

Conflict between Tradition and Modernity in Kongi's Harvest

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Abstract

Tradition is the transmission of ideas and beliefs from one generation to the another. Each family within a culture can have its own unique traditions while sharing other common traditions. Tradition is often the outer facade of a culture. It defines the identity and heritage of a culture. It means inheriting customs, beliefs, practices or ways of doing things from previous generations and continuing in the same way. African traditions are expressed through music, art, dance and crafts. These traditions are deeply embedded in all African cultures. African traditions emphasize mellifluous relationship with divine forces, and their rituals seek to harness cosmic energies. The cults of the gods are found in many sacred places. Shrines have always been the focus of religious worship throughout Africa but with the advent of civilization and modernity they have been relegated to the background. Through prayers, offerings and sacrifices, the African people have good relationships with God. Wole Soyinka's Kongi's Harvest highlights the conflict between traditional heritage and the modern. He describes how Africans cope with the consequences between tradition and modernity. Africans respect their culture and their deities. This play deals with the Yoruba culture and how the people protest against the authoritative power.

Keywords: Tradition, modern, shrine, conflict, authoritative power.

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Introduction

Conflict between Tradition and Modernity

The clash between modern and traditional forces in emerging contemporary African society is a well-known concern throughout African literature and so Wole Soyinka is not out of place in Kongi's Harvest. This struggle takes place between the Oba (traditional head) and President Kongi (modern and constitutional head). Although constitution chief Kongi is basically a dictator. Essentially, its modern totalitarian regime attempts to absorb the traditional order into itself in order to destroy it as a competing force and this struggle for its legitimacy, dignity, interest and power manifests itself in Hemlock from the beginning. The role of the instrument and the lyrics suggest two opposing camps struggling for power. Traditional powers are being locked out of existence with propaganda and elements including the Kongi dictatorship. Tradition plays a major role in Africa. However, a government regulation creates a clash between tradition and modernity. Wole Soyinka is a Nigerian writer who focused on African culture. The Yoruba, one of the three largest ethnic

groups in Nigeria, lived in the southwest of the country. The factious land Isma people follow their culture and revere their deity, Ogun. In this play, authoritarian power rules people. Essentially, its modern totalitarian regime seeks to destroy the traditional order as a competitive force and carry it into its own and this struggle for its legitimacy, dignity, interest and power is evident in Hemlock from the beginning. The clash between traditional Oba Danlola and Kongi's modernity. Kongi displays an almost nervous distrust of everyone around him. Through coercion he buys authority and traditional legitimacy which he then reluctantly surrenders all to himself. Thus he grows by himself into the main reservoir of all powers. So Danlola, the ruler of tradition, is forced to give him a new yam of his own. This allows him to publicly acknowledge his superiority and project his image as a beautiful and worthy ruler from every perspective. Opponents are also forced to apologize in this way. Kongi's scored one goal against Oba. Oba and the soldier were prevented from spending their remaining years in prison. Although the struggle continues, the struggle is on a lower plane because

Kongi and his army cannot be met face to face. This seizure of traditional forces is lamented in the opening lament in "Hemlock".

Ogbo Aweri laments:

This is the last
That we shall dance together
This is the last the hairs
Will lift on our skin
And draw together
When the gbedu rouses
The dead in Oshugbo (28)

President Kongi, the developing African country's dictator, is trying to modernize his country after the imprisoned King Oba Danlola was deposed. But Kongi's real desire is to preside over the celebration of New Yam. It reflects Kongi's rapacious intention to promote modernity by transforming the iconic shrine of yoruban culture into an art gallery. Conflict arises between Kongi and the people. Through condescending images, Kongi manipulate the people. Danlola raises his voice against Kongi's reforms. Danlola is a witty, steadfast, unassuming and stubborn traditionalist. His speech infused with traditional elements such as proverbs, parables and references to Yoruba folklore make him a master of tradition. Almost every one of his accents has traditional elements. With the help of proverbs, Danlola says wise men must know who to choose between them and Kongi, he says.

The pigeon's coming from the shrill alarm
When Ogun stalks the forest (58)

Segi is portrayed as having mysterious powers, cunning and intuitive. Throughout the play, she is shrouded in mystery. Even Danlola doesn't recognize her until she is told that she is the daughter of the first escaped prisoner. In the Daodu song, Segi is described as having mystical powers. She is very much loyal to the tradition. Kongi demands that Danlola make offerings in the form of Yam. Danlola enlists the help of carpenter to carve the deity Ogun. He played himself as a revolutionary in order to rebel against Kongi's manipulation. He carved subversively to revolt against Kongi. His resistance clearly highlights the youth's opposition to the official government. Kongi's misguided belief in the superiority of Western civilization leads him to uselessly substitute primitive institutions for traditional institutions. The transformation of traditional shrink into their abstract modern versions is lunatic. The exhibition of Ogun's sculpture highlights the rejection of modernity as opposed to cultural heritage. Kongi's opponents rebelled against Kongi's demanding rule. Hope arises among the Isma people to preserve their culture.

Kongi exudes a formidable confidence in almost everyone around him. Through coercion he buys a common resource of authority and legitimacy which he then reluctantly gives all to himself. So the basic reservoir of all energy just goes up. So Danlola, the ruler of tradition, is forced to give him a new one of his own. This allows him to publicly acknowledge his superiority and present his image as a beautiful and worthy ruler in every way. Opponents are also forced to apologize in this way.

Conclusion

The play portrays the conflict between tradition and modernity. It reveals the authoritative power of the rulers. Kongi inculcate the western ideas and thoughts to degrade the cultural heritage. Africans are known for their traditions and agriculture. The two symbols Harvest Yam and drum are play an important role in the play. A Harvest festival marks the transfer of power from the former leader Danlola to the new leader Kongi. The main conflict between the traditional Danlola and western perspective of Kongi.

The play is solely based on the idea of preserving cultural heritage of Isma. Kongi used his authoritarian power to deceive the people of Isma. He values modernity by making the essence of art and innovation. He renovate shrine into art gallery. Thereafter, religious conflict arose among the Kongi. People believe in their culture and regret the president's western thinking. People have their own beliefs that reject modernity as opposed to the authentic power. People who are loyal to their yoruban culture. The modernity does not destroy cultural heritage and rituals of Africa.

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