

THE ROLES OF ARABIC PLAY WRITERS IN NIGERIA

The use of Arabic drama in entertaining and educating the Muslims audience was developed and put in use in some private and public Arabic and Islamic schools. Short Arabic plays were staged by these schools on ceremonial occasions such as the *Maulud Nabiyi* (the Prophet's birthday celebration), *Lailatul Qadri* (The Night of Majesty); a night in the month of Ramadan, graduation ceremony days and other occasion such as naming and marriage ceremonies. Prof. Oseni noted that the only area where drama was developed had been in the private and government Arabic schools. Short Arabic plays were staged by these schools during festivities like *Laylatul Qadri* and *Maulud Nabiyi* (the birthday of Prophet Muhammad Peace be Upon Him).⁽¹⁰⁾

Apparently, the first published Arabic play in Nigeria is *Al-Amid Al-Mubajjal* (The Honourable Dean) in 1994 by Prof Z.I Oseni. Adam states that "in Nigeria today, there is what a writer describes as a culture of corruption which eats deep into the fabrics of the nation with negative consequences on national growth and development".⁽¹¹⁾ In this play; Oseni used the potential of drama to demonstrate how playwrights can educate the society on cultural value and morality. The play is a satire of the corruption scandal in the Nigerian universities' admission system. The play portrays the story of a university lecturer, whose corrupt lifestyle has been described as a bad egg among the seriously committed and humane lecturers in the Faculty of Humanities, Kakaddu University, Kakadu. Professor Akhuli, the lead character in the play, was oppressive and dubious not only to the staff, but also to the students as well as the people of his village, Abalolo. His evil character was illustrated in his selling of handout to students. He equally threatens to deal with those who refuse to buy his handout with failure in his course. Back in his village where he hails from and got sponsored for his education, he collects money from the poor villagers in the name of getting admission for their children, which he did not. His corrupt attitude led him to meet his Waterloo when some influential students seek recourse of the State Security Service that got him arrested and punished.

SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY

The play *Al-Amid al-Mubajjal*, is a three act drama events written in Arabic about a fraudulent scholar who enjoys community scholarship to be trained and got promoted to the rank of professor. But instead of reciprocating the good gesture, he ended up defrauding his own people by extorting money for admission, oppressing the female students, forcing students to buy handout and so on. The clear picture of the above is shown as follows: