

## FRAGMENTATION AND INTERTEXTUALITY IN THE POETRY OF WOLE SOYINKA: A POST-MODERNIST PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

This research paper aims at looking into the issues of disconnection and intertextuality in Wole Soyinka's major works. The chosen works are; "*Death in the Dawn*", "*Telephone Conversation*," and "*Abiku*," respectively. The theoretical approach of this research work is Jean-François Lyotard's notion of fragmentation and intertextuality, which is then situated within a postmodern context. The research article uses the descriptive qualitative approach. The data examination is done with the help of text analysis and critical discourse analysis. The paper intends to examine Soyinka's use of literary devices in order to paint the image of stressed out narratives and intertextual allusions that point to the complicated nature of modern society. The purpose of this research is to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by exploring the postmodernist strategies embedded within Soyinka's novel. The essay deepens our knowledge not only of his literary professional talent but also of the topics to do with modernism in general.

**Keywords:** Post Modernism, Wole Soyinka, Fragmentation, Intertextuality

### INTRODUCTION

Postmodernism is a philosophical and cultural movement which translated into reaction against the principle and suppositions of modernism from the mid-20th century. It calls the claim of absolute truth, unmatched certainty, and big schemes into question, bringing out the relativity about the truth, the complexity of reality, and the plurality of the viewpoints on them. Postmodernism does not accept one, stable version of reality but is rather pluralistic, seeing it as a fragmented and constructed reality, dependent on the perspective and the interpretation of an individual.

In literature, postmodernism as a movement is defined by those writers' application of unconventional narrative techniques like fragmentation, intertextuality, pastiche and meta-fiction. Authors variously tend to conflate parallels of fiction and reality, challenge conventional narrative patterns,

and incorporate various viewpoints to their narrations. Postmodernism confirms the turmoil and displacement of our times, covering topics such as identity formation, language and power, as well as the nature of representation.

A postmodern art encompasses a great many sort of styles and movements, such as conceptual art, pop art and neo-expressionism. Artists push the boundaries of our conception of the real value, exactness, and novelty by using the items that have already been used, appropriating, and irony. Probably, postmodernism constitutes an orientation that every so often moves from the modernism's belief in progress towards a skeptical, pluralistic views of the world. It conveys idea of multiplicity, mystery and uncertainty in which the truth is not black and white, but subjective and reality is a constantly changing.

Wole Soyinka ranks among Africa's finest creative writers when considering his many areas of ventures including, poetry, dramaturgy, and fiction. Apart from known as the greatest creative writer in Africa, he enjoyed the exclusive role as the writer of poetry, drama, and novel. Wole Soyinka who had earned immense recognition for his many roles as a poet, a dramatist and a novelist is definitely one of the most influential creative writers in Africa today. Wole Soyinka, one of topmost African literary figures, impresses many because he is known as a poet, dramatist as well as a novelist.

In the status of a poet, his works suit a unique and superb combination of artistic talents, social concern, and admiration of cultural traditions that have been handed down to him. There is no doubt that besides being a skilled poet, the poems entitled "*Death in the Dawn*," "*A Phone Call*" and "*Abiku*" perfectly portrays his best ability, after all he is not just a poet but an artist as well.

"*Death in the Dawn*" does not just simply sit on a shelf as an already much-acclaimed story on the human spirit and the mortality. Consequently, he can go down to the roots of the agitation versus mortality inasmuch as he is free-spirited, creatively thinking and, of course, in recognition of his remarkable language. However, still he paints a picture of a hopeless, defiant and resigned man who has stared at death in the face. The word poetry of this word gives us a purpose of understanding the death is about to end us and the momentous of life's fleeting existence. The phenomenal nature of Soyinka's ability in this aspect is beautifully displayed by his obscuring but not completely removing the philosophical concepts with the powers of poetry. This is the way he does it and it is highly commendable.

