

OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE, NIGERIA.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN
Obafemi Awolowo University
ILE-IFE, NIGERIA.

Inaugural Lecture series 246.

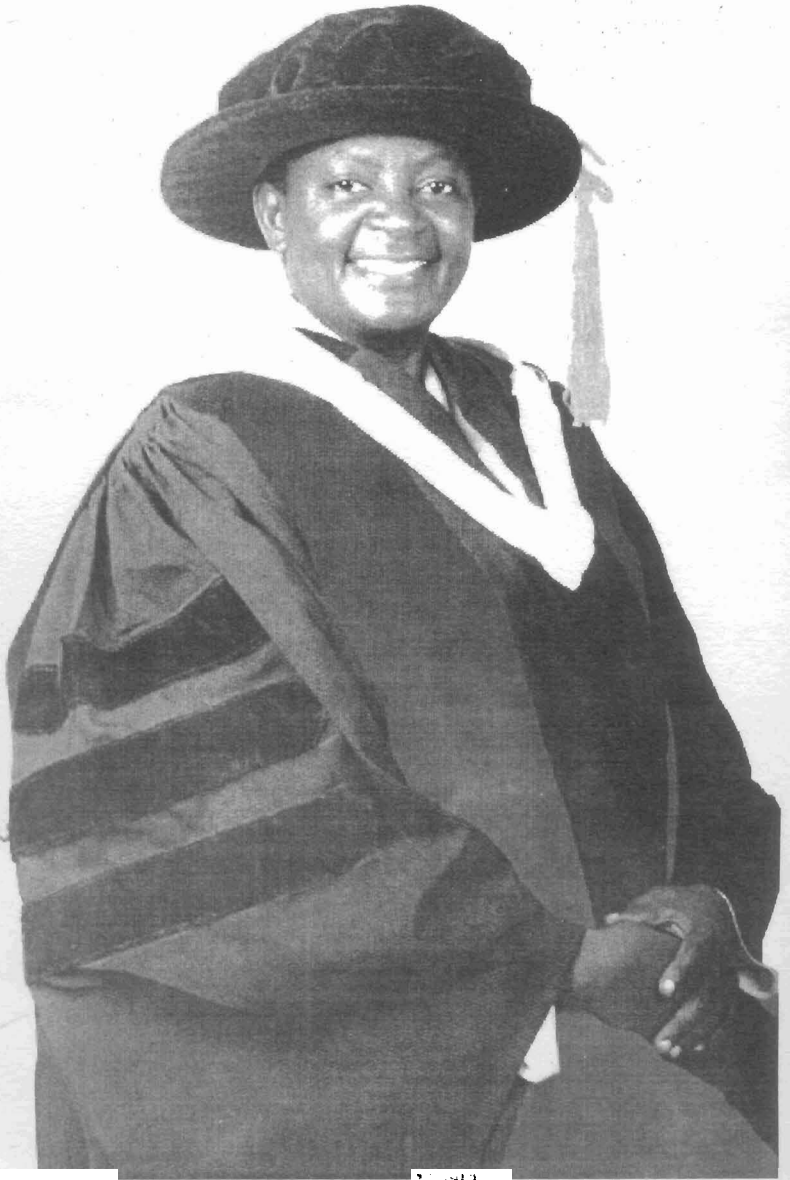
**THESPIANS AND CINEASTES AS
ENGINEERS OF THE NIGERIAN SOUTH**

By

Foluke Matilda Ogunleye
Professor of Theatre and Media Arts




OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE, NIGERIA.



Foluke Matilda Ogunleye
Professor of Theatre and Media Arts

THESPIANS AND CINEASTES AS ENGINEERS OF THE NIGERIAN SOUL

An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at Oduduwa Hall,
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
On Tuesday 8th, May, 2012

By 

Foluke Matilda Ogunleye
Professor of Theatre and Media Arts

Inaugural Lecture series 246

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY IN
Obafemi Awolowo University
ILE-IFE, NIGERIA.

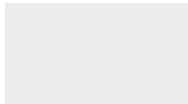
Obafemi Awolowo University Press Limited
Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

© Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 2012.

011 791
15, 2012

ISSN 0189-7848

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN
Obafemi Awolowo University
ILE-IFE, NIGERIA.



Printed by
Obafemi Awolowo University Press
Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

Overture

It gives me great pleasure to present this Inaugural Lecture today. It is also with great humility that I state that my Inaugural lecture is the second one coming from the Department of Dramatic Arts, and I am very pleased to say that I follow in the giant footsteps of our dear patriarch, the Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka, who presented his Inaugural Lecture thirty-two years ago in 1980, two years before I graduated with a B.A. in Dramatic Arts from this great University. His lecture was entitled “The Critic and Society: Barthes, Leftocracy and Other Mythologies”.

My lecture is a celebration of the theatre and mass media as functional tools of societal change and nation building. It also emphasizes the fact that studying drama is not an exercise in jesting and display of ‘contortional’ powers as so many uninformed would have us believe. I harboured such fallacious sentiments when in 1978; I came into the University of Ife as a green Jambite. I came in, powered by the brouhaha of FESTAC 77. I thought coming to the university would be a four-year exercise of acting, dancing and writing plays – all of them pleasurable pastimes as far as I was concerned. Imagine my shock then, when I entered into my first technical theatre class and discovered that I would need to learn something about electricity, something about design, something about carpentry – something about almost everything under the sun! Attendance at some other classes also revealed to me that I had to learn something about the human anatomy! Then I asked myself some ponderous questions, like Shakespeare’s Hamlet,

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? (Hamlet Act 3, scene 1, 55–59)

I was then confronted by a series of dilemmas - to jump ship or to continue my quest for theatrical excellence, to begin a rapid dialogue with my legs or to square my shoulders and stare fate in the eyeballs? At some point, I became alarmed and disoriented. I then said to myself: 'Behold the turtle. He makes progress only when he sticks his neck out'. I then resolved to bend my back to the task, and that momentous decision has steered my career into the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary waters that I have trawled up till this point.

It is not an unusual thing for me, therefore, to be found in academic gatherings that are far from the paths normally trod by those in the arts. For instance, in 1999, I attended the "Drugs and Society Conference" in Jos. It was organized by and for pharmacists, and it birthed my publication titled "Breaking the Drug Scourge among Nigerian Youths: The Utility Value of the Mass Media" (2006: 26-37), which stressed the value of media drama in combating drug abuse. I have also had cause to commune with historians on the altars of many conferences like the "Money in Africa Conference" organized by the British Museum in 2008 which led to my publication entitled "Money and Mercantilism in Nigerian Historical Plays: A Womanist Reading" (2009: 45-49). I have also consorted with colleagues in the medical profession, and this led to the publication of my volume of plays, *The Innocent Victim and other Plays for Health* (2003). My career has indeed validated the assertion of one of the grand patriarchs of Theatre Studies in Africa, Professor Joel Adeyinka Adedeji, that

As a discipline the theatre is a composite art whose resources include the use of the mind, body and voice in expressions that communicate with an audience. While it relates to all the other arts by reaching out to and unifying them dynamically, it serves as the crucible of language, literature, philosophy, sociology, psychology and religion while at the same time, for performance, it presses science and technology into service. (Adedeji, 1980: 2)

I am proud to say, Mr. Vice Chancellor, sir, that this first African Professor of Theatre Arts who penned such insightful words supervised my Masters thesis. At this point, with your kind permission, I offer three hearty 'Gbosas' to all Thespians and Cineastes, those indefatigable engineers of the Nigerian soul:

Gbosa! Gbosa!! Gbosa!!!

This lecture is firstly, a celebration of Drama and Theatre Studies at Obafemi Awolowo University. I want to state that the decision to establish a Department of Dramatic Arts in this University was a very brilliant one. I will therefore carry out a historical survey of the dramatic activities at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, starting from the University of Ife days, and showing how the tentacles of Ife Thespians and Cineastes have impacted and continue to impact their generations with their art. I am proud to be named as one of the members of the Ife Thespians and Cineastes. Secondly, I will peruse the activities of the *Alarinjo* Theatre and the Popular Yoruba Travelling Theatre. This is in acknowledgement of the contributions of the great wo/men who have written their names on the theatrical sands of time and the legacies they have bequeathed to us.

Finally, I will look at the popular Nigerian video film. The Nigerian Video Film has transcended ethnic and geographical boundaries. It evolved from the grassroots, utilizing traditional and cultural materials. It is essentially a child of circumstances - spawned by determination for artistic survival in the face of all odds. It celebrates the tenacity of African artists who determined to keep the arts alive, in spite of acute poverty, through low budget productions. At the initial stage, the films were of low production quality, but they told the story of Nigeria. Future historians would definitely obtain a lot of information about Nigeria from these films. It gives me great pleasure to humbly assert before this august body that I am one of the leading scholars in the area of video film studies in Africa today.

The purpose of my research in this area is to provide substantial literature, which would aid in elevating the video film from its initial image as a pariah and a mere craft to the level of a respectable and viable art form. I have written many scholarly articles on this topic, thereby contributing to the emerging aesthetics of the African Video film. I also have four books to my credit on the subject:

1. *Transformation and Advancement: The Video Film in Africa*, United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012.
2. *African Film: Looking Back and Looking Forward*. Senegal: CODESRIA, 2012.
3. *Africa through the Eye of the Video Camera*. Manzini, Swaziland: Academic Publishers, 2008.
4. *African Video Film Today*. Manzini, Swaziland: Academic Publishers, 2003.

These groundbreaking books are designed to offer a thorough introduction of the video film phenomenon. They provide a sound theoretical footing as well as a critical overview of the video film movement in Africa. They are important resource books and they are currently being used internationally in universities and other institutions of higher learning.

I have also been able to judiciously combine my scholarly works in the field with theatre and media practice. I have acted in many video films and I have produced and directed quite a number of plays as well. Very importantly, I initiated the Biennial Ife International Film Festival. The maiden edition held in October 2007, the second edition held in 2009 and the third edition will hold in September 2012. Through the Festival, I have attracted funding from both international and local agencies to support the visit and participation of filmmakers from the United States of America, Britain, South Africa, Uganda, Senegal, Kenya, Swaziland, Botswana, Ghana, France, Morocco, Zimbabwe and a host of other countries. I have also been able to bring film scholars

of international repute together to share their wealth of knowledge with colleagues and students during the two editions of the Festival.

The Festival has become a veritable teaching tool and Nigerian filmmaking organizations who participated in different editions of the festival are already taking on our students for Industrial Attachment. Plans are also underway to donate media equipment to our Department by various independent producers as a result of the Ife International Film Festival. The focus of my academic career has been on the use of Drama, Theatre and the Mass Media as instruments for improving the society. I have published more than sixty articles in reputable academic journals and refereed books, which expound the theoretical link between the performing arts, the mass media and society. Theories discussed in my writings are also utilized in my directorial works.



Second Ife International Film Festival, 2009

Apart from writing well-researched academic articles, I have also written plays that illustrate the theoretical underpinnings

of the articles. Such plays include *The Innocent Victim* (2003), which was used for a campaign against female genital cutting in Ile-Ife and its environs. The campaign was carried out in conjunction with some colleagues in the Faculty of Health Sciences of this great University. Another play, *A Little Attack of Pregnancy* (2003) was written and produced to educate the society about family planning issues. It was produced in collaboration with a team of Medical Doctors under a non-governmental organization, 'Campaign Against Unwanted Pregnancy' (CAUP). It has also been used by colleagues at The University of the North in South Africa. An example of a play that I have written and used in aid of moral rearmament is *Nest in a Cage* (2004). This has been performed at the Obafemi Awolowo University and at the University of Swaziland. I have also written many plays for religious education, and these have been widely disseminated. In writing and producing these religious plays, I have been able to sensitize practitioners of a popular art form (Christian drama and film producers) about the necessity of a marriage of form and content and also disseminate ideas about the theory and practice nexus. All the plays mentioned above have variously been published, produced for the stage, the screen and radio and exhibited in many countries.

I have contributed immensely to knowledge through my activities as an Editor. For many years, I co-edited the publications of the American Studies Association of Nigeria (ASAN) with senior academic colleagues, from both Nigeria and the United States of America. As an acknowledgement of my proficiency, I was appointed the substantive editor of the Association in 2003. I have also been the editor of many peer-reviewed academic Journals, both nationally and internationally. The Journals have published articles written by colleagues from different countries: Nigeria, Cameroon, Kenya, United States of America, Ghana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana, Mauritius, Madagascar, Morocco, Italy, the Caribbean, Greece and many others.

I have also been immensely blessed to have received various grants, awards and distinguished international academic

fellowships during the course of this short academic career. These include the Fellowship of the African Humanities Institute, (African-American Cinema) utilized at the University of Ghana, Legon and at the Northwestern University, Chicago; South Exchange Programme for the Research on History of Development (SEPHIS) sponsored Fellowship for the Visual Literacy Institute in Maputo, Mozambique; a textbook grant from the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Senegal to write a book on Video Film in Africa and grants from The Prince Claus Fund for Development, The Netherlands, for sponsorship of the Ife International Film Festival.

Why then have I chosen this title with the word 'engineer' as a very conspicuous modifier? First, my husband is an engineer and over the years, his scientific outlook has helped in an immeasurable way to complement my career. Second, on October 26, 1932, Joseph Stalin, while addressing Soviet writers paid a tribute to the profession of pen-wielders in a burst of acerbic humor when he stated:

The production of souls is more important than the production of tanks ... And therefore I raise my glass to you, writers, the engineers of the human soul. (Stalin, 1932)

He used the expression "engineers of the human soul" to describe the activities of certain types of writers. These are writers who, on behalf of the government, either for pay or to curry favor, or in submission to the use of strong-arm tactics by the government, write official versions of stories in order to create a positive image of the government in the minds of the governed.

However, in this particular lecture, we will not adopt Stalin's tongue-in-cheek approach. Rather, we will examine the activities of Thespians (practitioners of the arts of the theatre) and Cineastes (filmmakers) as women and men who arrange for things to happen, in a clever or indirect way, in order to positively affect the soul of

the audience. The soul refers to that part of a human being that consists of her/his mind, character, thoughts and feelings. In summation then, we restate that the theatre and media do not exist merely to titillate our senses, although they do that in great measure. The whole essence of art should be to **reflect, mediate** and **affect** society. According to the English reformer, John Ruskin,

Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts: the book of their deeds, the book of their words, and the book of their art. Not one of these books can be understood unless we read the two others, but of the three the only trustworthy one is the last. (Ruskin, 1890)

Today, we have an insight into Baroque, Medieval, Elizabethan, Romantic and other periods through the extant art of such distant periods and cultures. The same applies to the performing arts of Africa, which have served to document ancient African civilizations and serve as repositories of our culture as well as reminders of who we are as a people.

Functionalism in the Performing Arts

Our focus in this lecture dwells upon the issue of functionalism in the performing arts. It stresses the potency and functionality of the performing arts as diametrically opposed to the idea of art for art's sake. The focus of art for art's sake is basically on the aesthetic purpose of art alone - art for its own sake and nothing else. However, another school of thought subscribes to the opinion that art cannot exist for the aesthetic purpose alone, but must have a specific utilitarian function. According to Chernyshevsky, one of the advocates of the functionalist school,

The idea of art for art's sake is as strange in our times as wealth for wealth's sake, science for science's sake ... All human activities must serve mankind if they are not to

remain useless and idle preoccupations. Wealth exists in order that man may benefit by it, science exists in order to be man's guide, art too must serve some useful purpose and not fruitless pleasures. (cited in Plekhanov: 5-6)

Drama imitates life by bringing on to the stage or screen replication of real-life situations. The audience is able to relate to the circumstances of the characters and borrow ideas from them, especially in the way conflicts are resolved. According to Biodun Jeyifo,

... drama deals at a highly concentrated ... intense level with the contradictions of social existence. A dramatic piece which does not, in one form or another, deploy as its organising structural criteria, a physical or emotional conflict, a moral or spiritual contest of wills, a confrontation between contending principles, is almost inconceivable. Equally important is the fact that drama does not merely subsume conflict merely as its organising structural motif, beyond this; drama also axiomatically attempts a resolution of sorts, a provisional synthesis in the conflicting pulls within its constitutive action ... (Jeyifo, 1985: 7)

Good theatre then, apart from the obvious function of entertainment, should aim at improving the audience's state of knowledge and change the people's behaviour for the better.

Theatre and Social Change

Social drama is a theatre for social change that questions morality and deals with the issues of individuals versus society. According to Francis Donahue, the theatre of commitment is characterized by the importance of the dramatist's political views in relation to his art. Donahue emphasizes that 'it is not a literature of approval or tribute, but rather of protest and outrage' (Donahue, 1969: 355). We see this desire for social change in the works of

Nigerian theatre artists and filmmakers. Through such works, we feel the pain of the people and we see the protest and outrage vociferously articulated on the stage and screen.

Socialization can be defined as the process by which we become 'human', or the ability to be good members of the human society; and having the desire and ability to live at peace, in unity and amity with other members of the human species. Committed Thespians can be referred to as 'sociologist dramatists'. Shaw describes the sociologist dramatist as the dramatist who makes use of dramatized sermons, pamphlets, satires, etc. to address social questions. He gives an example of a dramatist who uses this mode - 'Shakespeare is full of little lectures of the concrete English kind, from Cassio on temperance to Hamlet on suicide' (Shaw, 1974: 633). In essence, the dramatist in the guise of a sociologist deals not only with the social question but with humanity as a whole. The sociological theme portrays people living together and relating together - believable characters dwelling in modern societies and their interaction with fellow human beings. They are presented in diverse situations and we see them making decisions that affect their lives and the lives of other people within their society.

As Goodlad has expressed, there are three principal features of the sociological theme. First, the plays inform the audience about the social structure and moral rules which are necessary for the smooth running of the society. Secondly, such plays express emotions through social arguments on issues where individual desires clash with the good of the society. Lastly, conflicts present in the real life of the society are presented in the plays so that the audience may learn how such conflicts are resolved in the play (Goodlad, 1971: 179). According to Femi Osofisan,

It is certainly a mystery, but in every class society, riven by inequalities, the mouth of the artist always speaks for the poor and the deprived, those who, in Franz Fanon's graphical phrase, constitute "the wretched of the earth". At certain periods, Cabral had informed us, to create at all, is to join a struggle, to open a battle-front. (Osofisan, 1997: 8)

Indeed, Nigerian theatre artists see themselves as waging a war on behalf of society. They see themselves as performing a function of social responsibility towards their fellow-citizens. In their plays, reality rubs shoulders with fiction and they prove that every art has a social function and as Soyinka has averred, the artist in an African society has always functioned as the Conscience of his people (cited in Osofisan, 1997: 11).

