

Volume XIV 2003

LEGON

JOURNAL OF THE
HUMANITIES



Designed & Printed by Comfort Impressions : 240557
ISSN 0855-1503

Faculty of Arts, University of Ghana

Legon Journal of the HUMANITIES

VOLUME 14 2003

Editor

E. Kweku Osam

Assistant Editor

Gordon S. K. Adika

INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

CONTRIBUTORS

Legon Journal of the Humanities is published once a year by the Faculty of Arts, University of Ghana. It publishes the following types of contributions: (1) general or technical articles in the fields of research dealing with the humanities from scholars in all countries and (2) review articles on new, particularly noteworthy books. The language of publication English.

MANUSCRIPT FORM

Manuscripts should be types doubled-space (including endnotes, questions and reference list) on 8.5" X 11" or A4 paper. An article should not exceed 40 pages. Two copies of each article are to be submitted to: The Editor, Legon Journal of the Humanities, Department of Linguistics, University of Ghana, P.O. Box LG 61 Legon, Ghana.

ABSTRACT

Each manuscript should be accompanied by an abstract of not more than 100 words.

CITATIONS

In the text, citation should take the following forms: (1) New evidence can be found in Yeboah (1993); (2) Brown (1979) claims that his theory marks a new era in social research and (3) She argued for a new policy that will "promote the dignity of both men and women" (Agbo 1994: 17). Citations should be done in the text, not in the endnotes.

NOTES

Notes commenting or explaining points made in the text should appear after the main text, not at the bottom of the page. They should be double-spaced.

SYMBOLS

Conventional, current type-faces are to be used. Special symbols and diagrams should be avoided as much as possible.

REFERENCES

All works consulted should be listed at the end of each article under the headline REFERENCES. Authors should be listed alphabetically. The entries should consistently follow the examples below:

Kroeber, Paul D. 1995. "Rhetoric Structure of a Kalispel Narrative." *Anthropological Linguistics* 37:1199-140

Sacks, Sheldon (ed.) 1979. *On Metaphor* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Roger W. Waite A. Wolfram, and William K. Riley. 1969. *Field Technical in an Urban Language Study*. Washington: Centre for Applied Linguistics.

Yankah, Kwasi. 1989. *The Proverb in the context of Akan Rhetoric: A Theory of Proverb* New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

AUTHOR IDENTIFICATION

Each article should be accompanied by a separate sheet indicating the title of the paper as well as the following information about the author: (1) full name (family name last), (2) institutional affiliation; and (3) current status (e.g. Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Professor, etc.).

For the purpose of blind reviews, the first page of each article should not bear the name of the author.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Kwasi Yankah.....	Chairman
E. Kweku Osam.....	Editor
Gordon S. K. Adika.....	Asst. Editor
Elom Dovlo.....	Member
Abraham A. Akrong.....	Member
Josephine Kyei Mensah.....	Member

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Editorial correspondence should be addressed to: The Editor, Legon Journal of the Humanities, Department of Linguistics, University of Ghana, P.O. Box LG 61, Legon, Ghana. **E-mail:** kosam@libr.ug.edu.gh

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Business correspondence should be addressed to: The Manager, University Bookshop, P. O. Box LG 1, Legon, Ghana. E-mail: bookshop@ug.edu.gh

THE SUBSCRIPTION RATES ARE AS FOLLOWS

Local.....¢25,000

Overseas

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| a. Individuals..... | US\$20 (Airmail) |
| b. Libraries & Institutions..... | US\$35 (Airmail) |

CONTENTS

Volume 14 2003

"BLOWING THE COVER": MEDIA PROJECTIONS OF RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONARIES/SPECIALISTS IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT	J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyedu	1
TEACHING DANCE EDUCATION IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN GHANA	Ofotsu Adinku	21
SPATIAL AND LOCATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN DAGAARE	J. Angkaarba Saanchi	29
THEATRE PRACTICE AND ELECTIONEERING CAMPAIGNS IN NIGERIA	Rasheed Abiodun Musa	37
A THEME-STRUCTURE APPROACH TO EVALUATING ASPECTS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' EXPOSITORY TEXTS	Gordon S. K. Adika	55
OLA ROTIMI'S <i>OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN</i> : A STUDY ON THE NATURE OF COMEDY	Naana J. Opoku-Agyemang	79
SOCIO-BIOLOGICAL GROUNDS FOR REJECTING A FALSE DICHOTOMY IN MORAL PHILOSOPHY: EGOISM OR ALTRUISM	Joseph Osei	101
LESSONS FROM THE RAN-SHELL-READ LITERACY PILOT PROJECT IN AKPABUYO, SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR DISTANCE LEARNING	Stella I. Ekpe, Louisa E. Uwatt, Mfon E. Etuk, Gabriel B. Egbe, Eno G. Nta, and Moses E. Inyangabia	117

"BLOWING THE COVER": MEDIA PROJECTIONS OF RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONARIES/SPECIALISTS IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT

J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyedu*

Abstract

Religion is integral to African life and recent technological advancements enable both the print and electronic media to serve as a 'platform' for articulating public religious discourse. In Africa generally, religion serves very practical ends with many people searching for answers to their problems in that realm. This article examines the nature of religious mediation in the growing African film industry looking at the specific images that are relayed to the public about the nature of religious mediation in Ghana.