"*Telephone conversation*" Here the author has wonderfully dealt with two issues, which are so critical to our modern society, racism and prejudice. In the telephone conversation episode, the white woman displayed ignorance and race prejudice that renders the response absurd and in Louis's mind an

embodiment of the title. Soyinka's sense of humour is clearly evident as he ingeniously uses wit and irony to soften the racial hatred in his messages. And there by he shows us that the ignorance and corruption which result from racial bigotry when people are condemned just for their race are the outcomes. This barrier will have to gain more momentum as people have to adopt agile working models.

"*Abiku*" is the entry to the world of Yoruba folklore and there, the deadliest spirit of Abiku, an Abiku itself in this reality, is mentioned. Via expressing the psychological feelings of emptiness, loss and sorrow that die away, Soyinka uses the description of the circle of life in Birth and Death. The explorations of such cosmic matters and also the differences between the natural and the unnatural realms in the poem suggest the subtlety of both the myths and the mysteries of living which escape human comprehension.

The collective poems by Wole Soyinka namely, '*Death in Dawn*', '*Telephone Conversation*', and '*Abiku*' are a manifestation of the author's ingenuity and flair in oral language, his attachment to human nature, his seriousness with respect to addressing unusual or tricky social and existential issues and the symbolism he incorporates. And forever, his poems will be the stamp on the road map of world literature and the cultural heritage of this great poet of Africa. This will be certainly, a very deserved recognition for the legacy of this poet of Africa.

Jean-François Lyotard was a French renowned philosopher who brought about the ideas of fragmentation and intertextuality to his project of postmodernism. On the contrary, however, they subvert orthodox notions of cohesiveness, uniformity and sequence in poetry, sculpture, and culture.

Fragmentation means such concepts as similar narratives and structures into small, divided units. Within postmodernist thinking, cracks represent the crumbling of the old metanarrative, the big stories that once guided us, and the disappearance of collective beliefs. Rather than resembling a

unified, sequential narrative, the split-up phrases destabilize the conventional storytelling styles, which oftentimes use multiple voices, points of view, and temporalities. Segmentation hints at variety of the experience of it, the meanings and interpretations, thus showing the commensurability of reality.

While intertextuality is about how connected different texts are and how one text might refer to, quote or maybe reflect another text. In this sense, intertextuality symbolizes that all the text is not separate units but form a large web of cultural associations, references, discussions and so forth. Postmodernist writings commonly incorporate multitextual references ranging from literature, philosophy, art, pop culture to history emerging a hybrid between origination and theft. Intertextuality calls for reader's participation in an hermeneutic reading process which result in meaning constructed through textual interaction.

Collectively, the two of them, fragmentation and intertextuality, condemn, the postmodernist rejection of the meanings with the fixed sense, identities with a stable meaningfulness, and the universal significance. In the end, whether they do that through different lenses, they are conveying to audiences the multifaceted, ambiguous, and complex nature of cultural expression, encouraging individuals to take an active role in the creation and decoding of meaning. This aids us in building a perspective from which to make sense of the fluid and diverse nature of the postmodernist texts, which also forces us to reflect on how we comprehend the literature, art, and reality.

### Scope and Limitations of Research

#### Scope

Analysis of Three Selected Works: The study will be based on the close analysis of selected works by Wole Soyinka namely "*Death in the Dawn*," "*Telephone Conversation*", and "*Abiku*", the chosen works to discuss the built-in contradiction and intertextuality within a postmodernist perspective.

Textual Analysis: The research will first resort to textual analysis of the works under consideration; the narrative strategies, linguistic inventions, and intertextual references will be the focus of attention.

Postmodernist Perspective: According to Jean-François Lyotard concept of the fragmentation and intertextuality, Soyinka's works will be the subject of the researches as a theoretical framework to study it from the Point of view of the postmodernism.

Socio-Political Themes: The lamination process will involve examining the intertextuality and the fragmentation which are used as means to avail socio-political themes in Soyinka's works, in the case of a Nigerian context.

#### Limitations

This research is considered to be a fragmented study and will only analyze the selected three works by Wole Soyinka; which does not truly represent the immense creations of his literary heritage Hence, the present outcomes cannot have any relevance for all Soyinka's books.

Interpretive Subjectivity: Textual analysis and the critical discourse analysis are the two modes of tools which are subjective in nature and often than not may be different due to different interpreter's perception on the same text. The limitations of this research relate to the researcher's matter of perspective and background.