The plays draw upon socio-political reality as their source and they use the brick and mortar of fiction to create a world that is a slice of the real. Many of the plays from this tradition are political, just like Aime Cesaire asserted, "my theatre is political because the major problems in Africa are political" (cited in Traore, 1972: 123). Charles Uji also buttresses this idea by stating that

It is perhaps the realization that drama in general, and profound drama specifically, cannot be purely contemplative that prompted Aristophanes – that talented comic dramatist of antiquity – to express that "the dramatist should not only offer pleasure but should, besides that, be a teacher of morality and a political adviser. (Uji, 2001: 1)

Dominic Thomas comments on the activities of writers in post-independence Africa:

Since the process of nation-building got underway following political independence, writers have had to decide whether to align themselves with the new governing elite, or to maintain their autonomy. In sociological environments in which one is either for or against the ruling authorities, separate and distinct bodies of literature have emerged. On the one hand, that which is produced by "official" writers (those who adhere faithfully to the party line), and, on the other, that which is produced by "non-official" or perhaps more appropriately "resistant" authors (those who insist on maintaining a signification - both

creative and ideological – that is autonomous (Dominic Thomas, 2000: 77)

Nigeria has definitely been blessed with more than her fair share of these "resistant" playwrights, writers that have been described by Molefi Asante as giants of the page and stage (Coker, Foreword: ii), and I also add, giants of the screen as well.

The first play broadcast on Nigerian television was Wole Soyinka's "My Father's Burden" and it was televised live in August 1960. Segun Olusola has described the play as an incisive criticism of the New Nigerian bourgeoisie and their indulgence in bribery and corruption (Olusola, 1981: 372). This falls within the category of the propaganda of agitation which seeks to destabilize the status quo. The play held the *nouveau riche* and new elites up to ridicule because of their desire to maintain their position in society through corrupt means. Also, despite Nigeria's attainment of political independence, these people wanted to remain as much like Britons as possible. Wole Soyinka tried to discourage this trend with nationalistic fervor. The Management staff that were part of the 'establishment' were afraid of what Soyinka's play might engender within the society – a destabilization of the status quo and a ridiculing of the elites; consequently they attempted to stop him.

Through rational propaganda, Soyinka sought to appeal to the audience's intellect. He attempted to cause a rupture in the questionable model of post-colonial society that was being built, challenging the populace to give the new country a better chance to develop. Suffice to say that the play took up a nationalistic stance, encouraging Nigerians to love their country and work for her good. Soyinka's "My Father's Burden" was able to generate an interesting storyline that was relevant to the lives of the audience. Most Nigerians at the period were very patriotic and they wanted all the vestiges of colonialism to be totally removed.

Thespians in the University at Ife

The theatre has always maintained a significant presence in the life of this great University at Ile-Ife. Theatrical activities at the University of Ife started from its temporary site at Ibadan. Plays were staged at the assembly hall and in November/December of 1966, Ola Rotimi presented his play, *Our Husband has gone Mad Again*. On arrival at the permanent site at Ife, lecture theatres were used for performances and Rotimi staged another play of his, *To Stir the God of Iron* (later re-titled *Cast the First Stone*) (Coker, 2003: 121). Ola Rotimi, the founding father of the Ife School of Theatre once stated that “art may not impose peace and love automatically on a people, but art could proffer mediums for a communal sharing in what is helpful to harmonious relationships” (Ola Rotimi Foundation Website). The altar of theatrical communal sharing between the University at Ife and its host community was erected at the *Ori Olokun* Theatre. The nucleus of what would later become the Departments of Dramatic Arts, Music, Fine Arts and African Languages and Literatures was incubated in the defunct Institute of African Studies, which was set up to promote studies in African culture. It illustrated the motto of the University of Ife – “For Learning and Culture” – because its manifest function was to emphasize the role of the University in the promotion of culture.

The Institute was originally designed as an interdisciplinary forum with a focus on the humanities, incorporating courses taught within the Faculties of Arts, Social Sciences and Law. The role of the Institute was later redefined to enable it to focus on carrying out research into the culture of tropical Africa. When the University moved to Ile-Ife, it was welcomed by the locals. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Hezekiah Oluwasanmi responded by instituting a town and gown policy. In 1967, he set up and chaired a committee charged with “(fostering) a relationship with the local community and (with formulating) a policy governing that relationship” (Akinrinade 1989: 41). The policy was taken forward particularly energetically by the Institute of African Studies. Ola Rotimi, researcher and man of the theatre

provided an insight into the Institute's approach. In the course of an interview with Adeniyi Coker, Rotimi said:

I had travel grants, cassettes, and all sorts of equipment to go and record discussions with traditional priests. ... we started looking at our past and felt we simply must redefine ourselves so we do not get merged into the general mainstream of another culture. (Coker, 2003)

Mr. Vice Chancellor, it becomes obvious then, that Drama at the University of Ife was designed to bring us back in touch with our roots, after years of the dislocation engendered by the colonial experience. Research assistants were equipped with tape-recorders and they traversed the rural areas of Yoruba land, recording traditional songs, chants and other cultural materials. It was partly in the context of this sort of search and this sort of thinking that Rotimi wrote plays for which he is well known, including *The Gods are not to Blame* (1968), *Kurunmi* (1969), and *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi* (1972).

Very early in the career of Drama at Ife, the folk dramatists were made to feel at home with Thespians from the ivory tower. For example, Duro Ladipo, leader of a renowned theatre company from Osogbo, was co-opted onto the Vice-Chancellor's committee and, through his connections, the Palm Tree Hotel in Arubidi, Ile-Ife was rented, establishing the University's presence right in the heart of Ile-Ife. The name of the building was derived from the symbol of the political party, the Action Group, whose headquarters it had been. After securing the premises, Rotimi, 'Papa' Akinola Lasekan, a prominent artist, and Ladipo put their heads together to decide on a name. According to Rotimi,

I said "there is this University logo, which has the head of Olokun". Lasekan ... said, "why don't we call it *Olokun's* head?" I said that was good. It sounded like Boar's Head from Elizabethan history. I said "why not just *Ori Olokun*?" (Coker, 2003)



The Gods are not to Blame: Queen Ojuda (Yinka Anjorin) and her children

Ori Olokun Cultural Centre was formally opened on the 6th of June, 1968, and became a rallying point for art lovers attracting local and international audiences.

The first of the plays that grew out of Rotimi's research was *The Gods are not to Blame*, performed in December 1968 during the first of the Ife Arts Festivals. The play resonates echoes of the Nigerian Civil War. According to Rotimi, ethnic jingoism (xenophobia) was the cause of the civil war and all ethnic groups in Nigeria stand guilty (cited in Coker, 2005: 90). The cast and crew included staff and students from the university, and secondary school teachers who brought some of their students to participate.

There was another special set of actors who participated in the productions. In Kole Omotoso's somewhat dismissive terms, they were 'enthusiastic amateurs ... farmers or carpenters or school teachers' (1983). Rotimi himself described the actors as

... farmers, mechanics and laborers, with little achievements in terms of western education. Most of them did not have any high school or elementary education but they were masters in the art of traditional theatre, music, song and performance. ... There is no way you can quantify their skills by western education. (Coker, 2005: 123)

It was a rare opportunity to have local performers from Ile-Ife town rubbing shoulders on the same stage with lecturers and students from the University – this was the real spirit of ‘Town and Gown’. This provided a cross-fertilization of ideas and the effect is still manifest in the performances of the Awovarsity Theatre till date. Margaret Oldfield, a graduate in drama and a lecturer in the English Department, helped with the diction, while Agbo Folarin from the Fine Arts section of the Institute, designed the set. Abiodun Adebona, of the Faculty of Science, acted as the business manager and the cast included Femi Robinson, a lecturer in the Faculty of Agriculture, and Olu Akomolafe, who later became a lecturer in the Department of Dramatic Arts. The play was well received by the town and gown audience, and this shot the *Ori Olokun* Centre into limelight.

Femi Johnson
as King Adetusa

IFE
FESTIVAL
OF
THE ARTS

Scenes from Ola Rotimi's
The Gods are not to Blame
Femi Robinson as King
Odewale





Multi-talented actors with proficiency in, for example, music and fine arts had been employed for the *Ori Olokun* Centre in 1968. Monthly wages for the artists ranged from £8 to £15, depending on the artist's proficiency or previous experience. Since the going salary for a School Certificate holder in the civil service at that time was between eleven and thirteen pounds, the non-certificated actors might have considered themselves quite well paid (Coker, 2005: 123).

Contrary to the erroneous notion that Thespians merely play away their time, they worked hard, and much was expected of them. According to Kola Oyewo, the working day fell into four parts: Peggy Harper took the first shift and rehearsed dance sequences with the artists between seven and nine o'clock in the morning. Akin Euba took them through music rehearsals between nine-thirty a.m. and noon. The artists would then break until five p.m. and during this time some of them "supplemented their

earnings as actors by doing tie-dye or *adire* clothes". Rotimi would take over in the evening and rehearse late into the night (Coker, 2005: 123).

Rehearsals and workshops run by Rotimi were conducted in a style that attracted criticism. For example, as soon as Rotimi entered the gallery which was situated just in front of the main auditorium, he would blow his whistle to announce his arrival and to start the rehearsal or workshop. Members of the cast also became familiar with the sound of the whistle during rehearsals as Rotimi used it to call for a cut. Rotimi loved creating crowd scenes and he mastered the art of crowd control with techniques that might appeal to a football coach. Actor Jimi Solanke recalls:

Rotimi would direct a play of over fifty members of cast from the black-board by drawing on the board to tell actors and actresses where and when to position themselves on the stage. (Solanke 2006: 5)

Because of this – and his whistle-blowing, Rotimi has sometimes been regarded as dictatorial in his approach.

Reacting to this assertion, one of the *Ori Olokun* actors, Kola Oyewo, maintains that Rotimi's methods should be seen in context. Rotimi had, as Oyewo argue, to work with a group that included rowdy greenhorns. In order to keep them in line, and to curb any tendency for overacting or being satisfied with mediocrity, he had to use dictatorial methods (Oyewo, 2006). This validates the Yoruba proverb – *Oju boro ko la fi'n gba omo lowo ekuro* (it is not an easy thing to retrieve the palm kernel from its shell). To his credit, Rotimi was able to instill discipline into the artists. To quote Solanke again: 'Through his workshops, [Rotimi] made playwrights out of teachers, traders, masons' (Solanke, 2006: 7).

Campus publicity for *Ori Olokun* performances was handled inventively and effectively. Colorful handbills and posters were printed, and each performer would be sent out, with his or her bus fare, to cover a particular area of the campus. The publicity in

town was even more impressive: in addition to pasting posters and distributing handbills, a bus-load of artistes would go round the town with one of them sitting on top of the bus. (Peter Fatomilola, dressed in palm fronds was the favorite for this role.) They would all sing:

E wa wo ere Rotimi,
oni a dara,
Akuruyejo oko Oyinbo,
oni a dara.

Translation:

Come and watch Rotimi's play,
today is going to be interesting,
the short man, husband of the white
woman,
today is going to be interesting

This helped to draw many patrons to the *Ori Olokun* Theatre. This style of publicity was similar to that used by the Yoruba Travelling theatre troupes as was the tradition of touring.

The touring circuit became a very important aspect of the programme of the *Ori Olokun* Players. After a play had been premiered at Ile-Ife, it would be taken to other parts of the country. Performances took place in universities and other tertiary institutions, in town halls, hotels, palaces and cultural centers. Trips were, however, shorter than those made by the Yoruba Travelling Theatre troupes. The longest tour was undertaken in 1974 and it lasted three weeks. It took *The Gods are not to Blame* to Osogbo, Offa, Ilorin, Kaduna, Zaria, Kano, Jos, Oturkpo, Nsukka, Port Harcourt, Benin and Ondo (Akomolafe, 2006).

The tours involved extensive planning. An advance team, made up of the Business Manager and his assistants, would go ahead to secure performance venues and make arrangements for accommodation and feeding. They would then return to base and prepare posters that would be pasted up some two weeks before the performance. The technical crew, who had the use of a Land Cruiser, also travelled to the venues in advance, setting out either on the day before a performance or very early on the day of the show depending on the distance from Ile-Ife. They constructed the set and mounted the lights before the cast, who travelled in the company's Coaster bus, got there.

When they arrived, the cast would ‘walk through’ the production and then rest before the performance. On tour, the cast and crew were generally well taken care of, but they had to rough it on occasions. Since it was heavily subsidized by the University, the tour did not have to make a profit and gate-fees were low, audiences large and responsive. Mr. Vice Chancellor, sir, we have attempted to revive the touring circuit; we are however hampered by the lack of a serviceable vehicle. Our present Coaster bus is a veteran of many years, having served the Department for at least, thirty years.

Some people feel that actors are born, not made. Anybody connected to the arts however knows that talent without training is a vain thing. Rotimi realized the need to give formal training to his “enthusiastic amateurs” and as the first Head of the Department of Dramatic Arts, he designed an appropriate Certificate Programme with them in mind. When Rotimi left for Port Harcourt, some members of the company felt insecure, wondering whether they would be brushed aside as “Rotimi’s Boys”. Their fears were allayed when Wole Soyinka who took over as Head, began to operate the Certificate Programme in Dramatic Arts, and they were all given the opportunity to enroll on that programme. Eleven of the *Ori Olokun* Players obtained Certificates in Dramatic Arts.

In other respects, too, Soyinka continued what Rotimi had started. After its premiere at Oduduwa Hall, the 1983 Convocation Play, *Requiem for a Futurologist*, written and directed by Wole Soyinka, was taken on a nationwide tour with the then newly purchased Coaster bus. One of its ports of call was the University of Port Harcourt where Rotimi had been appointed Professor and Head of the Creative Arts Department. According to Stage-Manager, Tunji Ojeyemi (2006), Rotimi sat motionless throughout, his eyes fixed on the programme notes, which dismissively described the first set of *Ori Olokun* actors as “enthusiastic amateurs, farmers, carpenters and school teachers” (Omotoso, 1983). After the performance, he spoke to the cast and his address included the following pointed comment:

When you get back to the University of Ife, tell them that I am glad that Rotimi's "enthusiastic amateurs, farmers, carpenters and school teachers" are now the ones taking major roles in this production'.

The moral of this story seems to be that that we should be appreciative of small beginnings and the contributions of our predecessors. What Ola Rotimi did with the green talents at his disposal cannot be quantified.

Thespians as Activists at the *Ori Olokun* Cultural Centre

When the *Ori Olokun* performers were initially employed, they were designated "artistes in residence", receiving pay from the University as daily rated staff. Understandably, they were unhappy about the insecurity of their position and one night in 1976 matters came to a head. After a rehearsal with Rotimi that finished after 11.30 pm, the actors were preparing for bed (there were bedrooms at the centre where the artists normally stayed after rehearsals), Peter Fatomilola raised the issue of their status as daily rated workers, other artists also voiced their displeasure and the group decided to stage a public demonstration (Fatomilola, 2006).

In a curious way, life was imitating art because this decision was influenced by the participation of the cast in a play titled *Rere Run*, a political play by Oladejo Okediji in which workers fight against a corrupt establishment. Fatomilola, who played the role of workers' leader, Lawuwo, in the play, found it easy to slip into the role of the artistes' leader in real life. Theatre indeed has a conscientizing effect, both on the performers as well as the audience. The next day, the actors, carrying placards, and dressed in costumes from *Rere Run*, walked to the campus, a distance of about eight kilometers, singing protest songs and asking that their appointments be regularized. They made for the office of the Acting Director of the Institute, Wande Abimbola. who promised to look into the matter.

A few of the artists employed at the *Ori Olokun* Centre in the early days were rough characters who equated being involved

in the arts with being carefree lay-abouts. Some of them smoked and drank heavily and dressed untidily. Given the history of the Palm Tree Hotel, many people mistook these artists for the political thugs who had hung about there waiting for political action. (See Soyinka's *The Road*.) It was not entirely surprising when, in 1974, the dreaded tax collectors invaded the Centre demanding that the artists should pay their tax. Instead of explaining that they were university workers whose tax was deducted at source, the actors took on the tax collectors and a free-for-all ensued. Eventually, the performers were invited to the Local Council office where they explained their status, and the tax collectors apologized to them! (Fatomilola, 2006).

***Ori Olokun* – The Fruit of the Project**

I postulated earlier that the plays that were produced at the *Ori Olokun* Centre reflected the fruits of Rotimi's research. A university town is necessarily a cosmopolitan community, comprising people of different backgrounds. He therefore stressed the idea of ethnic unity, especially during the Nigerian civil war. He used what he referred to as "inter-ethnic camaraderie or solidarity" to combat "ethnic rivalry, bias, bigotry, paranoia, chauvinism, and extreme states of jingoism". He did this to appeal for solidarity in the face of cultural differences (cited in Coker, 2005: 90), and ensured the audiences could see themselves reflected in the characters portrayed on stage.

Rotimi's historical plays were particularly welcomed by audiences. He claimed to have two purposes in writing these works: 'to correct some misconceptions of European historians' and to '[enlighten] our people about ourselves' (Coker, 2003). They provided, he felt, lessons in history and also gave the people a sense of pride in their forebears. His approach was sympathetic and it challenged the versions produced by the colonialists. Of special note is his preoccupation with leadership: Rotimi's tragic heroes are always portrayed as credible leaders devoted to their people. His plays stimulate a passion for a multiethnic Nigeria and a world of dignity and equality.

The last major *Ori Olokun* Theatre production was the premiere of Rotimi's *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi* in 1974. No serious performances were offered in 1975 and the fortunes of the Centre were clearly in decline at that time. What factors were responsible for this? First and foremost is the fact that, in 1975, the Institute of African Studies was dissolved under the new policy structure introduced by the new Vice Chancellor, Professor Ojetunji Aboyade. New departments of Dramatic Arts, Fine Arts, Music and African Languages and Literature were carved out of the old Institute. Under the new dispensation, the research that had been crucial to the flourishing of the *Ori Olokun* Cultural Centre was no longer being undertaken and funds for the Festival of Arts dried up. Thus ended one era in the annals of the performing arts at the University of Ife.

As a way of cutting costs, the *Ori Olokun* Centre was replaced by a campus venue, Oduduwa Hall. During the lull witnessed in 1975 and early 1976, staff members missed performances and it was in this context that Soyinka premiered *Death and the King's Horseman* in the new theatre. This was followed, at the end of 1976, by *Opera Wonyosi*. The new venue was easily accessible to members of the university community but not to the people from the town. The road to the *Ori Olokun* Centre became rutted and pot-holed, the 'gown wearers' turned away from it and sought their theatrical pleasures in Oduduwa Hall. The following table shows the list of plays produced at the *Ori Olokun* Centre.

List of *Ori Olokun* Plays

Date	Title	Author
1968	<i>The Gods Are Not to Blame</i>	Ola Rotimi
1969	<i>Kurunmi</i>	Ola Rotimi
1970	<i>Gbe'ku de</i>	Adegoke Durojaye
1972	<i>Ovonramwen Nogbaisi</i>	Ola Rotimi
1973	<i>Rere Run</i>	Oladejo Okediji
1973	<i>Wahala</i>	Babalola Fatunwase
1974	<i>Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again</i>	Ola Rotimi

Ife Convocation Plays as Politics: An Examination of some Past Productions

The tradition of staging convocation plays was initiated by Wole Soyinka who has averred that the artist in an African society has always functioned as the Conscience of his people (cited in Osofisan, 1997: 11). The plays were designed, not as mere entertainment, but as a means to conscientize the University audience. The Convocation play also offers the opportunity of bringing a captive audience to the theatre. Such audience hardly goes to the theatre at all, but attends the Convocation play because it is an official event or an opportunity for a family night out.

Since the 1970s, many Nigerian playwrights have shifted away from elevating the entertainment motive in their works. Instead, according to Saint Gbilekaa, their overriding concern has been to express ideological positions and to condemn decadent socio-political practices (Gbilekaa, 1997: v). Femi Osofisan, writing in the early 1970s, expressed similar sentiments. According to him, the mood that colours contemporary theatre is one of commitment and even aggression (Osofisan, 1973: 97). The attitudes described by Gbilekaa and Osofisan have, year in, year out, been displayed by different playwrights and directors in the Convocation Plays presented at what was the University of Ile-Ife and is now Obafemi Awolowo University.

Over the years, Convocation Plays have become an annual ritual at the University. According to Olu Akomolafe (2006), who lectured in the Department of Dramatic Arts and was at one time the Business Manager of the *Ori Olokun* Theatre, there was popular demand for regular theatrical presentations, and the department met that by providing regular theatre fare for the University community. In 1976, the Department of Dramatic Arts was established and the first Convocation Play, the world premiere of Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*, was staged. The table below indicates plays performed (and the films shown). It also lists the writers and directors.

List of Convocation Plays: 1976 – 2010

YEAR	PLAY TITLE	PLAYWRIGHT	DIRECTOR
1976	<i>Death and the King's Horseman</i>	Wole Soyinka	Wole Soyinka
1977	<i>Opera Wonyosi</i>	Wole Soyinka	Wole Soyinka
1978	<i>The Biko Inquest</i>	Blair and Fenton	Wole Soyinka
1979	<i>Madam Tinubu</i>	Akinwunmi Isola	Femi Euba
1980	<i>Morountodun</i>	Femi Osofisan	Femi Osofisan
1981	<i>Efunsetan</i> (Film)	Akinwunmi Isola	Isola Ogunsola
1982	<i>Winds</i> (Unibadan Masq.)	Laolu Ogunniyi	Laolu Ogunniyi
1983	<i>Lanke Omuti</i>	Amos Tutuola	Kole Omotoso
1984	<i>Haba Director</i>	Biodun Jeyifo	Chuck Mike
1985	<i>Ayanmo</i> (Film)	Hubert Ogunde	Hubert Ogunde
1986	<i>Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again</i>	Ola Rotimi	Olu Akomolafe
1987	<i>Anowa</i>	Ama Ata Aidoo	Olu Akomolafe
1988	<i>Hopes of the Living Dead</i>	Ola Rotimi	Ola Rotimi
1989	<i>Dance of Patriots</i>	Uko Atai	Segun Akinbola
1990	<i>Lysistrata</i>	Aristophanes	Uko Atai
1992	<i>Overamwen Noglobaisi</i>	Ola Rotimi	Ola Rotimi
1995(April)	<i>Saprites</i>	Uko Atai	Uko Atai
1996(Dec)	<i>An Inspector Calls</i>	Ahmed Yerimah	Olu Akomolafe

1997	<i>Murder in the Cathedral</i>	T.S. Eliot	Olu Akomolafe
1998	<i>Drums of War</i>	Rasaki Bakare	Rasaki Bakare
1999	<i>Man Talk Woman Talk</i>	Ola Rotimi	Ola Rotimi
2000	<i>Caucasian Chalk</i>	Bertolt Brecht	Uko Atai
2001	<i>Three Suitors One Husband</i>	Oyono Mbia	Uko Atai
2003	<i>Madam Tinubu</i>	Akinwunmi Ishola	Kola Oyewo
2005	<i>Death and the King's Horseman</i>	Wole Soyinka	Bayo Afolabi
2006	<i>Twingle Twangle</i>	Femi Osofisan	F. Ogunleye
2007	<i>Hopes of the Living Dead</i>	Ola Rotimi	F. Ogunleye & Kola Oyewo
2008	<i>A Dance of Patriots</i>	Uko Atai	Uko Atai
2009	<i>To the Stars</i>	Bayo Afolabi	Bayo Afolabi
2011	<i>Langbodo</i>	Wale Ogunyemi	Bayo Afolabi

Many of the plays listed above have provided sturdy political comments on the Nigerian situation. *Opera Wonyosi*, for example, provides a running political commentary, and is placed by James Gibbs among 'plays written when Soyinka had become "increasingly concerned with the need to communicate political

ideas to a mass audience” (Gibbs 1986: 128). The play makes specific references to political occurrences in the country, including the Igbeti Marble Affair which had led to several unexplained deaths, and the public execution of armed robbers in a carnival atmosphere. Other issues in the play include the position of women, religion as well as politics.

Many years later, Wole Soyinka made his film, *Blues for a Prodigal*, which continues to reaffirm his commitment to the political question. *Blues for a Prodigal* has been described by Odia Ofeimun as “a send-up of the early years of the looter-mania that soon became a way of life of the ruling echelons in our midst” (Ofeimun 2003). Dapo Adelugba also commented on *Blues*:

Blues for a Prodigal, as announced in one of the film's opening captions, is based on an actual event that happened during Nigeria's election year, 1983. Written and directed by Wole Soyinka, the film script was originally intended as propaganda to solicit the rejection of the civilian government which would have ruled the country from October 1983 to September 1987 (Adelugba 1989: 69)

The film presents the shady side of Nigerian politics – thuggery, intrigues, corruption, etc. It also satirizes the average Nigerian politician's corruptive tendencies. In the words of one of Soyinka's characters in the film: “I have immunity. Immunity plus impunity means government” (Adelugba 1989: 73). The immunity/impunity drama continues to be replayed as former Nigerian office holders are arrested by the various anti-corruption tribunals to return what they had stolen with impunity while they had official immunity. I am proud to say, Mr. Vice Chancellor, sir, that this great critic and Doyen of Nigerian theatre artists, Professor Dapo Adelugba, supervised my Ph.D. thesis.

The Biko Inquest, presented as the 1978 convocation play, provided a graphic representation of the political situation in South Africa and highlighted racial discrimination, murder, and the perversion of justice. This was the theatre at Ife's contribution to

the international political ferment which eventually snapped the backbone of apartheid in South Africa. *Morountodun*, the convocation play for 1980, is based on the 1969 *Agbekoya* uprising in what was the Western Region of Nigeria. In it, Femi Osofisan focused attention on Nigeria by dramatizing the confrontation of farmers and the state over taxation, harassment by corrupt officials, and the failure of the state to provide infrastructure. Osofisan has spoken eloquently about his intentions as a playwright:

As to my writing mainly for the stage, let us say I want desperately to get close to the spectator, to each and every one who I have trapped in the darkness of half-light, to penetrate very closely and intimately, like a knife in the ribs. I want to make the spectator happy and yet uncomfortable. I want to turn him open, guts and all, spice, cook him in the filthy, stinking broil of our history. I want him washed inside out, in the naked truth, and then I spew him back again a different man. I believe that, if we wound ourselves often and painfully enough with the reality around us, if we refuse to bandage our sensitive spots shielding them from the hurt of truth, I believe that we can attain a new and positive awareness. (Osofisan, 1997)

According to Gbilekaa, what Osofisan is saying through *Morountodun* is that for any movement of this nature to succeed, indeed for the masses to be liberated, they must be armed with a concrete common political vision. This vision must then be communicated to all members of the group before a revolution can be successful (Gbilekaa 1997: 9). There have also been other mass protests in Nigeria since then, the most recent being the highly successful post-oil subsidy removal mass protest in January 2012. In *Morountodun*, Osofisan used the Moremi myth, not only as a lesson in history, but to galvanize the audience into action that will change their lot and establish the rule of fairness and justice.

Osofisan restates the power of the theatre and presents the driving force behind his plays thus:

Of course plays do not have the power to topple a government, but they can, in the words of the Latin American writer, Mario Vargas Llosa, “[become] a meaningful and positive activity, which depicts the scars of reality and prescribes remedies, frustrating official lies so that the truth shines through.” And as Andre Brink adds, “Our work may be insignificant in the face of these horrors ... but we must do it.” I believe that it is a work that can teach resistance and compassion, beat back despair by upholding faith in the future, construct incisive codes of courage. As a playwright ... these have been my passionate goals. (Osofisan, 1997: 29)



**Femi Osofisan's *Twingle Twangle ...* as Convocation Play 2006.
Directed by Foluke Ogunleye**

Madam Tinubu has been performed twice as the convocation play at the Obafemi Awolowo University (1979 & 2003). According to Samuel Johnson, Efunroye Tinubu was an active adversary of the British Colonial Government who was banished by the government

from Lagos to her native Abeokuta in the 19th century. She was a former slave trader who, once she realized the differences between domestic slaving and the inhumane treatment of slaves in Europe and the Americas, became an active opponent to all slave trade. Madam Tinubu became the first Iyalode or 'the queen of the ladies' of Egbaland. The Iyalode is a member of the traditional council and she protects the interest of womenfolk in the city. She was able to build a small financial empire through trading in arms and salt. She is currently considered an important figure in Nigerian history due to her political significance as a strong female leader. It was not possible for King Dosumu to cede Lagos to the British until she was exiled to Abeokuta (Johnson, 1921: 77, 391). Today, in Nigeria, most people who know about the eponymous heroine of the play, *Madam Tinubu* (1998), obtained their knowledge from Akinwunmi Isola's plays.

Ola Rotimi's *Hopes of the Living Dead*, sub-titled 'a play of struggle', shows the efforts of a group of lepers, led by Harcourt Whyte, to ensure their right to a decent life is recognized by those in authority. Rotimi uses leprosy as a dramatic metaphor for socio-political and psychological malaise. He also stresses that this leprosy can be overcome through a workable praxis by the downtrodden who are their own best doctors, that is, if they are ready to take up arms to deliver themselves from the leprosarium of economic and psychological dominance (Gbilekaa, 1997: 9).

Ola Rotimi's *Our Husband has Gone Mad Again: A Comedy* speaks to the audience about a weighty subject matter in a lighter mood. In this play, Rotimi takes a comic swipe at clueless Nigerian politicians. Lejoka-Brown, a retired military Major, decides to go into politics. This play is rather prophetic in the sense that it is now a common occurrence for retired military men to go into Nigerian politics. Expectedly, Lejoka-Brown proves himself to be an ideological misfit and opportunist. According to Charles Uji, his farcical conception of democracy typifies the conception of the majority of Nigerian democrats (Uji: 3). Listen to Lejoka-Brown:

Are you there ...? politics is the thing in Nigeria, mate. You want to be famous? Politics. You want to chop life? - No, no - you want to chop a big slice of the National cake? - Na Politics ... so I said to my party boys - ...cakes are too soft, Gentlemen. Just you wait. Once we get elected to the top, *wallahi*, we shall stuff ourselves with huge mouthfuls of the National chin-chin... something you will eat and eat, brothers, and you know you've eaten something. (p.4)

Like his real-life counterparts, lacking the knowledge of politics, he utilizes campaign tactics borrowed from his experience in military combat. A polygamist, he takes on his newest wife, Sikira, the daughter of the Market Women's Association's President, as an easy ticket to the women's votes. Unfortunately for him, the women turn the table against him. Regrettably the artist as prophet is always ignored! That is why Rotimi's dramatic prophecy through *Our Husband has gone mad again*, given all these years ago keeps on unfolding in all its brutality on the Nigerian political stage.

The characters in the various plays mentioned above are mainly realistic contemporary figures that can be identified as members of modern urban societies. These types of characters have been referred to as "sociological" characters by Joel Adedeji (1987: 107) and they are used to buttress the point that society is peopled by such characters that face similar challenges and their problems need to be scrutinized with the intent to proffer solutions to them.

The playwrights and directors mentioned above and some others listed used the relative safety of a university campus, with its ready audience of academics and other theatre enthusiasts. They took advantage of the freedom of artistic enterprise in a locale which has been relatively free from political pressure to put forward their socio-political commentaries through drama. In successive years, the Convocation plays at Obafemi Awolowo University have endeavored to conscientize the audience in the

University environment about their political destiny. However, it is very necessary for more of these plays to be taken beyond the confines of the ivory tower. As Alain Ricard has said, there is a need to take the plays beyond the sight of the elite public into the domain of the people, the masses, whose interpreter the artist wants to be (Ricard, 1983: 58).

Mr. Vice Chancellor, sir, I restate at this point that it is important that we restore the touring circuit in order to keep the live stage alive and also to take our messages to people outside the Ivory Tower. The *Ori Olokun* Theatre of old has now transmuted into the Awovarsity Theatre. Apart from putting up various departmental productions, it also serves as a laboratory for the drama students, who derive both functional artistic and technical exposure from it.

The Folk Theatre and the Commercial Conundrum

It has been stated that profit is not a very good primary motivation for achieving sound artistic merit (Langley, 1974: 4). However, it could also be stated that if the theatre and media cannot make profit, they will gradually fizzle out of existence. In the 21st century, there is no room for an art that will not pay its own way, especially in a country like Nigeria where the economy is not buoyant.

The travails and triumphs of the Nigerian theatre and media practitioners are mirrored in the history of their activities. In the early days of the traveling theatre troupes, the director was at the head of the organogram. He was the creative head, the administrative head, as well as the economic head of the organization. He employed actors and actresses who were paid from the proceeds of the performances. (The typical actor's salary was nothing to write home about, for example, in 1976, the senior members of Ojo Ladiipo's theatre were paid One Hundred Naira (₦100) per month). Above all, the director was able to maximize his profits by using the age-old polygamous system to create an extended family of actors and workers. He married most of his actresses, so their salaries would devolve back to the family

exchequer. Also, the numerous children born to him by these wives became unpaid workers until they reached the age of maturity when they would either branch off on their own or become paid members of the group.

The income of the travelling theatre troupes, unlike that of the *Egungun Alarinjo* troupes (traditional masqued strolling players) from which they borrowed their art form, was more structured. Where the *Alarinjo* depended on the largesse of the court, as well as the money and material gifts obtained through the spontaneous appreciation expressed by members of the audience, the travelling theatre troupes had an organized box office where tickets were sold to theatre patrons. Proper machineries were also put in place to discourage gatecrashers. Most of the acts of hooliganism and violence experienced in theatre houses were initiated by attempts at gate-crashing and the resistance of same by agents of the director. Apart from the sale of tickets at the box office, the traveling theatre troupes also made money through the publication and sales of photoplay versions of their stage performances. These magazines known as *Atoka* were popular with the literate members of the audience who bought them to experience a lasting savor of the ephemeral stage versions of the plays.

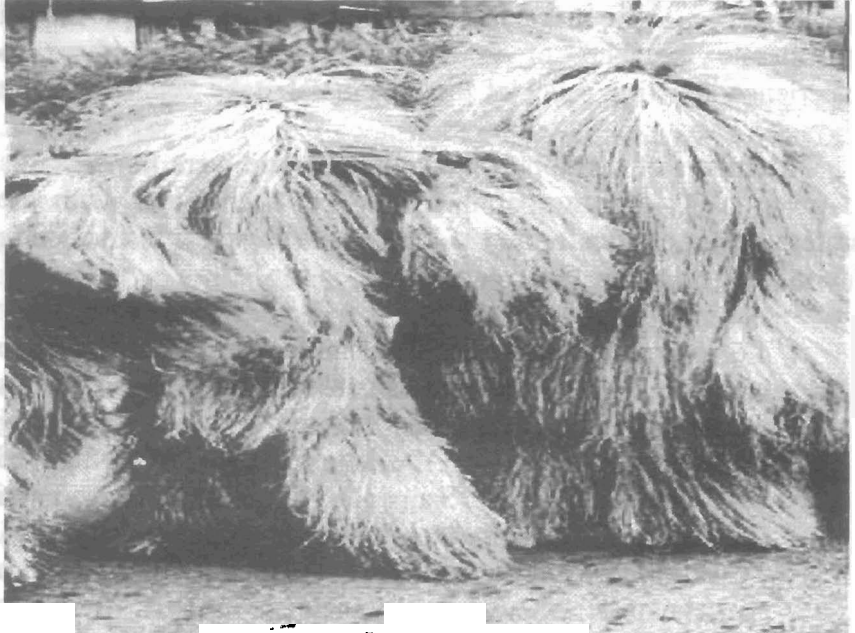
Members of the popular travelling theatre were no strangers to poverty. As a matter of fact, many of them stuck with the profession out of love for the art. The following quote from Biodun Jeyifo aptly illustrates the conundrum:

The harrowing experience of one troupe in its efforts to maintain full time professional itinerant existence is perhaps apposite here. This was the Freedom Travelling Theatre ... formed in Abeokuta in 1967; it comprised Jimoh Aliu, Charles Sanyaolu, Femi Adeyemo, Femi Olaiya, and Olu Kadiri, their wives and children and others. To launch the new troupe, they obtained a "loan" from a "benefactress" who apparently understood the "loan" to be a sort of capital investment which made her the owner

...she was thus impatient to rake in the returns of this "investment". ... Eventually she had the entire company apprehended ... they were remanded in prison for three to four months ... Ultimately, a settlement of sorts was reached when most of the troupe members assented to a form of debt peonage involving temporarily abandoning their professional activities, some becoming the personal domestic staff of the woman, others working as vendors in her manifold trading activities. (Jeyifo, 1984: 56)

The above quote paints a vivid picture of the economic vicissitudes of the Yoruba Popular Traveling Theatre. Worldwide, the entertainment industry is associated with profit making. Without a strong financial base, art cannot thrive. Expectedly, money matters also dictated the nature of the contents of performances. I shall examine specific cases here.

The Alarinjo Theatre



Masquerades

Masque dramaturgy evolved as an offshoot of religious rituals. It was believed that the beings under the masks were spirits, and not human beings. Consequently, the masked actors resided in and enjoyed the patronage of the Old Oyo court. The first mention of the performance of such masked actors in written form was in the journal of Hugh Clapperton and Richard Lander (Adedeji, 1998: 133), who witnessed performances in the court of the *Alaafin* in the Old Oyo Empire. The masked actors originated as a result of intrigues within the court. The Council of Chiefs (Oyomesi) wanted to dissuade *Alaafin* Ogbolu from moving his people back from exile in Igboho to the old Oyo capital at Katunga. But most of his council members were against this and decided to frustrate the move. They sent a group of six masked characters - the hunchback, the albino, the leper, the prognathus, the dwarf and the cripple - to frighten off the *Alaafin*'s advance party. However, through the intervention of Ologbo, who was one of the members of the council, *Alaafin* Ogbolu was able to defeat the plans of his councilors. His men rounded up the masked actors and brought them to the court where they became resident performers (Adedeji, 1998).

This then shows that the initial patronage of masque theatre in Yoruba land came from the courts. The actors did not need to source for finance from the public or by combining any other job with their artistry. All they needed to do was to wait upon the King and entertain his guests. They were consequently able to devote all their time to the development of their art. However, the disadvantage was that their performances had to be designed to favour the King, a classical case of 'whoever pays the piper dictates the tune'. They were indeed cast in the mold of Stalin's 'official writers' who would never breathe any iota of criticism against the government. For a long time, masque dramaturgy enjoyed the patronage of the courts, both the main Oyo court and the courts of the provincial governors. Nevertheless, after the collapse of the Old Oyo Empire, they had to succumb to the force of economic exigencies, thereby becoming itinerant players.

It was during this stage in their career that they earned the appellation *Alarinjo* - that is, the traveling dance theatre troupe (Adedeji, 1998: 138). Their art became commercialized, and they shelved their elitist nature, and sought the patronage of the general public. Due to the change of patronage, the subject matter of their performances also changed. While they had only the royalty to please in the past, their audience now widened to incorporate the general populace. Consequently, their plays took on a more social character. Themes now included social commentary. Thus, the *Alarinjo* theatre was delivered from the yoke of being 'official' performers and they became performers for the people. Unfortunately, however, without the patronage from the court, the financial base of the *Alarinjo* theatre crumbled. The theatre also disappeared to be transmuted in later years to the Popular Yoruba Traveling Theatre.

The Popular Yoruba Traveling Theatre

Hubert Ogunde (1916 – 1991), fondly referred to as the doyen of Nigerian theatre, endured years of privation in trying to establish the traveling theatre as a viable profession. A great percentage of his problems were money-based. For instance, he told an interviewer that he had a high turnover of actors in his troupe, "Some stayed and others went away. But my problem was still money. After the first and second shows, all of them went away" (Jeyifo, 1984: 83).



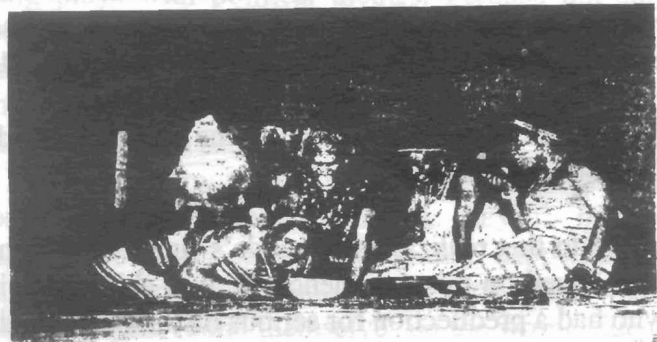
Hubert Ogunde and some of his Wives

Although members of the audience enjoyed the early shows, and the popularity of the group was beginning to be established, this was not enough. More money was needed to be able to pay the members of the troupe. When there was no money, the actors would go away. Another troupe director, Isola Oguniola (Isho Pepper), also had this to say about his own experience:

During the early days of the group the going was extremely tough and we lived virtually from hand to mouth. It was so tough we all collectively lived on soaked garri and akara balls. And of course, there is a limit to people's endurance, and this was what sent most people packing. In fact, I can say that this was what sent all of them packing; but they did not all leave at once, of course. As some left, others joined. (Jeyifo, 1984: 83)

Because of their privations, the entertainment content of the troupes' performances overrode the need for social commentary. They felt that high entertainment content would encourage greater patronage. As time progressed, the realization that their poverty was engendered by bad governance forced them to pay more attention to social drama, especially since it became obvious that the audience itself wanted more than mere entertainment. Hubert Ogunde was the first to experience the dawn of the new consciousness of the power of the audience.

Hubert Ogunde on Stage



Ogunde, borrowing from the idea of Ghanaian theatre groups who had been visiting Nigeria at that time, decided to take his new group on tour to Ghana. He took his play, *King Solomon* on tour to Ghana and he was there for three months. Unfortunately, he returned in a very sorry financial state. According to him,

I had to pay my boys. My rent? No money to pay my rent! I managed to pay for the transport - I had no lorry then, no transport - but I managed to pay. But when I was entering my house after three months, I had five pounds in my pocket. After coming back, I realized my mistake ... (Adedeji & Ekwuazi, 1998: 84-85)

The mistake that Ogunde talked about had to do with the nature of the performance. The type of play performed with tremendous success in Nigeria was not a success in Ghana. On that trip, he lost over a thousand pounds. This brought to the fore the importance of audience research in the traveling theatre. In order to achieve box office success, it is important for the troupes to know what the audiences desire. As a result of this, Ogunde radically repositioned his theatre to be more audience oriented. On his next trip to Ghana, Ogunde reported as follows:

... one of the boys advised me that next tour, I should come with some trumpets, saxophones; play highlife, jazz, and so on ... Then I went back about nine months later and after twenty four days' tour I came back with a thousand and eight hundred pounds. So to me it appears the audience or rather the society dictates what they like to see. It appears they direct us, not we directing the society... (Adedeji & Ekwuazi, 1998: 85)

After coming to this realization, Ogunde's financial fortune began to improve. Based on this experience, he was able to advise Duro Ladipo who had a predilection for serious historical plays thus,

This line you are taking is very interesting, but I doubt very much how you can live comfortably because these plays may not fetch money; but I advise you that at any time you are putting on some plays, try as much as possible to introduce some social satire to bring in money. (Adedeji & Ekwuazi, 1998: 88)

It is interesting to note that the audiences do not want to behave like the proverbial ostrich, hiding their heads in the sands of illusion; rather, they want to see the articulation of their problems, hopes and aspirations on stage. They want models to emulate, villains to vilify and an opportunity to participate in the social process through the passing of vociferous comments during performances, dialogues and discussions with fellow patrons after performances and continuation of same at home and at work.

Transcending the “Laughtercracy” Tradition

I have dubbed the years of ignorance, when the travelling theatre practitioners felt that the primary function of Thespians was to generate laughter in the theatre as the **Laughtercracy** tradition. As the dramatists matured, their subject matters also revealed a spirit of commitment. Hubert Ogunde’s political years can be dated as falling between 1945 and 1950 when he consciously started using his plays in preaching social justice and equity within the society. During this period, his main emphasis was on writing and producing plays with political themes. Perhaps not surprisingly, this period marked the height of agitation for political independence, and the theatre became a tool for the agitation. Though his theatre was banned for some time, Ogunde succeeded in making his opinion felt.

During the struggle for independence, Hubert Ogunde and his close Thespian confederate, A. A. Layeni, borrowed their political themes from actual events that happened within the society. A testimony to the potency of such plays was that both Ogunde and Layeni found themselves on the wrong side of the law at various times for inciting the masses through drama. In 1945,

Ogunde staged the first in his series of political plays titled *Worse Than Crime*. The play criticized the very idea of colonialism. This was followed in the same year by another topical play, *Strike and Hunger*. The play was inspired by the infamous June 1945 strike embarked upon by trade unions seeking for better wages and improved conditions of service (Clark, 1979: 81). Ogunde was incarcerated in a police cell in Jos because of the play. His next four plays were also in the same tradition- *Tiger's Empire*, (1946), *Towards Liberty*, (1947), *Bread and Bullet*, (1950), and *Herbert Macaulay*, (1946). All the three plays denounced colonialism and its attendant evils, crying for independence, and saluting the courage of patriots involved in the struggle.

In 1951, *Bread and Bullet* was banned in Northern Nigeria because the authorities did not want the Northerners to be corrupted by rabble-rousers from the South. In March 1964, Ogunde's group was banned from performing in the Western Region because of his allegorical play, *Yoruba Ronu* in which he criticized the action of some powerful politicians in the region (Clark, 1979: 81). Although the travelling theatre movement has been described as "not radical" (Abah and Etherton, 1981: 1), there is no doubt that the Ogunde theatre manifested its own fair share of radicalism and commitment. As it is to be expected, the Hubert Ogunde theatre has left its footprints on the political sands of the country. This shows that Nigerian theatre artists see their art as a reflection of their society and as an instrument of advocating and effecting positive change within the society. As one of the veterans of the Nigerian theatre, Oyin Adejobi said,

I regard actors as practical journalists because there may be some issues of public importance which the government wants to publicize but which people may not care to read about. And of course many people cannot read in our society. Through special plays we can publicize such issues and interest the people in them ... (cited in Jeyifo 1984: 116)

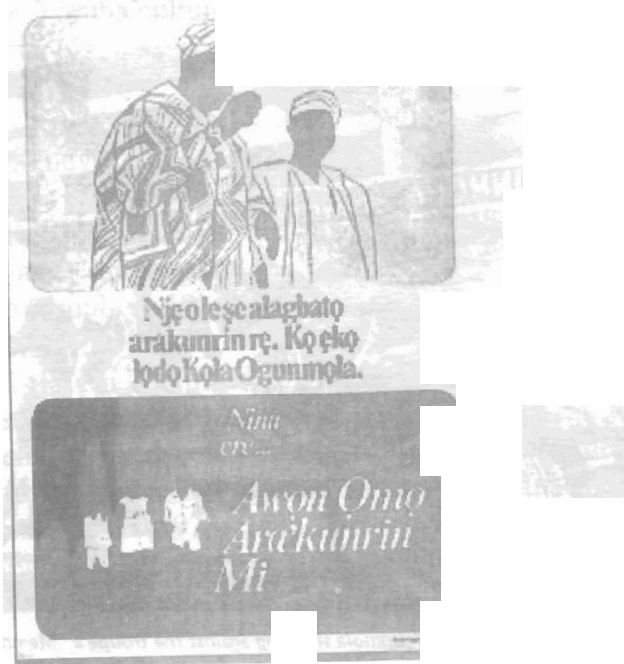
In 1973, another seasoned dramatist, Moses Olaiya Adejumo, designed a series of plays to introduce the new Naira notes to people. The plays would generally end with a refrain which served as a mnemonic device for the mastery of the Naira:

Hafu kobo gona ni naira kan, ogorun kobo naira kan, naira ni naira kan.

Translation: Half Kobo is equivalent to halfpenny, one kobo is equal to one penny, one hundred kobo is equal to one Naira, two naira is the equivalent of one pound.

Adejumo's plays and the refrain helped the Nigerian masses to master the intricacies of the new Naira currency.

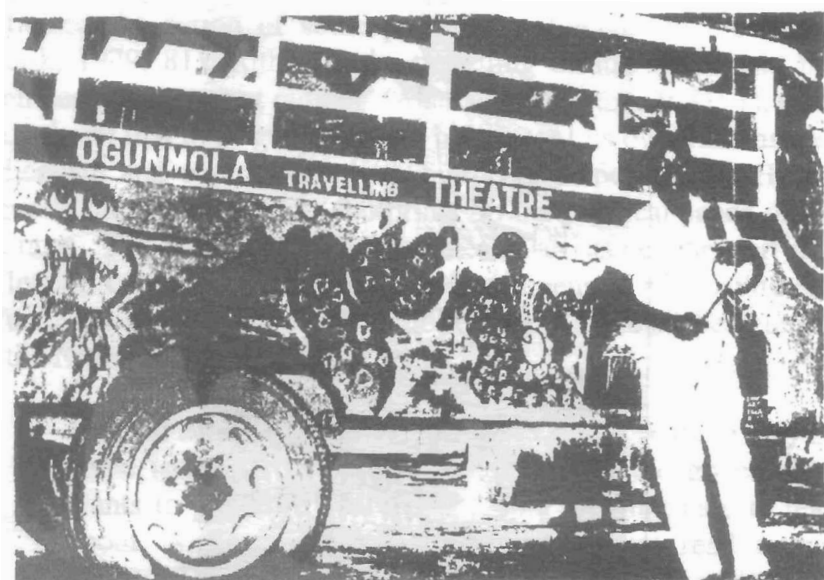
Kola Ogunmola (1923–1972), actor, director, and playwright founded the Ogunmola Traveling Theatre in 1947.



Before this formal founding, however, he had been using the theatre as a tool for educational purposes. According to him,

The years 1943–1948 had turned out to be preparatory years for my work in the theatre, for in those three years, I used drama not only as a teaching aid, but most importantly, as a weapon, for recruiting pupils. I made physical training uniforms for my 'actor-pupils' and we did physical training in market-places in full view of the general public. (Adeniyi, 1997: 77)

This undoubtedly would have encouraged some parents to send their children to school. Throughout his career, Ogunmola retained the idea of art and functionalism. One of his last productions was a film commissioned by the Family Planning Council of Nigeria in 1971, titled *My Brother's Keeper* (Adeniyi, 1997: 131).



The young Kola Ogunmola standing against the troupe's "Mammy-wagon".

The examples given above reveal the attempt of theatre practitioners who utilize materials that fall within the contemporary period to write their plays. We shall also look at an example of a playwright who focused on writing historical plays. Historical drama is an invaluable vehicle of documentation. It serves as a mirror of the society or the age in which the drama is set. Historical drama can be described as a form of drama which reflects or re-presents historical proceedings. Since time immemorial, writers have combined fiction and history in creative works. We can describe the history play as such 'that reconstructs a personage, a series of events, a movement, or the spirit of a past age and pays the debt of serious scholarship to the facts of the age being re-created' (Langner, 1960: 238). In this context, we can see the dramatist as historian.

Duro Ladipo, (1926-1978) was one of the most prolific theatre artists that Nigeria has ever produced. His forte was the promotion of the Yoruba culture. Ladipo cited the following as the reasons for writing historical plays:

... first, to ensure that Yoruba folklore and traditional stories are never forgotten; secondly, to amply demonstrate the richness and uniqueness of Yoruba culture ... thirdly, to ensure that the dances, the music and the splendor of Yoruba as a language never become things of the past. (Cited in Ogunbiyi, 1981: 340)

According to K. P. Roddy, the epic genre is correctly associated with the noblest and largest of activities. These include the heroic struggle between good and evil. An epic subject is determined not by battle or courage alone but by the momentous impact of the action upon men's lives (1973: 153). We see this kind of heroic magnitude in mythical characters brought alive by Duro Ladipo.



Duro Ladipo

In writing about Ladipo's play titled *Oba Koso* (1964), Wole Ogundele, a literary theorist and critic states:

Duro Ladipo based the play on the account given by Samuel Johnson in his *History of the Yorubas*, supplemented by consultations with Sango worshippers. In other words, here was cooperation between the oral and the written (and between religion and drama) in a process in which the oral in fact exerted more power. In the transformations of the play ... Duro Ladipo turned the mixture of history, religious myth and political legend that is Sango's story into a total theatre of spectacular scenery, hypnotic drumming and dancing, spell-binding costumes, music and vast corpus of Yoruba incantatory patterns and electrifying acting. (Ogundele, 1997: 56)

From this account of a production that originally took place in Osogbo, Nigeria, in 1963 and which was later presented in many theatres and art festivals outside Nigeria, we see the sowing of seeds of greater things to come. Ladipo aspired during his lifetime to put his historical plays on film, but it was not to be.



However, he participated in laying the foundation for the aesthetics of the Nigerian historical film. Ogundele's account of Ladipo's play shows what makes historiophoty richer than historiography - it combines motion with other cultural aspects ("spectacular scenery, hypnotic drumming and dancing, spell-binding chants" (Ogundele, 1997: 56), which brings history alive for the people.

Women in the Folk Theatre

The world of the Yoruba Travelling Theatre was male-dominated. As a matter of fact, the rights of women were badly trampled upon. The women were choiceless, powerless and treated as chattels. However, in rare cases, much-loved wives were treated with favouritism. More often than not, the women started off as paid actresses and ended up as wives to the troupe leaders. This is because it is difficult to get the women to stay for any length of

time with the troupes unless they were tied down by marriage. According to Tola Adeniyi, the leaders do not pay their wives any salary, “all they do is discharge their duties of feeding, clothing and lodging, which they would normally have been required to do were they not jointly involved in the same trade” (Adeniyi, 1997: 68-69). The women were also treated as perpetual minors as revealed in this quote from Kola Ogunmola:

... the greater part of my cast were school children under my guidance. I taught them their lines by caning them. This continued until 1953 when my first wife acted with us. She didn't know how to dance, she didn't know how to sing, she didn't know how to act – in fact, she didn't know ANYTHING about theatre. But I taught her by caning her. We were already married then. Today, she is a living example to the company. Anytime they misbehave, she shows them the scars she got from my caning to the culprits, urging their cooperation. (Adeniyi, 1997: 80)

It should be noted that some other leaders also beat their wives, though not all of them were into such barbaric practices.

With the exception of two enigmatic female theatre impresarios – Adunni Oluwole (1905-1957) and Funmilayo Ranko (1947-1985), all the other women in the theatre were under the thumbs of men. The history of the Nigerian theatre cannot be complete without mentioning both women who set records for themselves as mistresses of their own theatre groups when it was fashionable for only men to be directors. Apart from starting her theatre group in the 1930s, Adunni Oluwole was also known for her activities in the political arena where she formed a political party of her own in 1954 known as the Nigeria Commoners' Liberal Party (Olusanya, 2001: 144).



"Her politics apart, she did a lot for the awakening of women of Nigeria"

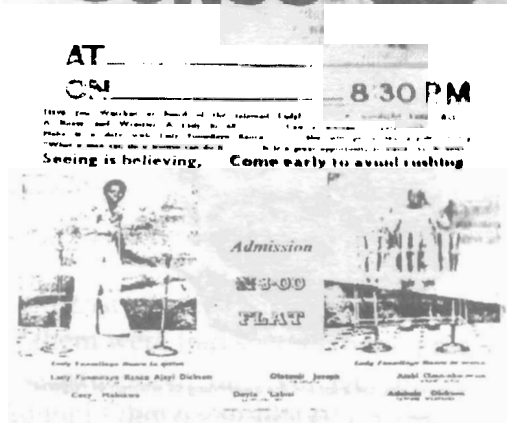
(Peter Enahoro, Daily Times December 21, 1958)

Adunni Oluwole

Although more information exists about her political activities than her theatrical activities, we do know that she organized her first performance after she resigned her membership of the Girl Guides. She used members of the same body as actresses in her play, which was performed in Lagos in the thirties, under the chairmanship of Herbert Macaulay (Olusanya, 2001: 144). Her name has also been mentioned by important theatre historians such as Eburn Clark (1979) and Biodun Jeyifo (1984) as one of the prominent names in the Nigerian theatre of the period.

