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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI
YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ**

WOLE SOYINKA'S AUTOBIOGRAPHIES AS NATIONAL HISTORY

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İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI

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Özet

Son dönemlerde otobiyografi yazıları, yazarların kendi kişisel yaşamlarını anlatmanın yanı sıra toplumdaki sosyo-kültürel olayları da anlatmaya yarayan bir araç haline gelmiştir. Afrikalı yazarlar içinse kolonializm öncesi ve sonrası kıta üzerindeki farklı ülkelerde yaşanan gerçeklerin anlatılmasının gerekliliği otobiyografi yazılarının yazarlar açısından doğal olan otobiyografi yazım çizgisinden farklı yapıtlar ortaya koymalarına neden olmuştur. Bu bilgiler ışığında bu çalışmada yazar Wole Soyinka'nın *The Man Died* (1972), *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* (2006), *Isara: A Voyage Around Essay* (1989), *Ake: The Years of Childhood* (1981) adlı yapıtlarında yazarın sadece yaşamını ve kişiliğinin anlatılmasıyla sınırlı tutmayıp, yazarın bu eserlerinde kendi kişisel gelişimiyle birlikte çoğu zaman Nijerya'daki askeri hükümetler zamanında ulaşılması mümkün olmayan, kolonializm öncesi ve sonrası siyasi otorite, misyonerlik, din ve ticari yaşam konularını göz önüne alarak nasıl ulusal tarih kitapları niteliğinde yapıtlar ortaya koyduğuyla ilgili derinlemesine analizler içermektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: kolonializm, otobiyografi, Nijerya, siyasi otorite, misyonerlik, din ve ticari yaşam

Abstract

In recent times, the autobiography has become a form of literary expression through which writers address various issues concerning their identity as well as socio-political and cultural realities in society. For African intellectuals, the urgency of pre- and post-independence realities that confronted in different countries on the continent makes it imperative for them to deploy their life narratives beyond the traditional ends which autobiographical works are generally expected to address. It is in this light this study probes into Wole Soyinka's autobiographical writings *The Man Died* (1972), *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* (2006), *Isara: A Voyage Around Essay* (1989), *Ake: The Years of Childhood* (1981) not only as an introduction of Wole Soyinka's personality and life but also this research deeply concerned how Soyinka constructed his autobiographies as national historical books in parallel to his individual development focusing on political authority, religion, missionary and commercial life pre-post independence in Nigeria which is sometimes impossible to reach the true stories in official historical records under military governments.

Key words: colonialism, autobiography, Nigeria, political authority, missionary, religion and commercial life

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1. Introduction

Autobiographical writing is a study which highlights the unique experiences and thoughts of the author in the process of individuation. In other words, it has been described as “retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality” (Lejeune, 1989, p.4). Until the 1950s, autobiography writing was generally underestimated by historians as a literary genre both as a method and a historical source. According to Popkin and Frontier, until the second half of the 20th century, it was thought that “personal involvement undermined the authority of scholarship and that the personal timeframe of autobiography did not correspond to collective time favored in historical studies” (Popkin, Frontier, 1996, p. 726-29). However, after the 1950s, considering autobiography as a literary genre, the method of the historians had changed and new perspectives on autobiography writing were developed. As a result of these changes towards autobiography, studies that based on personal life and experience had given a respectable occupation to historians. In the 1980s, French historian Pierre Nora, considering autobiography as a significant part of the historical researches to understand the background of historical events at the stage of history had done a lot of autobiography researches for her later works. According to Nora, “writing about themselves, historians (writers) create a new genre, for a new age of historical consciousness” (Popkin, Ego, p. 1140). According to Nora, it is a kind of urgency to “encourage and promote autobiographical reflection as part of a larger effort to re-vision the process of the production of historical knowledge” (Popkin, Ego, p.1141). From this point of view, it can be said there is a great deal of connection between history and literature. And history always assumes a central role in the autobiography as the genre takes on the past of both the individual and others related to him in one way or another as well as the community itself.

It is possible to say that the relationship between history and literature has continued to be a source of debate from Plato to Nietzsche to the present day, and from these arguments it seeks to find a more comfortable way of dealing with both concepts for a better understanding of the dynamics of human existence. Aristotle in his *Poetics* “distinguished between history as the study of events that had actually occurred and poetry [literature] as the imagination of possible events” (Spargo, 2000: 3). In this respect, it can be said that history is the inextricable part of literature in every segment of it. From this point, keeping this fact as a reality in mind, this study will focus on the history in Wole Soyinka’s autobiographies not just in terms of Soyinka’s life and events in his life but also related to the history of Nigeria. According to French writer and journalist Schlumberger “a simple reader of memoirs and correspondence can display more insight than a specialist deep in his files” (Jalons, p. 164). On this goal, Nigerian writer and intellectual Soyinka’s autobiographies pose a very important role in understanding the history of Nigeria as well as the author’s own-life.

The world of public intellectuals appears to be a unique one in the sense that they have to deal with a lot of challenges imposed on them by their roles in society and at the same time maintain a public image which complements their personality as individuals interested in the progress of society. In this respect, this research seeks to examine the intellectual writer Wole Soyinka’s autobiographical works analyzing his making of historiography in related to questions such as political authority, religion, missionary and commercial life in Nigeria as exemplified in his autobiographical works such as *The Man Died* (1972), *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* (2006), *Isara: A Voyage Around Essay* (1989), *Ake: The Years of Childhood* (1981). In other words, this research examines how Soyinka as a public intellectual portrays political authority, religion, missionary and commercial life in Nigeria with his individual development dealing with the complexities of pre and post-colonial periods of the author’s home country Nigeria.

In literary world, there have been a lot of studies and publications dealing with life writing in general. But the importance of Soyinka's autobiographies stem from almost the uniqueness and worthiness of them as historical sources in terms of showing the socio-economic, political and cultural reality of mostly Nigeria and in some extent the whole African continent besides introducing his own personal history to us. However, it is favorable at this stage to define one more time the scope and limitations of this thesis as it is not feasible to take on every dimension of autobiographies of Soyinka that can be imagined as far as the issues at stake are concerned. In this respect, this study examines the autobiographies of Wole Soyinka related to political authority, religion, missionary and commercial life in Nigeria in parallel to his individual development.

It is not possible that any single text can completely capture the life of Wole Soyinka who has had a very eventful life both as a writer, playwright, novelist and a public intellectual. So considering the fact that it is very difficult to take only one of his autobiographical works and analyze it related to question political authority, religion, missionary and commercial life in Nigeria in parallel to his individual development which is the focus of this research paper. Because of possible limitation just focusing on only one writing of him, this study focuses on four autobiographical works of Wole Soyinka including *The Man Died* (1972), *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* (2006), *Isara: A Voyage Around Essay* (1989), *Ake: The Years of Childhood* (1981).

Intellectual writer and novelist Wole Soyinka was born on 13 July, 1934 in the town of Isara in Nigeria. His father name is Samuel Ayodele whom Soyinka calls as "Essay" or "S.A" in his autobiographies is the manager of St. Peter's collage in Abeokuta. His mother's name is Grace Eniola Soyinka whom he calls as "Wild Christian", is a merchant. Soyinka's life, in particular, is showed in great details. While his father Essay represents a figure of authority, his mother Wild Christian represents "fostered an atmosphere of exotic disarray and spontaneity, often inviting an array of boarders or strays to room with her children" (Ankenbrandt, Spicer,

2010). In *Aké: The Years of Childhood*, Soyinka beside his own tells about his mother's ambition to help the poor and his husband's supportive approach to her action to take care of the poor "yet, at night, sufficient space was created on the floor where a mat was spread to sleep a constantly varying assortment of children-sometimes as many as twelve- there being no more avid a collector of strays than Wild Christian, tacitly aided by her husband" (Soyinka, 1989, p.79). Living a cultural garden "his environment was one of constant duality: that of both Nigerian and British perspectives, of both traditional and Christian religious practices" (Ankenbrandt, Spicer, 2010). Soyinka's parents and relatives being actively engaged with social and governmental issues had inescapable effects on Wole Soyinka's life. That's why his starting point in politics and activism cannot be separated with his relationship with his parents and aunt Funmilayo Ransome Kuti, who was admired as a political actor both in the town and country who kindled the famous Egba women's riots and gave a way to change the ruler of the country in 1945. Wole Soyinka is a huge supporter of justice. He believes justice to be the first condition of humanity. Soyinka's first involvement in activism for justice begins in the late 1930s, when Nigerian women led by his aunt Funmilayo Ransom Kuti, gathered and gave a voice against unjust tax system and dethroned the lord of Abeokuta.

It can be said that "Soyinka's household was at once an intellectual and communal haven in Aké and a stimulating and engaging childhood environment" (Kreisler, Harry., 1998) when we look at its functionality such as holding up meetings about the social and political issues with the prominent people of the town. While all these meetings are being held by Essay at home Wild Christian is the most supportive partner of Essay. In *Aké: The Years of Childhood*, Soyinka gives an example of his father's meetings: "one day the bookseller, Fowokan the junior headmaster of the primary school, the catechist and one other of Essay's cronies followed him home from church service... Their voices had long preceded them into the house, they were all hotly wrapped in the debate, talking all at once and refusing to yield a point. It went on right through bottles of warm beer and soft drinks, exhausted Wild Christian's stock of chin-chin and sweet biscuits and carried over

into lunch” (Soyinka, 1989, p.19) and then he continues to tell how much both Wild Christian and Essay were pleased by the action that they took as a couple in their society saying “Wild Christian enjoyed the role played by the Headmaster’s house as the intellectual watering-hole of Aké and its environs” (Soyinka, 1989, p.19). In the last quotation, Soyinka’s description of his home as ““watering-hole”” is important and a good example to understand his potent genius in vocabulary use.

Wole Soyinka’s intelligence and curiosity and both parents eagerly active involvement in social and political reality of Nigeria made also himself deeply involved in a kind of political and social activities in his early life. In this regard, Soyinka’s first autobiographical book *The Man Died: Prison Notes* can be an indicator of how Wole Soyinka was deeply involved with the political and social issues of his country. When we looked at Wole Soyinka’s four books *The Man Died* (1972), *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* (2006), *Isara: A Voyage Around Essay* (1989), *Ake: The Years of Childhood* (1981) as an exception the book *Isara: A Voyage Around Essay*, the rest three books deal with the life experiences of Wole Soyinka himself. In his first autobiographical book *The Man Died*, he tells about his prison experiences which he faced after the political crisis of the 1960s. In *Ake: The Years of Childhood*, he narrates the first eleven years of his life “growing up in a parsonage and learning the basics of life in an environment full of inspiring events and paradoxes imposed by a blend of tradition and modernity” (Jendele, 2008). In a way, it also reflects how the African people are getting used to modernity in their lands and how women are mobilizing against the tax oppression of the government on women. Wole Soyinka in his book *Isara: A Voyage around Essay*, tells about the experiences of his father and socio-politic structure both in Nigeria and partly in the world. “After all, the period covered here actively no more than fifteen years, and its significance for me is that it represents the period when a pattern of their lives was set –for better or worse–under the compelling impact of the major events in their times, both local and global, the uneasy love-hate relationship with the colonial presence, and its own ambiguous attitudes to the Western – educated elite of the Nigerian protectorate” (Soyinka, 1990, p. v). And in his latest bibliographic work

You Must Set Forth at Dawn he tells about his imprisonment and exile including political events both in his country and in the world as well. Although *The Man Died* and *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* has some similarities in content the main difference between two is that *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* gives us more comprehensive material for the discussion of Soyinka's personality and his making of an identity as a public intellectual in a postcolonial environment.

Looking at all published autobiographical works of Wole Soyinka, it is clear that all of them were published in Nigerian postcolonial time. But considering the content of each book *The Man Died* and *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* cover the postcolonial socio-political environment; arising turmoil in Nigeria, imprisonment of Soyinka himself and his exile. The autobiographical work of Soyinka *Ake: The Years of Childhood*, takes interest to the colonial socio-political environment of Nigeria as the book *Isara: A Voyage around Essay* did, including Soyinka's childhood memoirs related to political and social environment of his time. When someone looks at these autobiographical works of him he may wonder why Wole Soyinka's first published autobiographical work *The Man Died* did not cover the childhood memoirs of Wole Soyinka first but his later published work *Ake: The Years of Childhood* which was published almost ten years after the book *The Man Died* did. The answer for this was not explicitly put into words by Wole Soyinka but what we know about him is how he settled down to write his first autobiographical work *The Man Died* from him; "between the lines of Paul Radin's *Primitive Religion* and my own *Idanre* are scribbled fragments of plays, poems, a novel and portions of the prison notes which make up this book" (Soyinka, 1994, p. xxvii) and what kind of difficulties he faced during his first autobiographical book has been made clear by his words:

"This book has taken many forms and shapes. The question of what to include, what suspend, what totally erase, all influence by problems of expediency, of my continuing capacity to affect events in my country, of effecting the revolutionary changes to which I have become more than ever dedicated, consideration even of my own safety,

a reluctance to break the last restraints on a regime whose knowledge of guilt compels it to remain by force in discredited power.... all these have changed the format, title, conception of this book at least a dozen times” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 12).

As it is understood from the words of Wole Soyinka, the time he picked up the pen to write his works Nigeria was not stable both politically and socially as he stated but although all these blurred atmosphere Soyinka has attributed a great part of his writings to critique of the tyrannical postcolonial leadership in Nigeria and the prolongation of their throne by harsh actions. And in one of his speech he makes it clear why he hasn't kept his silence against the persecution of the postcolonial tyranny “the man dies in all who keep silent in the face of tyranny” (Maya, 2002).

It is interesting that the name of the book *The Man Died*, Wole Soyinka said, comes to his mind in a morning while he was still searching for a name for his book. Referring to outcome headline he says “I was struck by phrasing. It sounded weird, yet familiar. Its familiarity was that of the ending to a moral tale, doggerel” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 13). In a way, it also shows how much Wole Soyinka was deeply involved in his writings day and night. As we mentioned before that Soyinka's involvement of political activities brings so much inescapable trouble to him as it happened in the Nigerian Civil War in 1967. He was imprisoned by General Yakubu Gowon Government being accused as a traitor for his taking action in brokering a peace between the belligerent sides. The accusations of betrayal and collaboration with the enemy which brought on Wole Soyinka by the government resulted in his 22 months imprisonment in a high security prison in Nigeria. But reality is that when Wole Soyinka set off to establish a peace settlement between two sides to cease civil war in Nigeria, he was also looking for the answer to the question that he had in his mind “How do these Gowon types think they can build a nation on a successful genocide? Or Ojukwu on the emotional reaction to genocide?” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 179). According to Soyinka, the way of Gowon government such as slaughtering opposites of military regime such as Ojukwu supporters is unacceptable and inhuman. And he

also criticizes Ojukwu's emotional approach to massacres of Gowon regime such as declaring a war of independence against Gowon regime in Nigeria, closing their eyes about what possible results would be for both two sides and country as well. Soyinka believes that all these harsh attempts of two sides would not solve the real problem and would bring nothing than much bloodshed unless mutual trust was not foregrounded. From all these realities to look into a foremost intellectual and writer Soyinka's life with its ups and downs can be said to be as an interesting area of research for many researchers and writers.

2.1. The Credibility of Biography and Autobiography as Historical Source

Traditionally, biography means the story of a life, written by someone other than the person who had lived that life and autobiography is the story of someone's own life written by him or her. While these two narrative forms considered as the "life genres" which are devoted to represent an individual life experience, there are also thin boundaries between those narrative forms.

"...the autobiographical (they are written in the first person) and the biographical (that are written by another), between the historical (the protagonists are recognizable individuals who we know to have lived) and the fictional (they exist within texts that are not bound by any duty or fidelity to facts)" (Boldrini, L., 2004, p. 245).

Considering the relationship between history and autobiography, it can be said that they are two different narrative modes employing distinctive truth and narrative methods. For African writer autobiography writing is a way of establishing an alternative to writing document-based history to re-tell their own and their communities' lives against the official colonial history. According to James Olney, autobiography might be considered as the genre of black history worldwide. To support his claim, he uses Blassingame's analysis of slave narrative saying "from Frederick Douglass to Malcolm X, from Olaudah Equiano, Maya Angelou, the mode specific to the black experience has been autobiography..." (Olney, J., 1980, p. 15). This approach towards autobiography among the African writers until the end of the twentieth century can be explained as a trend towards a chosen literary convention among writers.

Until the end of twentieth century most historians in general considered biography as a lesser category of history. They claim that biography is genetically limited as it only covers a person life story and rather than coming from scientific

writing culture, it comes “belles-lettres” writing culture. Therefore, it is usually written by non-academic history writers. Intellectual developments during the 20th century have also made a contribution to the classification of autobiography as an inferior literary genre among historians. However, with emergence of the deconstructionist theory, who deals with “the death of the author” in the text and considered the text as an independent entity this new perspective and approach towards biography started it to gain popularity among other literary genres and led biography and autobiography to be considered as useful and informative literary genres among the historians.

Dealing with individual personal lives, biography is usually narrated in the third person. And besides an author dealing with the biography, he may also write an autobiography which in itself bears the ambiguities of the first person narrative. First person narratives tend to unsettle historians more than biographies do. In this perspective, historiographers have often doubted about the first person genres’ historical legitimacy and in general historians have attributed lower status to autobiographical writings and narrated life-stories among other literary genres. Based on these assumptions, the historians criticize the autobiographer’s dual roles as both “I” narrator and historical actor in the text, of which they claimed to have affected his objectivity in the work. The narrator’s personal interest in events and a vacancy of document based evidence to prove out his claims in the text have been considered as the methodological limitations to his objectivity. In this respect, this dilemma has cast a shadow upon the reliability of autobiography as historical source for historians. In regarding this, many history critics has often doubted about the reflection of individual interest in autobiography as the genre’s dubious fictional perspective and thus considered autobiography as “a nervous narrative form, being not quite fiction and not quite history” (Coullie, J., 1991, p. 21).

