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PRE-COLONIAL BENIN-EUROPEAN CONTACTS AS CATALYST TO THE CONSOLIDATION OF ESAN-BENIN RELATIONS

Osagie, Joseph Inegbenebho Ph.D and Dawood Omolumen Ebgefo*

Abstract

This paper undertakes an evaluation of the extent to which the pre-colonial Benin-European contact acted as catalyst to the consolidation of the inter-group relationship between Esan and Benin. The paper posits that Benin's pre-colonial social, political and economic relationship with the Europeans had both positive and negative impacts not only on her relationship with Esan but that of immediate and distant neighbours. The acquisition of arms and ammunitions from the Europeans by Benin enable her to embark on imperialistic adventure not only in Esan but what is today south central Nigeria. This adventure seriously negated the cordial relationship which she had hitherto enjoyed with her Esan neighbours - a situation which led to series of wars between them; one of which was the "Uzea [Uromi, Esan] war" (c.1502-c.1503), in which one of Benin's most renowned warrior kings, Oba Ozolua (c.1481) was killed. However, at some other time, some Esan communities rendered military assistance to Benin in some of the wars with her neighbours such as; Benin-Idah War (c.1515-c.1516) and Benin-Akure War (1823). On the other hand, Benin's trade with the Europeans brought a lot of economic benefits to her neighbours including Esan. This was due to the fact that some of the valuable merchandise, such as cloth and pepper, which Benin exchanged with the Europeans, came from Esan territory. Esan and Benin artisans and traders therefore, derived some of financial and material benefits from the trade. In all, the pre-colonial contacts between Benin and the European in spite of series hiccups at one time or the other, contributed to the consolidation of the relationship between Esan and Benin up to 1897, when Benin lost her independence to British expeditionary forces. It is expected however, that the lessons to be learnt from this paper, if properly applied by the managers of our national affairs, would further advance the social, political and economic relationship not only between Esan and Benin but between the diverse ethnic groups that made up Nigeria.

* Osagie, Joseph Inegbenebho Ph.D, Department of History & International Studies, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria, jiosagie@yahoo.com and Dawood Omolumen Ebgefo, Ph.D, Department of History & International Studies, IBB University, Lapai, Niger State, Nigeria, dawoodamirah@yahoo.com

roduction

Until recently, scholars and activists have concentrated their research effort on history and socio-economic activities in the mega states and kingdoms of Nigeria. One of the results of this development is the neglect of the history and other socio-economic activities of the mini states and their inter-relationship between them and the mega state. A case in point the pre-colonial relations and interactions between Esan and Benin kingdom. Yet there is much to be known about the mini-states especially in their contributions and sacrifices to the survival and sustenance of the mega states. It is within this context that this paper examined the pre-colonial Benin-European socio-economic interactions with the Benin kingdom and how these further developed and consolidated the then existing relationship between Esan and Benin. The objective of this paper is to redirect the attention of scholars and activists to the link between Esan and Benin and thus provide explanation to the present socio-economic and political organizations in Esan and Benin. Moreover, that the presence of Europeans increased the commercial, political and cultural interactions between Esan and Benin and that contrary to common belief, that Esan, were continually on the receiving end of Benin influence. There are evidences to suggest that to a large extent, the situation between Esan and Benin was bilateral and that it tended to be encouraged and sustained for a peaceful co-existence of both groups.

The paper is divided into five separate but related parts. The first is the introduction which is followed by the development of Benin/European interactions. Next is the dynamics of Benin/European commercial interactions and the further development and consolidation of Esan-Benin inter-group relations. Finally there is a conclusion in which the researchers noted that the relationship between Esan and Benin was dictated by historical circumstances that both peoples should harness and build upon the issues that unite them rather than falling back on primordial and divisive sentiments.

The research methodology consisted of analysis and synthesis of primary sources such as intelligence Reports on Esan and Benin mostly available at the National Archives at Ibadan and Oral interviews which were conducted with traditional rulers, elders, local historians and opinion leaders. Diverse literature such as books, journal articles, magazines and theses on Esan and Benin and some of their neighbours were also consulted.