1. Introduction

The mediation of power, healing, protection, and general prosperity by religious specialists, is central to the practice of religion in African countries like Ghana, the immediate geographical context for this essay. Closely tied to the prominence of religious specialists in African religions is a widespread notion that religious mediation is open to abuse and charlatanry. This common suspicion that religious specialists abuse their sacred office was the underlying presupposition of a question thrown to the public by the host of a radio programme in Ghana recently.

In the afternoon of Friday April 11, 2003, a popular 'drive-time' phone-in programme on Ghana's *Joy FM* radio station sought public responses to the following hypothetical scenario: 'The pastor of your church is a renowned miracle worker; after benefiting from his healing ministry during a life-threatening condition, you soon discovered that the *source* of the pastor's miraculous power is the "occult"; the matter raises concern in the church and you are invited to testify: will you "blow the cover"?' Although as I will state below, this question is posed from a particular religious viewpoint, my paper is primarily an exploration in the area of 'communication about religion' and not 'religious communication'. This is because the issues raised in the media about African religions and discussed below are not meant to advance the doctrinal idiosyncrasies of a particular religious confessional collectivity.

Religious specialists and how they relate to their clients is a common feature encountered in both print and electronic media in sub-Saharan Africa. This study looks at aspects of the relationship between religions and media. It explores the character, nature, and understanding of religious mediation

Rev. (Dr.) J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyedu is a Lecturer at the Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon.

REFERENCES

- Boadi, Lawrence A. Forthcoming. *Form and Meaning in Akan*.
- Brugman, Claudia. 1983. The use of body-part terms as locatives in Ialcatongo Mixtec. In Alice Schlichter et al., eds. *Survey of Californian and other Indian Languages*, Report # 4:235-290.
- Comrie, Bernard. 1981. *Language Universals and Linguistic Typology*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Crystal, David. 1985. *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Greenberg, Joseph. ed. 1963. *Universals of Language*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Heine, Bernd. 1989. Adpositions in African Languages. *Linguistiquefricaine* 2: 77-127
- Heine, Bernd, Ulrike Claudi and Friederike Hünemeyer. 1991. *Grammaticalization: A Conceptual Framework*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hill, Clifford. 1982. Up/Down, Front/Back, Left/Right. A Contrastive Analysis of Hausa and English. In Weissenborn, Jürgen and Wolfgang Klein, eds. 1982. *Here and There: Cross-linguistic Studies on Deixis and Demonstration*, 13-42. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Hopper, Paul J. and Elizabeth Closs Traugott. 1993. *Grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Koffka, K. 1935. *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Köhler, W. 1929. *Gestalt Psychology*. New York: Liveright.
- Langacker, Ronald W. 1986. An Introduction to Cognitive Grammar. *Cognitive Science* 10: 1-40.
- Langacker, Ronald W. 1987. *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*. Vol. 1, Theoretical Prerequisites. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Lyons, John. 1968. *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Svorou, Soteria. 1993. *The Grammar of Space*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Talmy, Leonard. 1983. How language structures space. In Pick, Herbert and Linda Acredolo, eds. 1983. *Spatial Orientation: Theory, Research and Application*, 225-82. New York: Plenum Press.

THEATRE PRACTICE AND ELECTIONEERING CAMPAIGNS IN NIGERIA

Rasheed Abiodun Musa*

Abstract

Democracy, the most preferred form of government, can only succeed through constant political socialization, political engineering and free and fair electioneering process. From the sociopolitical history of Nigeria, it is quite interesting to observe that one of the major disasters the peaceful transition from one democratic government to another is rigging during elections. Rigging is intended to subvert the wish of the majority affecting and impose unpopular candidates. Through the deductive method of research, this paper evaluates the practice of theatre in Nigeria and argues that the theatre has been used both negatively and positively during electioneering campaigns. This paper also concludes that since the theatre cannot be divorced from politics, the theatre and its practitioners should play instructive, educational and other useful intermediary roles in the electioneering process in Nigeria, all in an attempt to ensure subsequent free and fair elections in Nigeria.

1. Introduction

In almost all of man's conscious and unconscious activities through man's cycle of life, he is inarguably revolving, demonstrating, imitating, reproducing, reflecting, celebrating and performing theatrical activities. According to Huberman et al (1993:55),

The word 'theatre' is derived from theasthai, meaning 'to view'. The root word tea which means 'act of seeing'. In the fifth century B.C. the Greeks called the place on the side of the Acropolis from which they watched plays the theatron or seeing place.

Beyond this historical terminological underpinning, the theatre, however, has been conceptually defined as a performance art that places human experience before a group of people – an audience – in the presence moment. For theatre to happen, two groups of people, actors and audience, must come together at a certain time and in a certain place. (Barranger 1995:3)

Cameron and Gillespie (1996:12-16) list some of the unique traits of the theatre that distinguish it from other arts. Some of these traits are open-ended for each still depends on other for theatre to complete. Theatre makes use of:

live actors... depends on action (which we can think of for now as stories and characters) to organise and bind theatrical event... depends on live actors presenting these characters and their visual world to an audience that is physically present . . . gathers its audience into a defined space at a certain time and allows the reactions of the audience to affect the performance . . . uses real performance space, usually with artificial (that is made-for-the-purpose) seating.

In spite of these distinguishing traits, theatre and drama are also often used "interchangeably" although they have points of departure. Theatre makes use of all dramatic elements inherent in the play-script for theatrical presentations whereas drama itself is an addendum of theatre; while theatre is the general, drama is the specific. Olu Obafemi (1999:283-284) observes that "drama and theatre are inextricably components of performance" which interconnectedness is seen as a "siamese relations." For the purpose of this paper, theatre is seen as a 'medium of communication', entertainment and most importantly "theatre is one of the ways of spreading information." (Osofisan 1993:24)

Theatre practice in Nigeria has come of age, for it is one discipline growing with sociopolitical trends in the face of numerous cultural undercurrents. Historically as well, Nigerian theatre traditions have been variously documented and speculatively categorised into many sub-headings by different theatre scholars who often subjectively defend their broad, and at times narrow self-expressions. A theatre scholar once observed that:

Attempts to classify drama in Nigeria along developmental stages have yielded an avalanche of contradictory and inconclusive details. This latter is mainly because critics have, so far, tended to approach the issue along exclusive times. (Obafemi 1988:54)

Ogunbiyi (1981:49) also gives a rider to this impression by concluding that:

Would it not be right to speak of Nigerian theatre and drama as a conglomeration of several ethnic dramas, each with distinct qualities of its own, even if it manages to share a few basic features

with the others? So that while one can speak of Kalabari drama, 'Igbo ritual drama', 'Yoruba Traveling theatre', 'Kwagh-hir Puppet theatre of the Tiv', one can hardly speak of a single Nigerian theatre.

Relatively as well, I am of the opinion that the Nigerian theatre traditions can be classified into five sub-headings:

- The Pre-Colonial Theatre Traditions
- The Colonial Theatre Traditions
- The Post-colonial Theatre Traditions
- The Neo-colonial Theatre Traditions.
- The Post-modern Theatre Traditions

Each of these theatre traditions invariably has numerous avalanche of types and modes. For example, the pre-colonial theatre traditions fell within the 'indigenous theatre tradition' which Akinwale (1999:73) says "entails those theatrical forms which were developed by the people before their contact with Europeans who were their colonial masters." A detail analysis of the 'indigenous theatre tradition' would include over hundreds of theatre prevalent in our local communities. Chiefly among these are:

. . . . the ritual and festival forms, the story-telling and puppetry forms, the masquerade displays, the court jesters, the strolling comedians as epitomised in the Yoruba Etiyeri masked actors and the Hausa Yakamaci. (Akinwale 1999:73)

Kerr (1986:1) also submits that "Pre-colonial African theatre, in so far as it exists as a subject of enquiry, is plagued by imprecise terminology." Parameters such as; functionality of the theatre, cultural antecedents of the theatre, thematic pre-occupation, "spiritual values" of the theatre, class distinction or status based theatre, sociopolitical and satirical theatrical forms are part of the preferential prejudices that can be used to analyse the indigenous theatre traditions in Nigeria. The crosscurrent of these theatre traditions can also be seen in almost all the listed theatre traditions. For sure, an indigenous theatre tradition with its heavy reliance on the contraption of total theatre has its vivid elements in the colonial theatre, post-colonial theatre, and the neo-colonial theatre traditions.

Colonial theatre traditions evidently were the theatre traditions of immense Nigerian styles and forms. Most of these theatres deliberately defended the Nigerian cultural heritage as weapons of cultural revival. The Western theatre and operatic traditions were popular especially in the major cities and among the Nigerian-European educated elites. It was also during the colonial period that the popular and the agitational theatre traditions triumphed to compliment the nationalist struggles for liberation and independence. Hubert Ogunde and many more in the Yoruba traveling theatre traditions and almost all the indigenous theatre traditions across the Niger were theatrical instruments for mass mobilization, political engineering and social enlightenment.

The post-colonial theatre traditions incidentally marked the development of the literary theatre tradition in Nigeria with the works of Wole Soyinka, J.P. Clark, Zulu Sofola, Ola Rotimi, Olu Obafemi, Akanji Nasiru, Kalu Uka, Femi Osofisan and others. The post-colonial theatre traditions itself is also a nomenclature of many experimental theatres such as: the agit props and the marxist theatre vision, the popular and the indigenous traditions and so on. The post-colonial theatre traditions are melting point between the Western and the Nigerian theatre traditions. Partly or wholly written in English, yet with the dramaturgical contraption of the total theatre phenomenon of music, dance and drama.