Although having been done harsh criticism upon the credibility of autobiography as historical source by some historians that haven’t silenced the voices of autobiography writers especially in Africa like Mphahlele, Naboth Mokgatle,

Kuzwayo and Wole Soyinka. In their accounts they represent their communities' unknown and repressed histories. In this sense, they claim that autobiography as an individual testimony and history has historical credibility even though their authors are not educated historians. In this vein, literary critic Michael Sprinkler claims that "autobiographical truth is experiential rather than historically documented" (Olney, J., 1980, p. 15).

According to the prominent Americanist and biographer David Nasaw, biography writing has been characterized as a "lesser form of history," or as the profession's "unloved step-child". According to Nasaw, the rise of biography writing after the 1970s and being given credibility as a literary genre has much annoyed most of the historians. He says that in spite of this attitude of historians towards biography writing, it continues its importance as a vital genre in history writing. As evidence, he points out a reality expressing that five biographical works of the last eight presidents in American history having been written, edited and published by American Historical Association.

English writer Virginia Woolf who is considered as one of the foremost modernists played a significant role in shaping literary understanding of the twentieth century tells us in her writing *The Art of Biography* that "biography is built on the author's imagination but unlike fiction..." she says "biography resides in facts and is bound by them and it is the most restricted of all the arts" (Woolf, V., 1967, p. 227). According to Woolf, the difference between a novelist and biographer's writing is fiction which "is created without any restrictions save those that the artist ... chooses to obey. But a biography's authenticity lies in the truth of the author's vision" (Woolf, V., 1967, p.221). In this perspective, Woolf considers the biographer as a craftsman instead of an artist and gives more credibility to biography than novel.

According to some biography writers, historical reality is arguable and it is subjective rather than being objective. Gayatri Spivak in his explanation of the history uses the term "worlding" to explain that "our description of the world is not

mere reportage, but that textual practice contributes towards its uniqueness. Our circumscribed productivity cannot be dismissed as a mere keeping of records. We are part of the records we keep” (Spivak, G., 1988 p. 105). Having considered the subjectivity of historical reality some historians claims the collective memories of individuals could be considered as historical source. According to Virginia Woolf, to reach true history is impossible as it became a human production. In this perspective, she describes her perception of history and the duty of biography writers saying;

“They (biographies) are not like the facts of science-once they are discovered, always the same. They are subject to changes of opinion; opinions change as the times change... thus the biographer must go ahead of the rest of us, like the miner's canary, testing the atmosphere, detecting falsity, unreality, and the presence of obsolete conventions. His sense of truth must be alive and on tiptoe” (Woolf, V., 1967, p. 226).

After the 1970s, the interest between history and historiography gains a new perspective and increases as it had never happened before until that time. History writers become more interested with the personal experiences and issues which they looked down and studied it from a different perspective. Jeremy D. Popkin in his book *History, Historians, and Autobiography* explains this issue, analyzing the relationship between autobiography and history getting help from the history writers’ autobiographical works as a source for historical evaluation of events. He reveals the relationship between autobiography and history to rebuild and analyze the past saying “indeed, the practical and methodological links between history and autobiography are important. They share structural formulations that invite us to read them in conjunction, and decipher possible ways their enactments of events might be similar” (Lane, M., 1970, p. 145).

Although all these supportive approach towards biography and autobiography as a credible historical source by the scientist after the 1970s, the number of scientists that hold a counter position against the credibility of biography and autobiography writing as credible historical sources. In their point of view,

autobiographies might be affected by the historian's environment, education, his intellectual capacity and his ideological and political tendency. In this respect, Popkin argues that "autobiography thus yields true information; not about the author's past but about the way he or she chose to represent the past" (Popkin, J., 2005, p. 29). In regarding this, some scientists have claimed that the credibility of autobiography to use as a reference point or as historical source is restricted as "it sheds more light on the state of mind of the author when he wrote his recollections than on the events when they actually occurred" (Laqueur, W., 1993, p. 401). When we look at those criticisms about autobiography writing, it should not be put aside that the possibility of these issues may create doubts about the credibility of autobiography as historical source in a way.

Jeremy D. Popkin says that "readers of a novelist's autobiography may be interested in details of the writing process that produced the works by which the author entered their lives, but historians know better than to assume that their books are so meaningful to their readers that the circumstances under which they were written will be of much interest" (Popkin, J., 2005, p.170). According to Popkin, memoir of a novelist sometimes gives both significant and insignificant details about the process of his writing. So analyzing the autobiographical writings of Wole Soyinka, it should be also keep in mind that autobiography as a fictionalization of writer's own life might bear abundant metaphors and magical events aiming to attract the attention of his reader which decrease the credibility of autobiography as historical source.

Considering all these positive and negative criticism about the credibility of biography and autobiography writing as a historical source, my aim in this work is to find out how a written work of a person's life can help us to reconstruct the past in some extents within the historical process in the text. I think, biography of a person might help understand not only some particular events in a person's life but also the larger social, cultural and even political processes of a moment in history which could be considered as historical source. If we consider a person as a "text" and his

living environment as the “context” such as Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin said in his literary theory using the term “dialogic” to express the relationship between text and context, Bakhtin says that “the individual text not only reflects the context but also influences it” (Banner, L., 2009, p. 580). For instance, When Mehmed II ascended to throne in Ottoman Empire in 1451, he devoted himself to strengthen the Ottoman Navy, and conquered Constantinople in 1453. So he became a standpoint in history that closed the primeval era and opened the medieval era. From this example, we can come to a conclusion that an individual may influence the course of history and in this perspective, “studying the life story of an individual might be seen as akin to studying the history of a city, a region, or a state as a way of understanding broad social and cultural phenomena” (Banner, L., 2009, p. 582). In this point of view, biography and autobiography writings may be regarded among the best genres to understand the historical phenomena in more definite angles.

Considering all these perspectives about the biography and autobiography writing, Wole Soyinka is an astonishingly good subject who made a difference in his autobiographical writings compare to his contemporaries in understanding the relationship between the colonial and colonized in socio-politic and economic ways in general in Nigeria and also in some extent in the world. Studying the autobiographical works of Wole Soyinka, who perpetually got in touch with several important and influential social and political actors of his day while making vigorous debates, offers us a chance to access to understand the direction of twentieth century Nigerian society and Nigerian history from a different perspective than the colonizer own history by touching on the issues such as the revolutionary transformation of Nigeria from colonialism to post colonialism and the fluctuating contested nature of Nigerian military governments’ political impacts on Nigerian society.

2.2. The Effect of Postcolonialism in Wole Soyinka's Historical Autobiography Writings

Post-colonialism can be defined as the experience of the exploitation of colonizer the primitive people through achieving independence and establishing political and cultural hegemony over colonized. Colonialism stands for “the fact of a powerful country increasing its influence over other countries through business, culture, etc” or “a system in which one country controls other countries, often after defeating them in a war” (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 2000, p. 649). In other words, this term refers to “the dominance of one state over another territory for political subjugation and economic exploitation” (Das, 2001, p. 88).

Coming to postcolonial literature, it means the literature that was written after the withdrawal of the colonial power from the colonized land regarding colonial people history, culture, values and tastes. In other words, postcolonial literature can be also described as an uprising against the colonial practices and writings in literature. As Boehmer said, postcolonial literature “is that which critically scrutinizes the colonial relationship. It is writing ... to resist colonialist perspectives” (Boehmer, 1995, p.3).

Until the early postcolonial period in Nigeria, most of the works were written in colonial language and all the contents of the writings were passed through a series of colonial commission. So the challenging natures of their themes were not easily approved because of “the acceptability of form, publication and dissemination of works in the colonized areas were controlled by the imperial ruling class...” (Olatunji, 2010, p. 127) and most of the writings were often banned before publishing as a result of their colonial criticism. According to writers like Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, African literature at this level “comes into being within the constraint of a discourse and institutional practice of patronage system which...undercuts their assertion of a different perspective” (Olatunji, 2010, p. 129).

So, all the measures of the colonizer to protect its political existence in the colonized lands can be also described as the colonizer's locking up the mind of the African for her own favor. The postcolonial African literature takes its power from this reality and African writers like Chinua Achebe, Mungo Beti, Ferdinand Oyono, CamaraLaye, Wole Soyinka, Ngugiwa Thing'o can be said the foremost activist writers in the construction and emergence of postcolonial literature against all these limitations of the colonizers. The ideological orientation of such writers is "to combat and interrogate the colonialist literature, history and philosophy which function to articulate and justify the moral authority of the colonizer... the inferiority of the native as metaphysical fact" (JanMohammed, 1997, p. 27).

In this perspective, postcolonial writers permanently criticize colonialism and colonial practices in their works. They sought to break with the discourses which are in favor of colonizer such as the myths, the race classifications and the way of description of colonizer the African people, culture and history in their colonial works. Therefore, postcolonial literature can be described in short as "the imaginative recreation of a common cultural past crafted into a shared tradition to the demand for independence and self-governance" (Appiah, 1997, p. 120). For its early stages, postcolonial writing can be also considered as a nationalist writing as Boehmer remarked "postcoloniality is defined as that condition in which colonized peoples seek to take their place, forcibly or otherwise, as historical subjects" (Boehmer, 1995, p.3). Apparently, the writers like Homi Bhabha, Bill Ashcroft, Spivak, Chinua Achebe, Edward Said, Ajaz Ahmad and Franz Fanon can be considered among the foremost post-colonial critics who expose such consciousness to bring out a more understandable perception of the colonial tricks and treatments in the second half of the twentieth century. For African writers those affected by the idea of such critics, postcolonial literature means a chance to challenge against the domination of British values, tastes and the British perception of Africans and African history. In other words, post colonialism was considered as "an attempt of rising high above the worn-out shell of Europe and the emergence of new self-awareness, self-assertion, critique and national identity from the yoke of colonial

suppression and subjugation” (Spender, 1974, p. 4). According to Nigerian writer and intellectual Soyinka, post colonialism means “self-apprehension” of people, their culture and history under the hegemony of the colonizer. In another word, the term “self-apprehension” describes the emergence of an understanding which led Africans grasp the idea of independent, equal and respected human in governance, social life and literature.

Coming to the development of the Nigerian postcolonial literature, it is best understood within the context of certain social and economic changes in Nigeria after the Second World War. These changes are mostly associated with the increased educational opportunities, the development of printing and the emergence of the sense of nationalism. After the World War II, England’s having been eager to accept the demands of Nigerians for independence, education and writing became the most important subjects for both the colonizer and the colonized. For the British, education and writing were considered as a way out to protect their political system and large investments that they had constructed for a long period of time. But for the Nigerian, education and writing were seen as important instruments for the emancipation of the nation from the colonial rule and practices, in other words, to save themselves from the attributed characters and characteristics in narrations and made up written Nigerian history by the colonizer.

In the early stages of post colonialism, literary writings in Nigeria were mostly in the form of novelettes or chap-books. “These thin volumed homilies were generally concerned with moral issues of wickedness, greed, love, and, in a few cases, the fortunes of certain politicians” (Obi, 1983, p. 10). By the availability of cheap presses in the late forties “due to changes in laws governing ownership of newspapers, Africans were able to own newspapers and printing presses” (Schmidt, 1965, p.7). So the regulation of the government had given an immense literary sense which got involved most Nigerians into writing and publishing literary works. In 1950s, the literary elite in Nigeria were mostly university educated and more engaged with political issues. Therefore, it did not take so long for Nigerian writers

to come together on an idea for the struggle against colonialism within the idea of the postcolonial critics such as Homi Bhabha, Bill Ashcroft, Spivak, Chinua Achebe, Laura Chrisman, Ajaz Ahmad and Franz Fanon.

Although Africans gained their so-called independence from the British, his continuing confinement within the structural and conceptual frameworks in literary sense that they could reflect their own hopes, aspirations and perception of history and historical events had not altered quickly. In this vein, the overwhelming domination of England upon Africans by the colonial system compelled Africans to find out new ways of advancing themselves socio-economically, politically and literarily. Behind this request was the need to search new perspectives and parameters in both literature and other areas which later changed its course to a rebellion against the colonizer as a result of seeing the incapability of them to increase Africans' standard of living. So the main focus for the African writers before and after the post colonialism becomes how to come over this problem. In regarding this, African writers see the answer in his emancipation and rebuilding the predominant colonial discourses and teachings of African culture and history. Within all these perspectives, in attempting to establish alternative ones those reflecting his own hopes, aspirations, culture and history, it can be said for African intellectual and writer Soyinka that "the history of his development as an individual and as a member of his community throughout the colonial and post-colonial era has revolved around his struggle to develop more appropriate alternatives to the existing order" (Walunywa, 1997, p. 10) which is often unwelcomed by the colonizer. Again, it is worth to mention that in the development of this new sense of literary understanding, the effect of postcolonial writers and critics like Homi Bhabha, Bill Ashcroft, Spivak, Chinua Achebe, Laura Chrisman, Ajaz Ahmad and Franz Fanon is very deep and powerful as much as can't be under estimated. Having been affected by the vision and mentality of such critics and writers, Soyinka in his work *Myth, Literature and the African World* opposes colonial parameters in literary and history writing and takes his place as a revolutionist against the predominant colonial discourses and teachings of African and African history.

“Both in cultural and political publications . . . , we black Africans have been blandly invited to submit ourselves to a second epoch of colonization this time by a universal-humanoid abstraction defined and conducted by individuals whose theories and prescriptions are derived from the apprehension of their world and their history, their social neuroses and their value systems. It is time, clearly, to respond to this new threat, each in its own field” (J, Biodun., 2003, p.62).

In this perspective, the autobiographical works of Soyinka *The Man Died* (1972), *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* (2006), *Isara: A Voyage Around Essay* (1989) and *Ake: The Years of Childhood* (1981) in some extent affected by the mentality of post-colonialism and postcolonial critics can be considered as an uprising against colonial teachings and the official colonial history. According to Edward Said, all European literary works from travelogues to novels were aimed “to assert European identity and history as part of the project of colonial education, served to produce and manage the identity of the colonized” (Jefferess, 2008, p. 14). With the establishment of a colonial sense of history with the made up history of Africans and ignoring the historical writing of natives which has the possibility to demolish all bringing of colonization by revealing a nationalist sense of belonging, the colonizers had successfully governed the Africans for decades. In this regard, literary theorist and public intellectual Edward Said defends the idea that the colonized must literally write themselves into existence by contesting European understanding and representation of him. In here, the autobiographical works of Soyinka play very important role in asserting reality of in some extent Africans and African history but mostly the Nigerians and Nigerian history apart from the colonial historical writings those had been written behind the closed doors in favor of the colonizer. For Said, without self-written independent national history the dependency on colonized is eternal and inescapable. According to George Orwell, a famous English novelist and critic, shows us how history plays a very crucial role in constructing and keeping a nation alive. In his book *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, he says “who controls the past, controls the future: who controls the present, controls the past” (Orwell, 1961, p.143) showing the

importance of history in a strict sense for individuals and in the broad sense for the nations.

When we analyze the autobiographical works of Soyinka, the influence of Franz Fanon and his famous theory of “resistance” can be seen more explicitly in Soyinka’s autobiographical writings comparing the other postcolonial critics’ effects on his autobiographical works. Having been an anti-colonial activist Franz Fanon has had a profound influence upon the literature and politics. So to understand the background of Wole Soyinka’s autobiographical writings and his approach to colonialism and post colonialism, it will be helpful for us to look at Fanon’s theory of resistance and in opening paragraph of his book *The Wretched of the Earth* to find out the origin of the debates those give ways for the postcolonial studies. Fanon begins his essay *The Wretched of the Earth* concerning violence. According to Fanon, regardless of “how liberation is envisioned from the postcolonial practices whether as the restoration of the nation or the production of it, the process of decolonization is always a violent phenomenon” (Fanon, 1965, p.35). Supporting Fanon’s theory of “resistance” Soyinka gives us plenty of examples from his life in his autobiographical works which are contrary to Nigerian official history. To Soyinka, “books and all forms of writing have always been objects of terror to those who seek to suppress truth” (Soyinka, 1972, p XXVII). In this perspective, Soyinka supporting Fanon’s theory of “resistance” resists against the colonial perspective of African and African history saying “the man dies in all who keep silent in the face of tyranny” (Soyinka, 1972, p.13).

The colonial view of African history essentially looks at African History from a European perspective which is often prejudiced and racist. In their perspective, Africans are generally considered as inferior which gives European powers right in their eyes for their colonial efforts in the colonized areas. When we analyze Fanon’s theory of “resistance” writing especially about historical past plays very important role in achieving salvation from the colonial power and breaking away from the

colonial teaching and characterization of Africans. In regarding this, Fanon asserts that “liberation requires not only an attempt for the transformation of economic and political structures but the transformation of discursive structures of power establishing and maintaining colonial identities” (Fanon, 1965, p.35). In this point of view, as the producer of culture the writer or artist consistently has a privileged importance within Fanon’s theory of resistance. In this regard, when we analyze the works of Wole Soyinka considering the texts own culture, history, politics and religion, they all show the importance of his autobiographical writings. Especially his work *The Man Died: Prison Notes* plays a pioneering role in setting up post-colonial perspective in writing Nigerian history apart from the colonial consideration through the nationalist resistance against hegemonic structure in writing history. The importance of history stems from its competency to give information to people to figure out the past phenomena. In a way, it sheds light on the past sustaining the traditional and cultural values of a nation and serves society by guiding the various crises that they confronted in different time period of the history. As Allen Nerins asserts “a bridge connecting the past with the present and pointing the road to the future” (Alan N. Kay., p.8). So with the publication of Soyinka’s autobiographies several things can be said to have happened to demolish the confidence of people in their understanding of history. The most effective one might be said the publication of *The Man Died*. Soyinka in his work *The Man Died: Prison Notes* describes the cruelty and injustice of the system in many different perspectives but the most important of all, he can manage to reveal the connection between the British and Nigerian military government. Soyinka’s depiction of that relationship which is incompatible with the official history as it based on mutual interest of each side brings us into questioning the legitimacy of Nigerian military official history.