Development of Benin-European Interactions: A Historical Perspective

Benin's association with European nations dated back to the second half of fifteenth century. This is traceable to the arrival of the Portuguese in 1482, when Benin was visited by Ruy de Sequeira.¹ He and his entourage which included some Portuguese soldiers were not allowed to reach Benin but stopped at Ughoton (Ughoton), the old port of Benin kingdom where Oba Oba Ewuare (1480-1493) sent gifts of carved wooden plates to them. The Oba was fascinated by the soldiers'

muskets and some other weapons which took along with them.² In 1485 one Jean Afonso d'Aveiro, another Portuguese, reached Benin City and was said to have caused a great sensation. On his return, he took with him tailed pepper, which he bought from Benin, the first seen in Europe. This discovery made King John II of Portugal to decide to find out more about the Benin kingdom. He was interested not only in the pepper trade, but also in ivory and how to bring the Christian religion to the people of Benin.³ With the support of the king, D'Aveiro set about introducing Christianity, which slowly flourished as churches were built in Benin. In the course of the period, the Portuguese soldiers were said to have fought on the side of Oba Esigie (1504-1550), in his war against the neighbouring territories of Idah in 1515.⁴ Apart from priests and soldiers, Portuguese traders were also part of D'Aveiro's entourage. Thus trade in ivory, palm-kernels, red pepper, Benin cloths, Esan soap and later slaves soon flourished.⁵ The Portuguese mission remained in Benin for over a century and the priests finally left in 1614. Several factors had been attributed to the general decline of Portuguese power in West Africa. Before the mid sixteenth century, the Portuguese were faced with persistent French interloping and piratical activities which had more private and official sponsors than the Portuguese. However, by the 1570's the French challenge faded and by the end of the century, a more substantial onslaught by the Dutch developed. The British, Benin's eventual conquerors, came last to the West African waters for trade in the early nineteenth century. Generally, these relationships were confined to matters of trade as attempts at evangelization were not very successful.

Studies by scholars on Portuguese interest in Benin have revealed that in the course of John Afonso d'Aveiro visit, the chief of Ughoton, Oba Okun, was persuaded by Oba Ozolua to accompany the Portuguese as his ambassador to the Court of Lisbon.⁶ Through him, the Portuguese built a fort at Ughoton (the River Port of Benin). The aim of taking the Chief of Ughoton to Portugal was to teach him the ideals of the Christian religion and Western culture. A few years later, Oba Ozolua's son and a few others were taken to Portugal to be taught Christianity and Western ideals. More Benin were subsequently taken to Portugal not only for religious purpose but to do the menial and tasking work in farm plantations and homes which the Portuguese were incapable of doing. According to Reverend Obasogie and some palace Benin scholars, 'this was the beginning of the slave trade between Benin and the Portuguese'.⁷ The subsequent intensification of the trade no doubt represented an interesting variety of local responses to European and later American demands for West African slaves, which was accompanied by unprecedented series of raids and wars that lasted up to 1897 particularly in Benin kingdom.⁸ The conditions which facilitated these wars and the specific and general expectations or ambitions of the 'perpetrators', have been classified in two broad categories viz: Political and Socio-Cultural Situations

A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE: THEATRICAL DEVICES AND AESTHETIC DEVELOPMENTS.

Ibrahim Binta Fatima, PhD*

Abstract

A study of history of English literature is a worthwhile literary supplement for readers of history and literature, that highlights the beginning and subsequent developments of English literature, stipulates the peculiarities of each developmental theory in terms of their literary and aesthetic features. This study, using the themes and forms of the various times serves as a reflection on the happenings of each age. Many studies in English literature fail to consider the historical perspectives of the texts. Thomas Hardy's *Mayor of Casterbridge* for example, can only be better understood from the deep insight into disorderly agricultural setting of the Victorian era.*