Cultural Context: The focus area of the analysis will evidently be the social-political themes presented in Soyinka's novels in the context of Nigerian setting. The research may not translate to other regions or even the writings of other genres due to the diversity of cultures.

Theoretical Framework: On the one hand, Jean-François Lyotard's idea of fragmentation and intertextuality constitute a useful theoretical framework for further analysis. On the other hand, it does not entirely accommodate the different dimensions of Postmodernism. Therefore, other perspectives might cast light on Soyinka's plays in a variety of ways.

Language Limitation: The language of the analysis will be English; consequently, some aspects of the texts may be overlooked, e.g. cultural references and linguistic intricacies in their native dialects (if applicable).

### Significance of Research

This scholarly paper endeavors to broaden scientific domain of literary studies by performing thorough analysis of the selected works by Wole Soyinka based on postmodernism. In doing so, the study engages, points out to, and newly clarifies the significance of Soyinka's narrative methods and their implication to the literary analysis. Understanding Postmodernist Elements in African Literature: The research paper plays a significant role in increasing knowledge on postmodern themes in African literature, especially focusing on literary works by an indigenous author such as Wole Soyinka. With the deployment of the postmodernist Jean-François Lyotard's ideas to Soyinka's works, the analysis lays focus on how postmodernist themes find their place in the African literature setting and enrich and spice it up. Soyinka's works regularly delve into issues of societal relevance, pertaining not just to Nigeria but, more broadly, to the human condition. This essay deduces on the means through which Soyinka employs fracturing and entwining of texts to portray and allude to those themes, thus contributing to the enhancement of our perception of the socio-political dimensions within his work. The effects of Soyinka's writings from the perspective of theorized postmodernism lend to the postcolonial discourse through demonstrating such subtle nuances as those of cultural identity, power roles, and colonialism. Through the study, how Soyinka builds contexts for these themes by employing fragmented narratives and intertextual references becomes an issue in literature concerning postcolonial knotty problems. Research paper wrote above could contribute ideas to instructors and students dealing with African literature, postmodernism, and postcolonial theory. The findings from examining written by Soyinka may influence classroom

conversations and scholarly research to the benefit of understanding the literature as well as also putting into perspective the myriad of aspects of cultural expression. Conclusively, here, the paper covers not only the scholars of literature but also the people who are the the intersections of postmodernism, post colonialism, and African cultural self-expression. For example, it supports the dialogue on the significance of African literature in the modern world and it educates the students about how African literature enriches global literary discourse.

### Research Questions

1. What are the narrative parts of Wole Soyinka's works, "*Death in the Dawn*," "*Telephone Conversation*," and "*Abiku*," which entirely reveal instances of fracturing?
2. What are the most prominent examples of intertextual references in Soyinka's selected works, and how they enrich the texts' interpretation?
3. What does the fact that the themes of fragmentation and intertextuality as showed in Soyinka's works either indicate or dispute the social-political matter in Nigeria?
4. How, through Soyinka's postmodernist 'fragmentation' of thought and intertextuality, do we perceive or receive his socio-political concerns in his literary works?

### Research Objectives

- Writing a paper about the narrative structures of "*Death during the Dawn*," "*Telephone Discussion*," and "*Abiku*" and identifying popping points.
- The examination is establishment of the intertextual references in Soyinka's chosen works and how they impact in meaning conveyance.
- As to make known the socio-political implications of

fragmentation and intertextuality in Soyinka works from within the postmodernist narrative context.

- To measure the level of appreciation of Soyinka's postmodernist works by the audience.