According to Jean Paul Sartre, the writer is not only as determined but determining within society. In this vein, Walter Benjamin has pointed out the potential of the writer for political education and social change. He asserts the literary work is related to certain social phenomena, hence the intention of the author in deciding to write is related to certain factors of his society. In his autobiographical

work *The Man Died: Prison Notes* Soyinka explains his starting point of his work saying:

“When, some twelve years ago, I set out to recapture certain realities of experience in preventative detention, I most certainly made no claims that I was writing a political tract. I did not set out to write the history of Nigeria up to and including the Civil War, nor was I about to set down prescriptions for its political or economic salvation” (Soyinka, 1972, p.XII).

So when we look at the autobiographical works of Soyinka in this light, we can possibly better understand the value and the importance of his works in terms of historical writing and source against the colonial perspective.

Retrospective Insight into Colonial and Postcolonial Pasts in Autobiographical Texts by Wole Soyinka

2.1. The Man Died: Prison Notes

The book *The Man Died: Prison Notes* which consists of Soyinka's collection of notes during his 22 months imprisonment builds up his first autobiographical work. In the book, Soyinka tells about the atrocities committed by the army against innocent Nigerians and how the government tried to oppress them for its own favor. "that the Federal government was deliberately and systematically creating an atmosphere in which could unleash a state of violence and terror on a specific segment of the country's population; that the Federal government was violently repressing the views of dissent, and had, by so doing, created an atmosphere of restive and uneasy calm in a particular part of the country" (Soyinka, 1994, p. XVII). It is worth to mention at the beginning that while we are studying the work of *The Man Died: Prison Notes* we have to keep in our mind that the work in some perspectives mostly affected by Franz Fanon's theory of "resistance". So from this reality one might come across lots of resistance attempts that questioning the colonialism and Nigerian government in the text when he/she analyze it.

In Wole Soyinka's opinion, lack of courage and criticism are the greatest threat to freedom and he has believed that by making criticism is one of the best ways to increase the awareness of people about the reality of their lives and environs. Although all oppressions and persecutions in the high security prison for his criticism and writings, Wole Soyinka does not lose his faith in survival. He tells about how someone may have great crucial impact in achieving his dream of survival come true in a desperate time. "Yet in spite of the most rigorous security measures ever taken against any prisoner in the history of Nigerian prisons, measures taken both to contain and destroy my mind in prison, contact was made. But no matter how

cunning a prisoner, no matter how ingenious –and the definition of a prisoner’s nature is animal cunning—the humanitarian act of courage by the exception among his gaolers plays a key role in his survival” (Soyinka, 1994, p. XXVII).

In his autobiographical work *The Man Died*, Soyinka gives us details about the terrible situation in Nigeria after the 1983 elections by giving an example that took place in Guardian newspaper which he called as an independent newspaper and which had built up a reputation for carefully investigating, nonhysterical reporting. The newspaper says that the issue that Dr. Seinde Arigbede had come across even would have amazed Franz Kafka: “after the disputed 1983 elections Dr. Seinde Arigbede was caught by the Nigerian state and he was taken an empty cell, where he was hung up by the wrist and left dangling, his feet away from the ground, from the specially fixed ceiling hooks” (Soyinka, 1994, p. VII).

The 1960s were not stable for Nigerian community. Before and after 1960 elections in Nigeria, the military government does not stop making plans to suppress the public by sending their men on special courses like Psychology, International Relations, Law, Sociology, Political Science and etc... and keeps on torturing them. According to Soyinka, beside all government plans to stop uprising, the worst of all is that “more hideous obscenity has yet to be imagined in the system of power controls which make it actually possible, even probable, that a student in one’s class will one day be his torturer, or that a student patient at a university hospital, will one day drive electrified needles beneath the nails of his erstwhile physician or push broomsticks up his genitals!” (Soyinka, 1994, p. VIII)

Soyinka as being an intellectual and activist, comments on all these harsh measures and committed atrocities by the government on people as a result of public unquestioning of government’s approaches in taking actions on issues. Believing in this as the key factor for people being crushed by the military dicta, he asks “what

sort of labour solidarity is exhibited when the Secretary-General of the huge army of the Post and Telegraph Workers is allowed to die like a dog in the dungeons of Dodan Barracks, without a voice raised in protest, or a demand for explanation?” (Soyinka, 1994, p. VIII). Then he criticizes people’s approach to handling governmental atrocities and persecutions as normal and routine, saying “but with the certain knowledge that such events are unresolved, and that their lack of resolution promotes their own kind a hundred-thousand fold, with increasingly sophisticated machinery of outrage and camouflage, one recognizes the sanctimonious opiate inherent in popular slogans like ‘Bygones is bygones’” (Soyinka, 1994, p. X). According to Soyinka with this passive and inactive mentality he says “we can hardly hope for any aspect of government with less subversive complications...” (Soyinka, 1994, p. IX). When we look from this perspective, it can be said that the challenge of being an intellectual in a society where power dominates, is more horrifying results in certain kinds of actions, on the part of intellectuals. According to Franz Fanon

“The violence which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world, which has ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms and broken up without reserve the systems of reference of the economy, the customs of dress and external life, that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native at the moment when, deciding to embody history in his own person, he surges into the forbidden quarters” (Fanon, F., Sartre, J., 1965 p. 40).

When we look at the perspective of Soyinka, it is clearly displayed that at certain times of Soyinka’s life, he uses the urgency of the situation at hand, made evident by the lack of improvement in the political conditions of his country, as justification for his radical position even at an age when he is expected to have possibly retired from activism. It is possible to say that by using examples of historical events in his home country Nigeria, Soyinka draws attention to those crises and this attempt of him towards the crises reveals him as an active participant and a resister in socio-politic and economic issues of the country.

The 1960s in Nigeria, as a result of not having political and economic stability in the country can be said to be one of the dark and bloody periods of the country. After the elections were held in 1959 that was scheduled for Nigerian independence, no party gains a majority in the election and the NCNC combined with the NPC forms a government. The first years of independence can be briefly summarized by serious conflicts both inside and outside the country. In 1962, a group of people under the head of S. I. Akinyola set up the Nigerian National Democratic Party in the Western part of the country. After National election in the late 1964, NPC-NNDP coalition emerges which is called as the National Alliance. Although the existence of a coalition government in Nigeria in 1966, it wasn't easy to achieve and sustain a political and social stability in the country.

“Igbo army officers stage a successful coup, which result in the deaths of Federal Prime Minister Balewa, Northern Prime Minister Ahmadu Bello, and Western Prime Minister S. I. Akinyola. Aguiyi Ironsi, an Igbo, becomes the head of a military government and suspends the national and regional constitutions. This coup meets with a violent reaction in the north. In July, 1966, a coup led by Hausa army officers ousts Ironsi and Yakubu Gowon becomes the head of a new military regime” (2007).

After Yakubu Gowon's military government gained the control of the country in 1966, many Igbo that were living in the north of the country were killed. During these coups thousands of people were killed. In that period of time, people live every minute in fear of death or torture by the military junta. It can be said that it was an enigma almost for everybody whether they would see the day light the day after when they got to sleep. In the book *The Man Died* Soyinka tells about the civil servant Dr. Adeyemi Ademola who was mysteriously gunned to death at his Ikoyi home by three armed intruders and says that “the doctor's conducting sensitive autopsy had been closed by the Government. He criticizes this attempt of government to close the case and says “no commission of enquiry into his murder or public appeals for information or clue had been done” (Soyinka, 1994, p. X). After this barbarity of the military government Soyinka compares totalitarian states and Nigerian government saying that “even in totalitarian states, the time comes when

past errors are admitted, high-placed criminals unmasked and victims rehabilitated, mostly alas, posthumously! In Nigeria, we fail to establish a climate of enquiry which, even if they do not provoke immediate consequences” (Soyinka, 1994, p. XI). Although all these acts of violence and persecutions in the country, Soyinka as a powerful and dedicated character says believing that “at the very least, by the vigour with which they are pursued and the manifested rejection of falsifications, ensures that such unresolved anomalies remain on “hold” by sinking finally into the armoury of public wrongs which will reinforce the channels to eventual change” (Soyinka, 1994, p. XI).

Soyinka says that after he finished his book *The Man Died*, he had come across some criticisms as well as commendations. But he explains his perspective of writing of *The Man Died* by those words as an answer to those critics “when twelve years ago, I set out to recapture certain realities of experience in preventative detention, I most certainly made no claims that I was writing a political tract. I did not set out to write the history of Nigeria up to and including the Civil War, nor was I about to set down prescriptions for its political or economic salvation” (Soyinka, 1994, p. XII). In some enlightened quarters there had started a reaction against Soyinka’s writings and his personality. But among those criticisms the most unbearable for Soyinka as he mentioned later is that a growing sense of failure in presenting an ideological blueprint in his writings for those revolutionaries and others freedom hungers against the military junta.

In the book, Soyinka tells us how Nigerian people’s desire for a change was crushed by the government by expelling foreigners from the country and increasing its pressure on its aborigines in 1982. “In 1982, a brief respite was bought by an external shift in their sectionalizing through the inhuman expulsion of millions of aliens, the Ghanaians being the worst sufferers in the unprecedented exodus. The last of such scapegoats having departed, there had to be recourse to internal villainy for the consolidation of the geographical bases these politicians represent.” Then

Soyinka says that this expulsion attempt, pressures on people of the government made Nigerian people lose all their faith for a chance and on the contrary, some masses began to take part in the government. “That they have failed so far was decidedly proved when the people were robbed of their hopes for a change of government in the most cynical non-election in the brief history of national existence. Then the masses turned on the representatives of the party in power, whoever they were. Unlike the case of 1965, not one attack took place on alien quarters within any community” (Soyinka, 1994, p. XXI). This attempt of military government can be also characterized with early colonial policies of England’s divide and conquer policy in Nigeria, in other words, silence policy for the continuation of its own power. Along with this movement of the military junta Nigeria also loses its chance for independency and the opinion for a unified Nigeria begins to collapse for a long time as a result of cruel acts of junta.

When we look at the past historical events, it is not so difficult to see the violence taking many forms in politics. According to Soyinka sometimes these kinds of violence are knowingly kindled by the governments to serve their own interests. To support his idea he says that “all dead-end approaches to political goals-that is, political acts which create a cul-de-sac for all participants in the political process, including even those who initiate the process, constitute a violence which in itself breeds counter violence” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 21) which supports Fanon’s theory of ‘resistance’. In *The Man Died*, Soyinka expresses his ideas about the events that occurred before and aftermath 1983 elections of which he believes were organized by the government. “The first thing to note is that it (1983 election issues) was unleashed by the party which was already in power. The purpose was to cow the populace into retaining the status quo, terrorizing voters away from manifesting their political allegiances...” And Soyinka supports his ideas about the government by giving one example: “in Ondo State, three leaders of the main opposition party, the UPN were killed, gangland-execution style, in their own homes. The assassins went coolly from one house to the next on a given list and shot down their victims in front of their families” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 23). According to Soyinka, although this affair

took happened weeks before the general election, in his opinion, all these assassins were planned either to start a reaction that would led the current president to get use the advantage of his emergency rights such as canceling the general elections and imposing his own rules or to deliver a warning message to the antigovernment.

In the 1960s and 1980s socio-political situation in Nigeria were always fluctuating. So that people were always living in fear of death or being arrested by the military officers. The events performed explicitly before and in the aftermath of the 1983 election by the government essentially show us the incapability of people for change. In the book *The Man Died*, Soyinka questions the poor condition of people against the military dictatorship and he asks himself a question which is essentially displays the political cul-de-sac in Nigeria: “what a chance people have if popular leaders could be shot down with such impunity, what chance have the faceless followers?” Then he says that “the luckier opposition party activists were simply arrested at whim, taken to remote police cells where they were starved, tortured and forgotten” (Soyinka, 1994, p. XXI - XXII). According to Fanon, “national liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people, commonwealth: whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon” (Fanon, F., Sartre, J., 1965 p. 35) and we can also see this reality from Soyinka’s observation of Nigeria and Nigerian government. In regarding this, Soyinka compares El Salvador’s gangsters and Nigerian military officers which are functioning in the same way: just giving people fear or death. And he says that these military groups were welcomed by the government and made them intentionally show up on TVs or radios to show the power of government. “Perhaps the Right-wing death squads of El Salvador may have a thing or two to teach our newly created para-military police unites...These creatures were paraded on television and introduced by the General of Police, Sunday Adewusi, as something worse than psychopathic killers, who would be unleashed on the people at the first sign of trouble...They shot out of sight, pumping live ammunition into densely populated quarters, blowing away unseen lives with a strange mixture of disdain and relish” (Soyinka, 1994, p. XXII). The 1980s perhaps

were the most terrible periods of Nigerian history. Every part of the country could be said in flame and terror and Soyinka describes this situation of the country saying “nothing that Eisenstein could have composed matched the horror of the pictures in places like Odo-ona (Ibadan, Oyo State), Oke-Igbo (Ondo State) as innocents were brought out death from the broken sanctuary of their own homes” (Soyinka, 1994, p. XXII). And in all this combative environ in 1980s Nigerian people pushed to keep on their livings even in fear of from their own shadows.

According to Soyinka, in 1982 in which the election was held the number of guns and criminal records reached its highest level. He says that in the 1980s more armour was seen in the villages and towns than at any time even during the Nigerian Civil War. Police and military officers had their own special torture cells and methods. Then he says “torture has been institutionalized to such an extent that even provincial police stations now have their own torture cells” (Soyinka, 1994, p. XXII). It is for this reason that Soyinka says that he had eliminated from this edition some superfluous details and comments on the atrocities committed by the army against innocent Nigerians. When we looked at the actions of Nigerian military government to try to hide its dirty linen from public it can be said that it was the most pleased one from these eliminations of atrocities and genocides in the book.

As an intellectual, Soyinka believes that pressure on people just puts off the wish for change but never stop it. He claims that people’s hunger for a change cannot be prevented as long as the last one continues to breathe in the world. He says “our people have just undergone a savaging, contemptuously inflicted upon them for no other reason than their resolve to change a government by peaceful means. What make it difficult for them are pressures and restrictions again put by their kinds without any base” (Soyinka, 1994, p. XXIII). According to Soyinka, the more pressure put over people, the more violent wish for change becomes inevitable. “It is therefore only appropriate that I adopt as epilogue, a warning which, since the elections, served as a banner on successive issues of one of the Nigerian dailies:

those who make peaceful change impossible make violent change inevitable” (Soyinka, 1994, p. XXIII). To give an example to Soyinka’s word, the Arab Spring event that we have experienced in the recent history is the best example which symbolizes a revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests that first began on 18 December 2010 in Tunisia that is called the Tunisian Revolution or the Jasmine Revolution then spread throughout the countries of the Arab League and surroundings in the Arab world. Although starting point of the Arab Spring is widely believed to have occurred as a result of dissatisfaction with the wide gaps in income levels of people, longtime ruling governments’ turning a deaf ear to their publics’ change wishes as dictatorships along with numerous factors such as human rights violations, political corruption, economic decline and unemployment can be said to have played a very important role as well in this civil uprisings and violent changes. In short, it showed us that nothing can stand up against the common wishes of change in the communities even though the result is bloody.

In 1980s, Soyinka had been arrested several times by the government officers without giving any clear evidences for his detentions. He says that because of the government close watch on him, he could not set a contact with people freely. “Even in the two years at which I have been at liberty I have not dared contact such individuals knowing that the largest security force the continent is still very closely interested in my personal relationships” (Soyinka, 1994, p. XXVII).

The world of public intellectuals appears to be a unique one in the sense that they have to deal with a lot of challenges imposed on them by their roles in society and at the same time maintain a public image which complements their personality as individuals interested in the progress of society. In this respect Nigerian writer and intellectual Soyinka’s autobiographies pose a very important role in understanding the history of Nigeria as well as the author’s own-life.

In the book *The Man Died*, Soyinka says when he was held in prison in 1980s as a political activist, he got a letter from George Mangakis, a professor in Greece, who was then a captive of fascist dictators. After reading the letter Soyinka tells us how the letter revived his sensation and mind as a political activist. In the letter George Mangakis speak of the necessity of writing. “It is a need that suffocates one, at times. Self-defense. That is why I write. That is how I manage to keep my mind under control. If I let it loose, unsupported by the frame of written thought, it goes wild” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 12). So it can be concluded from Mangakis’ letter that Soyinka’s writing the book *The Man Died*, which mostly covers Soyinka’s prison life is a product of this necessity of writing. After reading George Mangakis’ letter, Soyinka gives his first impressions about the letter related to both his home country and his personality saying “George Mangakis did not only give contemporary expression to our own present fate but that it also performs for me a therapy” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 14).

