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ABSURDITY IN POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA: EXAMINING THE DRAMATIC CRITICISM OF OLA ROTIMI

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the portrayal of absurdity in Nigerian politics and governance through the lens of Ola Rotimi's drama. Rotimi's works serve as a poignant critique of societal issues, particularly the complexities and contradictions within Nigeria's political landscape. Through textual analysis and contextual interpretation, the study explores how Rotimi uses dramatic elements to shed light on corruption, power struggles, and the socio-political challenges faced by the country. The findings underscore Rotimi's role in exposing and dissecting the absurdities inherent in Nigerian governance.

KEYWORDS

Absurdity, politics, governance, Nigeria, Ola Rotimi, drama, socio-political critique.

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of Nigerian literature, particularly in the domain of drama, Ola Rotimi stands as a formidable voice whose works resonate deeply with the socio-political realities of his time. Central to Rotimi's thematic concerns is the exploration and critique of the absurdities embedded within Nigeria's political and governance structures. His dramatic narratives not

only reflect the tumultuous dynamics of power and authority but also serve as insightful commentaries on the complexities and contradictions inherent in Nigerian society.

Rotimi's portrayal of absurdity in politics and governance goes beyond mere theatrical

entertainment; it serves as a compelling tool for social commentary and critique. Through his plays, such as "The Gods Are Not to Blame" and "Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again," Rotimi exposes the inherent flaws and challenges within Nigeria's political landscape. These works vividly illustrate the struggles for power, the clash of ideologies, and the pervasive influence of corruption, all of which contribute to the perpetuation of absurdity in governance.

This introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive examination of how Ola Rotimi's dramatic criticism illuminates the intricacies of Nigerian politics and governance. By analyzing his works through a socio-political lens, this study aims to uncover deeper insights into the themes of absurdity and critique in Nigerian literature, particularly in the context of Rotimi's impactful contributions to the genre of drama.

METHOD

Data Collection and Selection

To examine the portrayal of absurdity in Nigerian politics and governance through Ola Rotimi's drama, a systematic approach to data collection was adopted. Primary sources included a comprehensive review and analysis of Rotimi's major dramatic works, such as "The Gods Are Not to Blame," "The Trials of Brother Jero," and "Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again." These plays were selected based on their thematic focus on power dynamics, corruption, and societal critique, which align closely with the study's objectives.

Textual Analysis and Contextual Interpretation

The methodology employed textual analysis and contextual interpretation to unravel the layers of meaning embedded in Rotimi's works. Each play was scrutinized for its portrayal of political absurdities, including exaggerated power struggles, arbitrary

decision-making processes, and the manipulation of societal norms for personal gain. The analysis also considered historical and cultural contexts to discern how Rotimi's narratives reflect and comment on real-life events and social issues prevalent in Nigeria during his time.

Thematic Coding and Comparative Study

Thematic coding was applied to categorize and analyze recurring motifs and themes related to political absurdity across Rotimi's plays. Themes such as leadership crises, societal disillusionment, and the moral decay of political institutions were systematically coded and compared. This approach facilitated a nuanced understanding of how Rotimi's dramatic criticism captures the complexities and contradictions within Nigerian governance, offering insights into the enduring challenges faced by the nation.

Historical and Theoretical Framework

The study situated Rotimi's works within a broader historical and theoretical framework of Nigerian literature and political history. It considered scholarly perspectives on postcolonialism, neocolonialism, and the impact of political upheavals on Nigerian society. By contextualizing Rotimi's critiques within these frameworks, the research aimed to elucidate how his portrayal of political absurdity serves as a lens through which broader societal issues and power dynamics can be analyzed and understood.

Interdisciplinary Approach and Ethical Considerations

An interdisciplinary approach was adopted, drawing insights from literature, political science, and cultural studies to enrich the analysis. Ethical considerations focused on maintaining academic rigor and integrity in interpreting Rotimi's works, ensuring that the study's

findings accurately reflect his intentions and contributions to Nigerian dramatic literature.

This methodological framework provides a structured approach to explore how Ola Rotimi's dramatic criticism exposes and critiques the absurdities in Nigerian politics and governance, emphasizing the depth and significance of his literary contributions.

RESULTS

Ola Rotimi's dramatic works vividly depict the absurdities entrenched within Nigerian politics and governance. Through plays like "The Gods Are Not to Blame," Rotimi critiques the arbitrary exercise of power and the tragic consequences of flawed leadership. The narratives highlight the clash between tradition and modernity, exposing the complexities of cultural identity and socio-political dynamics in postcolonial Nigeria. Rotimi's portrayal of characters like Odewale and Jero serves as allegories for societal disillusionment and the moral decay within political institutions, resonating with audiences through their tragic and satirical dimensions.

DISCUSSION

The examination of Rotimi's dramatic criticism reveals profound insights into the challenges and contradictions of Nigerian governance. His portrayal of political absurdity transcends mere entertainment, serving as a mirror to reflect societal realities and critique systemic injustices. Themes of corruption, nepotism, and the manipulation of power dynamics are recurrent in Rotimi's works, reflecting broader societal concerns and historical contexts. By juxtaposing traditional beliefs with contemporary political struggles, Rotimi challenges audiences to confront the paradoxes of Nigeria's postcolonial experience and the enduring legacy of colonialism on its governance structures.

Moreover, Rotimi's use of dramatic techniques such as irony, satire, and allegory enhances the effectiveness of his critique. These techniques not only entertain but also provoke critical reflection on the ethical implications of political decisions and the consequences of unchecked power. The complexity of his characters and their interactions further elucidates the moral ambiguities inherent in Nigerian politics, portraying individuals torn between personal ambition and societal responsibility.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Ola Rotimi's exploration of political absurdity in Nigerian governance through drama represents a significant contribution to both literature and socio-political discourse. His works continue to resonate with audiences by illuminating the systemic challenges faced by the nation and offering a critical lens through which to analyze and understand them. By engaging with themes of power, corruption, and cultural identity, Rotimi prompts audiences to question prevailing norms and envision alternative futures for Nigerian governance. As such, his legacy as a dramatist and social critic endures, challenging contemporary scholars and practitioners alike to confront and address the enduring absurdities within Nigerian politics.

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