### Literature Review

The poetry of postmodernism is a major difference from the classical literary forms, it contests and challenges the traditions and the orderliness of the structures. This review of literature, in particular, explores the postmodernism in poetry and its significance in the whole scope poetry. Modernism goes with abandonment of magnum opi and established narrations (Barry, 2002). Notwithstanding, the late poets of postmodernism willingly explore fragmentation, pastiche and intertextuality as the ways of expressing the inner turmoil and doubts that are one of the phenomena of the modern life (Hutcheon, 1988). As we observe in the work of poets like John Ashbery and Anne Carson, the influence of the postmodern school, which stresses deconstruction and doubt towards metanarratives, is apparent (Nietzsche, 1882). The essence of postmodernism as a fixture in poetry lies in its ability to mirror the intricacies and insecurities that currently define our world (Lyotard, 1979). Through the approach of the postmodern poets who refuse clarity and embrace the ambiguity of meanings, the readers are encouraged to interrogate the authority of established norms and opposition of the hegemonic ideologies (Jameson, 1991). Such deep thinking allows, thus, to learn something new and gain more balanced view of the world.

One of the highlight, among many, in African literature is Wole Soyinka, who excels not only as a play writer and novelist but also as a poet. Through them, I hope to unravel Wole Soyinka's poetic works, herein discussing his themes, style, and impact to literary works. Soyinka's often beautiful images, ingenious language and the deepness the theme all can symbolize his poetry (Gikandi, 1996). Throughout the

length of his career, Soyinka have written on a diversity of themes, from the typical political horizon of the postcolonial Africa, to philosophical queries of identity and existence (Okpewho, 1979). One of the main motifs in Soyinka's poetry is people's fight for dignity and fairness (Quayson, 2013). Illustrating his experiences as an activist in the field of politics and his views on the problem of social inequality, these poems often become powerful protests against tyranny and oppression (Nwosu, 2007). Allegory and symbolism are two of the poet's tools used to deal with political issues of a complicated nature in a subtle and thought-provoking way (Gates 1991).

The role of the poetry in the life and works of Wole Soyinka is to interpret the many facets of the 'African experience' while sounding universal themes of humanity and justice (Gikandi, 2002). On the one hand, Soyink has contributed to the enrichment of African literature and has, on the other, brought his unique voice to improving the global literary discourse, and this is the argument made by Diawara (1996).

The reviews below endeavors to unveil three of the Soyinka's best known poems, namely, "Death at Dawn", "Telephone conversation" and "Abiku", encapsulating their themes, poetic devices and also signify within the context of Soyinka's larger body of work. "Death in the Dawn", "Telephone Conversation" and "Abiku" may be seen as emblems showing his broad range in the themes and his innovativeness in writing style. "Death in the Dawn" portrays existential themes in that it deals with the humans and their conditions and eventual death varieties (Ojaide 2004). Hence, by the use of images with solemn words which call for reflection on the flailing of all things under the light of life, the growth and passage of time, Soyinka does confront the reader with the painful proof that death gives us (Gikandi, 2002). While the poem, "Telephone Conversation," evokes themes of race, prejudice, and communication issues, the poem, "Mrs. Merwin's Complaint" visualizes the story of life in the British colonies in the 16th century (Gates,

1986). However, this poem is structured as two poles of a dialogue between a black male and a landlady and it brings to the fore the ridiculousness of prejudices or racial stereotypes and the difficulties of being human in the sense of connectedness. Soyinka's racist stereotypes and satire does not spare much in criticizing the hypocrisy of racism prevalent in different societies while also highlighting the ridiculous nature of discriminatory attitudes. Soyinka refer to Yoruba mythology as the basis of her theme and her plot being the mortality of children in the poem "Abiku" (Soyinka, 1976). The lament is dedicated to a mother who has to face the failure of her child's deliverance from the pig-spirits called abikus. Soyinka uses frozen imagery and wavy language so that he can show a returning cycle of life & death and most importantly profound sadness of the people who are left behind (Ashcroft et al., 2002).