Neo-colonial theatre traditions are specifically created to condemn the local bourgeoisie who often connive with the imperial colonialists to further exploit the African nations. Wole Soyinka's *A Play of Giants* and *Death and the King's Horseman*, Ngugi Wa'Thiongo and Micere Mugo's *The Trials of Dedan Kimathi*, Femi Osofisan *Tegonni: An African Antigone* reflectively treat the conceptual underpinning of neo-colonialism. Neo-colonial theatre seeks to expand the patriotic zeal of the playwrights and theatre workers in general with a view to exposing, condemning or ridiculing the local leaders who exploit, oppress, and suppress the popular will of the people through fake heroism.

Post-modern theatre, on the other hand, is a fallout of the concept of post-modernism in literary discourse. It is also an experimental theatre which modern age and cultural trends tremendously influenced. Quoting Frederick Kameson, Jean Lyotard, Robert Stern, John Docker and Jean Baudrillard, Betiang (2002) observes that post-modern aesthetic traits include:

- The blurring of boundaries between high art, folk and popular culture.
- The use of anti-logocentric language laden with irony and parody.
- Historicism, reflexivity and Eclecticism
- Pastiche, collage and a mixture of past and present styles and forms.

- Playfulness, whimsicality and fragmentation.
- A pre-occupation with appearance rather than authenticity.
- The revival of pristine folk carnival and mistrel sub-culture.
- A rebellion against regimentation, compartmentalization and loss of individuality.
- Multiple presentation and spontaneity in production.

Post-modern theatre searches for the quality between the rich and the poor and condemns the glorified distinction between people of different status – a theatre where the voice of the oppressed are not only heard but dramatised.

From our discourse on the evolutionary trends of theatre practice in Nigeria, it is imperative to accept the interconnectedness between all these theatre traditions. One can see the elements of the pre-colonial theatre traditions in post-modern Nigerian theatre traditions and the post-colonial theatre traditions expand to include other dramatic icons of the neo-colonial theatre school. The episodic evolution of theatrical traditions in Nigeria is inevitable because the theatre as a cultural vessel plays resounding roles in the strata of socialization where the sociopolitical behaviours of the Nigerian nation have greatly affected the dynamic Nigerian theatre industry.

In summary, theatre practice in Nigeria includes all the refined cultural festivals and traditional performance celebrated quarterly, annually or triennially. The numerous stage performances which are the products of scripted plays or improvisational piece, the dramatic actions of the celluloid and the 'Home Video' industry, electronic (Radio and Television drama and theatre), popular, community and street theatres and all the creative experimental theatres that make use of the available performing arts platforms of music, dance, drama, puppetry and pantomimic dramatization to exhibit various theatrical and dramatic conceptions.

2. The Theatre in the Political Environment

From Augusto Boal's:

All theatre is necessarily political because all the activities of man are political and theatre is one of them. Those who try to separate theatre from politics try to lead to political attitude. (quoted in Gbilekaa 1993:1)

to Mao Tee Tung's: "In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines... (quoted in Gbilekaa 1993:2), one can relatively conclude that the theatre is one big instrument of politics. Right from Plato's assertions in *The Republic* to Aristotle's reflections

in the *Poetics* and to the Greek classical theatre in Athens, the theatre has always been an institution of political defence, change and moderation. This is so because almost all the published texts and experimental productions that pervade the five continents of the world have politics as their major or minor theme.

A critical examination of man's cycle of life will confirm Boal's constructive conclusion that "all the activities of man are political." Man is expected to undergo various stages of life such as:

1. Birth and childhood (these two can only happen through marriage between two people who must have mutually agreed to live together. The interplay of politics in marriage ceremonies, events, decisions and choices are quite inescapable).
2. Growth and adulthood (most of man's behavioural patterns, through social experiences are also political. He makes political statements and joins organizations, groups or unions that are politically based and as he transits from one state of being to the other he is being refocused through politics which help to make or to destroy him. He also participates in a series of cultural and social events, which are entirely theatrical).
3. Death (quite inevitable yet uncontrollable but laden with political events. The decision to die may not be totally political but the activities that surround death may be political. Interestingly, all burial rites, rituals and ceremonies are theatrical and are often determined by political factors).

In all these three stages of human life, the theatre plays intervention, revival, imitative and reflective roles and as one of the social institutions, the theatre inescapably performs social, moral, religious, economic and most especially political roles. Or from simple explication – all social, moral, religious, political and economic activities are themselves theatrical.

If a king dies and he is to be buried, there is going to be a political performance and if a new king is to be installed, culture is being revived and the theatre of political coronation must take centre stage. The decision of the artists and importantly the writers to see the society as the basis for their creative impetus necessarily makes "the artist as the watchdog of the society." He lives in the society that creates him and the artist's constant reflections through his art nevertheless helps to shape and re-shape the society. The

artist as a political animal also helps to express acceptable and unacceptable political culture in his nation, state or community.

Political culture of a nation has been conceptualised by L. Pye and S. Verba and quoted by Babawale (1999:210) as: "the particular distribution of patterns of orientations or popular attitudes towards political objects among the members of that nation." A nation's political culture also "involves the political style, values, norms, emotions, beliefs and symbolic attachment that are dominant among a population." (Babawale 1999:211-212) Ironically, a nation's political culture is always difficult to conceptualize if that nation is a heterogeneous one such as Nigeria. The very belief system and the cultural idiosyncrasies of some of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria and their contact with Western cultures and their democracies invariably affect their political culture. Or mildly expressed, the Igbo political culture of republicanism does not tally with the Hausa's feudalistic system. Still, the aggregate and the "commonly shared goals and commonly accepted rules" determine the nexus of a nation's political culture which is often explicitly written in the nation's constitution. The theatre, therefore, from all available historical records is necessarily one of the social institutions for political socialization and cultural revival.

