments of Edinburgh's multi-storyed lands where after 10 pm the filth collected by each householder was by custom emptied from the windows into the street, nominally to be collected at 7 am the next morning by the inadequate force of street cleaners (44). Swift writes:

[. . .] Edinburgh streets in a morning who is indeed as careful as he can to watch diligently and spy out the filth in his way; not that he is curious to observe the color and complexion of the ordure, or take its dimensions, much less to be paddling in or tasting it, but only with a design to come out as cleanly as he may. (44)

The above quote shows that Swift turns scatology to his immediate purposes as a strong patriot when he tries to account for an immense number quantity of filth scattered everywhere on the way of Edinburgh. Minute study shows that Swift has identified these filths with British people whom Irish people want to throw from their country as they throw the filths from the window. Therefore, it points out Swift's connection of scatological satire to particular political targets.

Supposedly, the main subject of the Tale is the history of three primary branches of Christianity: Catholicism, as represented by Peter, the Church of England, represented by Martyn; and the Dissenters, as shown through Jack. The beginning of religion, seen through the father, is pure because it is simple. There is only one man and one doctrine, but this basic structure cannot last since corruption must always occur. The father dies, and there are now three who must uphold God's will. Greater numbers create a greater opportunity for temptation, and the first to stray is Peter. The narrator then spends a significant portion of the allegory describing how the Catholic Church manipulates the Bible to satisfy its materialistic desires and assert its own authority, which is done in every way from hoarding wealth to worshipping tailors to cursing everyone to hell if they fail to believe it. It becomes intolerant of any opposing view and excommunicates the other two branches. No longer under their elder brother's influence, Martyn and Jack begin to reform. With the inherited coats symbolizing religion and its decorations revealing the superficial state it has fallen into, the two brothers remove the shoulder knots, Indian figures and other unnecessary additions in order to restore their coats to the original condition. But Martyn realizes that removing all the stitching will tear the fabric, and lets some of it remain to ensure that nothing will be damaged. Jack, however, is overcome with zeal and rips his coat in his eagerness to purge all the impurities.

This shows corruption of the Church as a prominent issue that Swift attacks on. What is important in this aspect of the *Tale* is that three courses of action are detailed which show not only "incorrect choice" but also the "correct one" (27). The obvious, right choice is represented by Martyn, who follows the advice of the narrator and does his best to recreate the original integrity of the church that existed in the beginning. Even though this can't be exactly replicated, it at least attempts as close as possible. Peter does the same as "all of the hack critics" and follows his own designs with no regard to any damage he might cause. Jack makes the same mistake as the moderns who are analogous to the colonizers and ruins that which he "wishes to preserve", all because he uses the wrong method as the colonizers lawless and rampant ruling over Ireland (86).

Swift's attitude towards the English colonizers is true to narrator's attitude towards critic in the text. Hacks, who make up the bulk of this group, prefer to trash literature so they may "appear intelligent and discerning" (56). They should be striving for:

[. . .] the frequent error of those men (otherwise very commendable for their labors) to make Excursions beyond their talent and their office, by pretending to point out the beauties and the faults; which is no part of their trade, which they always fall in, which the world never expected from them, nor gave them any thanks for endeavoring at. (3)

For the narrator, this is only the way to do anything, and that is to remain as close to the original intention as possible. The critics damage the works as colonizers destroy the colony. Similarly, moderns damage the ancients because they use their own method rather than that which has been assigned for them. Subsequently, the critic is no longer a fair judge, but becomes "a discoverer and collector of writer's faults" (45).

In a scene Swift reveals the "rotteness and corruption" prevalent in British colony of Ireland with the help of vomiting snake (48). He writes:

'There is a serpent that wants teeth, and consequently can't bite; but if its vomit (to which it is much addicted) happens to fall upon anything, a certain rotteness or corruption ensues. These serpents are generally found among the mountains where jewels grow, and they frequently emit a poisonous juice whereof whoever drinks, that person's brains fly out of his nostrils.' (48)

In the quote, the bad-activities, and the intention of Britishers has been portrayed through a vomiting snake.

