

The Influence of Western Drama on Contemporary African Drama

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ABSTRACT

African drama is generally believed to find its roots in the tradition and culture of the African society such as the celebration of the new yam festival (festivity) the display of masquerade, religious rituals, and the moonlight story (storytelling) therefore, African drama has been in existence before the emergence of the colonialism, African drama existed in form of action, through music and dance that was ritualized to express emotions such as terror, passion, and love. These actions were imitations of what the people wanted to happen so if they wanted to kill an enemy they would act out the process, religious and magical rituals were used and combined with dance and songs, with the emergence of Western drama which was brought through colonization, African drama became modernized to scripting of drama, use of language satirical plays, use of a curtain, theatre of the absurd, during colonialism, African drama such as the religious ritual was seen as a barbaric act by the colonial masters. The influence of this Western drama on African drama gave birth to what we call contemporary African drama. As we read the background and other parts of this paper we will understand the influence of Western drama on contemporary African drama.

INTRODUCTION

Western drama infiltrated into the African milieu mainly through colonialism. Before this time, African drama a peculiar and indigenous form of drama, distinct in its aspects existed in Africa. The contact between the two forms of drama brought about some changes. The original African drama shaded some of its components, modified and substituted them with the new alien dramatic form. The marriage of the two brought about a unique and subtle blend of cultures and more theatrical improvement from which contemporary African drama, therefore can be regarded as an offshoot of the inter-marriage between Western and African drama.

Significant improvements were made as a result of this marriage. This can be seen in the basic elements of the western drama. Theatre, stage, music chorus, design, actors, scripting of plays, professionalism, language, etc. These elements will be discussed fully in subsequent chapters in this work. These are conceived as healthy and welcome developments. Contemporary African drama, therefore represents a partial drift from the original African drama, which is a communal affair, to a highly specific defined viable activity with an appreciable level of professionalism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Western drama came in contact with the African drama through colonialism. The impact was observed. These impacts can be termed "Major Theatrical Developments in African Drama". The great theatrical events of the nineteenth century came during its last quarter when Loosen, Shaw, Strindberg, and their contemporaries ushered in the dramatic movement commonly studied in college classes under the title of "Modern Drama". Before this, the century had little to offer in the realm of dramatic literature. The theatrical developments in African drama are all those ideas, techniques, and dramatic approaches that found their way into Western origin or foundation. They have affected and shaped African drama into what it is perceived today.

With the influence of colonialism, African drama appears to have lost its originality, entertainment value, and communicative ability over the years. For instance, colonialism brought with it the impression that African cultural heritage was inferior and that the drama focus of the colonialists was superior. Colonialism suppressed the culture of the people and in some cases, openly condemned the people's language, identity, history, music, way of life, folklore, and political systems. African dramatists have not completely fought that yoke of colonialism over the years. These changes have been reflected in African drama, but the said changes have not encouraged effective solutions to hardships borne by society. It is not too easy to stage a play that is highly ambiguous in theme, with numerous conflicting thoughts, bi-cultural differences, difficult languages, and the cultural alienation of the people it is meant for. Such is the problem of African drama in contemporary times.

Given the manifestations of contemporary times, a deliberate plunge into dramatic primitively in the name of upholding indigenous drama would do more harm than good to African dramatic development. The artist also cannot be tied down to what is not creatively obtainable in his immediate environment

at the present stage of his existence. He cannot, be particularly alienated from that pool from which he draws to improve his theatrical/dramatic fertility.

Abiodun Adeodiji points that:

The indigenous African does not mind an interpolator existence of the African with the Western. But, he will be greatly and unfairly treated if his tradition and culture are discarded as being primitive while the Western tradition and culture are appraised as the "best"

Adeodesi advocates for a compatibility between African western dramas. A give-and-take situation devoid of complete rigidity. In her view Efua Sutherland, a female play Wright and critic averred that:

A truly vital theatre should be an example of oral literature by dealing directly with contemporary experience.

By this, she means that African artists should employ both indigenous dramatic concerns. Traditionally, Africans encouraged passive and active participation among spectators at the village level. Some argued that contemporary drama has failed to arouse a response, for it seems to alienate its audience, and therefore posit that theatre has not occurred in such a situation. For instance, a play that is highly ambiguous in theme with numerous conflicting thoughts, bi-cultural differences, difficult language, and cultural alienation of the people it is meant for. It has been a form of deliberate and sustained experimentation on the African environment, foreign alien are detached from their theatrical sensualities and carefully weave the two dramatic concepts into intricate patterns for greater effectiveness and appeal.