3. The Theatre in the Nigeria Political History

Although the theatre is pre-historical, research has shown that the recorded history of the popular Yoruba Alarinjo Traveling Theatre started in the Old Oyo Empire during the reign of Alaafin Ogbolu through a failed political palace coup. This theatre type is characterized as follows by Adedeji (1981:222):

There were six stock-characters, each representing a councillor; the hunchback (Basorun), the albino (Alapinni), the leper (Asipa), the prognathus (Samu), the dwarf (Laguna) and the cripple (Akiniku). Their presence at the sites, indeed, frightened the first batch of emissaries on the hill; Ajaka.

Concert parties, operatic theatre traditions and dramatic sketches also dominated the city of Lagos between 1880 upwards with some Christian churches modifying some Yoruba socio-cultural values while preaching the gospel. An European scholar, Walter Schwarz (1968) also describes the Yorubas as the *primus inter pares* when the Nigerian theatre is discussed. He observed that:

In both musical and dramatic entertainment, the Yoruba

appear to outshine the others. Most of the high-life 'Kings' are Yoruba. Yoruba dance troupes go on tour through other regions. Spectacles at a much more sophisticated level are also available. The Ogunde concert party is Nigeria's most famous itinerant group, offering political satire (Schwarz 1968:57).

Hubert Ogunde was one Nigerian who used the theatre to fight for political liberation and independence among many of his relevant thematic preoccupations in his Ogunde Theatre. Clark's (1979) *Hubert Ogunde: The Making of Nigerian Theatre* documents the life, works and performances of Ogunde who "bestrides the Nigerian stage like a colossus". Clark also observes that:

Ogunde was an outspoken contemporary political commentator, who was ready to risk the possible destruction of his theatre in order to fight for the freedom of his people from alien rule. (Clark 1979:86)

And when independence was finally won in 1961, he also condemned the political oppression and misrule that characterized Samuel Ladoke Akintola's Premiership in 1964 Western Nigeria through his popular play: Yoruba Ronu or Yoruba Think, a play that draws from the historical tragedy of "Field-Marshal Afonja of Ilorin, who in his revolt against the Alafin of Oyo, allied with Alimi the Fulani" to present "the parallels between nineteenth century and contemporary Yoruba history." (Clark 1979:58) Ostensibly, the political war between Obafemi Awolowo, the First Premier of Western Region (Oba Fiwajoye in the play) and Samuel Akintola, the Second Premier of Western Region (Fiwajoye's deputy in the play) and Ahmadu Bello, the First Premier of Northern Region as (Yeye Iloba in the play) as reported by Clark shakes the foundation of Yoruba race.

Ogunde was not just a Yoruba theatre artist because the contextual pre-occupation and the performance aesthetics of his theatre cut across regional lines to include national and universal dialectics.

The Kwagh-hir theatre, the Bornu Puppet Show, "Yankamanei – the craft of the Hausa Comedians", the Ekpe festival and the Bori spirit ritual are some of the indigenous theatre traditions that have politics as one of their themes. These traditional festivals cut across the Niger-Delta, the South Eastern and the Northern Nigeria.

There are also many literary texts with political undertones. Almost

all of Wole Soyinka's plays such as: *The Road, A Dance of the Forests, Kongi's Harvest, The Lion and the Jewel, A Play of Giants, The Beautification of Area Boy, The Trial of Brother Jero* and *Death and the King's Horseman* treat one political theme or the other. Schwarz (1968:65) once observed that:

Suicide plays an important part in Oyo's royal tradition. To ensure the election of a successor by the 'wise men' the eldest son of a dead Alafin (King) had to commit suicide.

This metaphor is graphically, textually and dramatically represented by Soyinka in *Death and the King's Horseman* with Elesin Oba attempting to re-write history and rubbish the long cherished political tradition of Oyo Empire which in itself are often punctuated by political performances to clear the path for Elesin Oba. Olunde, Elesin Oba's son finally pays the supreme sacrifice in the supreme context for political liberation, cultural revival and social development in the play.

Ola Rotimi's *Kurunmi, Ovonramwen N'ogbaisi, If... and Hopes of the Living Dead* are all dramatic plays with politics as their central motif. Femi Osofisan's *Red is the Freedom Road, Morountodun* and *Many Colours Make The Thunder King* to mention but a few in his saturated repertoire are also plays which interlock politics with human society. Wale Ogunyei, Olu Obafemi, Akanji Nasiru, Zulu Sofola, Ahmed Yerima, Bakare Ojo Rasaki, Ayo Akinwale, Kalu Uka, J.P. Clark and many unsung Nigerian playwrights have also written allegorical, satirical, didactic, tragic, comic and farcical political plays about the Nigerian nation and the international world politics.

Beyond the live stage and the literary circle, we have also witnessed and listened to Nigerian musicians (Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Bobby Benson, Onyeka Onwenu, Sade Adu, Ebenezer Fabiyi, Dan Maraya Jos, Mamman Shata, Osita Osadeba, Haruna Isola, Sina Peter and Sunday Adeniyi) who have sang melodiously to the tide of political directions and misdirections.

Clearly, the theatre has always been and will continue to be a n instrument of political reflections in Nigeria. The theatre artists as the political reporters know that politics is the bedrock of all developmental visions.

4. The Theatre of Electioneering Campaigns

Election is the legal option for political selection of eligible candidates into available political offices while electioneering campaigns are series of activities that take place before elections and even during elections. These activities include lobbying, speech making about the candidate's intentions vis-a-vis the party's manifesto, distributing printed or unprinted items, playing of radio

and television jingles and songs, chanting and the use of praise songs, the use of the theatre of human mannequins, sketching of dramatic piece, newspaper adverts and many more.

Elections in the Nigerian political system can be traced to the 1922 Clifford Constitution when elective principle was first introduced into the Nigerian polity. Ever since, there have been series of elections at the ward, local government, state, regional and national levels of governments. One negative effect of electioneering in Nigeria, however, is that most of these elections were often disrupted with massive riggings. The 1959, 1964, 1979, 1983, and 1993 federal elections speak volumes of the level of political fraud associated with elections in Nigeria. All the problems affecting the conduct of successful elections in Nigeria can be located in the pre-elections (electioneering campaign) activities.

The Nigerian democratic process has also been truncated thrice as a result of the misfortunes associated with electioneering process in Nigeria. The 1964, 1983, and 1993 federal elections all led to military interventions in the Nigerian political arena.

Specifically, the intervention of the theatre in electioneering campaigns in Nigeria has a cultural connotation with organized and unorganized oral performances dominating most of these campaigns, especially in the 50s and the 60s. Between 1979 and 1983, electioneering campaigns in Nigeria were expanded to include the blazing and high tech radio jingles and television adverts (which take the form of melodious and harmonious songs with pictorial cum dramatic sketches).

During the 1993 and the 1999 elections in Nigeria, the theatre was used as a cohesive and intimidating yet promotional and lobbying instrument of mass mobilization. The National Orientation Agency, the then MAMSER, Social Democratic Party (SDP), National Republican Convention (NRC), Alliance for Democracy (AD), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All People's Party (APP) all spent heavily on publicity and mass mobilization. Television advertisements and radio jingles were massively used.

The theatres of human mannequins were also used in 1993 and 1999's ward, local, state and federal elections. The technique of this theatre is for young and fanatical followers of prospective candidates to paint their bodies with various colours of their choice and write boldly the name of their candidates on their bodies. They would then stay at strategic locations as campaign progresses. These people often add dramatic impetus to electioneering campaigns as they often attract people's attention and any candidate not wanting to be overshadowed usually imitates this scenario for subsequent re-enactment.

Commissioned plays are also used to advance the frontiers of candidates during electioneering campaigns. *Yoruba Ronu* by Hubert Ogunde was a typical example although the intention of Egbe Omo Olofin who commissioned the play as a public relations strategy was jettisoned as the artist in Ogunde took the centre of his creativity. The play ironically condemns the government that it was intended to promote. Soyinka's *A Dance of the Forests* is also a critique of the then Nigerian political leaders. The play was intended to glorify the Nigerian government and the Nigerian people as the joy of independence demanded but the playwright superimposed his own vision and he predicts doom for the Nigerian leaders and its citizens. There were also numerous commissioned plays that have spoken the minds of their sponsors. However, the essentials of commissioned performances by the Nigerian political actors are for image laundering, a bug of political intimidation of opponents.

In the music arena, the theatre of music has also consistently being used for negative and positive political reasons preparatory to elections. Ogunde's *Awo Mimo* and of recent; Adewale Ayuda, a Fuji Musician in his *Gun Shot* praise Ahmed Bola Tinuba the current Governor of Lagos State with the following song:

*Mo dupe mi o sa bo nu
Emi o so bo nu
Bola ni mo dibo fun
Tinuba ni mo dibo fun*

*I thank myself that I did not lost my vote
Yes, I did not lost my vote
It was Bola that I voted for
Tinubu surely deserved my vote.*

He also praised Olusegun Osoba, the current Governor of Ogun State in the same cassette. A semiotic analysis of the above song nonetheless leads to one conclusion – that Tinubu, and Osoba should be voted for again. What a publicity gig! In the previous elections and even the current political dispensation, almost all the major and minor musicians have their political sponsors and godfathers who they often sing for.

In Kwara State alone, there is a dividing line between Muhammed Lawal (the current Governor of the State) and Chief Olusola Saraki (a long time political power broker in the state). Their various musicians numbering about sixteen whose only duty is to sing for their masters further strengthen the political disagreement between the king and the kingmaker. The economic

implication of this is that these musicians are being heavily paid and they now drive expensive cars and vehicles to convey themselves, their troupes and their instruments.