Although Soyinka lived so many difficulties and persecutions in 1980s, he had never given up following the daily issues out of the prison and by the help of his friends, he gets information that he is interested in. Segun Sowemimo is one of those Soyinka’s interest coverage and in the book, he briefly tells us how his relation with Sowemimo had affected the name of Soyinka’s book: “The dog of this immediate death was a journalist, Segun Sowemimo. I followed his case with interest. I sent word to colleague to trace him and send me news of him. His reply is contained in the cable beside me at this moment: *The Man Died*. This evening I recognized in it the only title for this book” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 13). Soyinka says that he had exceeded his limits by writing the book *The Man Died* about the military government of the time and put his life into danger. Then he continues saying that he had avoided of mentioning the names in the book that were then playing revolutionist roles on the way of attempting for a change in the government. “I recognized also that I moved long ago beyond compromise, that this book is now, and that only such things should be left out which might imperil those on whom the true revolution within the country depends” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 13). According to Popkin, memoir of a novelist often

gives both significant and insignificant details about the process of his writing. So analyzing Soyinka autobiographical work in this perspective like giving some insignificant details instead significant ones just like he did like not mentioning the real names of people, although he says his intention to protect them and their activism against government and colonialism this attempt of Soyinka decreases the credibility of the autobiographical work *The Man Died: Prison Notes* as a historical source.

According to Soyinka, “when a dictatorship is imposed on your country, the very first thing you feel, the very first day – and it is a feeling that has a totally spontaneous immediacy, free from all mental elaboration- the first feeling is humiliation” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 14). And he explains how this process worked in the mind of the oppressed one by one by those words “you are being deprived of the right to consider yourself worthy of responsibility for your own life and destiny. This feeling of humiliation grows day by day, as a result of the oppressor’s unceasing effort to force your mind to accept all the vulgarity which makes up the abortive mental world of dictators” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 14). In Soyinka’s opinion, his detention and being taken into custody are absolutely two different events. He believes that the one reason why he was treated so cruelly as a result of the political activities such as his condemn the war in Nigerian newspapers, his giving a visit to the East part of the country and his endeavor to bring together Nigerian intellectuals and academicians within and outside the country to create a lobbying group whose aim is to put entire restriction in supplying arms to Nigeria, “creating a third force which would utilize the ensuing military stalemate to repudiate and end both the secession of Biafra, and the genocide of consolidated dictatorship of the army” (Johnson, J., 2008, p. 287) which made both war and separation of the county inevitable. And the other one why he was framed and set free immediately; he says that “I was framed for my activities in gaol. I was framed and nearly successfully liquidated because of my activities inside prison” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 19). Soyinka later expresses his belief about his arrest and frame scheme “on the essential level however, the two acts of violence, the arrest and the frame up stem from the same source of corruption” (Soyinka, 1994, p.

19-20). Even though all these intrigues acted by the government, Soyinka says that the support letters from people and other captives in both Nigeria and other countries increased his faith in the way that he followed. And it can be said that among these support messages the letter of George Mangakis holds very special place in the memory of Soyinka “more importantly, the letter from prison was for me validation of the political stand which led to my arrest. I recognize today that it was this challenging fact of direct, immediate and continuing confirmation of the rot of power at the source which imposed on me the further duty of communicating the latest proof of the moral basis of our stand to my colleagues at liberty” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 19-20).

In 1980s, politic turmoil in Nigeria can be said to have reached its peak. Government and military pressure over people, unfortunately, had left no place for discussions about justice. As Soyinka noted in *The Man Died*, the same problematic and atrocious approaches of government was performed towards people in the years 1960s and these actions had paved the way of committing secession and war which also brought so much blood. “Resumes a debate (-for justice) that has been covered only thinly by the crust of blood. That crust is worn daily thinner by the continued tread of oppressive boots. It sums up the colossal moral failure within the nation, a failure that led to secession and war” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 20). According to Wole Soyinka, the communities that repressed by the governments or military powers has two choices “the failure to acquire an extraordinary historic acuity of vision and see with total clarity that humiliated nations are inevitably led either to a lethal decadence, a moral and spiritual withering, or to a passion for revenge which results in bloodshed and upheaval” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 20). According to Fanon, showing similar thoughts with Soyinka about the decolonization he says “to wreck the colonial world is henceforward a mental picture of action which is very clear, very easy to understand and which may be assumed by each one of the individuals which constitute the colonized people” (Fanon, F., Sartre, J., 1965 p. 40-41).

In the book *The Man Died*, Soyinka shares one of the most shocking experiences of him which took place in America. When some years ago, the bodies of three Civil Rights workers, one of them a black man, are recovered in the Deep South of savage America like millions of black people all over the world, experiences a disgusted conviction that only the fact the other two were white (and rich) induce the massive effort to discover their fate and compel the futile attempt to bring their murderers to justice. Soyinka and his friends marvel in a short time when the public prosecutor declared that acting on given directives he was unable to choose another option except drop the case. As the prosecutor said, the army authorities had wanted to solve this event themselves. From this memoir of him Soyinka comes to a conclusion and he says that “with that event not only the Courts of Justice of the Western Region, but the very pretence of law and justice in the entire federation were subverted to the doctrine of justifiable genocide!” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 21) From this point of view, we can say that injustice, persecution and genocide were not a kind of characteristic that just belongs to Nigerian’s military power in that period of time in the world. Taking on this fact, Soyinka urges people black people and his own community to fight for their rights. He warns them to be open-minded and see the details in the occurred events in both Nigeria and other parts of the world. “Moreover, unless we are singularly shortsighted and confess no further interest in the kind of society that must be raised on the ashes of this one” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 22). In this perspective, he wants and supports the idea of Fanon “decolonization unifies that people by the radical decision to remove from it its heterogeneity and by unifying it on a national, sometimes a racial basis” (Fanon, F., Sartre, J., 1965 p. 46).

Soyinka believes the necessity of some special groups and institutions to fight efficiently against any inhumanity. “It is obvious that certain foundations must be laid right now whose ideals will at least rescue our struggle from the common exercise of butchery and bestiality, and from their origin and cause of human damnation...” and at the end he puts forward a proposal and says that “a beginning must be made somewhere, so let it be made by us in the West” (Soyinka, 1994, p.

22). In his all life, Soyinka says that he had no taste for power and a seat. He says that he always tried to dedicate his life just for the happiness and welfare of his community. In the 1980s, lots of committee and groups were set up to cease the violence in the country. Among these groups and committees, the Committee of Ten can be said the most criticized group by Soyinka. In one of their conversation with Mallam D. Soyinka says that “The Committee of Ten are not intellectuals. And they lack of any sort of conviction. Or commitment. Except of course playing games in the corridors of power.” And in his another conversation he makes harsh criticism for The Committee of Ten accusing it as being ““power prostitutes””. According to Soyinka, any system which allows for the machinery of secrecy against an individual is the method of Gestapo. He says “the Gestapo mind believes more in holding than releasing, in guilt than in justice” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 39). From this point, he criticizes the Nigerian Government as being Gestapo.

In the book *The Man Died*, Soyinka shares with us one of his personal experiences that had increased his emotion and sensation and led him consider himself as a human. “In the prison in 1967, they have been instructed to chain my legs together. I sensed a vivid contradiction in all this, a contradiction in my being, in my human self-awareness and self-definition. In fact one might say that never until this moment did that self-definition become so clear as when I viewed these chains on my ankles. The definition was a negative one; as, finally, a human being” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 40). Although all negativity of the prison on personality Soyinka as an intellectual and activist turns the condition for his own stake and he says that even how it is bad and disgusting the prison have matured him personally by letting him to learn to starve his violence into calm. The same thing can be said also for Nigerian people especially for women. When the military officers dipped their hands in their salt, vegetables, in their corn and oil, right up to the elbow and imposed extra taxes on and do it as a right let Nigerian people to reconsider themselves as a human being to fight against the injustice and persecution of the tyranny.

In the prison, Soyinka takes some precautionary measures like not eating and drinking so much because of the risk of getting poisoned by the government. “Unfortunately going to the lavatory is one walk a man can’t avoid taking. I avoid that you see, or minimize it, by not eating. I pointed to the glass of water on the table. Just one of that a day. Quite sufficient. By tomorrow I should need to piss only once a day. After that I won’t need to go at all” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 44). When Wole Soyinka got into prison, the news is spread all over the world very fast. The well-known newspapers and TVs in the world release the event as the latest news. All these close watch of the world on the arrestment Mallam D., the police officer, wonders about how the foreign papers got the news of Soyinka’s arrest immediately and how could they have known and why all this publicity? Then Mallam D. warns Soyinka about his publicity and says Soyinka “I hope you realize that all this publicity is not helping your case one bit. They simply make your position more awkward. An hour later he gave orders that I was to be transferred to Kiri-kiri Prison” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 45). Even though all pressures in the prison, Soyinka does not give up to literate himself. In the prison, he tries to get information from newspapers or books about the political agenda of the government and he feels himself lucky at least to have a permission of the prison authority for supplying some reading materials.

In the narrative, Soyinka gives us the clear background of the Biafran secession and what kind of role he and his friends had played after the secession movement to cease the civil war in Nigeria. The Nigerian Civil War which is also called as the Biafran War, is “an ethnic and political conflict caused by the attempted secession of the southeastern of Nigeria as the self-proclaimed Republic of Biafra” (The Polynational War Memorial, 2014). In the mid-1960s, politic and economic uncertainty and ethnic conflictions can be said to have characterized Nigerian public life. The conflict between the Igbo of the southeast of Nigeria and the Hausas of north aroused from mainly economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions. In September 1966, wrath and envy against the more wealthy and literated Igbos erupts into violence. So the seeds of a civil war are sown by ethnic

and economic diversity between two different groups and about 35,000 Igbo people were slaughtered in the Northern and almost 1,150,000 escaped to East. After violence against Igbos turned into slaughtering by the northerners, Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu who is the governor of south-east of which majority of population dominated by Igbo people, pointing out the massacres in the northern and electoral shemes that took place in 1964-65, proclaims independence of the Republic of Biafra. After the secession movement of Biafran, General Yakubu Gowon launches a counter attack and kindles a civil war which will last about three years. In the narrative, Soyinka says that he had tried to recruit Aminu Abdullahi in London for the anti-war movement and after Aminu's release, he had been sent to Nigeria by an organization to try and obtain Soyinka's release. Then Aminu Abdullahi is offered to go to Ojukwu during London discussions of the organization in 1996 in which Soyinka himself took part as a member, but later the organization decides that it was too risky to send Abdullahi to Ojukwu as being a Northerner and the war having already begun. So the organization chooses Soyinka to talk to Ojukwu as an activist to cease the Civil War.

To understand Soyinka's approach towards the Biafran secession it is enough to look at his conversation with Mallam D. in the prison. Mallam D. accuses Soyinka forming a committee to campaign internationally against the importation of arms to Nigeria. Soyinka as an answer to all these accusations remarks that he had already declared that this war was morally unjustified. Soyinka sees the war as a last thing should be applied. As an intellectual Soyinka believes the power of communication and claims that using war weapons would never solve the real problem between the two sides. By the help of his friends, he tries to set up some lobbying groups to stop the war between both sides. During the war Soyinka phones up some friends at the U.N. to set up a pressure group to lobby against all supply of arms to either side and let them join in the discussion for bilateral solution in the country.

We can more or less understand the investment environment in Nigeria with Soyinka's brief story in the past. Although the economic and social crisis during the Balewa regime in Nigeria in 1960s was serious and affected all people, economic investments in the country were not totally suspended. Before its independence in 1960, Nigerian economy could be easily summarized by the dominance of commercial activities and exports. There wasn't any applicable industrial opportunity for the investors. So after the independence of Nigeria, agriculture had continued its importance as the backbone of the economy. Although the fluctuations in world prices, agriculture contributed a huge amount to National income and almost alone gave a shoulder to the economy representing nearly 80 per cent of overall exports. Another contribution of agriculture was to provide the foreign currency which utilized commerce with the foreign states while importing capital goods and raw materials. At the beginning of 1960s, agricultural productions, raw materials and some minerals began to be exported to the some developed nations. "By the adoption of the Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) strategy in 1960, consequently, various consumer items, which were hitherto imported, were begun to have produced domestically. Protective measures like tariffs, quotas, etc. were in place to ensure that domestic industries were allowed to grow" (Ekro, A., &Umoh, O., 2012). In short term, new work areas were created for people. Although many industries were tried to be protected by government, Nigerian native investors and industrialists couldn't get use the advantage of safeguarding measures those were set by Nigerian military government to increase the competitiveness of producers with foreign competing manufacturers. By the acceptance of First National Development Plan by Balewa government that includes the years between 1962- 1968, the State goes into directly and indirectly so many vivid economic activities. According to the plan, the main thing that government should do and supply is the infrastructure for domestic and foreign investors which are necessary to build factories. In 1960s, as a result of high rate of poverty and famine, government hands over investment funds to enhance Nigerian's economic development. The scarcity of varieties in working industry, the gap among the poor and the rich, although was not quite evident until the 1960s; it begins to emerge at the beginning of 1960s. In the second half of 1960, "a class of traders, commission agents and contractors started to appear. The manufacturing,

trading and services sub-sectors were still controlled by non-Nigerians. Most of the big companies were branches of multi nationals with no sign of domestic manufacturers until the mid-1960s when some Nigerians began to occupy senior positions in a few multinational companies” (Umoh, O., &Ekro, A., 2012). Until the oil-boom in late 1960s, Nigerian economy could be characterized by the dominance of agriculture and some limited commercial activities in small manufacturing bases that using primitive technology. However after the exploration of huge amount of petroleum, great amount of oil and petroleum-based goods began to have been produced in well-designed technological industries and both exported and consumed within Nigeria. Until the 1960s, main agricultural products that were produced in Nigeria comprised from palm oil, corn, cocoa, millet, rice, peanuts, sheep, yams, timber, fish, cattle, pigs, goats, rubber, and cassava, after the investment of big foreign petroleum companies because of productive oilfields in Nigeria had stimulated other foreign investors and can be said to have been broadened industrial investment areas such as, steel, footwear, printing, tin, fertilizer, textiles, ceramics, and coal in Nigeria.

During the prison time of Soyinka in Kiri-kiri, he follows up a routine of reading and eating. And he explains his prison life with those words: “I settled down into the monotony of Kiri-kiri which had itself settled down to a routine of read-stroll-read-eat-read-sleep. There would be no more interrogation- that much I had learnt” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 66). In the Kiri-kiri prison, he is given a chance to use the library in the Superintendent’s office but the books are not the type of he is interested in and he asks the possibility of getting new books from the city library and the answer is ‘no’ because of the occurred issues in the hospital. And he says: “Books? Mainly cheap novels on a little shelf in the Superintendent’s office. There was no proper library. I asked if books could be obtained for me from the main city library but the incident of the hospital had in the end only caused tighter strictures on the detainees in our prison. Primitive, inhuman directives were issued in the name of Security by the Gestapo to hold detainees in closer confine, to reduce their contact with the outside world to absolute zero” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 69).

It is known fact from history that the first thing that every Military Government wants to do is to decrease the foreign pressure on itself by showing up some democracy plays. In 1960s, the same tricks are played by Gowon regime on Wole Soyinka. The government offers Soyinka to see his wife in return to accept the accusations against him that has been held by the government. But even though Soyinka rejects the offer, the military government does its best by telling lies to the public about him. One afternoon Soyinka receives a visitor, his wife and they talk for an hour, not privately but in the presence of Mallam D. and three prison officials in the Superintendent's office. After his meeting with his wife the following day a press release is made by Tony Enahoro on the Sunday Post 29 October 1967 reporting that: "a famous Nigerian playwright, Head of Drama and Lecturer in English of the Lagos University, Mr Wole Soyinka, has been detained under the emergency regulations. Mr Soyinka has been ominously connected with espionage activities for the rebel leader Odemegwu Ojukwu against the Federal Military Government" (Soyinka, 1994, p. 72-73). And it is claimed in the newspaper that Soyinka had said "it was neat, beautiful compact" after he was given permission to be met his wife in the prison. After Soyinka learnt all these frames, he says "the military machine had some highly efficient experts on public psychology working on my affairs" and he guesses the possible understanding of the public towards this frame up saying "in return for his confession, the repentant traitor has been allowed a visit from his wife. He is happy, contented, and relaxed, glad to have got the whole thing off his chest" (Soyinka, 1994, p. 72-73).

The prison years of Wole Soyinka can be said to have been very harsh and anguishing for him. He is held under very strict conditions and every minute of him is kept under surveillance. But against all these negative sides of the prison, Soyinka carries out finding a way to change the condition for himself. "A prisoner knows at once just who will aid him and who will not. And I was ready to take chances, there being nothing left to lose. My mind was racing when the chance finally came, a mere tantalizing flash of opportunity. I managed to arrest that flash and make it serve" (Soyinka, 1994, p. 82). In the prison, he sets up a communication link and all daily

news is transmitted through this link. Soyinka says that “my private link was operated through two faithful who had taken up residence at the army post by the prison. They used the names “Dan” and “Sojo”. At most hours of the day they were to be found at the palm-wine shack where they caroused with the soldiers and met with prison warders on or off-duty. They communicated easily with prisoners who worked outside the prison walls, mowing the gardens or painting the walls of the senior prison officials. Each day one or the other met a mutual friend, an army officer of strange, indefinable duties. We called him G. I owe my life to the vigil of this trio” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 74).

As an activist, Soyinka plays a very important role in the political history of Nigeria. After the abortive coups in 1970s, Tony Enahoro escapes to England who is called as megaphone of official falsehood by Soyinka. After this event, Soyinka starts active lobbying on his repatriation to Nigeria by British government and he says “he fled from scene after the abortive coup and was obligingly held by the British government on behalf of their feudal favourities” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 93). According to Soyinka, the repatriation of Enahoro would be too great a loss in the thinning ranks of the radicals and when he flew England for active lobbying on Enahoro’s issue, he gets help from two English politicians Tom Driberg and Wayland Young (Lord Kennet).