Unfortunately, some have gone to ridiculous extremes trying to reproduce Western drama on African soil. One therefore wonders about the relevance of a Shakespearian classic to an African audience. Such plays no doubt are great achievements and contributions to Western drama and remain the delight of a selected African audience, with the Euro-American dramatic orientation. But drama is a vehicle of social change of the society; this implies that it must be earnestly relevant and theatrically appealing to the consciences of the audience. The audience must be carried along and made to appreciate what they see on the stage.

Not that they can be forced into complete disbelief by strenuous efforts at realism, such moves will attract nothing, but laughter from a father at the inability of the son to tell a witty lie. Rather that completes submission and timely penetration into the minds of the audience through deliberated and step-by-step entrance. Audience attention is captured and withheld while empathy and sympathy gain useful ground. Under purpose for the audience is "involved". In the activity, not just in the traditional African typology or theatrical context, but within the framework of contemporary African drama. This is quite different from the traditional African drama where there is a direct involvement and participation of the audience in the actual realization of the drama. In both cases, therefore, the basic remains the degree to which the intended messages have been communicated and responded to by the play. If the audience in the traditional African drama can "feel their parts" through direct participation in songs dance and chorus and if carried along through the

use of suspense and effective synchronization of Western and African dramatic elements, then contemporary African drama must have been a successful and important phenomenon to the development of drama in Africa.

Origin of African Drama

Traditional African theatre consists of indigenous theatre practices which is deeply rooted in the various African communities. Yemi Ogunbiyi views his point in his introduction to drama and theatre in Nigeria when he says that the indigenous Africans sought numerous religious rituals and festivals 'as an expression of the relationship between man, society, and nature. Drama arose out of fundamental needs in the dawn of human civilization and has continued to express those needs ever since these festivals involved the performance of rituals, use of masks, mime dance, incantatory speech, and several other elements that are used in a way tailor to their usage. In contemporary dramatic traditions, African drama originated with the African herself, embodying his first preoccupation, his first struggles and successes set back.

The Religious Rituals Origin

In the course of history, man tried to understand his environment and find answers to intriguing natural occupancies; he tried to search for the meaning of his existence, about those forces about him that appeared mysterious to his understanding. Given that concept, the urge to establish unity with those forces must have compelled him to conceive a certain formula in his relationship with them. He believed that harmony between his existence and those forces could be affirmed. This was a long application of the formula towards stabilizing the relationships with an indomitable force that could be shared in his world. Primitive man reasoned that each incomprehensible occurrence must have a superior and mysterious force that controlled it. So, each natural feature, phenomenon, and human activity was controlled by a god. Therefore, in order to get a god on his side, he must try to accommodate what he feels or thinks would be the god's liking. For example, if he is about to set out for a hunting expedition or battle, he would re-enact a mock game hunting or battle in which he overwhelms his targets to guide on his desire. If he wants to improve his chances of a good harvest he will demonstrate the pattern of behavior exhibited before in order to prevent that success. This is the sympathetic magic. The process of affinity took on a definite character which made it artistic. It could then be deduced that the initiative process by man toward understanding other forms of creation, gave rise to what can be named the "dramatized rituals, logically the dramatized ritual became man's musical creativity.

Since he was dealing with awesome invisible beings, he had to create an appropriate condition that would enable him to have access to the gods. This led to the use of dance and stylized movement as well as evocative poetry and songs to attract the attention of the gods. Into a kind of theatre. To this end, body makeup, imitation in gait, sound, and conceptualized appearance came to bear on the act of worship, into which verbalization of "wish-fulfilling" and invocations must have been basic, these rites became ritualized and established.

With greater awareness, this role (now rituals) was modified and altered, such that it became possible to isolate the myths that have been developed around the rituals and are acted out as traditional drama of some sort.

Religious ritual is a series of actions, demonstrable by man to create a conducive atmosphere for a meeting of the human and spirit world so that the gods/spirits would act on human requests, pleas, and activity. It is viewed as a solemn and highly elevated performance on which the communal progress of a society is hinged. Ritual depends on its rightness. Man uses means and procedures, which have been rested and affirmed over the years to “penetrate” a being. As a result of his inadequacy for instance, if a primitive man sought good health and remained ill, he blames it on a faulty ritual. He then performs the ritual again, taking care to follow the established prescribed procedure the distinction often made between ritual and drama.

