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DIALECTICAL DIMENSIONS TO THE DRAMA AND THEATRE OF WOLE SOYINKA

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Abstract

Wole Soyinka, perhaps, is one of the most misunderstood, exceedingly controversial, unnecessarily and 'fiercely individualistic', exceptionally gifted and radically ideological Nigeria in public and literary life. This rounded literary artist of Ìjègbá extraction of Ogun State is thus a living literary idol who has romanticised with all literary types (poetry, prose and most importantly drama) apart from his saturated credentials as a political activist and a confirmed social and justice crusader. Within the polemics and dialectics of drama and theatre in the Nigerian, African and global theatre markets, this article examines some salient issues in the drama and theatre of Wole Soyinka with the hope of dismantling and correcting some basic assumptions and misleading interpretations about the drama and theatre of African first Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka. It has come to the fore in this study that students, scholars and new entrants to theatre scholarship especially in 21st century found it difficult to understand Wole Soyinka and his works, creating in the process, misleading interpretations of his works. This study, therefore, concludes that consistent reading and the use of extra-textual critical materials, critical works of Wole Soyinka on Wole Soyinka and the watching of profound performances of Soyinka's plays by seasoned directors (live and past productions) will make the drama and theatre of Wole Soyinka interesting and understandable. The above, we hope; will break the disturbing misrepresentations of Wole Soyinka's drama and theatre especially in the current age of post colonial theatre.

Introduction

The tragedy of low reading culture, lack of concerted efforts at wanting to know more or a strong desire to refuse to seek for knowledge (the current toga of disillusionment even in the Nigerian academic environment) has partly led to a frequently asked but critically uninvestigated question: why is it difficult

