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*THE SETTINGS, SOCIO ECONOMIC ATTITUDES AND RELATIONSHIPS OF CHARACTERS AND THEMATIC PREOCCUPATION IN THE PLAYS ALONE AND FRIGHTENED AND CHILD INTERNATIONAL.*

**CHILDE INTERNATIONAL by WOLE SOYINKA**

SETTING OF THE PLAY

The play is set in Nigeria where Mr. Kotun lives with his wife, the butler/ cook and their daughter Titi. It is one act and one scene play so there was no change in setting throughout the play, it began and ended in the sitting/ dining section of the house. At some point in the play, the setting would have moved from the sitting room to upstairs where Titi went after she was excused by her mother but it did not because an important aspect of the play was taking place in the sitting room. It has a backdrop setting.

SOCIO ECONOMIC VALUE OF THE PLAY

The term ‘socio economic attitudes’ simply means if the play in any way relate with any present situation in the country economically and politically. The play says a lot about society and it teaches various lessons on life, discipline and hard work. The socioeconomic contributions made by the play to the country could be seen in aspects where Kotun is forced to discipline both his daughter and wife and bring them ‘down to earth’. Nowadays, parents would rather spoil their children by giving them whatever they want, instead of teaching them morals. Nobody is saying there is anything wrong in treating your children, but when it gets to the point where they loose respect for you, then definitely you have failed as a parent. This concept should speak to every Nigerian parent so they can understand the importance of claiming to culture and stop allowing ‘western ways’ affect your homes. Using Wife and Titi for example, the wife only stayed abroad for a period of time and in that period of time she decided to abandon her own culture and take up the way of the white man and she inculcated this way into her daughter ‘Titi’ but Kotun refused to allow her spoil his family so he took matters into his own hand and this brings the saying ‘spare the rod and spoil the child’ to life.

CHARACTERIZATION

 Each character plays an important role in the play and without each other the message being passed to the audience won’t be effective. Kotun played a role of passing out a message but his message cannot be passed out without the wife and Titi being present on stage, this just shows that each character has his or her own significance.

KOTUN; He is the major character of the play. Kotun is a typical African Yoruba man who values culture. He works as a politician and has a beautiful wife and daughter, Titi. By reading the play, one would be able to identify certain character traits in Kotun most especially the fact that he does not take nonsense and he seems to have zero tolerance for it, he values respect and is a disciplined and hardworking man who built himself and takes good care of his family. He funded his wife’s further education to study secretary-ship abroad but he was not satisfied with her behaviour when she got back but he refused to make fuss over it, but when she pushed him to the wall, he had no option but to pour out all of his anger and he even concluded with spanking her back to her senses. His role is expected to bring about comic relief to the audience which is the importance of whoever is playing the role to perform properly; if the actor doesn’t get it right, it kills the entire comedy in the play.

WIFE; She is a modern character, and plays the role as Kotun’s wife. Her name was not stated or mentioned at any point during the play so it remains unidentified and unknown to the audience. She is a woman of ‘western ways’ even though she only spent 4 years abroad learning ‘secretary-ship’ she came back to Nigeria with a whole new attitude which her husband was not pleased with. He complained about it several times in the play but she was oblivious towards his complaints and decided to do what she wanted. She changed the lifestyle of her family and her daughter is most affected by it. Her role is expected to represent westernization and bring the concept of ‘culture clash’ to life.

TITI; Like her mother, Titi is a modern character and plays the role of Kotun and his wife’s daughter. She represents the spoilt brat who gets everything she wants. She is currently in university and once she is home from school, she gives her parents he worst of her attitudes. She seems like a child that is most likely to drop out from school without her parent’s information because she already skips classes just because she doesn’t like her teacher. Her father does not like the fact that Titi is spoilt but he can’t do anything because he knows her mother is the greatest cause of her behaviour, but Titi pushed her father to the wall when she called him ‘silly’ and she got what she should have been getting.

GODWIN; He is the housekeeper and cook. In the play his character is expected to set off some comic relief, even though Kotun’s character takes up most of the comedic aspect of the play, his response to Kotun’s calls are meant to be somewhat funny.