After the military coup in 1982, a lot of people had been captured by the government in Nigeria. Soyinka says “there were petty traders among them, students, doctors, senior and junior civil servants, crooks also since they were all human beings” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 98). In the narrative, Soyinka tells us the real approach of the government officers to the civilians and tells us a conversation of him with a student in the prison. “I turned to the student. ‘And you? Any interrogation?’ No. The only interrogation we had was to be taken out by the soldiers for the Dodan roulette. That was the name I gave it. The soldiers would take you out and line you against the wall to be shot. It could be a live bullet or a blank. It depends on your

luck” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 105). After this conversation with the student Soyinka gives us another example of the government by showing that how Ibo people were slaughtered in the prison and how this massacre was covered by the government. “Two weeks ago a corporal was brought in-he wasn’t yet tried or court-martialled mind you. He was sent by his field-officer to Lagos to be made an example of. He had shot thirteen detainees in Asaba including some prisoners of war in cold blood. They were kept together in a stockade and he was on guard. A young man, a Yoruba, quite a nice boy. They all come here to use the table tennis with the V.I. Prisoners. He admitted shootings them in panic, said they were talking in Ibo and he asked them to speak only English. They ignored him. He decided that they were plotting something so turned his machinegun on them and killed them. He was released two days ago, re-assigned to a new division” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 109). But the more interesting and surprising thing for everybody is the release of the officer without paying a day for crime in the prison. According to Soyinka this injustice action of the government had surprised the other officers and even the killer himself. He says “they were all discussing it, his fellow soldiers I mean. Even they didn’t think much of that system of justice... The boy was the most surprised of the lot. Expecting a court-martial and at least seven years in gaol” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 109). And at the end, Soyinka express how he was disappointed by the court decision on the issue saying that he had supposed at least one day a piece for a murdered Ibo was quite sufficient.

In the narrative, Soyinka also tells us how the government tried to appease the public outrage for the crimes and vandalism by setting up an investigation commission. He says that “directly after the liberation of the Mid-West from the grip of rebel vandals by the gallant Federal soldiers, the government of Gowon-Ogbemudia in the Mid-West immediately set up a Commission known as the ‘atrocities’ commission” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 118). But although all these immediate precaution of the government, Soyinka describes the situation of the county saying “the war was still on of course. If anything it was hotter, fiercer, more total than ever. The words were total war, total mobilization, crushing blow...” (Soyinka, 1994, p.

118). In May 1966 Ironsi appoints a Commission to inquire into atrocities, known generally as the Minor Massacres in the North. This Commission works until Gowon seizes power in June of that year. After Ironsi gained the power, he declares public that the work of the Commission would continue unhindered- this was one of his earliest statements to the nation. Then Soyinka criticizes the action of Ironsi saying that although all his promises to public “privately he rendered the Commission defunct. The nation heard no more of this Ironsi initiated Gowon-inherited Commission into the May atrocities” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 119).

According to Soyinka, when Gowon got the power in September/October 1966, he had an opportunity on a grand scale to launch a big commission of his own. But after a short period, Gowon shows to which card he will play. Soyinka says “he had every right not to believe in the value of Commissions into atrocities. The silencing of the earlier (May) Commission indicated that this might be so. This was his privilege. A man, especially one with so much work to do, has the right to consider Commissions irrelevant in themselves” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 147). After Gowon took his position by closing his eyes towards the atrocities let other atrocities occur in every region of Nigeria. In opinion of Soyinka, it is the North where the atrocities were felt in grand scale. “The atrocities were so public even in the South (Lagos) that delegates to a Constitutional Conference which had been launched by Gowon’s Army right in view of the house of Assembly buildings where these constitutional talks did take place. Man-hunts, publicized by machine-gun stutters, took place around Ikoyi where Gowon lived, and the executions and torture games that went on in his official residence, Dodan Barracks, on civilians who were simply arrested on the public road- Ikorudu checkpoint was the favorite kidnap point- were common daylight occurrences known to Yakubu Gowon” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 119-120).

In the prison years, Soyinka experiences so many difficulties but despite all these negativities he does not give up fighting against the cruelty of the power. He says that “every day I spend in this hole will be paid for by someone... and he tongues what he felt against the persecution of the power by saying “my work, my suspended life, my deprivations. It is not possible to measure such debts in terms of cash” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 146). In 1970, Soyinka resigns from his academician position at the University of Ibadan and devotes his time to writing, “leaving the door wide open to the fantasies of an idle academic community...” he says. In *The Man Died*, he tells us an interesting story of him with Yakubu Gowon government “Yakubu Gowon had sent special instructions to the university to pay my salary entitlements for the period spent in detention, that on receipt of this unexpected nest-egg I had decided to take up a Hollywood contract and spend the rest of my life in glamour and clover...” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 146). This example of him, shows us how Soyinka’s hateful relationship with the Gowon government continued even after Soyinka’s release from prison.

In opinion of Soyinka, the whole trouble for the war is that people don’t like to leave their seats. But he says “perhaps I am looking at things too simply again, but that is the way I see it. Our people never admit it to themselves when their usefulness is over. The politicians want to stay on for ever so they plunge the country into chaos” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 159). In the period of Gowon’s military government bilateral relations between Soyinka and Gowon never get on the way and their politic and social ideas on people almost always collapse with each other. So Soyinka remarks this controversy saying “the truth is I am allergic to being in government employ...” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 159) also making his position clear against the Nigerian government.

Despite all negative events such as civil war, military coup and oppressions which eventually affected the poor segments in the country, the elites of the country still continues to live in welfare. The elite women come together for 5 o’clock tea

and talk about fashion or their daily routines as a ritual: “at the Hamdala Hotel, a fashion display formed the main event for the modern housewife of the North, sponsored naturally by the British Council. The innocent designer for this charade was Shade, commissioned by the Council to give demonstration lectures to the middle-class wives of the new Kaduna elite on cosmetics, make up, fashion, deportment and allied female preoccupations” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 166). From this telling of Soyinka we can understand the missionary effect of England was still at high rate even after Nigeria declared its independence from England in the 1960s.

As an intellectual writer Soyinka always defends the unity of Nigeria. In 1967, when the declaration of secession was announced by the Easterners, Soyinka feels disappointed about the future of Nigeria. By this attempt of the Easterners, He says “they left us the Mafia and the Military in the unbreakable alliance of mutual, lucrative guilt. And with a successful philosophy of genocide. Because if the East goes then there was no crime in the new entity still known as Nigeria. And the nation would be too busy mending its fences to bother with the – by then – monotonous demand for a complete moral purge. As for further hopes of building anything approaching a socialist state...” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 177).

According to Soyinka, the Soviets fought their Civil War gun in hand and political ideology in their heads which took place a whole half century ago. Then he compares Nigerian civil war with the Soviets and comments on who got the advantage from this war in Nigeria by saying “we thrust soldiers today into the field with just the slogan Kill Yanmiri or Kill-Hausa. And for whose benefit? The damned bourgeois capitalists who have already begun to lap up the profits of a rising war industry” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 180). And from this perspective, he criticizes people’s lack of ability to understand to whom stake they were serving as a puppet.

In 1967, before and after civil war a lot of people had been taken to prisons without giving any clear evidence. Soyinka says that “it is March, 1969. I have been in prison eighteen months. Fifteen of those have been here in Kaduna, in solitary... Nobody knows why. They have no files, nothing. They are locked up for no reason at all. Nobody knows a thing about them at the police department or in the army for that matter” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 216-218). During long prison period Soyinka tries to read newspapers and books as much as he can to break the hunger of information about the ongoing events in Nigerian. When he learnt something new, he thinks broadly and comments on them. But in the prison, it can be said that it is not the only occupation of Soyinka. He says that he had fed ants and flies in a short period and let them fight to each other, essentially considering their fight as Nigerian civil war by giving two sides names as Biafra and Nigeria. He says “at colonies whose natural cruelties I exploited to stage duels to the death- one red, one black ant or teams from each group put together in a bottle would massacre one another to the last man: I named them Biafra and Nigeria” (Soyinka, 1994, p. 245).

3.2. Aké: The Years of Childhood

Aké: The Years of Childhood is the second autobiographical book of Wole Soyinka. In the book, Soyinka narrates his childhood memoirs including social and political events that he came across in his first eleven year's period. The autobiographical writing *Aké: The Years of Childhood* (1981) can be seen as a basement for the later works of Soyinka since it also deals with the political and social situation in Nigeria in the colonial time beside his childhood memoirs. From this perspective, the book "follows no strict chronology and is rich in sensory detail, imagery, and Yoruba words and variants. As Soyinka grows throughout the book, spanning approximately the first eleven years of his life, Soyinka's perspective of himself and its reflection on his life in Nigeria and Nigeria's place in the world also matures" (Kreisler, Harry., 1998). In his childhood, Soyinka is very active and always keeps himself with the challenging works. He says that "sometimes I simply wandered off among the rocks intending merely to climb a challenging surface when no one was around" (Soyinka, 1981, p. 26). It can be excluded from this example that even in his childhood Soyinka was an undaunted and brave child to fight against the challenges a resister character.

According to Jeremy D. Popkin, "readers of a novelist's autobiography may be interested in details of the writing process that produced the works by which the author entered their lives, but historians know better than to assume that their books are so meaningful to their readers that the circumstances under which they were written will be of much interest" (Popkin, J., 2005, p.170). According to Popkin, memoir of a novelist often gives both significant and insignificant details about the process of his writing. So analyzing the autobiographical writing of Wole Soyinka *Aké: The Years of Childhood*, it should be kept in mind that autobiography as a fictionalization of writer's own life might bear abundant metaphors and magical events that aiming to attract the attention of his reader which decrease the credibility of autobiographical work as historical source.

Soyinka's life, essentially, is showed in great details. His father name is Samuel Ayodele whom Soyinka calls as 'Essay' or 'S.A' in his autobiographies is the manager of St. Peter's collage in Abeokuta. His mother's name is Grace Eniola Soyinka whom he calls as 'Wild Christian', is a merchant. While his father Essay represents a figure of authority, his mother Wild Christian represents "fostered an atmosphere of exotic disarray and spontaneity, often inviting an array of boarders or strays to room with her children" (Ankenbrandt, Spicer, 2010). In the book *Aké*, Soyinka tells about his mother's ambition to help the poor and his husband's supportive approach to her action to take care of the poor by those words; "yet, at night, sufficient space was created on the floor where a mat was spread to sleep a constantly varying assortment of children- sometimes as many as twelve- there being no more avid a collector of strays than Wild Christian, tacitly aided by her husband" (Soyinka, 1989, p.79). Coming to Wole Soyinka's religious belief, he says that he doesn't belong to any religious groups and he describes himself as a humanist. Although he doesn't have any participation in religious groups, even though his family is radical Christian, Soyinka considers himself a very fortunate having been raised in a Christian environment and enmeshed in African values. He says he had taken a fancy to what he saw was a toughly combined system which has a kind of respectful relationship with human and environment in general. Soyinka describing himself as a humanist says that he had taken most of his metaphorical images and statements from the Yoruba worldview. According to Soyinka, what makes Yoruba religion different from the other religions is that "the human characteristics of the deities that belong in the Yoruba pantheon actually make that religion one of the most humanist types of religion someone will encounter anywhere in the world" (Free Inquiry Magazine, 2004). Soyinka says emphasizing that "the Yoruba philosophy drastically reduces the absolute authority of deities over the lives of human beings and therefore reduces the dependency of human beings on the interpreters of the extraterrestrial authority" (Allen, N., 2004). In Soyinka's perspective, religion is freedom of expression. It is a kind of mean for people to express themselves spiritually. It stems from the religions that people put themselves into an attempt to get other people into their own belief system by trying to persuade their religion is the best satisfying one. The worst thing that Soyinka is afraid of and

that threads humanity is “those nations that say it’s a crime to preach your religion are making a terrible mistake. All they’re doing is driving underground other forms of spiritual intuitions and practices” (Godwin, P., 2012). In regarding this, although Soyinka supports his mother’s belief in helping such as building up a warm home for the poor, taking them to church and praying for them not to have a habit of stealing, lying and fighting in their future lives, he still believes these attempts of Wild Christian are to row against the stream. Soyinka says that “I had long lost faith in the efficiency of Wild Christian’s prayers. There were several of her wards over whom she prayed night and day. She took them into the church and prayed over them, found any excuse, any opportunity at all to drag them before the altar and pray over them. They continued to steal, lie, fight or do whatever it was she prayed against” (Soyinka, 1981, p. 105). According to Soyinka, all the prayers that his mother had said doubtlessly worked for nobody than Wild Christian herself. He says that although her mother Wild Christian seemed to succeed her wishes and she always claims that her prayers were accepted. But Soyinka has the opposite thought of her mother; he believes that his mother is deeply overwhelmed by the absolute authority of religion which Soyinka directly stands against.

Living a cultural garden Soyinka’s environment was a mixture of both British and Nigerian cultures, traditions and Christian practices. Having been Soyinka’s parents and relatives actively engaged with social and governmental issues had inescapable effects on Wole Soyinka’s life. That’s why his starting point in politics and activism cannot be separated with his relationship with his parents and aunt Funmilayo Ransome Kuti, who was admired as a political actor both in the town and country who kindled the famous Egba women's riots and gave a way to change the ruler of the country in 1945. Soyinka is a huge supporter of justice and he believes justice is the first condition of humanity and within this belief he exemplifies his first involvement for justice saying “that began in the late 1930s, when the women, led by my aunt, the formidable Funmilayo Ransom-Kuti, rose against unjust taxes and chased the feudal lord, the Alake of Abeokuta, from his throne” (Soyinka, 2007).

As an intellectual Soyinka's father Essay and his fellows holding up meetings about the social and political issues with the prominent people of the town, Wild Christian is the most supportive partner of Essay. Almost every day, Essay, the bookseller, Fowokan the junior headmaster of the primary school, the catechist and some of their friends come together after church service and they talk about daily socio-political and economic situation of Nigeria. In the narrative, Soyinka mentions one of those meetings saying "their voices had long preceded them into the house, they were all hotly wrapped in the debate, talking all at once and refusing to yield a point. It went on right through bottles of warm beer and soft drinks, exhausted Wild Christian's stock of chin-chin and sweet biscuits and carried over into lunch" (Soyinka, 1989, p.19). Then Soyinka continues to tell that how much both Wild Christian and Essay were pleased by the action that they took as a couple in their society "Wild Christian enjoyed the role played by the Headmaster's house as the intellectual watering-hole of Aké and its environs" (Soyinka, 1989, p.19).

In the book *Aké: The Years of Childhood*, Soyinka touches on cultural, political and social challenges in the country beside exciting and humorous childhood experiences of him. According to Spicer, Soyinka in his narrative *Aké: The Years of Childhood* tells us "serious and painful experiences, such as his father's death and reflections on the commercialization and cultural degradation of his hometown street market. He also offers a child's view of brewing political change and social unrest, hinting at the impending fight for Nigerian independence as the book draws to a close" (Ankenbrandt, Spicer, 2010). In the narrative *Aké: The Years of Childhood*, Soyinka briefly mentions about how the first national women uprising was kindled against government's tax impose which was then a burden on shoulder of women and how this wrath was slightly changed its course to the white who were essential tyranny of the country. "Although all these movements and demonstrations had been held for no taxation on women and their works these movement slightly changed its course to 'no white man taxation and it became all tangled upon the move to put an end to the rule of white men in the country'" (Soyinka, 1989, p. 200). In the content of the book *Aké: The Years of Childhood*, Soyinka mirrors up the

reality of the country while every corner of the country was being held by the gangsters and pseudo-officials who were introducing themselves as official and collecting money from the women in the name of government. “The women of Egbaland are no longer free to walk the streets of their own land, or pursue their living from farm to home and farm to market without being molested by these bloodsuckers...” And then he later says that “Tax! Tax on what? What is left after the women has fed children, put school uniform on his back and paid his school fees? Just what are they taxing?” (Soyinka, 1989, p. 183). According to Fanon and his theory of ‘resistance’ in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* “decolonization is the meeting of two forces, opposed to each other by their very nature, which in fact owe their originality to that sort of substantification which results from and is nourished by the situation in the colonies. Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together--that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler--was carried on by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons” (Fanon, F., Sartre, J., 1965 p. 36). When viewed from this aspect, Soyinka using a critical discourse has shown us the pathetic situation of the country in the hand of puppet government of England who had been unconditionally depended on the Whites (England).

The impacts of growing up in an intellectual environment on his imagination and language can be easily seen in his writings. Especially in the book *Aké: The Years of Childhood*, he uses broad mind of a grown up by using a child’s tongue to narrate the socio-political and cultural background of the country. One day while Soyinka playing see-saw with his friend Osiki in Tinu’s party, the bench is broken by the weight of Osiki and Soyinka flies in the air and falls down by striking his head. And Soyinka narrates this event using a funny sense of humor which can be said to be a kind of special characteristic of Soyinka. He says that “it was a yellow silk *dansiki*, and I now saw with some surprise that it had turned a bright crimson, though not yet entirely. But the remaining yellow was rapidly taking on the new colour. My hair on the left side was matted with blood and dirt and, just before the afternoon was shut out and I fell asleep, I wondered if it was going to be possible to squeeze the blood out of the *dansiki*, and pump it back through the gash which I had located

beneath my hair” (Soyinka, 1989, p. 27). From this quote it might be possible to understand his capacity of using language as both at the level of adult and child. It also gives us a clue about the extensity of his imagination world. So from this point of view, it is very important to be aware of what kind of language was used by Soyinka to narrate his childhood experiences related to the socio-political and cultural reality of the country in the narrative.