Introduction

English literature, like every other field of study is a product of history. The historical development of a discipline reveals not only its communal functional essence but also answers the essential questions of the how and why it developed. The history of English literature further enables periodic stipulations and enhances thematic placement of literary materials. This presupposes the fact that the literary critic's judgments, assessments and evaluations of events, characters, plot-constructions, settings, and other sub-elements of techniques of the English play, novel or poem would be based on the relevant historical criteria for analysis. For instance a critic needs to know the time when the material is written to be able to say the kind of material it is and what it is about. If a historical account of the past is not given, attempts to answer questions and examine contemporary English literature would be unsatisfactory and somehow irritating. A good survey of a modern English literature will therefore, have nuances of the long-existing but dynamic setting.

The characters would be exposed as personalities undergoing changing processes. And it is these gradual changes that makes such characters significant and enhance the readers understanding of the life around him/her. With the transference and adjustment of the pending historical issues into the recent political and economic posture of the society, the readers' curiosities become satisfied and their knowledge

* Ibrahim Binta Fatima, PhD, Department of English, University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria, binta1960@yahoo.com

A History of English Literature

Ibrahim Binta Fatima

becomes deepened. For example Joseph Conrad's novel *Nostromo* (1904) reveals a lot about corruption, economic devastation, political instability, the English governmental incompetence, deceit and greed. Most other literary materials, across ages in the English setting focus on the values and standards of the People's livelihood and welfare. And for this reason, ideas, principles and philosophies of scholars, at different points in time are examined and collated under identified critical periods.

English literature has developed over the years in line with the interpretation of the lives and patterns of the English people, at particular points in time. It has therefore been a living communal product chronologically harvesting and articulating history, root, identity and subsequent civilization.

Theories of Criticism

Literary theories enhance better understanding of the problems posed and the subsequent thematic issues resulting from the beginning of the plot of the literary texts. The historical context embraces the socio-cultural details in all settings. Deep critical examination and demonstration of the socio-aesthetic composition of a text has to be via a thorough reflection of the People's history. It is only from history that the suggested skills for literary writings by great scholars of English literature such as Aristotle, Lucretius Plato, Longinus Sophocles *Crato* among others can be better understood. Hence, this work examines the following theories of literature.

1. Classical Theory

In the history of English literature, the Norman Conquest period around the 16th century, serve as the beginning of English literature; when essay, memos, letters diaries and religious prayers changed into scholarship. The influence of the 'classics' like Geoffrey Chaucer, was quite great. Religious controversies led the thought about creation, however, with the English society in mind, the doctrine of the writers remained on the conduct of the individual man and the reorganization of the society for progress. Hence, the diversified English literature, history most themes for instance, were based on miracles, fate, the supernatural and morality with pure didactic essence. This initial theoretic device makes English literature at the beginning, communally relevant and functional. The realism from this observation is that history is not just a thing of the past: - it is the actions and activities of human beings within a particular setting and at a particular point in time. Like literature therefore, history is not static but dynamic. Man is a recognizable character in history and it is his experiences at various points in time that make history. History is therefore life and existence; Hi-story so to say. Each developmental theory examined here contains the way about writing human activities within a given period.

The rise and development of the English novel is dated back to the year before 1700 Arnold Kettle (1951), when the assumed initial artists like Jonathan

Swift, Samuel Richardson Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, Alexander Pope, Phillip Sydney etc. wrote from what have existed in history. They wrote adventurous stories, medieval romance and courtly fiction.

Sydney wrote *Arcadia*, Defoe wrote *Robinson Crusoe*, Pope, the man, Richardson, *Clarissa*, Fielding wrote *Tom Jones* and Swift wrote *Gullivers Travel*. The fact is that these writers use the bourgeois morality of their times. They merely have records of what men and women do without judging or evaluating their behaviour. There is no rejection of the bourgeois stratification:- all that is done is to give us picturesque stories of those in the helms of affairs or at comfort. The downtrodden is not given much recognition in such stories. That is why they used the inferior characters as minor characters. No agitations, sensations or vision for positive philosophies.

By the 17th century, in the process of development, novelists like Emily Bronte in *Wuthering Heights*, (1847) Lawrence Sterne in *Tristram Shandy* began to reveal some things into the photographic mind. The photographic technique began to harbour ironical situations, convincing conflicts, question forms, which changed men's consciousness and enabled them to demand for their human rights and freedom. This indicates that the moral theme can be better handled only through the aesthetic deposits of literary and cultural raw materials. It must be noted that earliest novels, however, lacked proper plot structuring. The plots are not organized chronologically; they contain limited number of themes. The names of the heroes are used in most cases as the title of the texts. The characters are few and the concentration is on the major round character. The contributions of the minor characters are not felt by the readers. In terms of technique, challenging choice words that can ginger the minds of the readers are not used. The story is merely on character recounts. *Clarissa* in Samuel Richardson *Clarissa* is given a full picture for the reader to see. Other aesthetic features that will enable awareness are however lacking in the novel.

From early to mid 20th century, the theories and practice of a number of theatre practitioners were formed and used. The theories by the different scholars brought forward the philosophical background of drama and theatre from the fifth century B.C. Notable at this critical time of development and recognized as the three ancient Greek giants of the classic theatre are Euripides, Sophocles and Aeschylus. Euripides wrote the *Bacchae*, *Hippolytus* among other plays. Sophocles wrote *Oedipus*, *the King*, *Antigone* etc. while popular among the theatre works of Aeschylus is *Agamemnon*, and *Trojan War*. Following other ideas, doctrines, principles and further developments, Aristotle documents what an ideal drama and theatre should be in his work titled "Poetics (384-322BC). The documentation includes the following. There is equally the problem of wrong use of tenses to indicate past and present happenings.

Drama should be a tragedy, which is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude. Secondly, it should be written embellished and standard language to give it a kind of artistic embroidery. Performance should be the core of all drama. Hence the theatre becomes an inevitable place of performance, the stage and setting for drama. This means that drama cannot be actualized and realized without theatric performance. A drama should therefore not be narrative like. The audience, which is a part of the expectation of the theatre and this pity and fear, would bring about real purgation of emotions by the audience. Aristotle technically refers to this purgation of emotion as 'Catharsis'. This is a metaphoric word that implies a purification of the mind of man from guilt? The tragic performance actualizes this. Aristotle recognizes the use of verse and the aid of song. He uses the French word 'mise en scene' to refer to the song as chorus. These two features of the theatre he believes, will aid the 'harmony' and rhythm' of the embellished language. Mere metric arrangement of words and use of choice words will enhance the full sense of understanding. 'Thought' i.e. the theme is one of the scenic accessories or equipment to be used by the dramatist to enable the character possess certain qualities on which success or failure hangs. The plot should be in chronological order, having a beginning, middle and end. The end of human life should be seen as a mode of action; an incident for therapeutic purpose. Unity of plot is not therefore the unity of the hero, for what has happened may be what can happen. It is the law of probability that should be applied into genuine drama works. Plots can be simple or complicated.

2. Neo-Classical Theory

The neo-classicists like William Shakespeare, Geoffrey Chaucer and Samuel Johnson did not believe in tragedy. They debated comedy against tragedy. Building on the premise of the classics anyway, Chaucer for instance talks about reformation in the use of language. He introduced more innovations in the use of metrical lines in drama. His works are quite more alliterative with refined prose insertions. The neo-classicists like William Shakespeare, introduced, Satiric forms and dramatic irony into his plays, *As you like it*, *King Lear*, *Hamlet* etc. He used less serious language even for his tragedies. The neo-classical writers believe in the use of simple language for easier communication with their immediate audience. Hence they introduce less serious characters like clowns, fools and jesters who in less serious moods subvert the intensity of serious subject matters/themes. Treading, on the line of the classicists, though the neo-classicists denounced bloodshed, they up held the issue of morality in the English society thereby dictate punishment such as death or banishment, for crimes as in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is a good example of a comedy where instances of dramatic ironies are used to as surprise device aiding suspense and climax in the construction of the plot. Many

large adjectives and give juxtapositions are used by the neoclassicists to give clearer pictures of situations. This is seen as borrowing a leaf from the Defoe tradition.