"*Death in the Dawn*", "*Telephone Conversation*" and "*Abiku*" serves as the poems of Soyinka's which carry significant importance within his oeuvre and have attached to them all that literary canons accomplish. They not only demonstrate Soyinka's linguistic and formal sophistication as well as spiritual evolution (Gikandi, 1996) but also show his determination to address vital social and existential issues. By his roots in the themes of mortality, race, and culture identity, Soyinka's poetry defies readers to encounter uncomfortable realities and enter into original perspective. First, Soyinka's inventive non-literal use of language and imagery noticeably adds to the creative pool of poetry which not only within the confines of Africa but also internationally (Quayson, 2000). Such is evident in his talent to zero in on a personal experience that gives out wider social and cultural commentary and the broad relevance of his work (Quayson, 2013). Through his works, Soyinka raises and questions the difficult ideas, in particular deeply embedded ideologies which is a reflection of his creative mind and cultural critique (Gates, 1991). The discussion below

uncovers Lyotard's concepts on fragmentation and intertextuality to reveal their remarkable role in the perspective of postmodernism and their further consequences to various disciplines. Lyotard concept of splitting undermines the grand differences and the fallacy of the standpoints (Lyotard, 1979). Lyotard points to the postmodern predicament as a polymaniacal disposition together with a rebuff of all the institutionalised grand (meta) narratives (Best and Kellner, 1991). Thus, the term dispersion embraces the idea of a dismantling of the monolithic patterns of signification together with the promotion of varied, frequently heterogeneous, messages. As explained by Lyotard, the concept of intertextuality is all about weaving texts together in a constantly evolving narrative that involves referencing, borrowing, and recontextualizing. The pervading postmodern context blurs the borders between plagiarism and intertextuality, and that way the idea of originality and authorial intention vanishes. Instead, readings tend to be plural and fluid as soon as they encounter the intertextual space (Hutcheon, 1980). Narratives are more like application pages that exist in a boundlessly connected cultural subject colossus. The profound idea of Lyotard to deconstruct and to change the relationship between texts, is directly applicable to many areas of knowledge, as for example, literature, philosophy, arts and the culture. In postmodern literature, writers resort to a stylistic device of examining fragmentation and, thus, it dismantles the traditional element of a narration and discordant reader-expectations (McHale, 1987). On the other hand, intertextuality always invites the readers to be processive impacting the meaning construction by the inputs of culture, history and literature of the concerned texts (Kristeva, 1980). The concept of Lyotard's fragmentation and intertextuality has gained greater currency in today's discourse and by imprinting the perception of culture, knowledge and identity. Through the emphasis of the conditional and devoid nature of knowledge

production, the author creates the space for a critique on the functions of power over the spheres of knowledge (Harvey, 1990). The very essence of fragmentation serves contrary to the each and every of the totalizing narratives, which in turn results in creation of space for the marginalized voices (this is the view expressed by Jameson in 1991). In addition, intertextuality leads to an active and dialogic (Barthes 1977) perspective that results to interdisciplinary conversations' development and creative synthesizing. Enabling the interplay of different texts and contexts, new meanings emerge and question the previously accepted hierarchies in the realm of ideas, which propels intellectuals to new approaches. In this sense, Lyotard's idea is a driving force for the revival of intellectual and cultural resources by bringing forward the new modes of capillary knowledge that are established in pluralism and favor inclusion rather than the exclusive view of the world.

#### Research Methodology:

This paper utilizes a qualitative methodology which is mostly based on textual analysis and critical discourse analysis. The works of Wole Soyinka that have been selected for this examination will be used to locate passages involving a sense of fragmentation and intertextuality. Excerpts from the text will be discussed to extract the narrative structure, linguistic devices, and intertextual references used by Soyinka. Complementary to these primary sources, different literary criticism and theories of postmodernism will also be consulted in order to improve the analysis.

#### Discussion and Analysis

##### "Death in the Dawn"

#### Introduction

Wole Soyinka's *"Death in the Dawn"* is a powerful poem that examines the beasts and intricacies of warfare, but most importantly, the Nigeria civil war. By utilizing Jean-François Lyotard's notions of the fragmented and intertextual, we will be able to break down the poem's structure, content, and

imagery so as to reveal how it depicts the fragmented human nature and emphasizes the role of other texts and cultural references in the substantiation of its meaning.

#### Fragmentation in "Death in the Dawn"

Fragmentation, in this context, is a process where a big story is used to replace all the small narratives.

**Disjointed Narrative Structure:** The poetry's narrative is unrestrained, creating scenes and images that represent the disorder and bewilderment of war.