The book *Aké: The Years of Childhood* takes place during World War II. In other word, the time span of the book covers also the period World War II. That’s way in the narrative “World War II and Hitler are referred periodically throughout the book as a pervasive influence without ever occupying much of the author’s direct attention” (Kreisler, Harry., 1998). It is a time when a television got into Soyinka’s house; the news begins to hold a more important part of the daily life of the family members and they are able to hear more about the news of the war and Hitler. In *Aké: The Years of Childhood*, Soyinka tells us the daily routine of the TV programs in that time of period saying that “It begins its monologue early in the morning, first playing ‘God save The King’. The box went silent sometime in the afternoon, resumed late afternoon, then, around ten or eleven in the evening, sang ‘God Save the King’ once more and went to sleep” (Soyinka, 1981, p. 108). According to Soyinka, the effect of the war is felt more deeply every day and at certain hours of the day, TV delivers the news. As a result of having been the only TV in the town of Isara, everyday a group of people in the town comes together in the house of Essay to listen to the news. Soyinka says that “the news soon became an object of worship to Essay and a number of his friends. When the hour approached, something happened to this club. It did not matter what they were doing, they rushed to our house to hear the Oracle...” Then Soyinka describes the people’s especially Essay’s approach to the news as a very serious matter and Essay’s role of commenting the news as a prominent face of Isara. “It was enough to watch Essay’s face to know that the skin would be peeled off the back of any child who spoke when he was listening to the news. When his friends were present, the parlour with its normal gloom resembled a shrine, rapt faces listened intently, hardly breathing. When the voice fell silent all

faces turned instinctively to the priest himself. Essay reflected for a moment, made a brief or long comment and a babble of excited voices followed” (Soyinka, 1981, p. 108).

The years of World War II cannot be said so easy for Nigeria and Nigerians. So as every people did, the government of Nigeria takes some precautions for the war especially for Hitler’s sneaky plans to take over the lands in Nigeria. In *Aké: The Years of Childhood*, Soyinka tells us how Nigerian people and government took precautions against the invasion of Hitler and how people were scared of seeing any airplanes in the sky of Abeokuta as a signal of Hitler’s coming close. He says that “windows were blacked over, leaving just tiny spots to peep through, perhaps in order to obtain an early warning when Hitler came marching up the path. Household heads were dragged to court and fined for showing a naked light to the night. To reinforce the charged atmosphere of expectations, the first airplane flew over Abeokuta; it had a heavy drone which spoke of Armageddon and sent Christians fleeing into churches to pray and stay the wrath of God. Others simply locked their doors and windows and waited for the end of the world” (Soyinka, 1981, p. 108). According to Soyinka, the only amateur of this war are children. He says while almost everyone seeing an aero plane runs away scared of being attacked by the plane but children do vice-versa and try to catch the sight of the plane and get enjoy doing it. And He describes the very nature of children saying “only those who had heard about these things, and flocks of children watched in fascination, ran about fields and the streets, following the flying miracle as far as they could, shouting greetings, waving to it long after it had gone and returning home to await its next advent” (Soyinka, 1981, p. 109).

In the period of World War II, Hitler monopolizes almost every TV and radio program in the country. He also has his own special programs. Every people in the town of Isara is in doubt about the result of the War and one of them is Paa Adatan, one of Soyinka’s friends, who is against the power domination of England over

Nigeria and criticizes England's attempt to recruit Nigerians for its own stake against the Hitler. He says Soyinka that "Ah, Mama Wole, this English people just wan' the glory for denself. Den no man' blackman to win dis war and finish off dat non-sense-yeye Hitler one time! Now look them. Hitler dey bombing us for Lagos already and they no fit defend we" (Soyinka, 1981, p. 110). According to Soyinka, Nigerian people are taken more and more into the broadening arena of peril and every minute Hitler comes closer home (Nigeria). In *Aké: The Years of Childhood*, Soyinka tells us how Hitler tried to invade Nigeria by bombing; he says "one morning the news reported that a ship had blown up in Lagos harbor taking some of its crew with it. The explosion rocked the island, blown out windows and shaken off roofs. The lagoon was in flames and Lagosians lined the edges of the lagoon, marveling at the strange omen- tall fires leaping frenziedly on the surface of water. Hitler was really coming close. No one however appeared to be very certain what to do when he finally appeared" (Soyinka, 1981, p. 110). In *Aké The Years of Childhood*, Soyinka shows us that how Nigerian people reshapes their ways of living during the war such as finding new things or excluding old ones from their daily lives such as

"the local barbers invent a new style which joined the repertory of Bertigo, Girls-Follow-Me, Oju-Aba, Missionary Cut and others. The Women add Win-de-who to their hair plaits and shop owners those who preside over the local food-stalls use the war as a standard response to complaints of a shortage in the quantity they served" (Kreisler, Harry., 1998).

When Soyinka is writing about Dayisi's walk in the book *Aké*, seeing the changing face of the country which is affected by the globalization, "Soyinka's perspective also shifts somewhat from that of himself as a young, naive child to a more modern, mature voice reflecting with the clarity of hindsight" (Spicer, p.123). As a social impact, Soyinka, in particularly, points out the entrance of Kentucky Fried Chicken and McDonald's into Nigerian markets. He tells about the people who wait at McDonald's for long times in a queue to eat fast food and drink Coca-Cola.

Then Soyinka also continues to describe the intrusion of Western hairstyles and music, saying that:

“the children of the new professionals doctors, lawyers, engineers, bureaucrats and clerics pass behind the parsonage along Dayisi are walk clutching the very latest cassettes from the abroad and congregate at Kentucky Fried Chicken to compare notes” (Hander, M., 1997).

After the intrusion of Western modernity into Nigeria lots of new shops had been opened but the most important of them for women, of course, were clothing stores and hair dressers. To keep up with the times, women had begun to be deeply involved with individual care whether or not she belonged to high society.

“A girl pauses at the hair-dressers’ and soon, the sound of sizzling joins the disco sounds, followed by the smell of frying hair as the hot comb heats up the brain of the young consumer without firing her imagination. At the end of the operation the belle of St. Peter’s examines the magazine floss on her head, touches it lightly here and there and approves her new appearance. It is time to join the others at the Colonel’s for a share of the “finger-lickin” goodness” (Soyinka, 1981, p. 157-158).

In the book the impact of colonialism can be easily seen along with the regular accusation of the “White man”. As an example, when Soyinka asked Mrs. Kuti about the reason of why Americans bombing Japan had upset her, Mrs. Kuti answers: “The white man is a racist...” she continues to say “you know your history of the slave trade, well, to him the black man is only a beast of burden, a work-donkey. As for Asians – and that includes the Indians, Japanese, Chinese and so on – they are only a small grade above us. So dropping that terrible weapon, experimenting with such a horrifying thing on human beings – as long as they are not white – is for them the same as experimenting on cattle” (Soyinka, 1981, p. 227). She asserts how the pride of the White and their place in society in their mind such as holding the highest level of the social category gave a way to the devastation at Hiroshima. In Fanon’s

description for the basement of decolonization and resistance, he totally considers this hierarchical categorization of European powers and summarizes this reality saying:

“As if to show the totalitarian character of colonial exploitation the settler paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil. Native society is not simply described as a society lacking in values... The native is declared insensible to ethics; he represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values. He is, let us dare to admit, the enemy of values, and in this sense he is the absolute evil. He is the corrosive element, destroying all that comes near him; he is the deforming element, disfiguring all that has to do with beauty or morality; he is the depository of maleficent powers, the unconscious and irretrievable instrument of blind forces” (Fanon, F., Sartre, J., 1965 p. 46).

When Soyinka applied for Government College his application is accepted by the Collage but he had not received any scholarship which he would need for his education. After this event, Soyinka’s brother Joseph says his mother: “Mama, please beg him not to argue with the white man. You see, they had to admit him, they know he is clever.” Joseph’s mother shows us a genius understanding of power relations saying “but do you think the white man will give food to a native who will only get strength to chop his head off with a cutlass? Since education is a source of power, those in power (England) must be careful in providing it, especially to those who may then rise up and challenge this power dynamic” (Soyinka, 1981, p. 187). One day Soyinka writes a letter to the director of Abeokuta Grammar School in Aké saying that he had admired the collage in some aspects but essentially was doubtful about the capacity of colonial teachers to give a satisfying education to Africans. According to Soyinka, they are incapable to impart right character to a pupil. Later, Ransome Kuti answers Soyinka recognizing possible problems by sending children to the White’s collage for education, considering the troublesome implications of colonizer’s imperialist nature in Nigeria “I would never send Koye or any of his

brothers to a school run by white men. But you must understand this, it is not merely because they are white, it is also because they are colonizers” (Ankenbrandt, & Spicer, 2010).

In *Aké: The Years of Childhood*, Daodu expresses Wild Christian the reason for Nigerians being exploited by the foreigners “Do you know the real trouble with the *aroso*? They are illiterate. They don’t know how to read and write, that is why they get exploited...” Then Daodu shows a way to overcome the problem and he asks Wild Christian to take a position in educating people as an educationalist “if you set aside half an hour at these meetings, you could end up making all the women in Egbaland literate by the end of a year!” (Soyinka, 1981, p.180). After the day this conversation took place Soyinka says “on the following morning at breakfast I heard, for the first time, the expression Egba Women’s Union” (Soyinka, 1981, p.184). In 1940s, as a reaction to the all governmental and British oppressions on people, several organizations were set up. The Cameroons, Nigerian Women’s Union and National Council of Nigeria and Nigerian political movements are among the other organizations which had played very important role in the fight against imperial oppression and injustice at the times of both pre and after independence in Nigeria.

In the time when Soyinka joined AGS - Abeokuta Grammar School, Daodu is in England joins a mission of educationists selected by England from all over West Africa. During his mission in England, Daodu does not stop working for the sake of either his country or other African countries. He manages to find funds to set up education institutions using British funds against England. “His exploits in England had become known largely through word of mouth- how he had forcefully ranged himself against the British plans to establish only one university for all of their West African Colonies, he insisting instead on one university for each country” (Soyinka, 1981, p.168). In *Aké: The Years of Childhood*, Soyinka tells us how Daodu’s return from England is welcomed in Isara by public after his achieving success against the British government plans for the African continent. “Wee-wee sank gratefully back

into the mathematics classroom when Daodu (head master of AGS) returned from his mission in England. He was welcomed back into Abeokuta by crowds which must emptied every home in the town. Daodu rode on a white horse into Aké for a Thanksgiving service at St Peters Church flanked by royal buglers, drummers, and a column of boy scouts...” (Soyinka, 1981, p.168). But before Daodu’s return, a group that had grown up around Mrs Kuti gathers informally which begins with three of four women, then increases as number. In their meetings they discuss the matters that have to do with the public and the problems that related to their homes as well. Considering all these meetings, Soyinka says that “they were all Christians, wives of professionals – teachers, pastors, pharmacists, and so on. When they were not discussing problems of sanitation, the shortages or rise in price of some commodity, plans for some kind anniversary, their absorbing concern appeared to center on the plight of young women who were just entering a phase of domestic responsibility” (Soyinka, 1981, p.177). After Daodu’s return from England, the social unrest against British mandatory does not stop. People using different kind of organizations keeps on showing their wraths against England and its puppet military government in Nigeria. In *Aké: The Years of Childhood*, Soyinka says “some young, radical nationalists were being gaoled for sedetion, and sedetion had become equivalent to demanding that the white man leave us to rule ourselves...they would demand not just higher institutions for all the colonial countries, but an end to the white man’s rule” (Goff, R., 2008, p. 375). During Women coming together for the discussion of the political agenda of the Women Union, they remonstrate from being kept by the government officers on their ways and people who came late for the meeting explain why they had been late by those words; “I was arrested by the Tax people; ‘The *parakoyi* took half of my farm produce for market toll. I went to the local councilors to seek their help’; ‘We spend the night in a police cell’” But the oppression on people had gone so far that officers seizes all their goods and continues to hold them until they bring them their Tax papers. They asks that “we have not even been to the market, how can we pay when they have taken the goods we are going to sell?” (Soyinka, 1981, p.182). Kemberi in one of their usual meetings says that “the women of Egband are no longer free to walk the streets of their own land, or pursue their living from farm to home and farm to market without being molested by these

bloodsuckers...” And then he says that “Tax! Tax on what? What is left after the women has fed children, put school uniform on his back and paid his school fees? Just what are they taxing?” (Soyinka, 1981, p.183) While all these issues happening in Nigeria some delegates are received by the king to make them voice their wishes up. Kemberi who is one of the foremost leader in Women Union Organization expresses the king that as Nigerian people they were pleased by the action of the officers but now they were acting just like a gangster, a jackal “once upon a time Kabiyesi, the parakoyi in the markets formed an honoured, revered institution. They kept the peace, their presence gave us a sense of security, even a sense of being in our own homes during the long hours of keeping market. What we gave, we gave gladly. We set ourselves a toll which we contributed to keep them fed and clothed. Now, in these past years, they have grown beyond the level of greed. They dip their hands in our gari, in our elubo, our salt, vegetables, in our corn and oil, right up to the elbow and do it as of right” (Soyinka, 1981, p.208).

3.3. *Isara: A Voyage around Essay*

Soyinka's autobiographical text *Isara: A Voyage around Essay* (1989) is a prequel to published book *Ake: The Years of Childhood*. In his narrative, Soyinka portrays the life experiences of people essentially his father Essay's life who died while Soyinka was in political exile and whose intervention might be said to have shaped the direction of history, culture and political struggle in Nigeria.

It can be said the content of the book *Isara: A Voyage around Essay* had been constructed in a way to mirror up the life of Essay and his environ, Western-educated protagonist, who was at the forefront of the independence movement in World War II. While he does so he tries to reconcile two conflicting cultures African and Western that trapped him between. Regarding the writing style and form, the book *Isara* shows similarities with the Homeric epics (*Odyssey* and *Iliad*). In the very first pages of narrative Soyinka emphasizes the importance of the book for himself and in which extent the book would cover the events of the time:

“After all, the period covered here actively no more than fifteen years, and its significance for me is that it represents the period when a pattern of their lives was set – for better or worse – under the compelling impact of the major events in their times, both local and global, the uneasy love-hate relationship with the colonial presence, and its own ambiguous attitudes to the Western – educated elite of the Nigerian protectorate” (Soyinka, 1990, p. v).

In *Isara*, Soyinka mainly uses approximate and invented names, delves back into the life of his father Essay and his generation almost ten years before from his own birth, and pursues their story up to the outbreak of World War II. Soyinka remarks that he had borrowed *Isara's* subtitle from John Mortimer's work of *A Voyage Round My Father*. According to Soyinka, the expression in essence captures what he tried to do

with the content of a thin box which he had opened almost four years before that is about two years after *Aké* was written.

Considering the full content of the book, it becomes clear in a way that Soyinka instead of making an attempt to tell about the life experiences of his father Essay and others in a simple ordinary way, he looks for an extraordinary way to recreate the thoughts and the inner experiences of them. “The completion of that childhood biography, rather than assuage a curiosity about a vanishing period of one’s existence, only fueled it, fragments of an incomplete memory returning to haunt one again and again in the personae personage of representative protagonist of such a period” (Soyinka, 1990, p. V). Essentially, the book *Isara: A Voyage around Essay* being a critical work beside being biographical in spirit, can be said to have turned out to be graphic and illuminating records of national socio-political and economic history telling about the military government and its taking actions on socio-politic and economic issues and World War II and its effects on Nigerians and so on.

By the entrance of the first Christian missionaries (appointed by the Anglican diocese) into Nigerian soil at the end of 19th century under the leaderships of Charles Gollmer and Henry Townsend, who were the first missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in Yorubaland, Nigeria met Christianity for the first time in the history. By the arrival of Christian missionaries to Nigeria, some changes have been in socio-political and economic structure of Nigeria. The first thing that the organizing committee met and selected as what should be done is the highlights of the drama in social area. The first visit of the Revend Henry Townsend is accepted as the starting point but it is his second visit, in company of Reverend and Mrs. Gollmer, which forms the centerpiece of the drama and establishment of church in Nigeria at the last decade of 19th century. As Soyinka remarks, after English missionaries first short visit of Nigeria, “it was this second visit which led to the establishment of the churches” (Soyinka, 1990, p. 179). By landing of the British

missionaries on Nigeria, to set up public relation becomes inevitable. The reason was because the British wanted to get to know the Nigerians, so they devised different means of getting to create mutual understanding between people. The establishment of Nigeria's first newspaper "Iwe Irohin" and theatres by Reverend Henry Townsend in late 1859 actually brought about public relation in Nigeria for its Christianization aims. After the British colonization of Nigeria, the Britain power in Nigeria was still on a knife edge. Britain, using her missionaries sought for ways to convince Nigerians of the advantages of colonial rule, because of the efforts of nationalists to stir up the fight for independence in the public so the British decided to employ the tactics of public relations, through mobile theatres, posters, newspapers and so on. So the British missionaries had used theatre and newspaper as the main instruments of propaganda for the colonization. By these two intermediaries they could use the advantage of addressing hundreds or more people in a short period of time in their own favor. Despite negativities of rivalry environment, after English missionaries' entry into Nigeria at the end of the 19th century, Christianity spread very fast in Nigeria and in a short time became one of the most important religions by the supports of Anglican Church and English government among other religions such as Islam and Pagan religions.