With the help of the allusions to the twelve labours of Hercules in *A Tale of a Tub*, Swift not only shows his potency of satire on colonizers and critic but they also suggest that the labor of exposing their vanity and fraudulence was a Herculean task itself. However in Swift's ironic posturing it is difficult to recognize how cleverly and unflattering he has commented about the four of the Herculean labors:

Now, from his heavenly descent of criticism, and the close analogy it bears to heroic virtue, 'tis easy to assign the proper employment of *a true ancient genuine critic*, which is to travel through this vast world of writings; to pursue and hunt those monstrous faults bred within them; to drag out the lurking errors, like Cacus from his den; to multiply them like Hydra's heads; and rake them together like Augeas's dung; or else to drive away a sort of *dangerous fowl* who have a perverse inclination to plunder the best braches of the *tree of knowledge*, like those stymphalian birds that eat up the fruit. (45)

The above quote recalls that Hera first drives Hercules mad; afterward he attacks his favorite nephew Iolaus and kills six of his own children and two siblings of Iolaus. After being purified by king Thespius, Hercules goes to Delphi where the Pythoness advises him to travel to Tiryns and serve king Eurystheus for twelve years by completing whatever tasks Eurystheus assigns. Although the narrator of the passage uses a different order of labors than that of original myth, the references are nonetheless clear.

The first labor to which he refers is actually the tenth. Eurystheus instructs Hercules to steal the famed cattle of Geryon. After defeating the three-headed, three-bodied, six-handed Geryon, Hercules drives the herd on the shores of the Tiber, Cacus, a three-headed shepherd who lives in a cave nearby, steals two bulls and four heifers and drags them by their tails into his cave when Hercules hears one of the heifer's braying, he traces it to "Cacus's den" and despite his flaming belches, severely beats him and takes back the cattle (45).

The second labor to which the narrator refers is actually the second labor in the myth. Fresh from slaying the "Nemean lion" and wrapped in its hide, Hercules frightens Eurystheus, who then orders him to go to the swamps of Lerna in Argolis and slay the Lernaean Hydra, a creature with a doglike body and nine heads. Accompanied by Iolaus and armed with torches and arrows, Hercules forces the monster to surface by shooting her with arrows. When he batters her heads with his club, not only does he find that "the Hydra's heads" regenerate, but Hercules must also tangle with a giant crab that Hera has sent to help the Hydra. Hercules crushes the crab under his foot, then, with Iolaus, again beats the heads of the Hydra, this time searing the stumps with fire, stanching the flow of blood and ending its ability to regenerate heads.

The narrator refers next to Hercules' fifth labor, "cleansing King Augeas's stables" (45). King of Elis, Augeas possessed flocks of sheep and cattle that were

immune to disease and were "inimitably fertile" (46). The stables had not been cleaned for many years, and the herds and flocks were so large that fields in Elis could not be ploughed because of the accumulated "dung". Augeas laughs at Hercules' offer to cleanse the stable and gives him only one day to accomplish the task. With the help of Iolaus, Hercules diverts the routes of the Alpheus and Peneius Rivers into the stable and into the fields, cleansing them of the dung.

The last labor to which the narrator of "A Digression" refers is that of the "Stymphalian birds" the sixth labor of Hercules. "Stymphaian birds" were the "brazen-beaked, brazen-clawed, brazen-winged, man-eating birds" that lived in the Stymphalian Marsh, a district of Arcadia (qtd. in Cole 75). Resembling ibises, these birds tormented and killed humans by simultaneously discharging their brazen feathers and raining down poisonous excrement upon humans and their fields. Hercules first fails to destroy them with his arrows because the birds are too numerous and he cannot get close enough to them the marsh is neither solid enough to walk on nor liquid enough for a boat. However Athene gives Hercules a rattle, a pair of castanets. He uses the rattle to irritate the birds, causing them to fly away in one giant flock and making them much easier to kill with his arrows. The ones who survive fly to the Isle of Ares where the Argonauts will later encounter them.