The Mimetic Origin

Drama may have evolved from imitation (mimesis). Man is essentially a mimetic being. The primitive man felt that imitating the character of the object was a helpful step towards understanding its mystery. In this way, man sought to affix his relationship to a particular object of interest to him. With mimesis in its mode, the process of affinity took on a definite character which made it artistic. The early man who is predominantly a hunter tried to deceive animals by costuming himself to look like them. This offered him, the needed access to these wild creatures, who could not easily identify the costumed hunter. The hunter cashed on this idea of camouflage and blended with the environment to kill as many animals as possible. Back in the village before a hunting expedition, a mock hunt is performed by the hunters, costumed in animal skins. The significance of this is to ensure a successful hunt (sympathetic magic). This could also be seen as a rehearsal.

On their return from a successful hunting expedite where a big animal was killed, the hunters would need to tell the story of how the unusual animal was killed, to realize the story, someone may elect, to behave like the animals while another would behave like the hunter that killed it. This obvious need for clarity must have necessitated the introduction of mimesis into an otherwise ordinary story session. The stories of this feat are re-enacted either to preserve race memory or didactic purposes, and for entertainment.

Drama

The Story Telling Origin

Stories about animals or inanimate objects abound in Africa. Most of these stories are didactic. The protagonists are mainly trickster animals here, spiders, etc. The tortoise is predominant in Nigerian folk drama, especially among the Akan-speaking people of Ghana where it is known as Anansesem, which means Ananse stories. The spider or the tortoise appears to be the archetype of every man (representing the average human beings and animals. The single narrator sometimes acts out the roles, switching from character to character as he tells the story. The more a storyteller does this role-switching

well, the more proficient he is said to be. This may evolve into satirical folk drama when it is said to grow in entertainment on interpretative values.

The Festival Origin

A festival is a ceremonial event that involves a community, it takes place when a community organizes itself to express its desires and celebrate its gains. The traditional village is full of fun fare and merry-making during the festival celebration. Drama may be found as part of the entire festival especially if the festival calls for enactment of parts of the people's history. The festivals are among the common activities that create a sense of unity and oneness in a community. It involves masquerading, singing, and dancing. Some of the festivals within which drama may be found, as stated by Duruaku are in the following categories festivals of the rites of passage, festivals of the feats of the farming cycle, occasional festivals, festivals of a deity worship, and ancestors veneration.

1. Festivals of rites of passage are those that demonstrate the joy of a new status in the society including priesthood, puberty, chieftaincy rites, etc. The iwa akwa festival of some Nigerian Igbo people is a good example of a puberty festival.
2. Festivals of the farming cycle are associated with the farming calendar harvest and cropping. The preparations are extensive, especially for the harvest festivals. The details of the preparation for the festivals differ from place to place. Some examples are the new yam festival of pumpkin leaves, the festival of maize grain, etc.
3. Festivals of ancestor veneration and deity worship are fumigant in areas where animism was the religion of the people. The traditional African held his heroic ancestors in highly esteemed worship of deity. Since they were invisible, their presence was concentrated in masquerades telling stories in dance even though pure dancing is dominant. Examples of festivals of ancestor veneration and deity worship include "owu odo" and "okorosha" of the Igbo people of eastern Nigeria and the Ayo and Egunguu festival, popular in the Yoruba-speaking area of Nigeria.

Educational Function

Art, in all its forms, has something to teach. There must be a lesson derivable from it, though the lesson, most times, is not clearly shown on the surface but rather embedded within the art or art form. Traditional theatre serves this function because it is a repository of the moves and traditions ss the people. The kind of education a child gets in a traditional setting revolves around understanding his community or immediate environment and its history. In this aspect, myths and legends, or what could be generally termed folklore come into play. These are intricately woven into traditional theatre. It was in the representation of traditional drama that such information, especially for a society that was not literate. Folk tales were used to give insight into the meaning of life, the reason for the events (etiological functions), the history of the tribe, as well as other philosophies of life. The various animal tales that

culminated into folk drama as well as the enactment of the heroic deeds of ancestors provided a veritable storehouse of knowledge.

The Moral Function

In theatre history, the first drama to be chronicled was staged for the edification of the ordinary people by the religiously ruling artistic elite. The play was the “Abrades passion” drama displayed in Egypt in about 400 BC. The play strove to implant in the ordinary people who comprised early Egyptian audiences. After the final analysis. The lasting message was: be good to one another so that the gods would bless you.

Traditional theatre therefore teaches positive values through an exploration of crime and the resultant punishment. This could be achieved through the use of satire or straightforward criticism of deviant behavior. Most times, the drama is made symbolic by making use of animal characters or populace. Even at this, the human foibles are being criticized. The moral function has two basic functions, which are, moral and educational function. Through this, traditional African theatre offers positive values. Vice is criticized and good extolled. Even when a character may be seen to have escaped punishment, his actions are condemnable. The lessons then strive to the mind.

Entertainment Function

Art, basically is all about entertainment. Traditional drama is heavy and rich in entertainment except in purely ritual form. Entertainment goes a long way relaxing the minds of people and bringing them together to commune with one another. Unity is ensured and the class difference is deemphasized to an appreciable extent.

Theatre can serve this function of traditional theatre by its ability to hold attention, please the senses, entertain the mind, and suspend all the worries of life at least for the period it lasts. Theatre employs means that ensure audience participation like music dance and pantomime. The entertainment function of theatre even cuts across rituals where people, who by the prevailing circumstance are ordinarily not part of the ritual, are still entertained by the ceremonies in which the ritual is embedded.

Social Function

The traditional drama explores some avenues to achieve control of social behavioral patterns and attitudes. This could be done through the use of static pieces and direct criticism. Vices committed by members of the society are used in mock songs and lampoons. A good example is the “Okorosha and the Owu” festivals in Igbo land, where such theatrical devices are largely evident. The masqueraders sing about the heroic deeds of some illustrious sons who have remained loyal and committed to the course of the traditional societies. They equally make caricatures of the bad egg in the society whose names are weaved into songs, narrating their evil deeds. This could be done during festivals in the village square or through the use of some mobile theatre in which the masquerader moves around the village with their performance. Evil is exposed

to the public and the shame and social stigma never leave the victims of the lampoon. If there is anything individuals cherish most, it is their integrity, therefore, nobody wants to be ridiculed. More so, when he cannot fight the masqueraders, who are believed to have a link with the spirit worlds and therefore are immune from any form of physical attack from anybody. The members of the community try to exercise restraint in their actions even when done in secret.

METHODOLOGY

African drama has come a long way. It has been ruling consistently in time and place. Interestingly, African drama in its periodic motion has been able to gather enough "theatrical evolution" to enrich itself. Traditional African drama was largely erupted from religious rituals. Festivals gradually gave way to a Westernized dramatic form. Rituals shed their sacredness to blend with the base. Several dramatists believe that what is usually called traditional drama is the huge legacy upon which drama may draw with ever-increasing returns. What some usually call traditional drama is proper and essentially elements of drama. In fact, traditional drama is the total of the doing of people before written records were kept.

Scripting of Drama

The idea of scripting drama is Western or foreign to African drama. African drama was devoid of any formal scripting. The drama was based on the performance of known rituals, a re-enactment of heroic deeds, an exhibition of diverse dance and songs, and the performance of folk drama. Traditional African drama was largely a communal affair without any proper written record. The participants were members of the society who had been taught the performance very well. Periodic rehearsals helped them to master their roles very well, to the extent that some were known for various roles. Given their ingenuity and profound prowess at being creative and the group having known themselves, assemble daily, in the evening, or once every two days to rehearse together for proper blending and synchronization of their performance. No book was consulted for this purpose as there was none and most of the performers were illiterates. This is to say that they could not read or write to transfer or interpret the scripts if there were any.

Language

Language is a means of communication. Theatre embraces all forms of communication from verbal to nonverbal communication. Language therefore becomes a necessary factor in African drama. The language used in any society must be understood by a majority of the people. This in other words means the use of formal language. English and French affected African dramas to the extent that most drama texts effusing from Africa are written in English and French. The English language has gained such a formidable ground that it has become the language of African theatre. This factor is attributable to the fact that not only that English is now a universal language but most African countries were colonized by the Europeans, particularly the British.

The early educated Africans were taught how to read and write in English. They mastered the language and those of them who showed greater ingenuity and dexterity in the use of the language were revered and respected in the society. Communicating in the language became the dream of most people, especially the young ones. The language thereby spreads to all nooks and crannies of the African continent.

Formal Staging

The direct implication of this theatrical concept is to take theatre into an enclosure. This could be a building constructed with definite and unique specifications and designs, for theatrical performances. The three indispensable elements of theatre are the actor, the place (stage), and the audience. The stage occupies a unique place within the framework of the theatre.

Traditional African theatre has no record of any formal staging. The stage was mainly the village squares, the market square, and in some cases the shrine. One seen in Africa today is so many theatre houses owned by some influential individuals and the states. For example, the National Arts Theatre Iganmu, Lagos which is owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Satire (Satirical Plays)

Satirical plays aim to point out the anomalies and vices in society and proffering solutions to them. This type of writing requires great ingenuity and profound theatrical ability on the side of the playwright to be able to carefully create a strong and vivid play, thereby giving an almost true-to-life picture of the prevalent situations in society.

At times the characters may be animals or spirits but eh human beings and situations they represent or portray may be quite noticeable. A good example of a Western satirical play is *Arms and the Man*. Here play playwright uses striking characters delicate situations and humor to x-ray the senselessness of war.

In the African theatrical arena, plays like *The Trials of Brother Jero* by Wole Soyinka prove that satire can thrive on African soil. The basis of this comedy is not humor, but satirical wit. It does not attempt to create immense comic characters in the round, as Shakespeare did with Falstaff. It is suggesting to us that life itself is absurd and that, certain types of people behaving in a certain way should be ridiculed and laughed at.

Design

The impact of Western drama on contemporary African drama is greatly manifested in this aspect of drama. As I mentioned earlier, traditional African drama consists of peculiar costumes and make-up but is devoid of formal staging. But today, one can see the harsh natural occurrences like thunder and lightning being created on the stage with vividness and astonishing reality. This phenomenon is imitated by a careful design to emphasize and establish the mood and theatrical background of the play. This has brought African drama to a higher level of esteem and appreciation. This is no doubt a positive impact of

Western drama on contemporary African drama. Theatre design has been included in the theatre arts curriculum in most tertiary institutions.

History has it that perspective design or background in theatre came up during the Renaissance this idea has been introduced into the African theatre with remarkable success. All these efforts on stage design are aimed at bringing about a degree of realism on stage. This has had a positive impact on African drama.

Uses of Curtains

With the introduction of formal staging and design in African theatre, there was a need to delineate the acting place from the watching place and also to effect scene changes. The use of a curtain, according to theatre history, evolved from the Western theatre. This concept was used extensively during the Elizabethan period in the Globe Theatre and other famous theatres for the theatricalization of most Shakespearian plays. In Africa, the stage curtain has been used to achieve various theatrical effects, especially on the proscenium stage. Effective use of a curtain can depict or represent the beginning and the end of each scene and also helps to build up suspense which is a useful technique for capturing the mind of the audience in the theatre.

The Use of Chorus

The origin of the chorus in theatre history could be traced to the Greek period. That is to say that the chorus has survived many centuries in theatre, starting from the Dionysus festival to the contemporary period. A look at the plays of Sophocles like *Antigone* and *Murder in the Cathedral* portrays a heavy reliance on the chorus for various theatrical effectiveness. It is used to introduce new scenes/characters, create mood, and is also used as a flashback technique. In this case, the chorus narrates stories of events that happened in the past, about the play, thereby giving a greater insight into the play. This approach fuses the past with the present and prepares the audience's mind for the future. Thus a genealogical sequence or causal relationship is effectively established.

Theatre of the Absorb and Lack of Action

A theatre is a form of art that engages the audience's attention through doing things or through action. That is to say, that action forms a major part of drama. There has to be dialogue, monologue, and some meaningful movements on stage. These go a long way to further express the playwright's ideas and facilitate the appeal of drama.

However, some plays defy this arrangement or sequence. An example of a Western drama with such an arrangement is *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Becket. No lively action is involved to stimulate the interest of the audience. Everything in the play drifts away from the conventional dramatic order, as the name suggests the absurd. One of the few Africans that toe this line of drama is Ola Rotimi. This was vividly manifested in his play *Holding Talks*. Though one may not say that the plays mentioned above are devoid of a serious theme, the manner of their presentation is what makes them absurd. This is no doubt a Western idea which African dramatists have embraced.

Professionalism

Traditionally, African drama is communal affairs with no distinct attachment to formal grouping or commercial gains. Most of what existed as drama was not scripted. Western drama history depicts a form of the theatrical root that spans centuries starting from the Greek period in theatre history. Greek writers like Sophocles and Shakespeare were great professionals in the theatre who made money and name through the drama.