On oral performances, this researcher has the unfortunate experience of witnessing the worst yet, the barbaric dehumanization of human being in the 1983 elections in the Western part of Nigeria. It was in Agbeye a town in Odo-Otin Local Government of the then Oyo State and the UPN supporters assembled in the market square chanting and singing war songs against the members of the PNP:

*Epon baba demo da ...
O ro pau o ro kegekege (2ce)*

*Where is the dick of the saboteur...
It burst and got destroyed (2ce)*

Laced with other dangerous weapons and aided with spontaneous war drumming, the UPN supporters moved round the town and the NPN supporters fled away. "Demo" is a coined Yoruba word for saboteur or anybody who belongs to other party that has no Obafemi Awolowo's root, a Northern party.

Interestingly, when the then FEDECO (Federal Electoral Commission) declared Alhaji Sheu Shagari and Dr. Omololu Olunloyo as the President of Nigeria and Oyo State Governor respectively, in 1983, the NPN supporters retaliated and some of the UPN supporters apprehended sang a different tune of political submission:

*Bo roju mi o ribun mi,
Demo ni mo wa (2ce)
If you see my appearance you did not know my mind
I belong to the party of the outsider (2ce)*

Beyond song recollections, the Western Nigeria was practically at war with itself as a result of rigging that characterised the 1983 elections.

5. Observations on the Theatre of Electioneering in Nigeria

5.1 Oral performances

It has been observed that oral performances through improvisation, praise singing, chanting, incessant musical accompaniments, acrobatic displays and dances in various cultures characterized the theatre of electioneering campaigns in Nigeria. Most of these oral performers are either willing political supporters,

praise singers, established and profound artists or family members of the prospective candidates seeking electoral offices.

The positive tides of oral theatrical campaigns modes and their performers are numerous for they reinforce campaign activities through the rituals of their theatrical dispositions. As basic collaborators with professional politicians, they advance the frontiers of political mobilization, publicity and cultural celebrations. They also dazzle and entertain the public through pragmatic socio-historical recollections; they are the actors in the complex political socialization web.

Negatively, oral performers and their performances have been relegated to the level of sycophants whose eruditions serve the wish of their masters alone. They are "sellers" of prospective candidates and as retired artists, money is probably one of the main reasons for their activities.

5.2 The Theatre of Human Mannequins

The theatrical homecoming of these robotic performers, nevertheless, is the cultural importation and modernization of some of the Nigerian theatrical traditions. These masked human musketeers are energetic agents of colour visualization. Good and beautiful to behold, isolated for effects and made to serve the master politicians or better, they are comedians in the political train swinging and moving to the tide of politics.

The contrasts of these robots are, however, hypocritically numerous: a toga of dictatorship; a feeling of cultural dislocation and bastardization; a theatre of the absurd where one man or few others in the mafia oligarchy frantically intimidate the electorate. Or, if a half-naked, young and energetic man paints himself white and writes on his body: MOSES MUST WIN, AHMED IS GOD SENT or CHIMA IS THE NEXT GOVERNOR and strategically positions himself in a political rally moving slowly, standing triumphantly and looking at the electorate jovially, indifferently and deadly, one can then begin to have a confused frenzy of the mind, a germinated neurosis of political suppression.

5.3 Musicians in the Theatre of Electioneering Campaigns

The wider coverage and the impact musicians often have on the society have made the Nigerian musician legendary in the Nigerian political environment. Songs of singers and music of musicians have been used to advance political understanding and engender political socialization. Fela Anikulapo's numerous political satirical songs such as; *Teacher No Teach Nonsense*, *Beast of Nation*, *Soldier, go Soldier Come*, *Suffer Suffer*; Suny Ade's 1995 masterpiece *This Nigeria belongs to all of us*; Hubert Ogunde's *Song of Unity*, and Funmi Adams and Lagbaja's numerous political jabbings only serve as positive

reflectors meant to re-awaken the Nigerian electorate to their political responsibility, a modicum for free and fair elections.

In spite of the profound positive aesthetics inherent in musical compositions and instrumentations, Nigeria musicians are also agents of pyrrhic victory. They sing for the winners and the professional politicians who pay the highest bills. They once sang for Awolowo and paradoxically sang for Akintola (extending the then crisis and conflicts in the Action Group Party). They sang for Tafawa Balewa and often welcome military adventurists with "song of supports". They sang for Moshood Abiola and various tune of success were also recorded for Uthman Tofa. In 1999, they sang for Olu Falae and Olusegun Obasanjo in the 1999 Presidential election.

The sense and nonsense, logics and illogics of musicians' refrains have affected the Nigerian electioneering process thereby mystifying the Nigerian political class as musicians' negative and positive pedagogy help only the politicians while stifling the electorate who must be re-educated and re-invested. Musicians must necessarily use the tonic of music to preach the gospel of free and fair elections in a polity where power is synonymous with death.