**ALONE AND FRIGHTENED by ABIODUN MACAULAY**

SETTING OF THE PLAY

The play began ended in Comfort World Hospital in Nigeria. The entire play was shot in Tina’s hospital room which was where all the action took place. All the characters are based in the hospital so the setting of the play was very convenient; the doctor, matron and cleaner and the secretary work in the hospital, Tina and George are patients of HIV/AIDS who stay in the hospital while Tina’s parents Mr and Mrs Cole come from home to visit Tina. The play consists of Thirteen movements yet the setting remains unchanged. It has an integral setting.

SOCIOECONOMIC VALUE OF THE PLAY

 The play teaches great lessons on HIV/AIDS and it raises awareness and hope to those living with HIV/AIDS. Economically, it encourages the government to establish more places like Comfort World Hospital in order to reduce the spread and make those with HIV feel more comfortable and locked out of the world. Like Tina, her entirely family deserted her and she decided to make a home for herself in Comfort World. This where she even met George and they ended up married even though it was short-lived. Politically, the play does not really present much but the morals inculcated are important either way.

 It teaches lessons of determination, forgiveness, endurance and hope. Tina in the beginning was not so keen about her life and survival because she was hurt by the family deserted her but she forgives them in the end and this is a life lesson to be learnt, no matter the damage it causes, one should always be open to forgiveness. Asides from forgiveness, lessons of determination are also taught to the audience, like Tina and George’s determination to get married and live their lives together even though the doctor was completely the idea of them getting married. Those living with HIV go through so much pain but they endure it with the hope of their survival, like George who was type 2, he endured the pain he had for so long but it was in vain because he still died in the ending.

CHARACTERIZATION

 The significance of each character could be seen in the play and the way they relate with one another makes it easier for the message to be passed. Each character contributes one thing or the other to help develop the play and bring to life the script that has been developed by the playwright and with the instructions of the director. The characters are;

TINA; Tina is a young woman living with HIV type 1, she contacted it from an ex-lover who she gave everything but ended up breaking her heart and left her with nothing but a virus she knew nothing about. Deserted by her family, Tina had no other option than to go to Comfort World Hospital which is a sanctuary for those living with this virus. While she was at the hospital, she never related with any of the patients at the hospital, she’d rather be by herself missing her family until she met George a patient at the hospital with HIV type 2 picked an interest in her but she refused him and then eventually accepted him. She and George spent so much time together and they were officially in love and decided to get married. As expected, nobody was in support of such, but for the sake of each other, they got married. Her parents came to see her after they abandoned her and they apologized for leaving her and she forgave them. Tina found love again and was so happy but her happiness was short lived because George’s condition was only getting worse and eventually, he died. Yet again Tina was all alone in the world but she continued to live her life and try making the most of it.

GEORGE; He is Tina’s husband. George, in the play is a HIV type 2 patient who got into comfort world because he was closer to death than anything else. George lived a good life as an actor, but he was reckless and it landed him the care of DR. Matt and the matron. He had an unusual interest in Tina, and he pursued that interest and it made him fall in love with her, and they eventually got married but unfortunately for him he died before Tina could give birth to his child. One could say George fulfilled his life by meeting Tina, they both became very happy till the point that they couldn’t live without each other, and it was for this reason DR. Matt eventually gave consent to their marriage. HIV got the best of George, but in the end his life was still worthwhile.

DR. MATT; He is the one who cares for the patients at Comfort World and ensures they are healthy and well catered for. DR. Matt is a kind man who helped Tina and George bring their relationship to life and encouraging them but when he heard the news of their marriage, he was against it because Tina’s case of HIV was curable and she still had hope, but George’s case was only getting worse and chances of him infecting Tina would have been high. Getting the lovebirds to understand this was difficult because they already cannot live without each other so he gave his consent. In the end DR. Matt brought a cure for the virus, but it was too late because George was dead.

MATRON; She is the mother of the hospital and she cares for the patients. The matron is the right-hand woman of DR. Matt in running the hospital. Matron cares for Tina and treats her like she is her own child and Tina loves her a lot particularly because she is very nice.

LINDA; Linda is the hospital cleaner, who can be considered as a clown. Her character is expected to bring up comic relief and ease the tension of the play a little

MR&MRS COLE; They are Tina’s parents who abandoned her on hearing she has HIV but came back in her life feeling bad for what they did and Tina forgave them.