DRAMA IN AFRICAN HISTORY: A STUDY OF OLA ROTIMI'S KURUNMI AND OVONRAMWEN NOGBAISI

BY

OKENE LOUIS AGHOOGHO
FOA/12/13/207554

ODIACHI IFEOMA EBELE
FOA/12/13/209948

OSHAM HENRY CHUKUKA
FOA/12/13/211482

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY, ABRAKA

JULY, 2016
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover Page..................................................................................................................i
Title Page...................................................................................................................ii
Certification................................................................................................................iii
Dedication....................................................................................................................iv
Acknowledgments.......................................................................................................v
Table of Contents.......................................................................................................vii
Abstract......................................................................................................................ix

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION
ABSTRACT

This project briefly studies the relationship between history and modern African drama. Two of Ola Rotimi’s historical plays- *Kurunmi* and *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi* - are used for illustration. The essay shows that modern African playwrights like Ola Rotimi have used African history to create plays that help to dramatize African history and modern African drama because one helps to illuminate the other.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Drama is a very strong channel of communicating through which large number of people receive information and are entertained at the same time. The communicative potentials of drama as a herald of cultural values and norms have forced many theatrics, artists, analysis, playwrights and their likes to see it as a practical means of reviving cultural values in the society. Thus, drama plays an important role in every society cannot be over emphasized hence the researcher in this study makes an inquiry into Ola Rotimi’s Kurunmi to ascertain the extent to which drama can receive a society and it’s cultural values.

Ola Rotimi was foremost director, playwright and theatre practitioner. His concept of drama and theatre is based on the practical occurrence in the society. He wrote many plays based on the past and contemporary events in Nigeria before his untimely death in 2000 A.D.

The project looks at his play from historical perspective. Two of the plays-Kurunmi and Ovonramwen Nogbaişi are used for illustration. The thrust of this essay is on the relationship between history and drama. Essentially, Rotimi is saying in a silent way, in the play under review that there is much to learn from
our past which can be useful in our understanding of our modern society. Hence, in *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi* he dramatized the ill-treatment of the Oba and the people of the Benin Empire by the British Imperial Army for the later’s selfish interest.

Similarly, in *Kurunmi*, Rotimi shows that the culture of a people is quite dynamic and static. Hence, Kurunmi’s resistance to change is frustrated, leading to Kurunmi’s defeat and the changing of the royal tradition of Oyo. A study of these two plays shows Rotimi’s artistic penchant for historical materials which he creatively adapts to create his monumental *Hope of the Living Death* which is a classic in its own right.

### 1.2 Statement of the Study

What is the relationship of drama to his story and vice versa? “Can we learn anything from our past experience or the past history of our country” Or can knowledge of the past help to shape or order contemporary society and even the future?

This project attempts to answer some or all of the above questions and suggested what lessons can be learnt from history through drama. Hence, the work defines the relationship history and drama on one hand, and drama and the society on the other.
1.3 Scope of the Study

The intention of this study is to ascertain and critically evaluate the extent to which drama can be used as a medium to regenerate history. Using Ola Rotimi’s Kurunmi and Ovonramwen Nogbaisi, the attempt to prove the revitalizing potentials of drama.

The topic for this project is “Dramatizing HISTORY IN AFRICAN DRAMA”: A story of Ola Rotimi’s Kurunmi and Ovonramwen Nogbaisi. Again, the backdrop of Ola Rotimi’s plays and theatre practice, the two plays mentioned in the topic stated above will be examined.

The discussion centres on the two plays to highlight the relationship of drama to history and vice versa. For history forms the basis on which these two plays are anchored.

1.4 Limitation of the Study

The inadequacy of the Delta State University library in terms of relevant literature on the topic for his inquiry posed a mighty set back to this inquiry; due to this problem, the researcher had to travel to other University Libraries to source for relevant information. The researcher also consulted some private libraries to obtain facts. The cost of this project soared considerably.

It would have been interesting if the researcher had gotten the opportunity of meeting with the playwright is no more. Also, more play texts would have been
used for a comparative study of drama and cultural advancement but time constraint limited the scope of this study as the researcher had to contend with other academic engagement.

1.5 Methodology

The nature of this topic recommends at once that a lot of literature in the area will be consulted. Thus, the first method of gathering this information was through intensive library research. This entails the study of books, journals, magazines, newspapers and other relevant publications. Information obtained was subjected to rigorous analysis before the researcher’s final submission.

The second methodology used was oral interviews and discussion with friends, students and scholars who are acknowledgeable in the subject of discourse. Fortunately, the researcher’s supervisor has done extensive research in this area and he was always there to help with his knowledge and wealth of experience in the area.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research is another contribution to knowledge, in the area of critical evaluation of modern Nigeria dramatic literature, its highlights specifically, the relationship between history and drama.

Moreover, it is a new addition to the emergence body of critical studies on works of Ola Rotimi. This will serve as a reference for scholars who wish to carry
out an investigation on the work of these sublime scholars who wish to carry out an investigation on the work of this sublime scholars, playwright and theatre practitioner who is regarded by some scholars as the best theatre director Nigeria had ever produced.

The study also draws the attention of scholars to the relevance of Ola Rotimi in the Nigerian and African theatre scene. This project also draws attention to Ola Rotimi’s contribution to the development and maturity of Africa (Nigeria dramatic literature and theatre practices).

The benefits that will accrue at the end of this study are stated thus;

i. It will encourage people to see drama beyond entertainment.

ii. It will aid in promoting cultural values.

iii. It will aid students and researchers who want to further research on the subject matter.

iv. It will aid the understanding and adopt ability of playwriting and instrument for cultural rejuvenation.
TO GET THE FULL PROJECT MATERIAL (CHAPTER 1 TO FIVE) FOLLOW THIS SIMPLE STEPS:

STEP 1: visit any Ecobank/Zenith Bank branch nearest to you and pay into the account details below:  
Account Name: Teezed Business Enterprises

![Bank Logos]

1014662581  
3583011916

STEP 2: After payment, SMS the Teller Number, the project code (can be found at the header of this project work) and your Email address TO 08067950556, 08110684119. Upon confirmation of the payment, the full project will be sent to you (this will usually take few minutes after payment is confirmed).

STEP 3: Go to your mail and download the full project materials.

NB: To view other Banks, Click [HERE](#)

DISCLAIMER:  
We at Teezed strongly advice that the research you will get from us should be used only as a guide rather than as a template for personal research. This research work is intended to guide you and to provide you with idea on how a typical research work looks like. Plagiarism still remain a sanctionable offence. Goodluck!!!