It can be said that the religions' coming into existence throughout history, the debates and conflicts among the religions had become the main problem in creating a stable and peaceful world all the time. Soyinka in his narrative *Isara* gives us the detail about the regional situation of the country in the second half of the 20th century by exemplifying the conflictions among Christians, Pagans and Muslims in Nigeria. As Soyinka narrated in *Isara* a catechist in a Bible class says his class "your Christian mission, remains unfinished as long as such pagan sights as these defile your gaze in Ijebuland. Your faith is sham unless you bring them into the fold of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Soyinka, 1990, p. 94). By this ideology in mind and by the help of mass print and its use in publishing books by the Anglican Church under the support of English government had increased the domination effect of Christianity over other religions "the Christian used books. Bought books. They even owned

bookshops. Books were the result of printing” (Soyinka, 1990, p. 13-14). So they gained a huge advantage in spreading the Christianity in the country. According to Soyinka, the fight among the religions might be the best depicted with the poem of Gerhart Hauptmann, the great German dramatist, who pictures “the poor hand weaver trying to compete with the crushing loom” (Soyinka, 1990, p. 44). Saying so Soyinka expresses his idea that the technological advantage of Christians and England gives them a chance to gain a large people of followers against the other religions in Nigeria.

When we analyze the narrative *Isara*, Soyinka perfectly shows us the working mentality of Anglican Church within both England and also abroad giving us a dialog which took place between an English bishop and Mr. Opeilu. One of his conversations the bishop says Mr. Opeilu “you mustn’t take offence, Mr. Opeilu, I hope you won’t take offence, but our African brothers in Christ sometimes strike me as being deficient in their sense of mission. Are you not all one people? Why does an Ifo priest fight tooth and nail to remain within shouting distance of his hometown? We go wherever we are sent, in England. After all, look at me. I was sent all the way to West Africa from across the seas- of course I obeyed” (Soyinka, 1990, p. 186)

Although their distance from the theater of war, Nigerians feel the great impact of World War II and make substantial sacrifices which contributed to Allied power Britain over Nazism. In 1939, German occupation of Polish territory triggers British government to declare war on Germany. Britain quickly enlists the support of France, a colonial power like herself in the war against Germany. “Thus a European war starts which later will be called World War II which soon spreads like wild harmattan conflagration as almost the whole world gradually becomes engulfed in the holocaust” (Mordi, E., 2010, p. 88). For British colonies, including Nigeria, the defense of the colonial master is felt imperative. At any rate, the colonies, as huge reserves of men, food and raw materials, are vital to the success of British war efforts. This fact makes them potential German military targets, and, therefore, Britain

psychologically conditions them to fight on the side of herself. “Their psychological conditioning had been facilitated by pre-war British propaganda, which emphasized Hitler’s equation of Africans with apes in his *Mein Kampf* and their possible enslavement in the event of German victory” (Mordi,1994). The thought of such dehumanization, and wild rumors that Nigeria would be given to Germany by Britain to regain her former demanded territories which turned into German control in Africa, causes considerable anxiety and immeasurable panic throughout Nigeria. These rumors elicit Nigerians profuse professions of unalloyed loyalty to Britain and their readiness to pay the supreme price in defense of the Empire.

Soyinka in his narrative *Isara* gives us some background information of World War II, he tells about people’s approach to the war and its effects on socio-politic and economic structure of the country as well. In the book, two characters Sotikare and Akinyode talk to each other and Akinyode as a critic of the war speaks to Sotikare about what the war brings in and takes out from their lives; “Sotikare, we all regret that death. But do you know how many of our people have died to preserve the British throne? Those who have now joined the army for this war at least made their own choice – thank God for small blessings. But whose throne are they really fighting and dying to preserve? It is certainly not that of the Odemo of Isara!” (Soyinka, 1990, p. 216) When we look at Akinyode’s speech, his words essentially reflect the general understanding of war by public. Almost everyone in Nigeria during World War II live the negative effect of war in that way or another under the British throne. In the narrative in another conversation that took place between Mr. Soditan and a visitor, who live on the way to Meko in Nigeria, shows us the effects of the war on socio-economic structure of people. The visitor remonstrates about the war saying:

“We feel the war a lot more over there, perhaps more than in Lagos. And those of us in the trade – even we part –timers – we know how everything is affected. Farmers know it, business is undependable. And the training schools-education, technical, or

whatever- when the students leave, there is no job for them. Even secondary school learners” (Soyinka, 1990, p. 153).

Then the visitor asks Mr. Soditan a question that he says he has been asking himself for a long time: “Whose war is this? What is our stake in this quarrel between white people?” And Mr. Soditan answer is more striking; he says that “I wish I could tell you. All I know is that we are caught in it. Unfortunately, we cannot even choose between two evils; one of them has already enveloped us” (Soyinka, 1990, p. 157). By saying that he complains about both the policy of Nigerian military government in attempting to help his colonizer and also British government’s policy to get Nigeria involved into the war on her side. So from this conversation of Akinyode with Sotikare, it is also possible to make an inference partly about to whom the war really served and in which extent the war affected Nigerians’ socio-economic and politic structure while they were not still at a humanitarian level of living.

After the first bombs fell on London, the war effort is stepped up even more intensely in the colonies, a spirit of patriotism for the colonial powers is calculatedly whipped up, even taken to a competitive dimension. On 15 June 1940 by the *Nigerian Daily Times* the Spitfire Fund, for instance: rallies, concerts, exhibitions, dances and plays are organized to raise funds to purchase a Spitfire fighter for Britain. The event takes place in the wake of France’s capitulation to Germany and nearly two weeks after the Dunkirk debacle, when the need for weapons was acute. “Britain had lost 700 tanks, 2,450 guns and 50,000 vehicles of all kinds at Dunkirk. The objective of the Nigeria Win the War Fund is, therefore the purchase of a tank, or an aeroplane Spitfire Bomber, for donation to the British army” (Public Relations Department, 1945). Both within their hometowns and operating through their town unions in Lagos, Spitfire Clubs vie with one another to prove themselves loyal subjects of the crown and defenders of British possession. In the narrative, Soyinka mentions about the policy of both Nigerian and British governments on Nigerian people to get much more support to increase the military capacity of Britain Army against German military forces. “The Residents, the District Officers, toured the

country, encouraging the numerous events, announcing the progress of the collections and spurring others to greater efforts. Spitfire badges were distributed to the deserving; the more successful organizers were honored with invitations to tea parties at the Residency. The dissidents were censored” (Soyinka, 1990, p. 168).

It can be said that the Nigerian press of the First World War era had similarly supported and encouraged Nigerian monetary contributions and donations to various organizations. For instance, the press while emphasizing that Britain was fighting for universal freedom, it also urges Nigerians to be prepared to make more sacrifices in support of the war, different from the increased tariff rates they are accustomed to but not unlike similar sacrifices made by Africans during the First World War in defense of the Mother Countries, including contributions to Imperial War Funds, Aeroplane Fund and contributions in men and material. On this score, the *West African Pilot* canvasses a wholehearted support of the Imperial power by Nigerians in 1940 publishing an announcement:

“Now that the war is becoming intensified on the economic as well as on the military front, far from being lackeys of Imperialism, as some ill-disposed leftists abroad might think, this newspaper urges support, morally and materially, towards the cause of the Allies. Much as we would criticize British Colonial Administration, It is plain that, with all its faults, it promises a safe and secure future to all of us, only, at times, it is felt that the promise is vague and indefinite. Howbeit, we are at war. Let us put our shoulders to the wheel and let the cylinder work on all fours in order to destroy Hitlerism. Our Empire is in need. Let us render to it all the aid we could” (West African Pilot, 1940).

Although all the war aid efforts those had been done by Nigerians, the British government had never given Nigerians a change to show out themselves in different credible occupations even after the war. Since the colonization of Nigeria by England, the policy of Britain on Nigerian people can be said to have been based on keeping them busy with the daily things and let them hold simple occupations such

as let them to be a small businessman, an electrician, a farmer and so on. In the narrative, Mrs Esan referring this reality of the country analyzes the basic reason of this situation. According to Mrs Esan, the average West African can be said as a good chap. But he has his limitations. “He is a merchant, an electrician, a farmer, or a grocery boy; within his bounds he is excellent – but only within those borders. Occasionally, he shines as a lawyer, a doctor, or a padre – but only very occasionally. You never find the West African who can invent a big business, such a steamship line, or a bank, or a railroad. The white man steps in there” (Soyinka, 1990, p. 155). While Mrs Esan criticizing Britain’s policy on Nigerian, he also criticizes his people Nigerians as having lack of vision and usually acting on their sentiments. As a result of these inadequacies in governing themselves as individuals, Mrs Esan remarks “the average West African is no more fit to govern his own colonies than the average English member of Parliament of today is to handle any part or portion of the British Empire. If the African were allowed to try, and we, at the pull of our silly sentimentalists, withdrew the home stiffening, how long would it be before chaos reigned? Five years? One? Six months?” (Soyinka, 1990, p. 155) While Mrs Esan digs out all these problems, he sees the biggest problem in the mentality of Nigerians and in their general approach to each other as individuals like judging each other according to in which part of the country they lived such as easterner and westerner.

As the war negatively affects the majority of people in socio- economic perspectives, it also had worked in favor of some groups and people who had seen the war as an opportunity not to be missed and had used the advantage of it in making money as a war brings about demands and creates its own needs while an entire industry springs up to support the madness of war.

In the narrative, Sipe sees the war as an opportunity to make money. In his conversation with Yode, he talks about the things that can be used to make money. According to Sipe, rubber is one of the most important materials to be acquired in a war, that’s way he emphasizes the importance of it saying “forget you David Lubin-

war needs food, cash crops, iron and steel, even the gum Arabica which you so Jebusitically boil in your backyard, you will be amazed how it will shoot up to astronomical heights both in demand and prices” And during World War II the stocks of rubber is almost finishes in Nigeria as Sipe said to Yode and the price of rubber folds its price double. The deficiency of rubber material in markets and industries during World War II works in favor of the rubber stockers and they sometimes fold their money triple or more in a day.

At the war time, money and cheap labour are the most crucial things and they were also the same for British government in the World War II. Sipe as a genius local man in finding out the lack of necessities by British government and factories during the war, urges Yoke at least become the middlemen buying soap from amateur soap producers and deal directly with the big companies- UAC and Lever Brothers and others. He mentions Yoke about an article in *The Nigerian Teacher* which was then published by the British to justify his idea on the soap-making industry saying “who edit that journal are looking for cheap supplies and want to turn all people into cheap labour for their war needs” (Soyinka, 1990, p. 49). So Sipe shows us the effects of the war on Nigerian economy and its people as cheap labors.

During the World War II, the most interesting thing that happened may have been said salt reserves had been run off and turned to gold dust in Nigeria. It is a mystery that where it was available, its price had jumped tenfold or more. So salt is rationed during the World War II. In the book *Isara*, Sipe attributing to this reality of the country criticizes the disappearance of salt from markets because of the war in which Nigeria was not directly involved in and is far away from its homeland. He says “How could common salt suddenly vanish from the markets?... How could such a thing happen? Not even in those ancient wartimes was such an event recollected, and this was a war. Was salt also part of the war effort? Was salt used to manufacture guns and Spitfires? Or could it be gunpowder?” (Soyinka, 1990, p. 168). It is possible to say while World War II generally brings some disadvantages for

Nigerians; it had also created some opportunities for some people especially for those who had seen the war as no silver lining but a rich seam, waiting to be mined by the fearless.

World War II is also a boom time at the work earnings of tailors. As the war continues the urgency of new uniforms for military and police officers reach its highest level. In the narrative, Sipe mentioning his conversation with Tailor Famade says Yode “Tailor Famade was awaited in vain; he would not be home this New Year as there was far too much money to be made. Over two hundred tailors, he wrote, had been hired by the government to make army uniforms” (Soyinka, 1990, p. 169). During the war Kaduna becomes quite a fast growing civil service and business enclave, by its increasing importance as a junction for the two main rail lines—from Enugu in the east and Lagos to the south. A new barracks for the West African Frontier Force is opened and they also require uniforms. These developments in Nigeria forward most tailors to Kaduna where they wanted to set up a tailoring service. Tailor Famade pictures the migration wave of tailors with those words “every two-bit tailor was heading north with his Singer sewing machine. Trade was expanding at the same time, and a number of wealthy traders required new *buba* and *agbada* outfits” (Soyinka, 1990, p.135). In 1940s, cloth and jewellery trade in Nigeria are dominated by the Lebanese and Indian traders. And in the narrative *Isara*, Sipe referring this situation says “it was these Middle Easterners, keeping a sharp eye on their local shop assistants as they measured out the cloths to local customers. The jewellery shops also belonged to them...” Then he criticizes Nigerians’ lack of vision and leaves the mine for easterners to dig up “everything well-turned-out ladies or gentlemen of refinement required to hold up their own in society, the Lebanese and the Indians reaped the profits thereof” (Soyinka, 1990, p. 58).

Enterprising lorry owners are also among the luckiest people in World War II. Private lorries are seized to transport goods and soldiers and the compensation for each lorry is at thirty shillings a day and lorry owners bribes to the police, to government officials to hand over their lorries saying “seize mine, please, won’t you please seize mine?” (Soyinka, 1990, p. 169). And with all these developments food prices, the cost of utensils, clothing, farm implements, even of local foods, rises until the pulpits rang with denunciations. According to Soyinka, with the beginning of war money becomes a new idol and in *Isara*, he criticizes the general situation of the country using a strong language “the spirit of religion is dead in us! Why, why is this war bringing out the worst in us? So what would it do to those who are actually engulfed in it – will those mothers now begin to sell their children for a quick profit?” (Soyinka, 1990, p. 169).

3.4. You Must Set Forth at Dawn

The autobiographical work of Soyinka *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* is the latest writing of his memoirs, but considering his previous autobiographical writings, the work does not limit itself to any specific time of span of the writer, on the contrary, it goes back as far as the writer's youthfulness as a college member in England, including Soyinka's theatre, academic and political life which includes the 1966 elections, the civil war, military coups and the June 1993 elections. Regarding the time span of the stories in the book, it can be said the book enlighten both colonial and post-colonial time of Nigeria.

Soyinka in his book *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* identifies the pains of colonialism, the failure of post-independence leadership as well as the lack of promise in contemporary administrations in Nigeria. According to writer Jendele the book *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* is "a personal narrative of his own personal experiences of harassment, incarceration, betrayal, and exile within a frame work of literary and historical references as tropes for the exposition of the injustice prevalent in Nigeria under various political dispensations" (Jendele, 2008, p.6).

Between the years 1980s and 1990s is a hard period for Soyinka. At the beginning of 1980s, he leaves on voluntary exile and it is just only became possible for Soyinka to come back home by the death of Abacha in 1998. Abacha's death can be seen as a turning point in Soyinka's active writing life and it is just only after Abacha's death that the book *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* had been handled more seriously by Soyinka. In the narrative, Soyinka makes his confliction clear with the regime in political angle saying "my prison memoir, *The Man Died*, recently published, had not endeared me any more to the regime in power and was unofficially banned from circulation" (Soyinka, 2007). From this point of view, *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* can also be said to be a striking autobiographical work in

many ways. It is not just a work through which the author attempts to tell about his own life in a simple way, it also offers us an opportunity to take a trip into the life of the author as a public intellectual who has had to contend with the conspiracies of power on different fronts.

Soyinka in his book *You Must Set Forth at Dawn*, places before the reader a very personal chronicle of political events full of sketches of his comrades and detractors as well as ferocious rejoinders to his critics. At another level, *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* provides an alternative to the hegemonic narratives of colonizer and its puppet government as a way of resistance against the narrated colonial realities and history those are related to Nigeria's socio-political development. According to Fanon "colonialism as a total and elemental rupture within African history ... [his] thinking about colonial culture is premised upon a preliminary assumption as to the decisiveness of the transformation wrought by colonialism, such that scarcely anything of pre-colonial African culture (history) is seen to survive into the colonial era" (Fanon, F., 2008 p. 76-77). In this perspective, Soyinka sharing the similar perspective with Fanon, for instance, his writing about the Nigerian Civil War in *You Must set Forth at Dawn*, by drawing extensively on the history of Nigeria and using most of the historical events like the 1966 elections, the civil war, military coups and the June 1993 elections among others, to draw attention to certain ambiguities in relationships among the different categories of people in the country can be considered as an attempt and a necessity to fill this gap between the past and present in Nigerian history such as Fanon mentioned.

According to writer Busby, Soyinka's commitment to "struggle for democracy brought him into conflict with a series of dictatorial Nigerian heads of state, earning him imprisonment (by Gowon), exile (by Babangida and Abacha), a death sentence in absentia (by Abacha) and silencing (by Obasanjo)" (Busby, 2007). So from early in the narrative the reader begins to see the evidence of an attempt by Soyinka to define himself against certain prejudicial views and assumptions which may not be too convenient for him. The following passage becomes necessary in

Soyinka's narrative as he is later to delve us into the propaganda mounted against him by the military regime of Sani Abacha:

“When the dictator's specially created smear brigade began its offensive through the publication of an obscenely libelous journal under the cynical name of Conscience International, circulated worldwide, with a special complimentary copy to Emory's president, he promptly raised the level of protection” (Soyinka, 2006, p. 398-9).

Similar campaigns which attempted to portray Soyinka as a violent individual who is also willing to commit violent acts against his country and its government featured on government controlled electronic and print media during the days of the military regimes. Although every pressure of which were set by the oligarchic structure and military junta, Soyinka has never changed his approach in criticism about inequalities and cruelties of governments of the time. He says “I think that feeling that if one believed absolutely in any cause, then one must have the confidence, the self-certainty, to go through with that particular course of action” (Chukwuemeka, Eze., 2013).