That the narrator of "A Digression" gets the order of the labors wrong is less important, it seems, than the fact that he gets the stories wrong. In the quoted passage, the critic drags out "the lurking Errors like Cacus from his Den" (45). In the myth, Cacus is the one who drags the cattle into his cave. In the case of Augeas's stables, Hercules washes away the accumulated dung, but in "A Digression" the critics accumulate dung; they "rake them together like Augea's Dung". The reference to the "Stymphalian birds" is a bit perplexing because of the ironies, but it makes sense if we recall two details. First,

we know of course that Swift was on the side of the oppressed. Second, he attacks those who are favouring the colonizers as vain supporter and those compare the colonized to something perverse, something foul. The colonizers believe themselves superior to the colonized but Swift supports to the colonized "who have a perverse inclination to plunder the best branches of *the tree of knowledge*" (45).

Swift, therefore, in the text firmly discredit irrationality, he seeks to stigmatize as irrational vast areas of human activity normally considered in quite an opposite light. And finally he is very much sensitive towards the circumstantialities of his motherland during the colonial period when Ireland was tortured in academy, religion, philosophy, rationality, and politics. So, to attack on these tortured aspects Swift has taken help of excrements and these excrements have generated irony to hit at the wrong activities of Britishers.

3.2 Excremental Vision in Soyinka's *The Interpreters*

The Interpreters, a scatological work by Soyinka, signals a wide cultural reorientation in which questions about nationalist excess begin to mute the celebrations of independence. Soyinka expresses disillusionment about the lost promises of African independence and questions the political and aesthetic standards that were the legacy not only of British colonialism, but of heroic national struggle against British colonialism.

The pointed relevance that the scatology gives in Soyinka is his satiric application to an elite that is, after all, a residue of colonialism—a lingering efflux of the despised and departed European body politics. In *The Interpreters*, we see the corrupt comprador Sir Derinola turned into a coffined "tured" sticking out of "a nineteen forty-five Vauxhall" (111). Comprador's respectability often means pathetic imitations of white or British institutions and manners. Here some tropes which once used to code natives as filthy are now reassigned to Africans who mimic the ex-colonizer; the "matter

out of place" is no longer the native but the Europeanized comprador. During the colonial period, colonized were termed as dirty, barbaric, filthy creatures but in post-colonial era writers use the same terminologies to the colonizers to satirize the destabilization and prevailing political corruption. When Sekoni, the engineer prepared to test the plant in his own country Nigeria, after returning back from his study, he was mocked and laughed at. Soyinka's Sekoni says, "I . . . I . . . have come back' [. . .] I-er . . . I came to t-t- test the plant' "(Wole Soyinka *The Interpreters* 28).

He, in the novel was denounced and scolded as well only because of the progressive plan of him. When Sekoni heard the undigestable answer from Head, "Sekoni became incoherent, a throbbing vein out on his forehead and his neck-muscles working with self-destructive strength. D-d- don't believe it. D-d-d -don't believe it. If they only allowed me to ttest . . . (29)". Moreover, Sekoni was ordered to uproot the plant and move away from there. The head even bribed foreign "expert" to decree Sekoni's project unsafe. He says, " 'If you want to test it, my friend, just uproot your funny thing and carry it with you. Go and test it in the bush, or in your home town. Electricity is government thing, we all know that. The white men know about it, and one came here and told us. They know what they are talking about' " (29).

In *The Interpreters*, whenever our attention becomes focused on corrupt, powerful men such as Sir Derinola, the narrative beam swings back to Sagoe and other young intellectuals, stuck in the position of cynical outsider. The novel's real interest lies not so much in Soyinka's satire of the venal comprador but in his clear-eyed questioning of the interpreters themselves—cultural mediators with no real power, Sagoe, for instance, resorts to mock-philosophical disquisitions on shit. The issue of self-interrogation by Soyinka constitutes what we might call the autocritical function of

excremental post-colonialism, i.e., the tendency to question the status of aesthetic discourse itself in the new nation.