Funmilayo Ranko was born Funmilayo Rachel Ajayi. It was the Rachel that was later turned into Ranko. Her theatre was very popular between the late 1960s and early 1980s. She was also

known as an accomplished boxer. The name of her theatre group was *Irawo Obokun* International Theatre. She led a very vibrant company made up of both men and women. She was always dressed in men's clothing, probably a silent affirmation of her determination to lead and confront men on their perceived space.



Funmilayo Ranko

She played the major role in all of her plays. During the opening glee, she would not dance with the women, but for the closing glee, she would come out, dressed in female clothing, not to dance, but to play the drums. She told Biodun Jeyifo that

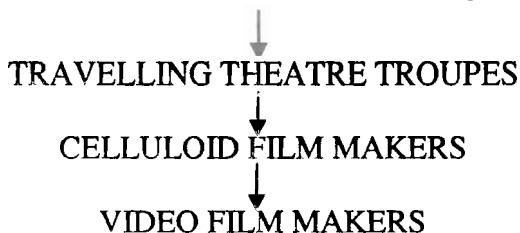
I always play the major character or role in our productions. You could liken this to the star role in films. And that is why I always dress in men's costume on stage. Also it ... allows me to dominate the tone of the performance. That's why I play the most important role and the longest too. (Jeyifo, 1984: 168, 170)

She was very particular about reaching out and touching the minds of members of her audience. She wanted them to think and be able to solve problems by themselves and consequently, she would leave her plays to be open-ended. She would sometimes ask questions from the stage and encourage discussions after her performances. This is the kind of theatre that can be used to conscientize the audience and make them participants in the process of effecting change of attitude within the society. Funmilayo Ranko had big dreams of going on television, making films, etc., but this was not to be because she died in 1985, at the unripe age of thirty-eight.

Cineastes –Video Diaries, Political Films and Historiophoty

The metamorphosis of the Yoruba video film artiste has taken her/him through the following diagrammatic progression:

EGUNGUN ALARINJO (Masked strolling Players)



Nigerian video films are produced in Nigeria by Nigerians and primarily for Nigerians. This popular filmic genre has provided an opportunity for filmmakers to produce low-budget films that are accessible to even the lowest economic stratum of society. Hyginus Ekwuazi describes the Nigerian video film industry as having spawned an industry that turns out 1,000 films every year; generates 300,000 jobs every year; and has a turnover of well over N5 billion yearly (Ekwuazi, 2006). The films are produced in many parts of Africa, with producers following examples of the Nigerian experience. The video films can be described as video diaries as well as cultural memorabilia which

parade the cultures of the environments from which they take life. For instance, Nigeria celebrates its cultural pluralism through the films, utilizing materials from Yoruba; Hausa and Igbo cultures in braiding the films. The films can be described as video diaries, documenting and reflecting Nigerian life, and revealing the frustrations, yearning, hopes and aspirations of a people.

Naming the Industry - Naijafilms

Before proceeding further, let me clear up some misconceptions through the clarification of terminologies. There have been so much hype about the nomenclature 'Nollywood' foisted on the Nigerian video film industry by the western media and which had been mindlessly adopted by the Nigerian media and academia for want of a better word. A brand name is usually arrived at through processes of market research and strategy planning. It can be safely assumed that the strategy behind the creation of the neologism 'nollywood' is to continually resonate our colonial past, and not our present hopes and aspirations as a nation. It implies that as far as film art is concerned, we have to keep toeing the line that Hollywood has drawn in filmmaking, thereby making nonsense of our efforts to create a vibrant homegrown film industry.

For a proper re-imaging of the industry, we will be using the terminology '**Naijafilms**' to denote the Nigerian video film. 'Naija' is a slang word derived from the name 'Nigeria'. It could either mean the nation, Nigeria, or the people, Nigerians. It is proudly and lovingly used by Nigerians from all walks of life to denote a sense of oneness and pride for the Nigerian heritage. The word, Naija, is now almost synonymous with the expression - proudly Nigerian. Naija is a "patriotic name for Nigerians to show their strength and smartness" (*The Urban Dictionary*, 2011). This new nomenclature is very apt because a name is a term used for identification and names are usually given by parents or relatives, not by outsiders who possess less than honorable intentions. A Yoruba proverb states: *Oruko omo ni ijanu omo*, which loosely translated means that a name is a means of checks and balances for

the bearer of the name. A name is different from name-calling and the term Nollywood smacks more of name-calling than a name. The name, 'Naijafilms' reveal the Nigerian-ness of the video films and is designed as a revolution to reclaim the video film universe and its aesthetics in a way that will position Nigeria and its people at the epicenter of the art form. Why do we need a revolution in the Nigerian video film industry? According to Maximilien Robespierre, a dominant figure of the French Revolution,

What is the end of our revolution? The tranquil enjoyment of liberty and equality; the reign of that eternal justice, the laws of which are graven, not on marble or stone, but in the hearts of men, even in the heart of the slave who has forgotten them, and in that of the tyrant who disowns them. (Robespierre, 1974)

One of Robespierre's major preoccupations in the quote above is the engraving of worthy concepts of liberty, equality and justice on the hearts of men. According to him, it is important to help human beings to remember these exalted notions in order to prevent the erosion of such notions from human cognition with the passage of time. Bards and griots have provided such memory aids through tales of valor and the Nigerian video film now also performs this bardic function.

A griot is a poet, praise singer, and wandering musician found in West Africa. His repertoire also contains satire and political commentary. Griots and griottes have been around for more than a millennium. They are considered to be a repository of oral history. They are sometimes also called bards. Bards are poets and scholars largely identified with medieval and early modern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Cornwall. Paul Oliver states "Though [the griot] has to know many traditional songs without error, he must also have the ability to extemporize on current events, chance incidents and the passing scene. His wit can be devastating and his knowledge of local history formidable" (Oliver, 1970). Undoubtedly, elements of these characteristics of the griot abound

in the Nigerian video film. Bards and griots perform important functions in the sociopolitical life of the African continent. For a people determined to maintain an indelible presence in the globalized world, a retelling of the past, especially as it concerns positive and glorious deeds, which occurred in the pre-colonial era, remain very important. Africa has largely been defined through written history, which began to appear in the late 1800s, through the pen of colonialists. However, African societies have long documented their own history, in their own languages, orally, in the form of epics.

Bards' functions include minstrelsy, composition and recitation of verses, which celebrate the legendary exploits of chieftains and heroes, while griots perpetuate the oral tradition and history of a village or family (*The American Heritage Dictionary*). These functions are evident in Nigerian video films. Far from being a mindless rehash of Hollywood, the Nigerian Video Film enjoys a peculiarity of its own - features are shot on video and marketed without necessarily going through any medium of theatrical release. Although the genre has been initiated and popularized by Nigerian producers, the esteem of the video film transcends the borders of Nigeria; it has become widespread in other African countries as well as in the Diaspora (Ogunleye 2003, Muchimba, 2004). The Nigerian video film came to life as a challenge to the country's socio-economic problems. When crude oil was discovered in commercial quantity in Nigeria during the mid-1950s, the country became immensely rich. The resources obtained from oil placed Nigeria amidst the prosperous nations and the boom continued between 1971 and 1977. During this period, the arts also enjoyed a bumper harvest.

The cinematograph film industry could boast of regular film releases both by government establishments and private production outfits. When the petro-bubble burst, cinematograph films gradually became a rarity and eventually petered out. Consequently, thousands of artists became jobless. However, following the maxim that nature abhors a vacuum, these artists began to search for novel ways to earn their living. One of the

early practitioners of the video art was Alade Aromire who made a video film in 1984 titled *Ekun* (Ogunbayo: 2011). Isola Ogunsola's *Aje Ni Iya Mi* was produced by Kenneth Nnebue, who also, in 1992, produced *Living in Bondage* Part 1, which proved to be both a commercial success and a trail blazer, establishing aesthetic and commercial values later to become the hallmarks of the Nigerian Video Film industry.

Many books on the video film have focused on the phenomenon as a strictly Nigerian experience. I however view the video film as Nigeria's contribution to the globalization of the media. The Nigerian video film, as we have been severally informed in many scholarly endeavors, evolved as a result of Nigeria's economic recession which rendered celluloid filmmaking to recede beyond the financial reach of the Nigerian filmmaker. Due to Nigerian producers' success in using the medium to tell the Nigerian story, first, the products were exported into the rest of Africa and the Diaspora, and later, the format was adopted by other African producers to also tell their own stories. In many parts of Africa where a celluloid film industry never really developed or has become comatose, the video film is now the medium of choice. This, I believe, will eventually lead to the establishment of an indigenous film culture, which will cut across every stratum of society in a way that the earlier waves of African cinema were never able to do.

The African film can be described as existing in four Waves: the colonial Wave, the post-colonial wave, the modern wave and the post-modern wave. The African video film belongs to the post-modern wave. The first wave of African cinema took place with Africans serving as mere voyeurs of scenes created by "others" – the colonial oppressor. This "otherness" created a sense of alienation because the images scrolling across the screens were not of the making of the African people who could not really identify with such images. The second and third waves mainly bypassed large strata of the African society, firstly because the means of production was available only to the few educated elites and the films produced circulated just in cities where there were cinema

houses, while some were merely made available to art house circuits or festival circuits abroad. The video film, on the other hand, is a film by the people and for the people. It grows out of the grassroots, resonating the hopes, aspirations and frustrations of the African people.

The video film has significance, both for the educated and non-educated, the poor and the rich, the government and the governed. By its very nature, it is non-conformist. It defiantly refuses to be associated with the aesthetics of the celluloid film; neither does it allow itself to be forced into the mould of television drama. It proudly forges for itself a life that enables it to exist on its own terms as a 'poor cinema' - daring to exist in the face of all odds. What are these odds - the high budget of celluloid and the nihilistic nature of African television. The video producers have been able to call the bluff of African television stations. In some cases, producers are supposed to pay the stations before they can air their works on television. Such TV stations prefer to broadcast cheap foreign programmes such as North, South American or Indian soaps. Consequently, the video producers have endeavored to forge their own distribution channels through formal and informal circuits. Today, they even have the satisfaction of seeing their works disseminated through cable and satellite to an audience never reached by the earlier waves of African cinema. They have also been able to peg production costs at a reasonable level, which the prohibitive cost of celluloid can never accommodate.

The earlier waves of African cinema owed their lives to external aid, while the post-modern wave of the video film owes no man anything, paying its way by itself. This is an advantage because the earlier waves experienced the adverse effects of 'aid with strings attached', but the video films are able to tell the unadulterated African story without the compulsive necessity of modulating messages in order to please funding agencies. According to Ola Balogun, "Because this production is entirely market-driven, the films are closer to the tastes of African audiences than the vast majority of foreign-assisted films made in

francophone African countries. The reasons for this are clear: "Who pays the piper calls the tune" (Balogun, 1998).

Josef Gugler, writing on African films (though not of the video film genre) states that the films 'offer us a window on Africa, a window that presents views quite different from those we usually see through the three windows on Africa readily available to us: television news, documentaries, and feature films produced in the West' (Gugler, 2003). If this is the only thing that the video film does for Africa, the movement would not have been in vain. The images may be good, or they may be bad, but they are nevertheless images of Africa portrayed through the lenses of Africans. However, care must be taken to ensure that the lust for wealth does not influence some producers to send wrong signals through their productions. This is where African governments owe a responsibility to the continent to provide a conducive (non repressive) policy environment to guide the production of the video film.

Jean Cocteau, French artist and filmmaker, once said "Film will only become an art when its materials are as inexpensive as pencil and paper" (cited by Denatale, 2012). We cannot say that the world has arrived at the point envisaged by Cocteau, but the advent of video technology has brought us close to Cocteau's ideal, and Africans have not wasted any time in seizing the bull by its horns. The African Video film can be described as micro-budget films or no-budget films. This is simply because of the reduced resources available to the filmmakers. The films are characterized by the obvious lack of production budgets. Although this possesses its grievous disadvantages, there are also some rewards. These include the freedom to tell one's story without the editorial interruption by financiers and the ability to indulge in experimental creative rule-breaking without fear of box office failure.

Unfortunately, because of its low budget nature, the industry has become an all-comers affair. Some opportunists see the video film genre as an avenue to make fast money and their productions are nothing to write home about. According to Bob Dentale, such

films 'wind up neither fish nor fowl, not connecting with - or reaching - audiences while also not exciting the critics who expect in lieu of production value a different and original sensibility' (Denatale, 2012). It is in this area of 'original sensibility' that critics proffer different solutions to the creative conundrum facing the African film industry. The clarion call is for 'a new aesthetic of film, one that is based on the needs of people and of artists, not the marketing needs of Hollywood' (Denatale, 2012).

It is heartening to also see that the African video film has not remained static. From the early days of using the VHS tape recorder with its poor picture resolution, very poor sound quality, indifferent lighting and generally poor craftsmanship, we now witness an improvement. Digital cameras with higher resolution are now being used for recording. Corporate players are now partnering with artists on production ventures through sponsorship (e.g. Amstel Malta of the Nigerian Breweries Plc., Diamond Bank Plc. in Nigeria, etc). Industry players are also now aware of the importance of training. Universities, Polytechnics and other institutions such as the Nigerian Film Institute, Don Bosco East African Multi Media Services (BEAMS), The Media Centre de Dakar, etc. are offering courses on film production, which industry players are benefiting from.

Many traditional filmmakers in Africa are complaining bitterly about the video film wave. Ola Balogun, one of the pioneer Nigerian filmmakers has been particularly vitriolic in his attack (see *Nigerian Vanguard* article of July 23, 2005 where Afolabi Adesanya took up the issue with him). Ola Balogun sees the video film as a substandard art form. He however concedes that it is now becoming a widespread practice, for filmmakers all over the developed world, to shoot on digital format and transfer to celluloid (nollywood.net, 2005b). We all hope that African economies would improve and video film artists would have enough funds, without having to sell their souls and their filmic content for a mess of funding agencies' pottage, to be able to transit from digital to celluloid. We also hope that Africa's cinematographers would be willing to lend the benefit of their

knowledge and experience to the video artists in order to improve their art. Many books have been written on the African video film, many festivals are being organized in its honor, awards are given to practitioners, many articles have been written in newspapers and academic journals. These and other activities are acknowledgements of its importance. All hands must be on deck to ensure it does not just fizzle away, but that it would survive to justify the confidence reposed in it by all and sundry.

Historiography and Historiophoty

History has become one of the most prominent subject matters in the Nigerian video film and this is of great advantage to the Nigerian populace. This is because history as a course of study has lost its pride of place in the Nigerian School curriculum (Adesina, 2012: 7-8). It is now subsumed under subjects like Social Studies and Government which incorporates diverse other components. With this situation, it is a welcome development that video producers are increasingly using the historical theme in their productions. Prominent names of producers that utilize the historical theme include Adebayo Faleti, Akinwumi Isola, Isola Ogunsola, Obafemi Lasode, etc. Obafemi Lasode is an America-based Nigerian film producer who specializes in producing epic historical features. One of his films is titled *Sango*, and it tells the story of the eponymous legendary King of pre-colonial Oyo Empire. Lasode opined that “People are really keen to see their amazing history and legends depicted on video. There are so many stories to tell that are important for Nigerians. We need to develop a sense of pride in our past” (cited in Nathan, 2002). Like in so many modern societies where science has been given primacy at the expense of the humanities, the major defining contact that many people have with history is through the silver screen of television or the cinema.

The word “Historiophoty” was coined by historical philosopher, Hayden White. It describes the movement of historical documentation from the realm of ‘paper and ink’ or ‘historiography’, (the ‘writing of history’), to the realm of

historiophoty, which is “the representation of history and our thoughts about it in visual images and filmic discourse” (White, 1988). Historiography utilizes the media of “verbal images and written discourse”, but in historiophoty, the word (both written and verbal) literally becomes flesh.

The intents of the chronicler, the historian and that of a film producer are divergent, although they are all interested in history as a record of the past. While the chronicler provides an extended account of historical events, which sometimes include legendary material, presented in chronological order, such materials are basically without authorial interpretation or comment. On the other hand, the historian is expected to engage with her/his material in a very active way. S/he is confronted with a lot of materials out of which s/he is supposed to choose what to retain and what to jettison. S/he also performs the editorial function of expressing a view on selected material. This is basically what the film producer also does. For Robert Rosenstone, there is a point at which the historian and film producer part ways. According to him

... no matter how serious or honest the filmmakers, and no matter how deeply committed they are to rendering the subject faithfully, the film that finally appears on the screen can never fully satisfy the historian as historian (although it may satisfy the historian as filmgoer). Inevitably, something happens on the way from the page to the screen that changes the meaning of the past as it is understood by those of us who work in words. (Rosenstone, 1998)

Basically, the filmic medium is identified with entertainment. Rosenstone acknowledges as much:

I no longer find it possible to blame the shortcomings of historical films either on the evils of Hollywood or the woeful effects of low budgets, on the limits of the dramatic genre or those of the documentary format. The most serious problem the historian has with the past on the screen arises

out of the nature and demands of the visual medium itself.
(Rosenstone, 1998)

These demands of the visual medium include verisimilitude and entertainment. That notwithstanding, the film producer has a responsibility towards society, in spite of the artistic interpretation of historical documents, to maintain a socially responsible approach to filmed history.

There are two classes of history film producers in Nigeria: the first class is made up of educated and enlightened producers and the second class comprises of producers that can be described as the philistine. The educated and enlightened producer attempts to carry out research and processes the materials with a sense of commitment and responsibility. On the other hand, the philistine is interested only in the commercial imperative - how much money can be obtained from a film and how much crowd can the historical subject pull. In determining which class the Nigerian film producer belongs to, the following yardsticks is used to assess the films:

1. What seems to be **accurate** in the film? What sources are you using to assess accuracy?
 2. What liberty does the film take with the past? Why?
 3. Is the film primarily entertainment, or is it really trying to work within a historical period?
 4. What, if any, modern point is the film trying to make?
- (adapted from Paul Halsall, 2002)

However loyal the film might seek to remain to history, the entertainment requirement must inevitably be fulfilled; otherwise, the film may be unable to retain the attention of its audience. According to Jane Plastow (1999),

The rewriting of myth and history in dramatic form has been common for many modern African writers as they seek to find 'truths' often suppressed or ignored in colonial

or post-independence versions of African history.(Plastow, xxvii)

Plastow further reiterates that script writers invariably reinterpret history, while keeping close to its major events in order to explore various ideas such as leadership, tradition and the gulf between peoples (Plastow, xxvii). This sentiment is also revealed in films made by Nigerian producers.