Beyond his concern with events in the lives of individuals, Soyinka takes on national history in the course of representing the trajectory of the Nigerian state. One important event that comes to mind here is the Nigerian Civil War which raged in the country between 1967 and 1970. Several accounts have been written about the Nigerian Civil War in which the Eastern Region of the country led by Odumegwu Ojukwu attempted to secede from the rest of the country which was not welcomed by Gowon military government and found counter attack which resulted in Nigerian Civil War. In some literary or historical books we may come across the Biafran Civil War and read about the different roles of certain individuals. For example, the book *Why We Struck* that was written and published by Adewale Ademoyega in 1981, as an eyewitness of Biafran War. The work is important because it gives us the first

historical account of Nigeria's first military coup by an active participant. In the book, while Ademoyega talks about the background of the war from his own account, while also telling about his own role in Nigerian Civil War as a commander of army. Another book, *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran Civil War* that was written by former Nigerian major general Alexander Madiebo is "a gripping account of what transpired in Nigeria between the years 1966-1970. Madiebo was major dramatis personae in the play: he actively scuttled the first coup by, in his own words, putting "a quick and tidy end to Nzeogwu's revolution" (C.Onyema, H., 2011). In the book, Madiebo figures out the power plays in Nigeria especially in Biafra and how Ojukwu had hidden his vulnerability for the war ingeniously by manipulating realities in the war. Beside all these, Madiebo also tells about his own role in the war and writes his work in an aspect that will make it easy to be read by a non-military man. In *You Must Set Forth at Dawn*, however, Soyinka uses the opportunity offered by the autobiography to present his own account of the war especially the aspect of his own role in the war which culminated in his twenty-two month incarceration in solitary confinement.

Soyinka's inscription of the motivation for the civil war includes the discovery of oil in the East which might have emboldened the region to contemplate self-determination and also goes on to lay out the propelling impact of the unjust treatment and progressive pogrom of the Igbo under the Yakubu Gowon regime that succeeded Aguyi Ironsi. As Soyinka recounts:

"The discovery of oil in huge reserves in the East, largely in the Niger estuary, played a role, unquestionably, in the propulsion of the Biafran leaders toward secession, but it would be a distortion of history to and an attempt to trivialize the trauma that the Igbo had undergone to suggest—as some commentators have tried to—that it was the lure of the oil wealth that drove them to seek a separate existence. When a people have been subjected to a degree of inhuman violation for which there is no other word but genocide, they have the right to seek a separate existence" (Soyinka, 1994, p. 101)

With the use of words as strong as “pogrom” and “genocide”, Soyinka seeks to hold the Nigerian state accountable through a form of social agency premised on historiography for the massive deaths recorded especially in the Biafran enclave during the civil war. Records of official history not only attempt to avoid the use of such strong words as Soyinka chooses, but also try to create the impression of a balance in terms of casualties of the war. This is a display of responsibility which helps, as Soyinka himself observes, to give voice to ‘the marginalized orphans of history’” (Soyinka, 2006).

In the narrative as a historical record, humiliation of Igbo people and their suffering from extraction shortly before the outbreak of the war is captured in Soyinka’s description of the insecurity that they experienced in other parts of the country and the ignominious modes of escape they had to seek when fleeing back to their region:

“Even within Lagos, the hunt for the Igbo continued unabated, in their homes and at roadblocks. The depletion of my wife’s wardrobe during the months of October and November was only one of the private testimonies to the desperation of one’s Igbo male acquaintances—not all of them soldiers—who resorted to female disguise to escape detection as they flew eastward” (Soyinka, 2006, p. 101).

From the retrospective insight, Soyinka’s description of the fleeing Igbo population from Northern Nigeria before the outbreak of the war leads people to take action on certain issues:

“The trainloads of refugees from the North bore pitiable cargoes: some survivors with physical mutilations, some women in such a state of shock that they clung to the severed heads of their spouses or sons, cradling them on their laps.... Images of death and mutilation in Eastern journals and the television coverage of a savage humanity

erased the final sense of belonging in a people who saw themselves isolated within the nation and catalyzed their resolve to secede” (Soyinka, 2006, p. 101).

According to Soyinka, by extension the average post-colonial nation state Nigeria finds itself in the hands of political elites that destitute of progressive ideas of which can flash the future of the country. In trying to justify his point of view about the country of which some critics are likely to see as excessively pessimistic, Soyinka states: “I was not pessimistic about the future but extremely cautious, having once come into contact with the first generation of leaders in my student days in England. The enemy, as I identified it, was power and its pitfalls, a cautionary motif that dominated my would-be independence play, *A Dance of the Forests*” (Soyinka, 2006, p. 53) When we consider Fanon’s writing *The Wretched of the Earth* and his telling about the colonial powers’ approach towards the elites in the colonial countries in the colonial period, to understand Soyinka’s concern and anxious about the future of Nigeria will not be so difficult. In his writing, Fanon says that

“During the period of decolonization, certain colonized intellectuals have begun a dialogue with the bourgeoisie of the colonialist country. During this phase, the indigenous population is discerned only as an indistinct mass. The few native personalities whom the colonialist bourgeois have come to know here and there have not sufficient influence on that immediate discernment to give rise to nuances. On the other hand, during the period of liberation, the colonialist bourgeoisie looks feverishly for contacts with the elite and it is with these elite that the familiar dialogue concerning values is carried on. The colonialist bourgeoisie, when it realizes that it is impossible for it to maintain its domination over the colonial countries, decides to carry out a rearguard action with regard to culture, values, techniques, and so on. Now what we must never forget is that the immense majority of colonized peoples is oblivious to these problems” (Fanon, F., Sartre, J., 1965 p. 44).

At the individual level, *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* also leads us into the roles played by individuals who at one time or the other had the responsibility of leadership of the nation in shaping Nigeria’s politic, social and economic structure.

Soyinka in his book *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* makes it clear for readers the monumental failure of leaders who had the immediate responsibility of charting a course for the nation after the supposed demise of colonial domination like Olusegun Obasanjo, Ibrahim Babangida, Sani Abacha and Abdusalami Abubakar as well as individuals who, belonging to civil society, played significant roles which have since become reference points in national discourse. According to Soyinka, the reason for their failure can be credited to the lack of vision on the part of subsequent leadership in the country. In capturing the magnitude of this failure Soyinka writes:

“Their conduct on home territory, from the news that reached us, appeared to be of the same nature. The pan-African project was becoming farcical. The alienation of many of the first-generation leaders was total, and, for the first time, we began to wonder if the power relation between the political elite and their people was not paralleled by that between the Boers and the black South African majority—a master-servant relationship, the monopoly of privilege by a minority, with its compliment, the denial of rights or human respect to the people. We read in this a double betrayal, an act of treachery from within” (Soyinka, 2006, p. 43).

In the narrative, Soyinka shows us the importance of the contributions of certain individuals to the history who may not necessarily be recognized by official history but who all the same continues to make remarkable contributions to national development. For instance, Femi Johnson is one of them who in his entire life played various roles against the military government oppressions. In reflecting over the great loss which his untimely death constitutes and Soyinka expresses his sadness at the absence of Femi Johnson to celebrate the death of dictator, General Sani Abacha: “Femi should be alive at this moment. If any single being deserved and could contain in himself the entirety of the emotions that belong to this return, it is none other than OBJ, and he is gone”(Soyinka, 2006, p4). As Soyinka expressed in the narrative: “all I knew of Femi’s politics was his outrage at the electoral fraud. He was not a member of CWIL; I had never subjected him to any test of solidarity or asked him to participate, even marginally, in our activities. Yet Femi had taken extra pains to

frustrate the police every way” (Soyinka, 2006, p.87). This description of Femi’s commitment in the struggle for free, peaceful, independent and democratic Nigeria makes him quite significant in the history of Nigeria.

In the book, Soyinka also narrates the death of the professor of Economics Ojetunji Aboyade as a historical account which tends to acknowledge the service and sacrifice that the activist professor made towards the development of the Nigerian nation which is on the contrary the military government tried to do for to show the professor as a traitor to erase his name and his useful attempts at the stage of history. Soyinka describes the professor as “a first-generation nationalist of Yoruba stock who never lost his political fire until his death in 1984” (Soyinka, 2006, p. 9). In this manner, Soyinka attempts to separate the intellectual professor from the group of first-generation nationalists whom he had earlier condemned in the text for their lack of vision.

“He (OjetunjiAboyade) was one of that breed of tireless intellectual sparring partners, cunning at fashioning theoretical propositions that were guaranteed to provoke you and keep you in animated debate until lunch dissolved into dinner and then into late supper” (Soyinka, 2006, p. 9).

Although official history seems not to have said much about the contributions of Aboyade to national development, Soyinka tries to elevate him to his deserved status by writing for instance that he was in fact the brain behind what is today known in Nigeria as the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS):

“Aboyade had been deeply immersed in a project in Ibadan, the Development Policy Centre, long before I fled into exile. The seed of the idea had been sown as far back as 1978, under the military regime headed by General Olusegun Obasanjo....That original idea of a civilian think tank had ended up as yet another military

appropriation, becoming the Centre for Strategic Studies located in the far north, in Kuru” (Soyinka, 2006, p. 12).

In bringing to the fore the prominent role played by Abovade in fashioning out a development policy centre to address the needs of the nation, Soyinka at the same time points out the subversive role played by the military government in appropriating civilian programs and projects which are meant to serve developmental purposes and in the course of time turning such projects, programs or policies into the opposite of what they were originally designed to be by civil society.

“Interestingly, Kuru later became known as a place reserved for the top brass of the military in Nigeria, a training ground for secret agents and administrators who worked, in the main, for successive military regimes, and more crucially, a rallying point or base for adventurous military officers who later terminated democracy or other military regimes through the staging of coups” (Soyinka, 2006).

The story of another individual whom Soyinka brings into his narrative as an attempt to review official hegemonic or elitist history is that of Bashorun Moshood Kashimawo Abiola. Abiola’s story as a philanthropist and international businessman is quite known across Nigeria and beyond. With his entry into partisan politics and his eventual death however, various versions began to emerge about the lives and times of the politician. The most volatile of these contentions is the cause of the death of the man who was elected Nigerian president at the June 1993 general elections in Nigeria. Soyinka describes the pathetic story of him saying, “Abiola was the elected president of a nation who never did preside over more than his home, his vast network of businesses, and finally his place of detention” (Soyinka, 2006, p. 15). Since the death of Abiola in detention the Nigerian state has continued to attempt to convince the world that he died of natural causes. However, there are those who insist that Abiola was murdered by a section of the military with the acquiescence of some civilian powerbrokers in the country and the conspiracy of the international community especially the Western powers who were vehemently opposed to an

Abiola presidency. As far as Soyinka is concerned, Abiola was simply “wasted!” by the powerful oligarchy that probably would not have succeeded without the conspiracy of the West:

“No one of any note still denied that he had won the 1993 elections for president. Then, one month after the death of Sani Abacha, in the presence of a delegation of US officials Thomas Pickering, a former ambassador to Nigeria; Susan Rice, President Bill Clinton’s Assistant secretary of state for African Affairs; and others—Abiola was served the cup of tea that has now attained legendary status in the nation, for he suffered a seizure minutes after that cup, collapsed, and died” (Soyinka, 2006, p. 15).

Soyinka by this account clearly negates the official documentation on the cause of the death of the politician. Soyinka is also hopeful of a validation of his version of the Abiola story as he insists “the truth, I know, will come out some day” (Soyinka, 2006). From this perspective, it can be said that Soyinka in his narrative *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* desires to bring attention to the margins of history and break the silence imposed on certain aspects of Nigerian history. Soyinka reminds the reader the fact that the stage for such deliberate plotting of history has its roots back in the colonial days as the British authorities would stop at nothing to cover up their roles in setting the stage for the volatility of the Nigerian state and by implication its underdevelopment. This is evident in the author’s account of the pre-independence 1959 federal elections and the population census conducted by the British colonial authorities:

“Recent memoirs by former colonial officers have revealed how crooked that beginning was. The elections that placed a government in power at the center were rigged—by the British! John Bull was not about to leave an independent Nigeria under the control of any uppity radicals, as the southern nationalists—the East and the West—were perceived. Thus, on instructions from the British Home Office, even the Nigerian census was falsified, giving an artificial majority to the North, which was largely feudal and conservative in political outlook” (Soyinka, 2006, p. 54).

According to Soyinka, the imperial colonizer even before they leave their colonial regimes for their independencies tries to create a chaotic atmosphere with intentional mischief in lack of sincerity which characterizes colonial regimes in most parts of Africa where civil outburst occurred shortly after their independences. “Before their reluctant departure, the colonialists had put in place political landmines which produced ethnic suspicion and eventual eruptions in the former colonies like we see in the three year civil war in Nigeria” (Soyinka, 2006). It can be said that Soyinka by selecting a historical method and reflecting his life experiences in the context, he builds an effective historical record about some period of Nigeria.

4. Conclusion

Considering the world of intellectuals, the way of their life, their actions and decisions during the tough times can be said unique in the manner and sense by their roles in their society. While they both deal with those challenges in their societies on the other hand, they also have maintain a public image which complements their personality as individuals interested in the progress of society. In this respect, in this research the intellectual writer Wole Soyinka's autobiographical works have been examined and analyzed in terms of his making of historiography in related to questions such as political authority, religion, missionary and commercial life in Nigeria as exemplified in his autobiographical works such as *The Man Died, You Must Set Forth at Dawn, Isara: A Voyage Around Essay, Ake: The Years of Childhood*. In other words, I hope to have demonstrated to the reader how Soyinka as a public intellectual portrays political authority, religion, missionary and commercial life in Nigeria with his individual development dealing with the complexities of pre and post-colonial periods of the author's home country Nigeria.

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction part. The second chapter is divided into two parts such as *The Credibility of Biography and Autobiography as Historical Source* and *The Effect of Postcolonialism in Wole Soyinka's Historical Autobiography Writings*. In the third chapter one autobiographical work of Wole Soyinka is analyzed according to research span of this thesis. In the first part of chapter three, the first autobiographical book of Soyinka, *The Man Died: Prison Notes*, is analyzed which consists of Soyinka's collection of notes during his 22 month imprisonment. In the second part of chapter three, the author's second autobiographical work *Aké: The Years of Childhood* is analyzed in which Soyinka narrates his childhood memoirs including social and political events that he came across in his first eleven year's period. In the third part of chapter three, the book *Isara: A Voyage around Essay* is analyzed which had been constructed in a way to mirror up the life of Essay and his environs, Western-educated protagonist, who was at the forefront of the independence movement in

World War II and whose intervention might be said to have shaped the direction of history, culture and political struggle in Nigeria. In the fourth part of chapter three, the author's latest autobiographical work of *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* is analyzed, which goes back as far as the writer's youthfulness as a college member in England, including Soyinka's theatre, academic and political life which also includes the 1966 elections, the civil war, military coups and the June 1993 elections, enlightening both colonial and post-colonial time of Nigeria which is sometimes impossible to reach the true stories in official historical records because of the restrictions of military governments to purge their historical treason and conspiracies to their own community. Chapter four is the conclusion part which summarizes the general understanding of the thesis. And chapter five is bibliography part.

It is a well-known fact that, throughout history almost all military or dicta governments at work choose or create scapegoats. By creating such an atmosphere, military-dicta governments sweep some historical realities under the rug which will work in favor of the continuation of their power. Therefore, to set historical records straight, Soyinka as a public intellectual goes down the memory lane to remind the reader of certain actual national, continental and, in some instances, global events in his autobiographies. By doing so, he fills some gaps and puts in place some missing links in the national grand narrative in parallel to his individual development such as he did in his autobiographical works *The Man Died* and *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* by telling the background of Nigerian Civil War through the lens of a civilian as not a partisan of military government. By means of his autobiographies, he also gets an advantage to exculpate himself against the background of the likely misinterpretation of his activism as an individual and the constant attempts by the state to discredit him to create an impression of uncomplimentary disposition towards the nation and its people.

I hope to have demonstrated to the reader that the life of public intellectuals as represented in their autobiographies, are often shaped by various external and internal factors. Historical realities of situations in which such intellectuals find themselves, effect the writers' lives and the ways of their writings as in the autobiographies of Wole Soyinka and might turn into a national historical writing in some angles, filling the historical missing parts or setting historical records straight of which sometimes some governments wanted to change to cover up their dirty clothes. In the course of this, new dimensions are brought to the fore about what had been told before and what official history would want us to believe. Although it would be difficult to firmly establish the veracity of everything said in any autobiographical work, judging from the problematic of what may qualify as universal history in the Hegelian sense, Soyinka's autobiographical works represent landmark narratives in the sense that they serve to challenge the official position on historical events hitherto fed to the people and thereby question the grand narratives with which the ruling class seeks to validate its disruptive activities which continue to be a drawback for the progress of society in terms of social, political, economic and religious. This kind of approach goes along with the thinking of Jana Gohrisch to the effect that "scholars need to investigate the historical situation' of a region in order to adequately appreciate the social contexts within which developments take place" (Gohrisch, 2006: 234).

In addition, the research report has also shown that the autobiographies of Wole Soyinka provide a significant lens through which we can better appreciate socio, economic and religious structure in Nigeria by extension his writings. As evidenced in these four autobiographical works of Soyinka *The Man Died: Prison Notes*, *Ake: The Years of Childhood*, *Isara: A Voyage Around Essay* and *You Must Set Forth at Dawn*, African writer and public intellectual in the course of writing his life stories also tend to make important statements about himself and the society in such a way that we are led to a better understanding of not just his character and personality but also the existing paradoxes which impact on the general well-being of the people as well as the polity.

All said and done, it is Wole Soyinka the intellectual who has an unusual ability to combine his life story with the historical realities of his hometown and the world in a critical way and which soon collected all the focus and attention of Nigerian governments by discomforting them and some of them banned in a short time after their release in the country.

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