*"O iridescent Iris,*

*She of the infinite gazes.*

*Death, the real death, the breaking dawn*

*is welter-weight with the feline's*

*solemn tread."*

The scenes shifts and perspective differences contribute to a sense of disorientation and expose the fragmentation of war-affected territory.

**Fragmented Imagery:** Soyinka conjures imaged fragments through his poem to illustrate the trauma and wantonly destruction of war. Scenes of death, violence and devastation alternated with moments of sublimity described so vividly by him gives a sense of the crumbling of human life in times of conflict.

**Psychological Fragmentation:** The poem takes a slight towards the mental fragmentation ensuing every individual during the conflicts. As with the statements *"the many voices haunt the silence"*, and *"night entwined in the network of dawn"*, the idea of detachment and dread is depicted, announcing the psychological impact of violence and torture.

#### Intertextuality in "Death in the Dawn"

Intertextuality, according to Lyotard, signifies juxtaposition of texts to other texts indicating one of them probes into the other.

**Biblical Allusions:** Yoruba mythology is a rich collection of symbolic stories and images, which form the background of the writer's poem. For instance, the imagery of death and the resurrection, the meaning of which is expresses by *"O iridescent Iris"* and *"Death, black death, the dawn"* indicates to

biblical motives of suffering and salvation, and it adds depth and resonance to the poem's investigation of war and sacrifice.

**Classical References:** In addition to that, some allusions to classical Greek tragedy by way of Iris the messenger of the gods as well as Panther, the symbol of power and fury can also be found. Through these archetypal contexts that are Classical references, the poem is bestowed with the feeling of timelessness and universality, creating a link with the broader tradition of Western literature and culture.

**Historical Context:** The story is deeply connected to the historical settings of the Nigerian civil war and is based on the events and experiences of the war showing the depths of cruelty and loss war costs humanity. Through orienting the poem in a specific historical development, Soyinka creates a framework of intertextuality that allows the reader to reflect on, not just the social and political consequences of war and violence but those deeper hidden implications.

### Sum Up

The presentations of styles such as fragmentation and intertextuality by Wole Soyinka in *"Death in the Dawn"* through narratives increase the fusion of the war illustrations. The poem fragments the madness of conflict psychologically, it is torn up in to pieces by the destructive elements and these parts of the poem show these details by the broken narrative structure, the imagery and the psychological fragmentation. Moreover, there is addition to a miscellany of its anthropological relics, biblical ideologies, and historical experiences that make the rather a tour of war's long-term effects on our being and the human nature in its finality. Through the representational worth of Lyotard's standpoint, the poem gifts us how wondering about broken pieces and arbitrary references gives a comprehension of the intricacy of life and abnormal times.

## "Telephone Conversation"

### Introduction

In his poem *"Telephone Conversation,"* Wole Soyinka displays a simple experience as being a major social issue such as racial discrimination and inequality. Lyotard's notions of fragmentedness and intertextuality give us a powerful lens to examine how the poem is structured, its themes, and symbolism depict the current state of human communication. Moreover, the poem does not merely stand as a product of one conscience. Instead, it draws upon various literary texts, cultural references, and art work to make its meaning multifaceted.

### Fragmentation in "Telephone Conversation"

The phenomenon of decrepitude, for which Lyotard uses the term, includes the crumble of marvelous narratives and the reappearance of more minor narratives that become separated. In *"Telephone Conversation,"* this fragmentation is evident in several aspects of the poem: In *"Telephone Conversation,"* this fragmentation is evident in several aspects of the poem:

**Disjointed Dialogue:** The poem is largely built upon a conversation between the speaker and the woman who let him/her a room, which is evident through its lack of the smooth flow. Take the proprietor's abrupt interjections and the speaker's broken sentences as illustration. The mere fact shows how disconnect, the gap between two people in society is noticeable.