Historiophoty and the Yoruba Video Film

The primary source material used by Yoruba filmmakers in scripting their film is Samuel Johnson's *History of the Yorubas*. The book was first published in 1921, and it is a collection of history, myths and legends of the Yoruba nation. In the preface, the writer acknowledged that the book, which is a seminal effort in documenting Yoruba history, was not exhaustive. He also stressed that the purpose of writing the book was an effort to document the history of the Yoruba people and he encouraged other researchers to continue the process of documentation where he stopped (Johnson, 1921: Preface). One of the strong points of the book is its eclectic nature. It contains materials from journals, diaries, eye witness accounts and materials from other verifiable sources. While other books in the same vein have since been written, this book remains the most important among historians and non-historians alike as a very useful testament of Yoruba history. It is important to note that pioneer theatre practitioners also made use of the book. In this section I will briefly examine two Yoruba video films. They are *Basorun Gaa* and *Afonja*.

Basorun Gaa

Basorun Gaa (2004) is a story set in 18th century Oyo town. Gaa is the head of the Oyomesi, the seven-man powerful committee of kingmakers/council of chiefs. His immense power causes him to become pompous, arrogating so much authority to himself. He becomes tyrannical, killing one *Alaafin* (title of the Oyo King) and installing a stooge of his, Adegoolu. Culture and

tradition are turned upside down. For instance, instead of Gaa coming to *Alaafin*'s palace to pay homage, *Alaafin* Adegoolu goes to Gaa's house every morning to perform obeisance to him. This kind of travesty is witnessed in present day Nigerian political circles when elected Governors go to their political godfathers' houses to prostrate before them in abject submission, even on national television.

Things get out of hand when Gaa murders Adegoolu's daughter for ritual purposes. Adegoolu raises an army and with the aid of his trusted lieutenants, wages war against Gaa and defeats him. Gaa is the prototype of the modern day African dictators and iron-fisted rulers that Africa is currently bedeviled with. Such dictators oppress their people in various ways. Examples include Kamuzu Banda of Malawi, Idi Amin of Uganda, Sani Abacha of Nigeria, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe - the list is endless. *Basorun Gaa* provides for the African people, a glimpse of their history. It shows that tyrants and dictators will always exist, but the only way to checkmate them is for the oppressed to unite and forcefully reject such tyranny. The film also corroborates John F. Kennedy's position that "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable" (Kennedy, 1962).

Afonja

Another film scripted by Faleti is *Afonja* (2001). This film deals with a very controversial issue - ethnic politics in Nigeria. *Afonja* was an Oyo generalissimo (Are Ona Kakanfo) who lived in the 18th century. Samuel Johnson summarized his story as follows,

Afonja of Ilorin was the Are-Ona Kakanfo - the Head of the Army of the Oyo Empire, under the *Alaafin* of Oyo - Aole (The King). That year, *Afonja* sent an empty calabash to the *Alaafin* Aole, thereby signifying that he no longer acknowledged the authority of the *Alaafin*. Aole had no choice but to accept and in the traditional fashion, he committed suicide, but not before *Alaafin* Aole uttered his famous curse on the Yoruba land. (Johnson: 192)

This film shows the intrigues that occurred within the ruling class of this bygone era and how these occurrences have two abiding effects on modern society. First and foremost, as a result of Afonja's insistence that *Alaafin* Aole should commit suicide, Aole placed a curse on Yoruba people and it is believed that the curse has been responsible for the disunity and backwardness of the Yoruba people up till today. The curse binds an entire race and the unborn generations in a spell of permanent discord, treachery, and slavery (Issa-Onilu, 2004).

Also, the Ilorin people are supposed to be of the Yoruba ethnic stock, having descended from Afonja. However, in a classical example of treachery, a Muslim zealot, Alimi, who was invited by Afonja to help in warfare became a traitor and waged war against him. Afonja was killed in the process and Ilorin is currently ruled by Alimi's descendants who are of the Fulani stock. This brings to the fore the present raging controversy that the Fulani from the North should not be ruling the Yoruba from the South-West. The settler/indigene controversy is very potent in Nigeria and it needs to be settled constitutionally. The government is currently looking into the problem as it has led to outbreaks of violence in many places (Ile-Ife/Modakeke in Osun State, Jos in Plateau State, Zaki Biam in Benue State, etc.) However, the aspect of Aole's curse being the source of problem of the Yoruba is not a realistic proposition. There is a need to look inward and see where both the rulers and the ruled are veering off from the common and beneficial agenda so that they can make amends.

A close scrutiny of Yoruba historical films shows that they are an admixture of history, myth, legend and modern stories. The reason for this is that the screenwriters do not depend only on published sources. They also carry out their own research to find out what historiographers have left out of their written documentation. They thereby dig up other oral and visual resources which are utilized in their films. One important source is the lineage praise chant. These chants are passed on from one generation to another by word of mouth and they are repositories

of the great deeds of long-gone forebears. As a result of the research, new visual documents are evolved, which prove to be rich additions to extant narratives such as those penned by Samuel Johnson. Such original stories include those that form the basis of films like *Okere*, the story of the founding of the town of Saki in Oyo State of Nigeria, *J'ogun o Mi*, the story of warfare in Ibadan and a host of others. Even the documented stories are creatively interpreted by the screenwriters. They are not verbatim chronicles, but the writers seek to creep behind the eyeballs of the characters to understand the motivation for their actions and they examine the socio-political situations of those by-gone eras to re-create causes and effects of actions. In the same vein, historian Robert Rosenstone argues that it is precisely by fictionalizing and inventing a past that such films communicate much of value to us about our history.

The films also bring alive the culture of the people through the use of songs, music, dance, costumes and language. In this era of globalization, these films show that Nigerians can boast of a glorious past which can be replicated again with determination on the part of the people and the government. The films also show the inglorious performances of historical characters which should be avoided in order to build a responsible nation. These films are thus important instruments for socialization and resocialization. They show that the past is not so different from the present and the future. Only the actors differ, and lessons should be learnt from actors of the past to make the present and the future more equitable for all concerned parties. This can be illustrated with the following quote from Robespierre:

We wish that order of things where all the low and cruel passions are enchained, all the beneficent and generous passions awakened by the laws; we wish in our country that morality may be substituted for egotism, probity for false honor, principles for usages, duties for good manners, in a word, all the virtues and miracles of a Republic instead of all the vices and absurdities of a Monarchy. (Robespierre, 1794)

The historical film should not be a piece of “art for art’s sake”, but an art form that performs the social responsibility of providing images that can inspire confidence in the populace and present credible characters that can be emulated to move society forward.

The Video Film and Democracy

According to the celebrated African filmmaker, Souleymane Cissé, the primary task of early African filmmakers was to show Africans as human beings and to help people discover African values. They set out to make their audience understand that white people lied through their filmic images of Africa (cited in Thackway 2005: 39). Early African filmmakers indeed utilized the cultural theme, among others, to accomplish the task stated by Cissé above. However, in recent times, African filmmakers (Nigerian filmmakers inclusive), are expanding their themes to include the political theme.

The Nigerian political video film strives to capture the essence of Nigeria’s democracy, reflecting it in all its glory and its gore. It documents for posterity the political happenings of Nigeria’s 21st century and attempts to affect the political status quo by making definite statements about the selfishness and coffer-looting propensity of the political elites. The video film started its life as a medium of entertainment. Early producers probably never thought it could be used for any other purpose. Over the years, it has become a vehicle for many other things – education, information, politics, conscientization, etc. In the olden days, Africans commented on the political situation through music, dance, poetry and many other artistic forms. Political videos are now being used as one of such measures of checks and balances. According to former president, Olusegun Obasanjo, we are seeking to cultivate a ‘homegrown democracy’ (2011). If the idea of this homegrown democracy is not to metastasize into cancerous tyranny, there is indeed a need for measures of checks and balances.

According to Ernest Giglio, a political film can be defined using two broad criteria: **intent** and **effect**. Giglio stresses that those involved in the production (producer, director, studio) either intend to deliver a political statement or intent is reasonably implied from media interviews, commercial advertisements or the consensus of film scholars and reviewers. Producers of video in Nigeria have affirmed on various occasions that they see themselves, not merely as entertainers, but as performing a social function in affecting their society for good. It is gratifying to see that they are including the political theme into their dynamic repertoire. Video filmmakers are adopting the political theme because of the collective suffering inflicted on the populace by years of mis-governance. Wrong people have been elected, corruption has gone unchecked, there is no accountability – the list is endless, and it translates to poverty and suffering for the masses.

The filmmakers, therefore, seek to reflect happenings within the Nigerian nation, hoping that the politicians would take note and mend their ways and also, to encourage the Nigerian polity to be more responsible in the use of their votes. The Nigerian video has been described as recalling the sass of junk journalism and, in a sense, what was called guerilla journalism under the military (Ofeimun, 2004). The subject of politics sometimes creeps into their works in an unconscious fashion. Because the subject of politics is now a major item of interest, some producers are eager to cash in on this new wave. When advertising their films, they would tell tall stories of how they were arrested, or threatened by hired assassins, etc., because their films have revealed one diabolical political plot or the other. These are mere commercial gimmicks that may have nothing to do with the plot of the film. On the whole, the political videos serve as barometers that measure the prevalent public opinion about Nigeria's nascent democracy. After decades of abusive military rule, and some still-birthered attempts at democracy, a great percentage of the populace desires that the present democratic experiment should succeed.

The films are generally interventionist in nature. Producers send out a warning about the need to stem a perceived drift into a state of anomie if issues such as corruption, bad policies, electoral malpractice, etc. are not tackled. Some genres are identifiable in the Nigerian political videos. The first is the comic genre. In this category are the films that explore sensitive political issues using the medium of comedy. An example of such films is *Aare A'pase Wa*. Comedians use their artistic license to comment on sensitive political matters in an incisive manner. Next are the propaganda films. These are mostly used by people in government to manipulate things in their favor. The bulk of offerings in this regard are documentary films. Another variant of the propaganda film is the biography film. This type is not yet common on the Nigerian scene. However, judging from the political landscape, it is a 'genre with a future'. There are two examples to draw from.

According to Kola Oyewo, *Ekun Oko Oke* treats the life history of Pa Abraham Adesanya (SAN) with particular emphasis on his leadership of National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) and Afenifere during the Abacha regime. *Ejiogbe* traces the life of Lam Adesina (the former governor of Oyo State) from his humble beginning as a village boy through his followership of Obafemi Awolowo in his career in politics and journalism up to the time he became the Executive Governor of Oyo State in 1999. The two productions reveal the intentions of the sponsors to impinge on the emotions of the electorate through the power of video film, which is capable of manipulating them without their noticing the manipulation (Oyewo, 2003: 147).

Another category is the Messianic/Arthurian film. The messianic film presents characters that attempt to solve problems on behalf of the people. It also falls into the category of Arthurian Cinema theory propounded by English Professor Susan Aronstein. According to Aronstein, Arthurian films attempt to recreate 'an ideal past, but they fill that past with values they want the present or future to hold'. These films have revived the legend of King Arthur to justify and challenge social and political values (cited in David Eisenhauer, see also, Ogunleye, 2003: 134).

Examples of the Messianic/Arthurian film include *Makan* (Untouchable) and *Akobi Gomina* (The Governor's Heir). *Makan* examines the highhandedness and arrogance of the political class. But victory comes to the common man at the end. In the film, Chief Onileola, a corrupt politician operates under the Orwellian dictum "all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others". Together with his thugs, Chief Onileola oppresses the citizens of his community by killing, raping, extorting, etc. The long arm of the law finally catches up with him and he is tried and sentenced to life imprisonment (Ogunleye, 2003: 139). *Akobi Gomina* (The Governor's Heir) is a contemporary political story. It mirrors the inordinate lust for power by African leaders. Fed up with his inept, corrupt and callous leadership pattern, the Governor's first son attempts to show his father the way to atonement. The former spoilt-child heir of the governor, experiences a political rebirth and aids the removal of his selfish and corrupt father from office. This also encourages the citizenry that they have political power in their hands, only if they would exercise it with responsibility (Ogunleye, 2003: 139-140).

The fourth category is the inspiration film. It has been defined as a movie that inspires us, lifts our spirit, or transforms our lives. An inspiration film makes us feel more hopeful, more thankful, more connected, more passionate, and better about life in general. We identify with an inspiration film's characters on a deep, emotional level, and are motivated by their stories to pursue positive change in our own lives. An inspiration film honors the belief that simple choices can change the world and inspires us to make a difference (Inspiration film festival website, www.inspirationfilmfestival.com).

The most fascinating example of this genre is the two-part epic, *Saworo Ide* and *Agogo Eewo*, scripted by Akinwunmi Isola. These two films can be described as metaphors for discerning minds. They provide an allegorical odyssey of Nigeria from independence to the present. The films take us through the coups and counter coups (the first military coup in Nigeria took place in 1966 and the last one in 1985), various still-birthered attempts at

democracy (first attempt was at independence in 1960, another one in 1979, a truncated version in 1992 and the present experience which started in 1999). The producers challenge their viewers to see themselves as stakeholders in the Nigerian nation and also to pull their weight in the sustenance of Nigeria's nascent democracy. *Saworo Ide* details the confusion that comes with coup d'états.

Akinwunmi Isola describes *Saworo Ide* (Brass Cymbals) as "the Parable of the Drum as the Voice of the People" (film blurb). It is the story of the pact between an ancient community, Jogbo Kingdom, and the kings that ruled over it. It had been laid down that any corrupt king that puts on the brass crown while the drum sounds would die. This leads to the death of two corrupt kings in quick succession. The Brass Cymbals ensure that the rulers and the ruled would remain good citizens, or else, they would die painful deaths.

Agogo Eewo (Taboo) is a sequel to *Saworo Ide*. The death of Lagata, the military usurper of the Jogbo throne sets off a nervous search for a credible ruler. Hopes are high that if the young contender, Arese, is elected, he would bring back the golden age of Jogbo Kingdom. However, some entrenched interest in Jogbo Kingdom hijack the process and install Adebosipo, a retired police officer, whom they think would acquiesce to their greedy exploitation of Jogbo Kingdom's resources. They were however unpleasantly surprised as Adebosipo becomes a social crusader (Ogunleye, 2003: 140). *Agogo Eewo* reiterates that there is hope for the future of the Nigerian nation.

The last category in this section is the stark critique. It holds the mirror up to nature and requests both the governed and the government to see themselves and make decisions about the way forward. It makes no prescription to the society. *Aseju Afobaje* (The Godfather's Excesses) is a good example of this category. The film highlights the trouble engendered by god-fatherism in Nigerian politics. In the film, the Governor comes into office due to election rigging masterminded by his political godfather. The Governor however decides to follow due processes in governing the state, to the chagrin of his godfather who would rather use the

Governor as a pawn to loot the state treasury. The godfather then sets the machinery of the Governor's replacement in motion and this splits the party into factions. The godfather eventually forms a new party. This heats up the polity and leads to excessive violence, which culminates in the death of the new party's gubernatorial candidate. This theme is a reflection of happenings within the Nigerian political system. Three political godfathers – Chief Ariyibi Adedibu, Chief Olusola Saraki and Chief Andy Uba have had serious problems with their godsons who became Governors through their beneficence. The godsons usually ignite the godfathers' political fury when they cut the apron strings. This had caused severe political turmoil in Kwara, Oyo and Anambra states of Nigeria at different times, thereby rocking the boat of democracy in the nation.

An important artistic medium like the film cannot escape the political imperative. In a very important way, such media perform the informal role of the watchdog, conscientizing and sensitizing the common man about issues of governance and what their roles should be in the promotion of democratic values in society. A silent and politically lethargic majority will truncate the democratic experiment, and this is what the Nigerian film should continue to emphasize. The mass media should be used to promote citizenship - conscientize and sensitize the populace about what their rights are, and what roles they should perform in a democracy.

A former Minister of Information and National Orientation, Chief Chukwuemeka Chikelu gave the following address to filmmakers at the 2nd National Film Festival in 2003:

I invite you my friends to see your work as an integral part of a Renaissance Project. The Renaissance of a great nation, the renaissance of a great people. Your work is an ambassador from Nigeria to the world. It is an international diplomat requiring no accreditation. The content of your work is the only credential that is presented for Nigeria in the living rooms of millions of people around the world.

Your challenge is to ensure that your work does not cause these people to deny your countrymen the respect that they deserve. We are not a nation of violence and blood; neither are we a nation of cults and frauds. We are not a nation of witches and wizards; neither are we a nation of crime and intrigue. We are a nation of sports, of arts and sciences, a rich culture, a vibrant population, a nation of leaders, a pride to Africa. Nigeria has a story to tell, the world is willing to listen. You, dear producers, are our story tellers. Please make us proud. (*The Guardian*, 2003)

While on the surface, this call by the former Minister appears sincere and laudable, it can also be seen as an attempt to pull the wool over the eye of the filmmakers and the rest of the world, to discourage the filmmakers from telling the Nigerian story as it really is. We cannot continue to hide our collective heads in the sand in an ostrichian fashion.

Revealing the truth about Nigeria's democracy is important in order to make amends by all parties concerned. As Ofeimun submits 'One necessary point that has to be made is that the resentment of the narratives of the home videos tends to be a figment of self-deceit. Rather than seek to change the society so that the untoward elements that figure in home videos may be removed, there seems to be too much of an attempt to create a consensus around the need to make things look better in the films than they are in real life' (Ofeimun, 2004). In charting the way forward, the messianic archetype of the *dues-ex-machina* that resolves all social, health and even political problems in the video narratives must be jettisoned. It builds a lethargic and uncommitted populace who would remain choiceless and disenfranchised, nothing but liabilities in the political drama.

Female Stereotypes in the Nigerian Video Film

This lecture will not be complete, Mr. Vice Chancellor, sir, without talking about the woman question. Traditionally, the role of the woman is seen as that of a subordinate to man. It limits the

woman to a very narrow place within the society; and this is reflected in the film media through a portrayal and projection of negative female stereotypes, which helps in furthering the wrong socialization of the female in society. Such negative stereotypes include the woman as a witch, the woman as a termagant, the woman as a whore, the woman as subordinate to man, the woman as a low-income worker, the actress as playing supportive roles to the actor, etc. It is distressing to know that even female producers champion such damaging stereotypes. This is simply because producers pander basically to the box office - the film must sell, and purchasing power lies more with men. Film should be *thermostatic*, initiating a new image and fostering women empowerment, rather than being a *thermometer*, merely reflecting damaging traditions within the society - even if it fetches more money.