Scatology reveals the problems of uneven development and neocolonial corruption in the public sphere while underscoring the artist's own representational predicament. In particular, Soyinka drives his story toward a reckoning with the limitations of the realist and existential novel, a form conventionally dedicated to the fate of individuals. Shit, operating as the preeminent figure of self-alienation, becomes a symbolic medium for questioning the place of the autonomous individual in new postcolonial societies. Soyinka describes individual surrounded and pre-occupied by shit, from the beginning of the novel. Soyinka's hyperarticulate Sagoe manages to absorb excrement into his own urbane, absurdist philosophy. He masters societal excrement through the elaborate language and erudite mockery of voidancy, his own "philosophy of Shit". Voidancy, Sagoe explains, is entirely idiosyncratic:

If I am personal; it is because in giving the history of myself. I do neither more nor less than uncover the mystery of my philosophical development, for this is one Ritualism for which I am indebted to no predecessor but the entire world of humanity, this is one vision for which I acknowledge no cause but the immutable laws of Nature. If I am personal, it is because this must rank as the most inward philosophy in human existence.

Functional, spiritual, creative or ritualistic, voidancy remains the one true philosophy of the true Egoist. (70)

Furthermore, he explains that, " voidancy is not a movement of protest, but it protests: it is non-revolutionary, but it revolts. Voidancy [. . .] is the unknown quantity. Voidancy is the last uncharted mine of creative energies [. . .] in release is birth" (70).

In the rituals of voidancy, shitting is utterly a private act of self-consolation. Sagoe expresses his wry cynicism by promulgating the voidante's existential and anticollective doctrine; he also cultivates the habits of a cosmopolitan individual—a hygienically modernized subject in Warwick Anderson's sense. For Sagoe, the importance of voiding is that it is the "most individual function of man" (97).

When Sagoe's voidante privacy is violated by the uneven plumbing of post independence Nigeria, he becomes frustrated. In a scene, Sagoe walks the city at night encountering filth and excrement of every variety.

God is spring-cleaning in heaven, washing out his bloody lavatory. The sights that rode in the wash of flood were indeed of that nature. There was a film of oil, palm oil on a brown lake which had swamped a food-seller's shack, but Sagoe said, castor oil of course. . . . Next to death, he decided, shit is the most vernacular atmosphere of our beloved country. (108)

As a vernacular, shit presents an immediate democratic challenge to Sagoe's high-cultural discourse of the peristaltic egoist. Indeed, Sagoe sees night-soil men as profaners of "true voidancy." Soyinka satirizes intellectual fastidiousness by narrating the moment that shit, becomes a collective and unavoidable fact.

The excremental nature of an imperfect collective forces itself upon the ethical and aesthetic consciousness of individuals hungering after the sanitary perfection of art. When Soyinka's Sagoe recall from the urban market place, he becomes perfect representative for novel split between disgust at the public cesspool and recognition that recoil, or retreat, is unacceptable. This political dilemma, fueling the tension between private disengagement and public engagement in the novel, constitutes the crux of excremental post colonialism.

Soyinka's *The Interpreters* seems to make the discovery of a problematic relation between private discovery of a problematic relation between private and public destinies in the post colonial novel. The text doesn't suggest that prevailing social conditions are bound for improvement, much less redemption. Nor more importantly, Soyinka implies that those outer conditions are at all affected by the moral, libidinal, and aesthetic preoccupations of his protagonists. The absurd conversation that ends the novel leaves the interpreters immured in their semi-thwarted individual existences. Even more to the point, Soyinka represents the limitations of the autonomous subject in distinctly excremental terms. Sagoe's "philosophy of shit" provides the clearest instance of escape from cruel social reality into the ultimately cold comforts of ethical self-satisfaction and aesthetic self-indulgence. His posture of metaphysical retreat, while verbally charming, smacks of political despair. Here, Soyinka's own suspicion about the value of self-justifying aesthetic gestures fuels his ironic treatment of the protagonist. By the end of the novel, an enervated Sagoe feels the pressure to translate his private rituals into some wider, socially effective gesture. He directly engages his excrementally imperfect sociology:

[It] is disgraceful that at this stage, night soil men are still lugging shitpails around the capital. And in any case why shouldn't the stuff be utilized? Look at the arid wastes of the North [. . .]. You should rail the stuff to the North and fertilize the sardauna's territory. More land under cultivation, less unemployment. (240)

It is tempting to take this scheme as Sagoe's attempt to convert shit into the national fertilizer. Such a reading, however, would overlook the strong tonal ironies of the scene. Sagoe turns quickly from the public to the private satisfactions of the sewage project: the picturesque vision of a shit caravan trekking north and the metaphysical

appeal of "bringing the wheel full circle" (241). In a political system less thoroughly corrupted, Sogoe and other interpreters might be able to take national regeneration seriously, but here it becomes the occasion for a sophisticated jest. The irony of the scene underscores once again a fundamental nonalignment of public works and private vision.

Soyinka's protagonist cannot find a meaningful way to contribute because the public arena has been claimed and polluted by neocolonialism. It is perhaps unsurprising that the interpreters do not serve as allegorical vehicles for the national destiny, given that their dilemmas are those of an educated but disempowered minority. Yet the novel does not simply resign itself to the limitations suffered by the protagonists; instead, it replays the frustrating discovery of limitations at the level of form. The results are an uneasy generic tension between subjective satiric fantasy and objective realistic presentation, between the novel of the condition of Nigeria and the novel of consciousness.

Sogoe describes his own "retreat into the lavatory" as "not so much a physiological necessity as a psychological and religious urge," when he veers from the public and national arena (71). Such writing- with its playfully erudite tone and its charming embrace of solipsistic withdrawal resembles nothing so much as a line from Beckett, another penchant for scatological dismissals of the nationalistic imperative.

At the beginning of the novel, the five main interpreters are shown at "Club Cambana," a setting that serves as a symbol for the drama of their lives and the existing scenario of independent Nigeria (5). A club is a melting pot of all sorts, a source of panacea, a center of socialization; it is also a meeting point of solitudes, a refuge for alcoholics and pariahs, a home for the defeated and disgruntled. A fortnightly affair, now in Ibaden, the friends' get together soon become a systematic exorcism of social demons as well as a gradual decent into a personal hell, with Egbo's final "choice of drawing"

standing out as the symbol of their tragedy (251). At the final moment, the paradox becomes patent—that the exorcism itself has been put an aspect of the descent. Yet, all along, the reader has had occasion to wonder, and the heroes' words and acts have given out signs of the final tragedy.

Each of the five interpreters, in the novel, is socio-politically conscious, and one might even call them patriotic in as much as they are vocal about the society's sickness and the necessity for change. Nonetheless, actions, they say, speak louder than words, and, as Soyinka himself would say, words ought to be put into action so as to show true commitment. Not only do the five fail to fulfill any promise arising from their image, they often reveal a certain obsession with personal problems. There is a kind of lack of harmony, in between the relationship between friends except in matters that are trivial, or more abstract than concrete. Echoes of " 'goddamn cynic' " " 'cowardice ' " " 'callous, indifferent' " fill the ears after the fortnightly meetings (23, 22, 228). The singular event that could be constructed as an exception is the death of Sekoni. For once, there is truly shared feeling, a oneness that is, unfortunately, ironical, given the fact that the issue at hand is tragedy, a state of absolute inability to act. Rather than act, the interpreters react, and their most poignant reaction comes at the moment of Sekoni's death:

[T]hey all felt a little like that, flat. Sekoni's death had left them all wet, bedraggled, the paint running down their acceptance of life where they thought the image was set, running down in ugly patches. They felt caught flat-footed and kola thought, not a bit like the finished work tonight, more like five figures from my Pantheon risen from a trough of turpentine. (158-59)

They are doomed to live out the dilemma and the defeat; even Kola's finished work, The Pantheon lacks conviction. When Sagoe tries earlier to make Sekoni's plight public by writing an article, his editor-in-chief rejects it. He says, " 'I know you think

you owe some loyalty to your friend; believe me, you don't. In the end you will find it's every man for himself" "(96).