**Internal Fragmentation:** Within the speaker, internal self dissipates and he struggles with the proprietor's prejudicial norms to be able to negotiate racial disintegration. Stanzas, as in the example: *"Do you have dark sadness or blues?"* Toward the end of the poem, the poet mention about his uncertainty and a sense of the disintegration of his identity due to society expectations and discrimination. For instance, *"Sometimes I come close to knowing the burden of choice / And then there are times: Facially, I am brunette, but*

*madam, you should see / The rest of me"* points out to the inner dissension and also a breakdown of

**Spatial Fragmentation:** The poem also entails spatial disruption as the speaker is at the isolation of his bedroom and is talking to his family member who is currently on the other side of the world, he would be able to share the realities of racism and discrimination that is transpiring in the present times. This contrast between public and private spheres implied the disintegration of communal basis of norms and assumptions, so that such individual feeling of contradiction between the individuals and environment was highlighted.

### **Intertextuality in "Telephone Conversation"**

By the expression of intertextuality, we mean that the texts are constituted in a way that one text refers to or impacts upon another (The so-called Lyotard). In "Telephone Conversation," intertextuality is evident in the poem's use of cultural references, literary allusions, and historical contexts: In "Telephone Conversation," intertextuality is evident in the poem's use of cultural references, literary allusions, and historical contexts:

**Literary Allusions:** Soyinka inscribes literary allusions into the poem for the beauty of the poetry and for the mystical experience that they heighten. A similar example is the title of the poem, "Telephone Conversation". First, it gives a feeling of communication that is carried out with the help of technology, and secondly, it creates an image of one of the main literary form of drama. The Icarus allusion confirms the poem existence within the literary tradition thread while implying that is upheld.

**Cultural References:** It contains words that describe things that are around the speakers: things that serve as symbols marking the everyday experience of these children. Hence, the proprietor's avocation of race identity to the speaker indicates the social attitudes including the myths of race and their discrimination. The usage of

African and English culture through which Soyinka is able to see through the mask that racism and discrimination wear and encourages his readers to investigate their own point of view on issues.

**Historical Context:** "Telephone Conversation" is linked very necessarily to the historical background of colonialism and post-colonialism where each sentence of the speaker indicates the difficulties of racial discrimination that remind us that colonial societies that usually include racial hierarchy and exploitation. The poem naturally takes place in this historical background, which creates an arena of textuality that prompts the reader to explore the wider cultural and political problem of racism, and exploitation.

### **Sum Up**

Through the employment of the concepts of "fragmentation" and "intersubliousness" in his story "Telephone Conversation", Wole Soyinka tries to look at racial discrimination and social divisions problems in a new light. By means of the broken dialogue, inner conflicts and spatial ant Thesis the poem shows how disparity and fragmentation that humans use to communicate, especially in situations related with discrimination and prejudice. Further, its incorporation of culture references, literary allusions, and historical contacts enriches the poet's investigation of racism and poverty, prompting readers to face the poem on various levels, and reflect over the effects racism on society. Employing the idea of Jean-François Lyotard who emphasizes the functions of fragmentation and intertextuality Sanctus Soyinka tells much about the detailed nature of humanity life where the complexity of societal injustices emanate from.

### **"Abiku"**

#### **Introduction**

In the poem, "Abiku" by Wole Soyinka the theme of identity, mortality and the supernatural that is connected with the Yoruba belief of "Abiku" or "spirit children" is explored. With Lyotard's concept of

"fragmentation" and "intertextuality" we can discuss how the poem's structure, themes, and expression of images are naturalistic.

#### **Fragmentation in "Abiku"**

According to Lyotard, fragmentation is manifested by the destruction of the central narratives and the production of small and more fragmented stories.

**Disjointed Narrative:** From the point of view of the narrator in the poem, the storyline is like a puzzle, made up of pieces that are not connected to each other, but only reflect the disjointed and unpredictable nature of the world. The poem carved in the repetition of "*the first / (and the repeated time)*" implies the cyclical, repeated nature of existence and, consequently, the splitting of time and identity.

**Psychological Fragmentation:** The speaker's personality gets splitted as they struggle to reconcile their reality, which is both human and spirit on one hand. For instance an attention grabber phrase as "*I am the squirrel teeth, What is just part of my fabric, soaked in my blood*" and "*I am Abiku, the reject--waiting for impatient drivers*" impart disconnection and estrangement, expressing the psychic break through which those whose porcelain world crumbles are left shattered.