Shakespeare for instance turned out as many plays as possible, which were theatricalized in the Globe Theatre. These playwrights have authority in drama and make a living out of it. This idea of professional drama gradually found its way into the African soil. In Nigeria for instance, the idea arrived with a concrete manifestation in 1946 with the production of "TIGER'S EMPIRE" by the African music research party founded and managed by the doyen of Nigerian theatre Herbert Ogunde. This could, in other words, be termed the beginning of real arts commercialization in Nigeria. Actors and women were involved in drama. The success of the group and the impact their play generated triggered them the more, into greater theatrical advancement. It also spurred other artists into action. Africans today can boast of great men and women who are professionals of the theatre in the real sense of the word. This is a significant impact of Western drama on contemporary African drama and a major development in contemporary African drama.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the contemporary African to harness the rich and veritable elements of traditional African theatre practice for his audience to comprehend, one important factor is likely to frustrate him, the factor is the use second language. Language is a means of communication. It is a necessary factor of human co-existence which evolved out of the need for man to communicate and share his experience with his fellow man. Any inability or incapability to articulate this mode of communication for the targeted audience to comprehend will covertly, and overly result in a dead end. It is therefore not surprising that in any contemporary African, the problem of the use of foreign language against the use of indigenous African language always comes up. This is because there is always a division between those who are for the use of an indigenous African language and those who advocate for the use of the English language for socio-political convenience, since the personnel and machinery of African government that direct the course of the ruled, are patently the literate minority. Ola Rotimi contends that though numerically, the literate class may constitute a minority functionally, it is an influential majority. To target this literate "ruling" class, therefore, is to address the heart of the nation. It is by this, that modern African literature may validate one of its claims to national relevance despite the alien.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion on the influence of Western drama on contemporary African drama, an attempt has been made to establish (the fact) that contemporary African drama is a mixture of traditionalism and modernism. The study has demonstrated that there is a necessary meeting that forms the basis for great dramas. It is based on this understanding of the necessary marriage of two opposite the infiltration of one culture into another, that great works of African drama now stand as modern while maintaining some traditional elements.

These are the words of Prof. Chris Nwamuo. He posited that there should be a structuring of plays on the strain for oppositional affinity. African writers and dramatists should not be unduly restrictive in the application of various dramatic elements but should explore new grounds on the most effective ways of implementing such ideas to project and transport their works to greater levels. In doing this, however, great care should be taken to avoid sounding too ambiguous or being misunderstood. Finally, I must not fail to state that this research is exhaustive in itself, but I hope that various issues raised and treated in this study will serve a useful purpose in the advancement of further studies on the impact of Western drama on contemporary African drama. With a theatre as young as that of contemporary Africa, it is obvious that the best is yet to be accomplished.

Recommendations

Contemporary African drama has come a long way a lot of improvements have been observed. This has to a large extent positively affected the general aesthetic appeal of contemporary African drama. However, relevance and suitable language have been a major issue in contemporary African drama. A lot of dramatists and playwrights prefer to use the foreign language instead of the indigenous African language. The obvious consequence of this practice is that it has relegated the indigenous African language to the point of near extrication. On the other hand, some dramatists have applied and are still applying the local language to their works that they make no meaning outside their immediate environment and hence, drastically limiting their audience. Strongly recommended that the various languages should stand so long as they will serve the intended need of drama.

Certain local words or expressions lose their potencies and when translated, they should therefore be written as such, but adequate explanations should be given to such words expressed in the glossary. This has a way of preserving both the language and instead of dramatic appreciation and patronage for people to go for what they know and appreciate and what will shade of opinions abound about this argument. Some are in support of the use of the English language while others thump up for the use of indigenous language. Yet another group is strongly in support of the local or pidgin English, an evolution of language which some see as being neither here nor there, but well adapted and farmed in accordance to the primary needs of the average African. All the schools of thought have very strong and cogent reasons for their varied inclinations to this critical discourse. However, some literacy

giants proffer that African playwrights and dramatists should seek to evolve or identify and use the language that brings out their message the best given the circumstances of the place and intended audience. No definite rule on how a specific language should be used or applied, but effective synchronization of the language is needed for greater effect and impact. They believe that a perfect blending and affective synchronization of Western and indigenous Africans would go a long way in the development and appeal of contemporary African drama. Positively affect them.

Various classes of the audience should be well addressed and discuss a subject matter with them, in direct local attachment and relevance within the typological framework of pure Western drama after which the audience will be left with crucial self-questions what have I gained from this exercise? To solve these problems those things and ideas they identify with and appreciate should be brought into the appropriate picture and drama, weaved around their known situations and habits. This will in no small way further enhance the progress of contemporary African drama.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so further research on the topic is still needed "The Influence of Western Drama on Contemporary African Drama."

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