None of the friends does anything noteworthy to change the news chief's tragically "capitalistic, reactionary" position (95). On the contrary, another event—the saga of Lazarus, the self-proclaimed born again, and Noah, the thief redeemed by him shows the force of each protagonist's personal pursuits.

From the observations of the main interpreters and the barbaric behaviour of the Pharisees of the ivory tower, the myth of the Citadel of learning is quickly blown to pieces. No conscious, concerted single-mindedness here, no possibility of progressive action for the good of society. Our ivory tower, with its feudal feet clad in colonial clogs and its head hidden away by the neo-colonial, Christian halo, is a haven of hypocrisy and hierarchic non-quality. Professor Oguazor, the stuffy man of "merals" is the quintessence of the university's disgusting moral turpitude.

If it is true that some are more phony and more philistine than others, it is no less true that Soyinka, concerned as he is with the macrocosm, condemns the whole academic community. Just as the club is the scene of the main interpreters' unfolding drama, the social gathering is the point where the academics exhibit their "civilization". Sagoe, the journalist, attending one of the parties celebrating Oguazor's newly conferred professorship, wonders why his friend Bandele attends such occasions:

"Why do you bother to attend their party, then?"

"But don't you enjoy just watching people sometimes, especially when you know they can't stand the sight of you?"

"That's a queer taste."

"Not so queer as theirs. Why did they invite me ?

"If I may presume to say so, there didn't seem much strain between them and you."

"That is what is known as civilization. We are all civilised creatures here."

(144)

Bandeled may be playing at being the clever, ironic observer, but his observation hits the nail on the head, as it were. He is one of the neo-colonial half-breeds choking in their ties and looking ludicrous in their coattails. He fits perfectly well into the house of teaspoon smiles, the affected, tongue-twisting lingo, what Sagoe calls the "house of deaths" (112). "And among the dead Sagoe included the suburban settlements of Ikoyi where both the white remnants and the new black oyinbos lived in colonial vacuity" (112). He also includes the academics with their plastic lives symbolized by the plastic fruits adorning every space in the Oguazors' house. Banded attends these parties because he can't afford to stay away. If he did, he would become a non-person in a community that is accepted to be the microcosm of the larger society.

Ayo Faseyi, who "is supposed to be the best x-ray analyst available in the continent", recognizes all the facts, and unlike Banded, he has accepted into life in the house of deaths (43). Faseyi's personal and professional life is an example of the then society and of what Soyinka has called the wasted generation. Invited to an Embassy reception for the conferment upon him of an award as the best radiologist in Africa, he feels disgraced by his wife Monica, who is not wearing globes one of the simple requirements of society:

"Do you know a minister was present? Yes, and one or two other VIPs.

Oguazor knows people, you know. I saw four corporation chairman there, and some permanent secretaries. A thing like that, kola, one is simply socially finished."

"Yes, you, of course!"

"Look, let's face the facts. The university is just a stepping-stone. Politics, corporations— there always something. Not to talk of there foreign firms, always looking for Nigerian Directors. I mean Kola, you are an artist, but I am sure it is all a means to an end, not so?" (203-04)

The above quote shows the university as a politicized, privileged institution engaged in the games of power and positions that go on daily outside its gates. Faseyi is not only a product and a purveyor of neo-colonialism in the academic sense, but he is also a slave of western civilization. His "uncivilized" wife Monica is white, and her disarming down to earth nature shows how far gone Faseyi is on the road the civilized vacuity. Unlike the Nigerian women, Monica refuses to wear gloves; instead of champagne, she drinks palm wine what makes Faseyi angry is that Monica is an educated woman: "If she were a bush-girl from London slum I could understand. But she is educated. She has moved in society. What does she have to come and disgrace me by drinking palm wine? . . . Even those in native dress are wearing gloves" (45).

Soyinka's depiction of Monica serves as an indictment of the new madam professors, "a rare species" observed with a etiquette that is no better than the bungle of slave's imitating his master (86).

Instead of working assiduously at their research, university is busy gossiping. Faseyi's citation for excellence in radiology does not change the picture either, for the emphasis in this episode is not placed on his professional exploits but on his personal eccentricities and inferiority complex. The new professor, Oguazor is never shown in his academic element. All that he professes on is "merals": the character of European women that he met while abroad, the behaviour of his younger colleagues, and the "fatherly advice" he gives to lesser lecturer regarding when to take their annual leaves, (143).

Oguazor's first child, mothered by his maid, is hidden away in Islington while he threatens to make the senate punish a womanizing lecturer for "moral tergiversation" and proudly engages in a discussion with the unethical, inhumane Dr Lumoye, who rebuffed by a pregnant student seeking an abortion, decides to tell it all to the other inmates of the academic asylum:

"The college cannot afford to have its name dragged down by the moral tergiversation of irresponsible young men. The younger generation is too morally corrupt."

[. . .] "yes, I agree. The dishonor their family name for nothing that is the saddest part of it (252).

The tragedy of university life in post-independent Nigeria, as depicted in *The Interpreters* is that nobody does anything about the power of phony, paperweight professors such as Oguazor. They are tin gods, perched on the top of the academic tree. The professor does not feel obliged to do anything more to prove his quality in research and scholarship, for his title assures him of a lifetime reputation as the very best. He is a hero among villains, and a god to his family. His superiority complex rubs off on his wife, who comes to believe that she, Mrs. Prof, is God's own choice as shepherdess to the numerous, nameless sheep that must share with their academic goats a life of shame and unfulfillment as long as the title eludes them. In the above quote he demonstrates hypocrisy when he describes the moral tergiversation of some of his female students even though he himself has an illegitimate daughter.

Although Soyinka shows in the novel his soft spot for students, a careful reading convinces us that they are role players in the decadent community. "We are not total fools," says Egbo's girl (128). They are "sharp" and full of the "vapid excrescences of national juvenalia" (204). Their newspapers, appropriately named 'worm' and Slime are

sensational and often senseless, assaulting from all angles staff inviolability, telling blatant lies and seeking cheap popularity and votes for the editors at union presidential elections. Professor Oguazor and his colorless deal with them, trying to bribe with tea and sandwiches. Thus, staff and students complement each other in the sick society. Not only do boys seek to rise in popularity in the name of free speech by castigating staff; they also rail against uncooperating girls with pornographic sketches that reveal a wit of diarrhoeic brains" (205).

In the novel, Joe Golder, a lecturer in African history and a concert singer, is American, "three-quarter white", but longs intensely to be black; " I am Negro . One quarter Negro in fact [. . .]. I wish it were more' " (101,186). He is also a homosexual, and this Egbo abhors, calling Joe " 'that disgusting cessation of nature' " whom Egbo " 'didn't even want to know' " (241). The problem has bothered him all his life, to the extent that he drove his father, a half-Negro able to pass for white, to suicide: " 'you may be horrified when I tell you I drove him to it. I was so ashamed of him and I didn't hide it.

I spat on my flesh to his tale because it came from him' " (188). He is obsessed with blackness that he implores Kola to paint him as jet black," ' the blackest black blackness' " (219). His avowed reason for coming to Africa is that he's " ' been to several European countries and human beings are all the same. Boring, insincere I came here hoping Africans were deferent' " (191). But everybody's expectation in the newly-independent country goes unfulfilled. Behind the smoke screen of swashbuckling cynicism and sophistication lies a sense of frustration and failure that lead some to drink, other to death.

Thwarted by a corrupt public system and unwilling to besmirch themselves by participation in it, the interpreters become "apostates" from their true purposes, in effect,

they abandon the attempt to translate their desire for change into practical action and retreat into private, self-gratifying quests and preoccupations: Egbo into an esoteric religious mysticism, Kola into art, and Sagoe into the cynical scatological ruptures of "Voidancy" through which he seeks to exorcize revulsion at the moral filth of public corruption by raising excrement to the level of a philosophy to explain political and corporate misdeeds in Nigeria .