5.4 Live Theatre and Literary Contraptions

Playwrights and Artistic Directors are often commissioned to produce plays with political theme. Some of these plays or improvisational performances also help to promote those who sponsor them. Formidable also is the fact that some plays are written specifically to express the evils associated with election riggings and political violence. Femi Osofisan's *A Restless Run of Locusts* and *Yungba and the Dance Contest*; Ayo Akinwale's *This King Must Die*, Ola Rotimi's *If... and Hopes of the Living Dead* are good examples. The performance of such plays should be encouraged.

Social agencies such as NGOs, Independent Electoral Commission (INEC), National Orientation Agency (NOA), National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), private and public television houses should also endeavour to sponsor live performances with free and fair elections, political socialization and evils of election rigging as themes, all with the intention of educating the electorate.

5.5 The Cinematic Tradition and the Home Video Industry

Theatre practitioners while delivering the services and the intentions of the Producers and Executive Producers must also use a portion of their clips to make statements towards the eradication of violence and rigging during elections. Governors of states are now in the habit of sponsoring political

related video cassettes to boost their electoral chances and as they do that, the need for free and fair elections should also be emphasized. The social agencies discussed above are also implored to tap from the mass coverage engendered by the cinematic and the home video theatre.

5.6 Of Radio and Television Jingles, Advertisements and Dramas

These instruments of mass mobilization are also utilized for political oppression, intimidation and suppressions within the ambit of electioneering campaigns in Nigeria. It is, therefore, suggested that massive radio and television jingles, advertisements and organized dramas must necessarily be used to educate both the politicians and the electorate on the danger of truncating our nascent democracy.

6. Conclusion

Our theoretical exploration in this article is both multi-dimensional and mono-reflective. Multi-dimensional because we have reviewed the past, the present and the likely future trends of the Nigerian theatre traditions, the inevitability of the theatre in the political environment and its relevance in the Nigerian political history. This work is also mono-reflective because our reflections on the theatre of electioneering campaigns in Nigeria through observations and suggestions are to shape and re-shape, change and re-focus, educate and re-engineer the Nigerian political class and most especially the Nigerian electorate on the enviable task of democratic sustenance through free and fair elections in Nigeria.

The theatre practitioners must also accept the reality of their enviable roles in nation building through political conscientisation. The theatre as a reflector and its artists—the reporters—must practice various theatrical forms but, the thematic pre-occupations of their performances and its media must include free and fair elections, evils of violence during elections and the danger of rigging during elections in Nigeria. The political suppressions, oppressions and intimidations of opponents are also socio-political disorders which the theatre artists are enjoined to correct and re-order.

REFERENCES

- Adedeji, J. A. 1981. "Alaringjo: The Traditional Yoruba Traveling Theatre." In Yemi Ogunbiyi (ed.) *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine.
- Adeola, Taiye. 1999. "Contemporary Nigerian Popular Music: A Tool for National Development." In Ayo Akinwale (ed.) *Nigerian Theatre Journal*. Ilorin: Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists.
- Adesina, Foluke. 1993. "Theatre and Media in Nigeria Politics." In Jide Malomo and Saint Gbilekaa (eds.) *Theatre and Politics in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists.
- Ayo Akinwale, Ayo. 1999. *The Impact of the Theatre on Contemporary Nigerian Society: A study in theatre Sociology*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Ibadan.
- Babawale, Tunde. 1999. "Political Culture and Political Socialization." In Remi Anifowose and Francis Enemwo (eds.) *Elements of Politics*. Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd.
- Barranger, Milly S. 1995. *Theatre: A Way of Seeing*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Beting, Liwhuliwhe. 2002. "Postmodern Trends in Nigerian Drama: The Example of Wole Soyinka's *The Beautification of Area Boy*. A Postgraduate Seminar delivered at the Theatre Arts Department, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, August 15th, 2002.
- Cameron, Kenneth and Gillespie, Patti. 1996. *The Enjoyment of Theatre*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Clark, Ebun. 1979. *Hubert Ogunde: The Making of the Nigerian Theatre*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Gbilekaa, Saint. 1993. In Jide Malomo and Saint Gbilekaa (eds.) *Theatre and Politics in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists.
- Huberman, Jeffery, Ludwig, James and Brank Pope. 1993. *The Theatrical Imagination*. London: Harcourt Brace.
- Kerr, David. 1986. "An Approach to Pre-colonial African Theatre." *African Theatre Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2.
- Obafemi, Olu. 1988. "The Development of Nigerian Dramatic Literature." In Yemi Ogunbiyi (ed.) *Perspectives on Nigerian Literature: 1700 to the Present*. Lagos: Guardian Books Nigeria Limited.
- Obafemi, Olu. 1999. "Fundamentals of Drama, theatre and Performance." In Efurosibina Adegbiya (ed.) *The English Language and Literature: An Introductory Handbook*. Ilorin: Modern European Languages.
- Ogunbiyi, Yemi. 1981. "Nigerian Theatre and Drama: A Critical Profile." In Yemi Ogunbiyi (ed.) *Drama and theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine.
- Osofisan, Femi. 1993. "Conversation in 1978 by Olu Obsafemi." In Muiyiwa Awodiya. (ed.) *Excursions in Drama and Literature*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.
- Schwarz, Walter. 1968. *Nigeria*. London: Pall Mall Press.