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**FESTIVAL IN THE THEATRE OF WOLE SOYINKA :
“THE OCCASION FOR SPEAKING” IN THE POSTCOLONIAL STATE**



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ABSTRACT

Wole Soyinka is probably one of the most imaginative playwrights in Africa. His work is a mélange of European theatrical traditions and his Yoruba cultural heritage. The objective of this paper is to examine Soyinka's imaginative and innovative perception of some African festivals in his plays as problematic traits of postcoloniality. The issue at stake is whether a nation is created before a state or a state is created before a nation. Consequently, in Soyinka's plays African festivals that are generally marked by ritual and celebration turn out to be unpleasant occasions for either castigating the ills that Black Africa has inherited from European colonialism or undermining the unimaginative, coercive and parochial decisions of those entrusted with the power to lead people after independence. Read largely from George

Lamming's illuminating essay, "The Occasion for Speaking" the paper argues that Soyinka manipulates festivals in *A Dance of the Forests*, *Kongi's Harvest* and *The Road* as a decisive platform for the examination of the postcolonial state in Africa and by so doing elevates African festivals to giant screens for critical retrospection and prospection as vital ingredients for building the postcolonial nation.

KEYWORDS : African Festivals, postcoloniality, "occasion for speaking", state, nation.