Film has become one of the most powerful agents of change within the society. I advocate that film producers should not merely reflect negative things going on within the society, but that they should create positive models that would restore societal confidence in women and encourage women to take up positive behaviors. To this end, video film producers would become change agents.

Way Forward?

In 1992, I wrote a paper entitled "Film Content and Moral Rearmament in Nigeria". In that paper, I stated that the filmic fare from many developed countries is replete with sex and violence. I then expressed the fear that if care was not taken, made-in-Nigeria films could also degenerate to such a level. It is very unfortunate that today, some Nigerian video film producers have become enslaved to the production of such cheap thrills. Fortunately, producers who know their onions look inwards to the riches of their culture to produce valuable films with relevant content for the development of the Nigerian nation. In 2009, during an interactive session with students of the Department of Dramatic Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University, film producer, Tunde Kelani said that there

was too much violence in the 'lived experience' of the Nigerian people and it was therefore unnecessary to force viewers to submit to violent filmic scenes, either in the confines of their homes or when they go out to watch movies.

Dramatic films that provide positive models for viewers to copy should be actively encouraged. Virtue should always be rewarded and vice punished. This encourages viewers to imbibe positive values. Films that are of doubtful quality in this respect should be denied the censors' license. This is, however, difficult in Nigeria because there is the lack of the socio-political and moral will to enforce existing production codes that are supposed to serve as guidelines for producers. Let us take the case of Akin Ogunbe's *Asiri Baba Ibeji* as presented by Hyginus Ekwuazi:

Baba Ibeji and his friend Ajenifuja, collude in using the former's son for money. Both become exceedingly rich. But where Baba Ibeji becomes a womanizer and megalomaniac, Ajenifuja comports himself as becomes a gentleman who spends his ill-gotten money with care. Baba Ibeji dies, Ajenifuja survives ... The film fails to tackle the thematic problem to its root ... By inference the film endorsed man's acquisition of money through rituals involving human life so long as such a man comports himself well ... it is the kind of film which ought to have been denied the censor's license. (Ekwuazi, 1991: 72)

This kind of film seeks to perpetuate the moral decadence inherent in modern Nigerian society. To prevent this, Nigerian Video Film Censors Boards' production code should be enforced and the censors should be more alive to their moral responsibilities to the society.

Film can be an invaluable tool in the hand of its producers. It can be used to effectively pass across any message desired by the producer. When properly handled, in terms of form, content and structure, it will produce the same kind of picture that Plato had in mind as to the effects of art in his *Republic*:

...that our young men, dwelling as it were, in a healthful region, may drink in good from every quarter, when any emanation from noble works may strike upon their eye or their ear like a gale wafting health from salubrious lands, and win them imperceptibly from their earliest childhood into resemblance, love, and harmony with the true beauty of reason. (Hodgkinson, 1983: 24)

Good films can be used to change the moral tone of the society. However, such films may not be instant box office successes. This is because the Nigerian film audience has been brought up on a fare of excitement and mysticism. Private commercial producers may not want to take such financial risks in producing serious films for fear of commercial failure. The onus is then on the government and private funding bodies to harness the feature film in aid of everything that can be gained from it, not merely for financial gains and entertainment.

It becomes pertinent to note here that our graduates go out of Universities and other higher institutions half-baked and half-trained. They have the theoretical and ideological exposure, but except in very rare cases are they exposed to the practical side of their profession. Student doctors and nurses train in hospitals and lawyers go to the Law School. Agric students go to the farms, but Nigerian trainee film producers learn their art from text books. It should be made compulsory for such students to have some form of industrial training. This enables them to become more useful to themselves and to their society after their graduation.

Finally, it is advisable for film production outfits to arrange for a sort of in-house censorship right from the script stage through the whole production process. It gives greater opportunity for producing films that are of a very high quality and it also ensures that the film would not have any problem at the official censorship stage. High quality form, content and structure would certainly benefit the Nigerian film industry immensely.

Relevance of Thespians and Cineastes to other Disciplines

As R. Arnold exclaimed, in an era when self-development, consciousness-raising and the worth of the individual are valued, it is surprising that drama has not been acknowledged more forcefully as a core learning medium in all educational contexts (Arnold, 1991: 13). Interdisciplinarity has been described as a type of academic collaboration in which specialists drawn from two or more academic disciplines work together in pursuit of common goals. Interdisciplinarity was sired by discontent with traditional disciplines. Many academics felt that knowledge was not being optimized from the tiny pigeon-holes which characterized the purview of the various disciplines. According to Helga Nowotny, if joint problem-solving is the aim, then the means must provide for an integration of perspectives in the identification, formulation and resolution of what has to become a shared problem (Nowotny, 2006)

Branches of knowledge in the humanities are concerned with human thought and culture and this makes them relevant to other disciplines. There is a need for knowledge to transcend barriers of theory and become relevant to the process of life and living. Unfortunately, serious efforts have not been made in curriculum development in Nigeria to maximize the potentials of the humanities. The failure is partly responsible for the high rate of unemployment in the country. Many uneducated, half-educated and semi-literate people graduate from our universities and remain unemployed because they are unemployable. They fail to translate their years within the educational system into something that can generate private employment, partly, because the kind of education received was not designed to prepare them for the challenges of the twenty-first century. This poses a challenge for a more goal-oriented education and Interdisciplinarity seems to present a hope for the future. The theatre and mass media have been used at an interdisciplinary level, in different times and cultures. Such examples can be borrowed and adapted for the Nigerian setting.

Interdisciplinarity might not be as new as some theorists would like to have us believe. The theatre and mass media have

been known to perform interdisciplinary functions for ages. For example, eighteenth century British law students at the Inns of Court had to take courses in drama to sharpen their presentational skills (Brockett and Hildy, 2003). Also, theatre artists have worked with psychiatrists at mental institutions to design psychological drama therapies for patients. Theatre and media for development strategies have been used for health, agricultural and other campaigns. These examples emanate from both inside and outside Nigeria. In gathering data on the issue of Interdisciplinarity, I posed a question to the online community through Yahoo Answers: "How useful can drama and theatre studies be in interdisciplinary studies"? Not surprisingly, some interesting responses were obtained viz:

Suzita: ... in my opinion, drama and theatre studies is (sic) one of the most useful subjects to study for ANY future career, because it teaches you about relating to others. It will give you more confidence in yourself and it will develop your social skills. It is a wonderful subject, full of interest and richness.

Nlshzhoni: ... I want to congratulate you on your desire to study drama. It is very useful in a lot of ways, especially when you go for your first job interview, you'll find out why. For one, as a teacher, I love to use drama in my classes. Have you seen the movie with Robin Williams in which he uses drama to teach poetry?

basket_case34: Communication and observation skills are the two main things a drama class will teach you, and they are both crucial to almost any career. Learning how to work with others, interpret writing, design and build sets, make costumes, create advertisement, balance a budget ... need I go on? (Available at:

www.answers.yahoo.com/question?quid=1006052904262)

Certainly, drama and theatre would be of immense use to many disciplines and designing interdisciplinary courses would be of utmost benefit. Students from the Department of Theatre Arts at the University of Ibadan have successfully worked with doctors and patients of the Aro Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Abeokuta in using psychodrama to help in the healing processes.

I wish to strongly recommend that students from other faculties such as medicine, Agriculture, Law, etc. would definitely benefit from taking courses in Dramatic Arts; therefore, curriculum developers may want to consider such interdisciplinary linkages, which would utilize the expertise of Thespians and Cineastes, in the interest of society. Mr. Vice Chancellor sir, this great university will surely be placed on the world map if such an experiment could be carried out here.

Some of my Contributions to the Fray

Mr. Vice Chancellor, sir, lest I behave like the man that sat down, guarding another man's head leaving his own unprotected, until the eagle snatched it away, let me briefly mention some of my theatrical engineering activities.

The *Ori Olokun* theater started when I was still in the primary school, so I did not have the opportunity to be a participant in its hey days. But our elders say *Bi omode ko ba ba itan, yio ba aroba* (if a child does not have access to scientific history, s/he will have access to stories retold). I have carried out major research on *Ori Olokun*, out of which I have published some articles in reputable international outlets. Also, I am currently working on a documentary to immortalize the heroes and heroines of the *Ori Olokun* days and save the gains for posterity. It is my greatest hope that the film will be one of the entries of the Ife Film School at the Ife International Film Festival this year.

When I went to the University of Swaziland for my sabbatical, I saw so much that was theatrical, but the theatre itself was nowhere to be found. I then began the campaign to put Drama on the curriculum. By the time I left, I had designed a diploma course for the University, I was able to organize, for the first time

in the history of the University, a drama seminar titled “Drama in Swaziland: The State of the Arts”. This gave birth to the first book about Drama in Swaziland entitled *Theatre in Swaziland: The Past, the Present and the Future* (2005). When I put the book into the hands of my colleagues in the department where I worked, one of the Senior Professors in the Department turned to another one and exclaimed: “These Awolowo People!”. When I asked the other senior Professor about the meaning of the exclamation, I was informed that all the Obafemi Awolowo lecturers who had been there in the past had introduced new things into the university system. Also, when I arrived in Swaziland, I read in their newspapers that Swazis did not know how to act. By the time I left Swaziland, I had directed four plays, acted brilliantly by Swazis. The seed we have planted has continued to grow, even up till today.



University of Swaziland Students in *The Marriage of Anansewa*

I have also sought to champion the cause of women, because, to use one of my late father’s favorite quote “If you do not say ‘I am’, nobody would say thou art”. If women do not protect themselves, it is not likely that ‘non-women’ would do so. I have examined many plays written by men to judge their compliance with ‘women-friendly’ ethos. In *Efunsetan Aniwura*, Akinwumi Isola strove to show the evils that human beings do. I

do not want to believe that the intent of the playwright was to denigrate women. This is because he has championed the cause of women in many other plays. A very good example is *Madam Tinubu*. In an earlier study, I attempted a womanist reading of *Efunsetan Aniwura* and arrived at the conclusion that the play is a malecentric modification of history. Interestingly, an internet search would reveal that my article on the subject, which was published by the reputable American Journal, *History in Africa* has been circulated widely and variously commented upon on the web.

The process of adaptation for any creative writer is a process of choice. Certain materials are chosen and others discarded. What are the reasons motivating these actions? The basic reason is that of ideology. We can safely surmise that a preoccupation with a malecentric ideology motivated Akinwunmi Isola to demonize Efunsetan Aniwura in his play. Our historical analysis shows that Aare Latosa was a more pronounced villain than Efunsetan ever was, yet, he was portrayed as a saint and a crusader while Efunsetan was portrayed as satanic. It ought to be noted that Efunsetan was a product of her socio-political milieu. She grew up in times of 'wars and rumors of war'. Automatically, she began and centered her trade on war supplies and slave trafficking (Awe, 1992: 68). It was a tough time, and one had to be tough to survive. Though Efunsetan was not 'all-good', she certainly was not 'all-bad' as portrayed in Isola's play. We hereby submit that it would have been of more benefit historically and socially to have painted her with a softer and more sympathetic brush, emphasizing her success in business, her commitment to a sense of nationhood which enabled her to take an active part in the defense and expansion of the Ibadan empire. These positive characteristics would then be placed side by side with the psychological problem she had after the death of her daughter. This would have made her a better tragic heroine, and the play would have been better for it. Mythical figures may be processed and re-processed with poetic and aesthetic license, but real-life historical figures should be treated with more chariness.

Female writers have been in the vanguard of causing the female voice to be heard in the patriarchal wilderness of Nigerian theatre. The pioneer female writers have, according to Kolawole, 'pioneered the call for African women's self-realization' (Kolawole, 1999). The newer female writers are building on the solid foundation the pioneers have already laid. Through their plays, these female Nigerian playwrights are using the African feminist/womanist ideology to make a case for the women in Nigeria. Mr. Vice Chancellor, sir, I am proud to say that I have published over ten plays and I have many unpublished ones. I have produced many video films and still counting. I can confidently say that I have different types of women in my plays - the good, the bad and the ugly. We see those who contribute their own quota to make the society better. They make their presence felt in a positive way. We also see the ones who strive to destroy others of their type in order to realize their own personal selfish ambition. In summation, whether the women are good or bad sends a message to the audience. It makes a statement also that women are not 'invisible' in society. They maintain a presence, which is very important. We see them, not as stereotypical models as we see in the patriarchal plays – women as décor, prostitutes, low-income workers etc., but as sturdy characters who exist in the typical work-a-day life of the average Nigerian. In Mabel Erwerhoma's opinion, 'through writing, women erase the namby pamby women from their drama by elevating the female characters' consciousness and tempering their portrayal with some ideology, power and radicalism' (Evwierhoma, 2002). Mr. Vice Chancellor, sir, I confidently assert that I am one of such women writers.

Today, I can proudly say that I am also an authority on Christian drama as well as Christian film. I have acted very prominent roles in many Nigerian Christian films, I have also produced many Christian films and I have written many Christian plays. I entered one video shop in the United States of America to promote one of my films some time ago. The first question that the Nigerian owner of the shop asked me, even before I discussed my mission with her was this: "I hope you too have not decided to

check out of Nigeria? We prefer you to remain at home and produce these films and send them to us". She of course conveniently forgot to tell me how many of my films she had pirated; neither did she offer me any royalty from my films she might have illegally sold over the years. Very importantly, I have been able to organize seminars and workshops, acted as facilitator and consultant to Christian dramatists and filmmakers in order to help them polish their act.

I have become a specialist in writing morality plays. I am of the opinion Mr. Vice Chancellor, that human society is headed towards a state of anomie if nothing is done to stem the drift. The morality play is an allegorical drama in which the characters personify moral qualities (such as charity or vice) or abstractions (as death or youth) and in which moral lessons are taught (*Encyclopædia Britannica*). I have written plays to champion the cause of chastity among youths, I have also written plays to discourage, bribery, religious chicanery, corruption and moral turpitude. My focus has been varied, and I hope to continue to use my plays to challenge humanity to chart a better course, for our sakes and for the sakes of generations yet unborn.

In accomplishing all the above, I owe a debt of gratitude to my family. First, my gratitude goes to my husband – Engineer Segun Ogunleye. Without your love and kind support, I would not be on this podium today. Thank you, I love you, the best is yet to come. My worthy parents - the late Pa John Oyebade Adesina, an educationist and firm believer in the aphorism, 'spare the rod and spoil the child'. Nobody could have accused you of sparing the rod! You really should have been here today, you would have been so proud of us all. My Mother, the great matriarch, Mrs. Ruphina Olajumoke Adesina – you left your teaching career to build our lives. At times, it seemed like a thankless job. The Lord will cause you to enjoy the fruits of your labor for many years to come. I would not be the person I am today without my siblings. They never allowed me to be 'at ease in Zion'. Wunmi, Tayo, Femi, Yewande, Yemi, Biyi and all the spouses, Okanlawon, Nike, Kemi, Funke and Sumbo - grace and peace be multiplied unto you.

I also appreciate all my nieces and nephews, my children, Oluwaseun and Kehinde – God bless and multiply you. Ini-Oluwasemiloore, you have made my mother ‘great’ and you have made me ‘grand’. It sure is a nice thing to be a grandmother. God bless and keep you. I heartily acknowledge my in-laws: the family of Elemure of Emure, Oba Ogunleye II, Prof. & Dr. Mrs Ademola Fabayo, Deacon & Rev. Mrs Rotimi Oni, Engr. & Mrs Busola Ogunniyan. May God enlarge your coast. I cannot forget my maternal link – the Ogunnayas, God’s blessing upon you.

Where would I be today without my teachers and mentors? I salute you all – Professor Joel Adeyinka Adedeji, Professor Ola Rotimi, Professor Wole Soyinka, Professor Dapo Adelugba, Professor Akinwumi Isola, Dr. Olu Akomolafe (I was recruited by Dr. Olu Akomolafe from the Polytechnic, Ibadan in 1989. I rose through the ranks from the position of Assistant Lecturer in 1989 to become a Professor in 2007), Professor Femi Osofisan, Professor Biodun Jeyifo, Professor Kole Omotoso, Dr. Yemi Ogunbiyi, Kabiyesi Oba Segun Akinbola, Mr. Bankole Bello, Professor Folabo Ajayi, Dr. Lanre Bamidele, Professor Duro Oni, Dr. Hyginus Ekwuazi, Dr. Mathew Umukoro, Dr. Remi Adedokun. I appreciate my friends and colleagues who provide a very warm academic circle for me – Professor L. O. Adewole, Professor Mabel Erwerhoma, Dr. Korede Yusuf, all Academic and Non-Academic Staff of the Department of Dramatic Arts as well as the Awovarsity Theatre Staff. Thank you all. To the immortal and invisible God – unto Him, the only wise God, be glory and majesty, dominion and power. Your presence has always been with me. I will continue to serve you all the days of my life, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Conclusion

I have postulated in this lecture that art does not only exist for pleasure, but rather, it performs a functional role, its main objective being to affect man. This agrees with Ermash’s position that art’s purpose is not just to accumulate observation, but rather art cognizes life with the intent of influencing man (Cited in Uji,

1989:437). When art influences a man, it also has an effect on the society because society is made for man. The "theatre of entertainment" is combined with the "theatre of ideas", the resultant blend provides a satisfying message for the audience. The puritan, Jeremy Collier, also put forth ideas about what drama should do:

The business of plays is to recommend virtue and discountenance vice, to show the uncertainty of human greatness, the sudden turns of fate, and the unhappy conclusions of violence and injustice, it is to expose the singularities of pride and fancy, to make folly and falsehood contemptible, and to bring everything that is ill under infamy and neglect. (Collier, 1974: 351)

There is also a moral relevance inherent in the performances. Viewers are involved in moral and ethical choices and through this; they exercise their free will to either decide for good or for evil. No amount of effort will ever be too great to expend on the achievement of building a law-abiding and peace-loving citizenry. J. A. Adedeji encourages the use of the theatre in this direction,

Conscious of the role of the theatre in society as an effective agent which affects attitudes and motivates the desire for change through aesthetic and intellectual appeal, our theatre artists must begin to feel themselves partners in the remaking of a new African society in a progressive way. (Adedeji, 1985)

The rebuilding of the crumbled moral and socio-political base of modern Nigeria should, among other things, form the major concern of Nigerian Thespians and Cineastes. In summary, if the essence of the message being propagated is a positive one, if the ethics are such that would help society to develop, and to improve its moral tone, then, it would be a worthwhile exercise, investing

human, material and artistic resources in propagating such ideals. Mao Tse-Tung expressed such a view when he said,

We should carry on constant propaganda among the people on the facts of world progress and the bright future ahead, so that they will build their confidence in victory. (Tse-Tung, 1965: 70)