**Cultural Fragmentation:** The poem considers the cultural block that is a characteristic of the conflict between the communities and the new society. Abiku as a figure portrays the disjunction of the supernatural realm where spirits dwell and the rational environment that humans endure, thus, emphasizing the fragmented nature of beliefs and culture.

#### **Intertextuality in "Abiku"**

From the perspective of Lyotard, intertextuality is when texts cite and then unmake each other's meanings.

**Yoruba Mythology:** This poem is based on the legendary and cosmology of Yoruba, where the Abiku, the Kito that returned to life on earth and the spirit world. This feature richness which is a new dimension of features is representative of our culture and

covers its significance with layers of symbol and importance.

**Literary Allusions:** "*Abiku*" is full of imagery and analogy, which turns the poem into a very deep and unforgettable one. I would rather, therefore, dwell on the idea that the title represents a trend in Yoruba poetry and oral tradition as those that take over concepts linked to death and the supernatural. An allusion of this nature suggests that the context of the given poem is part of the larger literary tradition and hence makes the audience regard it in the same way as other related works.

**Historical Context:** In the child character, the colonial context of the poem is made flesh to be a concept of the existential pain and cultural misplacement experienced by most African people after the colonial era. In placing the poem within this historical context, Soyinka presents a complex intertextual reference that encourages readers to be involved in reflection concerning the deeper meanings of the work for the African race and the recollection of its culture.

#### **Sum Up**

Soyinka uses many devices in "*Abiku*". One of the devices is the technique of fragmentation and intertextuality so that he may understand very complex questions concerning identity, death, and cultural values. The poem is in a simple element that should show the simplicity and everydayness of the African culture. It also strengthens the poetic sense, pulling the reader to dive into the theme and leading him through mythology, literature, and even history. This approach allows one to realize completely that Soyinka has picked these methods of fragmentation and intertextuality for him to investigate the multi-dimensional character of the human space and the perpetual preserving of the cultural tales.

#### **Conclusion**

Overall, this research paper has considered the themes of fragmentation and intertextuality in the selected works of Wole Soyinka, "*Death in the Dawn*," "*Telephone*

*Conversation,*” and *“Abiku,”* where these two concepts have been analyzed in the light of postmodernist Jean-François Lyotard. By qualitative analysis, some Soyinka instances could be as fragmentary narratives and intertextual references that promote complex socio-political themes in the Nigerian arena. Our study has exposed how Soyinka’s narrative techniques operate in the manner of his own society complexities and uncertainties, thereby, challenging conventional concepts of coherence and unity in storytelling. Having the elements of fragmentation and intertextuality, Soyinka’s works are also representatives of this feature of postmodern literature that a meaning is fluid and that there are many possible perspectives.

In addition, our study has revealed sociopolitical impact of fragmentation and intertextuality in Soyinka’s works, showing that they serve as the means for the critique of power structures, colonial heritage, and cultural identity. Using fragmented narratives and intertextual references, Soyinka enables to propel through the intricacies of the Nigerian society as he provides deep insights and critical views of its historical, social and political dynamics. This study adds to the sustained discussion on African literature, postmodernism and postcolonial theory by giving a detailed examination of Soyinka’s literary artistry and its consequences for understanding the depth of African cultural expression. Through borrowing the postmodernist theory to read Soyinka’s work, we have been able to appreciate the depth and significance of African literature within world literary discourse. In this regard, future studies may consider other works of Wole Soyinka or other African writers, to reveal postmodernist characteristics in African literature. In addition, comparative studies would provide an analysis of how postmodernist themes were manifested in diverse cultural settings, justifying the universal nature of postmodern literature.

In the end, this research paper highlights the importance of Wole Soyinka’s work in the

history of African literature and the perpetual pertinence of postmodernist ideals in grasping the intricate problems of the contemporary era. The study of fragmentation and intertextuality is the inspiration of the critical inquiry of Soyinka’s works, and in this way, it enriches our literary, cultural, and societal understanding.

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