4. Conclusion

The texts analyzed here deal with the impact of British colony in Ireland and Nigeria and use excremental images as the device to satirize the misruling on Ireland by British colonizers in the text of Swift and Soyinka has used the same tool to look at Nigerian government not different from white colonial administration.

This comparative account discusses the historical differences between the Irish and West African contexts in its attempt of comparing the two satirists. Ireland's history differs substantially from the African ex-colonies in terms of language, race, religion, climate, geography, settlement patterns, and governing institutions. For the immediate purposes of this argument, it seems most important to distinguish Irish writing of Swift that contents with choking cultural norms and the political situations of Ireland from postindependence Nigerian writing that addresses crushing political failures. But these differing emphases do not preclude us from observing the political analysis that can well be applied to Ireland, or that 1960s African intellectuals also have to contend with strongly normative forms of cultural nationalism.

The patterns of scatological discourse appear in Irish and African novels written under historical circumstances that are, at the very least—Swift discusses about the Irish circumstantialities whereas Soyinka connects it to the potent presence of a new nationalism where interpreters have become the victim of colonial government even in independent country because there prevails malfunctionings as the legacy of colonial administration. The project of youths for making the country developed is thwarted by the forces of corruption which were prevailed in Nigeria even after independence. It shows that both the texts discuss about the anarchy created by British colony but in two different situations—Soyinka's novel depicts Nigeria after independence and in Swift's it is Ireland during colony.

In Soyinka's novel *The Interpreters*, young, energetic, enthusiastic patriots' return to their newly independent country Nigeria by collecting optimism of progressive plans, intending to make their country developed. Contrary to their expectation, all of their projects are thwarted by the existing forces of corruption. Still, people like 'The Head', Sir Derinola, and the editor-in-chief are advocating for white people, the colonizers and supporting to the status-quo of their motherland by avoiding any developmental activities. Sekoni's interest to test the plant is made unsuccessful by 'The Head' since he bribes the expert to decree Sekoni's project unsafe. Sagoe's trial to make Sekoni's plight public by writing an article is rejected by editor-in-chief.

Sagoe's 'philosophy of voidancy' is also the outcome of his frustration created by the uneven plumbing of post-independent Nigeria. So, he describes the scene of excrements that he sees while walking to the city at night as the common atmosphere of Nigeria. These excremental images suggest colonial rule analogous to excrements themselves.

Swift in *A Tale of a Tub* takes pot-shots at weak sides of religion, education, government, rationality of human beings by using excremental images. The digressions upon digressions make us to think the unsaid part of the political irony which is related to the repressed and marginalized. Even more, it has become unsayable under the hegemony of the oppressors. So Swift moves here and there with tale, digressions and analogy to satirize the misruling of British government equating the government with excremental images because these images record a tragically imprecise predicament of Ireland.

What comparative postcolonial approach brings to light is the fact that national cultures in both Ireland and Africa were shaped by a colonial legacy in which local forms were taken to be colorfully backward and primitive. Colonizers and in their turn, natives

saw the intactness and authenticity of the subaltern culture as compensation for the dispossessions and dislocations of imperialism. This history bequeaths to postcolonial writers to unwelcome custodial role within a fetishized national culture shaped partly by the imagination of the ex-colonizers. And, as a result, that national culture is always in danger of chasing after magical sources of precolonial authenticity or devolving into hackneyed nativism. What is more immediately to the point is the excremental coding of the resulting national culture.

Thus, Swift and Soyinka have exploited excremental vision to satirize the misdeeds and malpractices which have created anarchy in Ireland by Swift and to expose the corruption of neocolonial politics and malfunctionings in Nigeria by Soyinka which have become a sign of failed development and, therefore, a part of a vexed political question. Though comparable as satirists in their excremental vision, they are also different from each other. Whereas Swift writes in colonial context, Soyinka's contexts are post-colonial background of Nigeria. Swift may not have opposed colonization, but his sympathy is certainly with the under-privileged, exploited Irish just as Soyinka remains sympathetic to the general Nigerian public suffering at the hands of elites in post-colonial Nigeria.

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