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, as I attain the golden age of fifty in this month of May 2012 - just as our great University also clocks fifty - we must continue to utilize all resources and opportunities at our disposal in a more sustained fashion to engineer and re-engineer the souls of our nation and its people. This is to ensure that the next fifty years of our nation and our great university will be glorious ones. The production of souls is indeed more important than the production of tanks ... And therefore I doff my hat to you, Thespians and Cineastes, the engineers of the Nigerian soul. I thank you all for your attention

References

- Abah, S. Oga, and Etherton, Michael, 1981, "The Samaru Projects: Street Theatre in Northern Nigeria". Mimeograph.
- Adedeji, J. A., & Ekwuazi, H., 1998, *Nigerian Theatre: Dynamics of a Movement*. Ibadan: Caltop Publishers.
- Adedeji, J.A., 1987, "Aesthetics of Soyinka's Theatre", in Dapo Adelugba, (ed.), *Before Our Very Eyes: Tribute to Wole Soyinka, Winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 1987
- Adedeji, J.A., 1985, "Cultural Nationalism and the African Theatre" in *Africa*, ANNOX2N3 Set.
- Adedeji, J.A., 1978, *The Theatre in African University: Appearance and Reality*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Adelugba, Dapo, 1989, 'Wole Soyinka's 'Blues for a Prodigal': A Review', in *Africa Media Review* Vol. 3 No. 2. 67-75.
- Adesanya, Afolabi, 2005, "Adesanya Replies Ola Balogun" *Nigerian Vanguard*. July 23.
- Adesina, Olutayo C., 2012, *The Future of the Past*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Akinrinade, O., 1989, "The Era of Consolidation, 1966-1975", in Omosini, O., & Adediran, B., (eds), *Great Ife: A History of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (1962-1987)*. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University, pp. 31-45.
- Arnold, R, 1991, Drama in the Round: The Centrality of Drama in Learning", in J. Hughes, (ed.), *Drama in Education: The State of the Art*. Sydney: Educational Drama Association, New South Wales, pp. 13-24.
- Awe, Bolanle, 2001. "Iyalode Efunsetan Aniwura (Owner of Gold)" in Bolanle Awe, ed. *Nigerian Women: A Historical Perspective*. Second Edition. Ibadan: Bookcraft. Pp. 63- 82.
- Balogun, Ola, 1998, "Africa's Video Alternative". Available at: http://www.unesco.org/courier/1998_11/uk/signes/txt1.htm
- -, (nd), "Don't Envy the South Africans: A rejoinder by Ola Balogun". Available at: http://www.nollywood.net/Essays/p2_articleid/16

- - -, 2005a, "Does Nigeria Indeed Have a Film Industry?" Available at:
http://www.nollywood.net/Essays/p2_articleid/37
- - -, 2005b, "What Nigeria Must Do To Have a Film Industry". Available at:
http://www.nollywood.net/Essays/p2_articleid/56
- Boal, Augusto, 1985, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Charles A. & Maria-Odilia Leal McBride (Trans.), New York: Theatre Communication Group.
- Brandon, Dawn, M., 2001, 'Art for life's sake: The Role of Arts in a Liberal Arts' in *Drury Magazine*. Drury University, Volume 2, Issue 2: Summer, available at <http://www.drury.edu/multinl/story.cfm?ID=3455&NLID=125> (accessed August 1, 2007)
- Brockett, Oscar G., and Hildy, Franklin J., 2003, *History of the Theatre*, Foundation Edition. Pearson Education.
- Cannadine, David, (ed.), 2002, *What is History Now?* Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd.
- Chikelu, Chukwuemeka, 2003, "the 2nd National Film Festival", *The Guardian*, Nov. 28.
- Clark, Egun, 1979, *Hubert Ogunde: The Making of Nigerian Theatre*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Coker, Adeniyi, 2005, *Ola Rotimi's African Theatre. The Development of an Indigenous Aesthetic*. USA: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- Coker, Adeniyi, 2003, 'A Director's Vision for Theatre in Africa: Adeniyi Coker Interviews Ola Rotimi - One of Nigeria's Foremost Playwrights and Directors' *Black Renaissance*. Summer. Vol.5, Iss. 2.
<http://www.nyu.edu/africahouse/expressive/cokerdirectorsvision.pdf> (Date of Download: January 27, 2005)
- Coker, Adeniyi, 1992, "The Context and Development of Ola Rotimi at the Ori Olokun Theater" in *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Sep.), pp. 60-74.
- Collier, Jeremy, 1974, "A Short View of the Immorality and Profanity of the English Stage", Dukore, B. F. (ed.).

- Dramatic Theory and Criticism; Greeks to Grotowski*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- Davis, Ossie, (1970), 'Movies; When is a Camera a Weapon? The Camera as Weapon', in *New York Times*, September 20, 1970, Sunday, Section: Arts & Leisure, Page 123.
- Denatale, Bob, 2012, "Film as Cheap as Pencil and Paper" <http://bobdenatale.wordpress.com/2011/01/14/film-as-cheap-as-pencil-and-paper/Gugler>,
- Donahue, Francis, 1969, "Spain's Theater of Commitment" in *Books Abroad*. Vol. 43, No. 3 (Summer), pp. 354-358.
- Dukore, B. F. (ed.), 1974, *Dramatic Theory and Criticism; Greeks to Grotowski*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- Eisenhauer, David, 'Hollywood Knights' available at <http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/UWYO/vol3/03/knights.htm> (accessed May 12, 2003)
- Ekwuazi, Hyginus, 2006, "To the Movie: Everything Good will Come. Abridged text of keynote presented by Hyginus Ekwuazi, former Managing Director/CEO, Nigerian Film Corporation (NFC) at the International Convention of the Association of Nigerian Authors held in Kano State. http://www.nollywood.net/Essays/p2_articleid/99 (accessed October 1, 2007)
- Ekwuazi, Hyginus, 1991, *Film in Nigeria*. Jos: Nigerian Film Corporation, Nigeria.
- Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2012, "morality play." *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc, Web. 24 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/391805/morality-play>>.
- Evwierhoma, Mabel, 2002, *Female Empowerment and Dramatic Creativity in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Caltop Publishers.
- Gibbs, James, 1986, *Wole Soyinka*. Houndsmill: Macmillan.
- Giglio, Ernest, 1995, *Rights, Liberties and Public Policy*. Avebury.
- Giglio, Ernest, (nd.), 'Defining a political film', available at <http://faculty.smu.edu/dsimon/A%20Film%20Course/Feb2d.html> (accessed March 15, 2007)

- Goodlad, J.S.R. 1971, *A Sociology of Popular Drama*. London: Heinemann.
- Gugler, Joseph, 2003, *African Film: Re-Imagining a Continent*. Oxford, James Currey.
- Gugler, Josef, 1997, "Wole Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest* from Stage to Screen: Four Endings to Tyranny," in *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 31.
- Halsall, Paul, 2002, "Ancient History in the Movies". Available at: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/asbookmovies.html>
- Hodgkinson, A. W., 1983, *Screen Education*. UNESCO, *Handbook of the Institute of African Studies: 1969-1970*. 1969, Ile-Ife: University of Ife Press.
- Issa-Onilu, Lanre, 2004, "Ilorin Afonja: The Burden of a Race", in *ThisDay Online*. Available at: <http://www.thisdayonline.com/archive/2003/08/30/20030830pol01.html>
- Izognmovies webpage, nd., available at: <http://www.izognmovies.com/index.php?/product/browse/action/view/id/901/>
- Jeyifo, Biodun, 1984, *The Yoruba Popular Travelling Theatre of Nigeria*. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine Publishers.
- Jeyifo, Biodun, 1985, *The Truthful Lie: Essays in a Sociology of African Drama*. London: Villiers Publications Ltd.
- Jibrin B. Jibrin, 2006, "Northern Film Industry: Manko and the Audio-Visual Chronicles Of Nupe History". Available at: http://www.nollywood.net/Essays/p2_articleid/131
- Johnson, Samuel, 1921, *The History of the Yorubas from the Earliest Beginning of the British Protectorate*. Lagos: CSS Bookshops Ltd.
- Josef, 2003, *African Film: Re-Imagining a Continent*. James Currey & Indiana University Press.
- Kennedy, J. F., 1962, "Address on the First Anniversary of the Alliance for Progress," White House reception for diplomatic corps of the Latin American republics, March 13, 1962. *Public Papers of the Presidents – John F. Kennedy*.

- Kolawole, Mary, 1999, (ed.). *Zulu Sofola: Her Life and Her Works*. Ibadan: Caltop Publications.
- Ladipo, Duro, 1964, *Three Yoruba Plays*. English Adaptations by Ulli Beir. Ibadan: Mbari Publications.
- Langley, Stephen, 1974, *Theatre Management in America*. New York: Drama Book Specialists.
- Lasode, Obafemi, 2002, cited in Nathan, Jeremy, "No-Budget Nigeria", in 'Filmmaker: The Magazine of Independent Film'. Available at: http://www.filmmakermagazine.com/fall2002/features/no_budget_nigeria.php
- Muchimba, Helen, 2004, "Nigerian Film Lights Zambia's Screens" in 'BBC Focus on Africa Magazine', Thursday 23 September. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3674322.stm>
- Murphy, David 2000, "Africans filming Africa: questioning theories of an authentic African cinema". *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 13 (2).
- Nathan, Jeremy, 2002, "No-Budget Nigeria", in 'Filmmaker: The Magazine of Independent Film'. Available at: http://www.filmmakermagazine.com/fall2002/features/no_budget_nigeria.php
- Nigerian Vanguard*, 2005, "Ola Balogun tackles NFC boss over the Video Book Project" available at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/articles/2002/features/homevideo/hv23072005.html>
- Nowotny Helga, 2006, "The Potential of Transdisciplinarity by Helga Nowotny". Available at helga-nowotny.eu/downloads/helga_nowotny_b59.pdf
- Obasanjo, Olusegun, 2011, "Democracy must be Sustained in Africa". *The Sun Newspaper*, Dec. 16.
- Ofeimun, Odia, 2004, "In Defence of the films we have made. Keynote address at the 2nd national film festival, 27th November, 2003", in *West Africa Review*: Issue 5.

- Ogunbayo, Modupe, 2011, "Nollywood: The Journey into the Global Hall of Fame" in *NewsWatch Magazine*, July 28.
- Ogunbiyi, Y. (ed.), 1981, *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Bath: Nigeria Magazine.
- Ogundele, Wole, 1997, "From Folk Opera to Soap Opera: Improvisations and Transformations in the Yoruba Popular Traveling Theatre" in Jonathan Haynes, (ed.), *Nigerian Video Films*. Jos: Nigerian Film Corporation, pp. 45-70.
- Ogunleye Foluke, 2009, "Money and Mercantilism in Nigerian Historical Plays: A Womanist Reading", UK: British Museum Research Publication, No. 171, pp. 45-49.
- Ogunleye Foluke, 2007, *Theatre in Nigeria: Different Faces*. Ibadan: Humanities Publishers.
- Ogunleye Foluke, 2008, *Africa through the Eye of the Video Camera*. Manzini, Swaziland: Academic Publishers.
- Ogunleye Foluke, 2007, *Theatre in Nigeria: Different Faces*. Ibadan: Humanities Publishers.
- Ogunleye Foluke, 2006, "Breaking the Drug Scourge among Nigerian Youths: The Utility Value of the Mass Media" in *International Journal of Humanistic Studies*, Vol. 5, University of Swaziland, pp. 26-37.
- Ogunleye Foluke, 2005, "Gender Stereotypes and Reconstruction: A Feminist Appraisal of Nigerian Video Films" in *Acta Academica*, Vol. 37 (3), University of the Free State, South Africa, pp. 125-149.
- Ogunleye Foluke, 2003, *African Video Film Today*. Manzini, Swaziland: Academic Publishers.
- Ogunleye, Foluke, 2003, Amali, S. O., Paton, A., Ogunleye, F. et al., *Ethnicity, Citizenship and Democracy in the United States of America*. Lagos: American Studies Association Publication/PAS, pp.131-140.
- Ogunleye, Foluke, 2000, 'Fostering a Nigerian Dream on the American Model: Civil Education Through the Mass Media' in Ogunba Oyin, (ed.), *The Empowerment of the Civil Society in a Democracy: Nigeria and the United States of America*,

Lagos: American Studies Association Publication/PAS, pp. 215-226.

Ogunleye, Foluke, 1992, "Film Content and Moral Rearmament in Nigeria" in Ekwuazi, H. and Nasidi, Y. (eds.), *Operative Principles of the Film Industry: Towards a Film Policy for Nigeria*. Jos: Nigerian Film Corporation, pp. 169-178.

Ola Rotimi Foundation Website. Available at:

<http://www.olarotimifoundation.org/index.html>

Olusanya, G., 2001, "Olaninwun Adunni Oluwole", in Awe, B. (ed.) *Nigerian Women in Historical Perspective*. Bookcraft/Sankore, Ibadan.

Olusola, Segun, 1981, "The Advent of Television Drama", in Yemi Ogunbiyi, (ed.), *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria*. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine Publishers, 1981, pp.372-.

Oliver, Paul, 1970, *Savannah Syncopators*. Stein & Day Pub.

Omotoso, Kole, 1983: 'Unife Theatre – A History of Continuity' in 'Unife Theatre in Requiem for a Futurologist' Programme notes for the production.

Onitsha Market Literature: From the Bookstalls of a Nigerian Market". Available at:

<http://www.ku.edu/~onitsha/historical.htm#9\cf1\lang1033\par>

Osofisan, F. O., 1997, *Playing Dangerously: Drama at the Frontiers of Terror in a "Postcolonial" State*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press.

Oyewo, G. A., 2003, "The Yoruba Video Film: Cinematic Language and the Socio-Aesthetic Ideal", in Ogunleye Foluke (ed.), *African Video Film Today*. Manzini, Swaziland: Academic Publishers, pp. 141-157.

Plastow, Jane, 1999, "Introduction" in Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman*. Methuen.

Pleckhanov, G. V., *Art and Social Life*. London: Lawrence and Wishfort.

"Review of Nigeria's Entertainment Industry since 1960" Saturday, Oct 8, 2005, "The Tide Online"

<http://www.thetidenews.com/article.aspx?qrDate=10/08/>

2005&qrTitle=Review+of+Nigeria%E2%

80%98s+Entertainment+industry+since+1960\`tab

- Robespierre, Maximilien, 1794, "On the Principles of Political Morality", in *Modern History Sourcebook*. Available at: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1794robspierre.html>
- Roddy, K. P., 1973, "Epic Qualities in the Cycle Plays" in Malcolm Bradbury and David Palmer (eds.), *Medieval Drama*. London: Edward Arnold Publishers.
- Rosenstone, Robert A., 1988, "History in Images/History in Words: Reflections on the Possibility of Really Putting History onto Film", in *American Historical Review*, Vol. 93, No. 5 (Dec.): pp. 1173-1185.
- Rotimi, Ola, 1979, *Our Husband has Gone Mad Again: A Comedy*. Ibadan: University Press Ltd.
- Ruskin, John, 1890, *St. Mark's Rest: The History of Venice*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Shaw, G. B., 1974, "The Problem Play", in Bernard F. Dukore, *Dramatic Theory and Criticism: From Greeks to Grotowski*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc. pp. 633-634.
- Solanke, Jimi, 2006, "History of the Ori Olokun Theatre". Unpublished Manuscript of talk presented to the Dramatic Arts Students Association.
- Stalin, Joseph, 1932, "Speech at home of Maxim Gorky" <http://www.junkfoodforthought.com/quotations/L.htm>
- 'The Rotimi Foundation Website'
<http://www.rotimifoundation.org/rotimi.php?content=mission>
(Date of Download: February 2, 2004)
- The Urban Dictionary*, 1999 - 2011, "Naija". Available at: (<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=naija>). Accessed: January 28, 2012.
- Thackway, Melissa, 2003, *Africa Shoots Back: Alternative Perspectives in Sub-Saharan Francophone African Film*. Oxford: James Currey.
- The Inspiration Film Festival. available at

<http://www.inspirationfilmfestival.com/>(accessed on 10 march, 2007)

- Thomas, Dominic, 2000, "Officials Writers: The Engineers of the Congolese Soul" in *South Central Review*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Summer), pp. 77-102.
- Traore, B. *The Black African Theatre and its Social Functions*. Dapo Adelugba trans. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1972.
- Tse-Tung, Mao , 1966, *The Thoughts of Chairman Mao*. Peking.
- Uji, Charles, 2001, "The Theme of Democracy in the Drama of Ola Rotimi and Wole Soyinka". *Humanities Review Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 1-8.
- Jji, Charles, 2000, "Radical Popular Theatre in a Democratic Perspective: A Focus on Nigeria and the United States, in Ogunba, Oyin, (ed.), 2000, *The Empowerment of the Civil Society in a Democracy: Nigeria and the United States of America*. Lagos: American Studies Association of Nigeria, pp, 345 – 351.
- Uji, Charles, 1989, "Marxist Aesthetics in the Works of Femi Osofisan and Bode Sowande", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ibadan.
- White, Hayden, 1988, "Historiography and Historiophoty" in *The American Historical Review*. Vol. 93, No.5 (December): pp. 1193-1199.
- Yahoo Answers, 2006, "How useful can drama and theatre studies be in interdisciplinary studies"? (Available at: www.answers.yahoo.com/question?quid=1006052904262)

videography

- Aare Apase Wa*, 2004, 1hr. 47min. Dir. Bolaji Amusan.
- Afonja*, 2001, Dir. Adebayo Faleti. Perf. Laide Adewale, Peter Fatomilola, Larinde Akinleye.
- Agogo Eewo* (Taboo), 2001, 1hr. 30min. Dir. Tunde Kelani.
- Akobi Gomina* (The Governor's Heir), 2005, 1hr. 30min.
- Aseju Afobaje* (The Godfather's Excesses), 2005, 3hr.21min. Dir. Lamorudeen Saba.

Basorun Gaa, 2004, Dir. Adebayo Faleti. Perf. Deji Aderemi, Adebayo Faleti, Adewunmi Faleti, Gbemisola Faleti, Tubosun Odunsi, David Ojedokun.

Ija Ofin, 2007, 1hr.30min. Dir. Rasheed Yusuf.

Makan (Untouchable), 2004, 1hr.30min.

Saworo Ide (Brass Cymbals), 2000, 1hr. 30min. Dir. Tunde Kelani.

Interviews

Akomolafe, Olu, 2006: Interview carried out by this writer, June 27.

Fatomilola, Peter, 2006: Interview carried out by this writer, June 28 & 30.

Ojeyemi, Tunji, 2006: Interview carried out by this writer, June 26 & 29.

Oyewo, Kola, 2006: Interview carried out by this writer, June 26.