3. Epic Theory

An epic is a long heroic and narrative story of renowned societal personalities. For example, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Bertolt Brecht's *Good Woman of Switzuan* and *Three Penny Opera*. Other epical fore-founders are Erwin Piscato, Vladimir, Stanislavski etc. The epic theorists believe that the good deeds of man must be recorded and practiced on the theatre for any progressive society to withhold. Hence, Brecht refers to epic writing as "a short organum of the theatre". The epic writers belief in realism and opine that the theatre should be brought to the common people's reach. They therefore for this reason introduce street theatre in which they more about on performance. Epic theatre became referred to as popular theatre. The purpose of epic is to effect a change in the societal statuesque and it exposes to the human mind the happenings around man, thereby creating awareness for reaction. Epic theatre is very musical as it involves very many choruses for foregrounding purposes. Epic works have in them dialectal trend. And since the characters perform and interact on road, on the streets with the audience, faster communication enhanced through the satiric molest device incorporated into it. See Bertolt Brecht's *Three Penny Opera*.

Lane cooper et al (1913) explains how Aristotle enumerates the principles of epic composition in his praise of Homer (c.750 B.C-A.D). The principles of the construction of epic theory involved performance, action, characterization, meter, narration and improbabilities in plot building. The plot having a beginning, middle and end each with its own beauty (aesthetic decorations) so as to arouse in us its own characteristic form of pleasure. In Homer's legend of Ilium for example, and according to cooper (1913), war is not dealt beginning of the epic story. By way of episodes, Homer inserts a number of incidents such as the multiplicity of plot subparts. The hero character is a suffering one. There may be reversals on discoveries, there may be not.

No matter the length of composition of an epic, the metrical innovations, diction, refined prose and intellectual processes must be perfect to give room for narrative nature of epic. The epic writer represents a number of incidents as simultaneous occurrences but not in uniformity because it is assumed that, the uniformity of bulky experiences will destroy the audiences' interest to go further. Most epic poetry being heroic are found in hexameter verses as a result of large experience of the hero.

Epic poetry makes use of strange words and metaphors. Their forms have to be out of the ordinary in line with their historical bases. The iambic and trochaic measures express life and action and are appropriate for a dancing mood. The epic poet says as much as he can in his own personal utterances and is therefore not an

imitative writer. The epic writer does not paint pictures of situations but explain circumstances in illogical or irrational ways. This is because the epic themes are not what we see before our eyes but are reported history of what certain character, giants are said to have done in the past. Hence, actions that are really possible seem incredible despite their striking details.

Other philosophies of Epic composition are revealed more critical statements by Cooper (1913) from which the following key principles of writing epic can be deduced.

- i. The unity of effect,
- ii. Rejection of the use of allegory
- iii. The brevity of the plot construction
- iv. The appeal to emotions
- v. The ideality of the subject matter
- vi. Didactic effect
- vii Epigrammatic

However, other arguments and debates on these later values of epic writing reexamines the long narrative nature of epics and concluded that an epic writing cannot have the brevity of plot construction if its full content is to be realized, besides the appeal to emotions require the response from the reading guidance. That is to say that emotional appeal cannot be qualified or measured.

4. Victorian Theory

The writers that wrote during the reign of queen Victoria of English are the Victorian theorists. They include Thomas Hardy in *Tess of the Duber'ville* and *The Mayor of Caster bridge*.

The writers under this group such as Alfred Tennyson and Samuel Johnson opine that the issue of morality should not be brought into literature because man's downfall is caused by man and not by the unseen supernatural forces. During the Victorian period, the European setting for instance was faced with lack of utilization of the fertile green agricultural land and this resulted into famine and starvation of the citizenry. Hence, Lucien Goldman (1975) is perhaps right to have defined to history as "sort of memorial achievements and endeavours of a people or a community. Hence history serves as a cardinal roadmap for the writing of a pack of tricks on the changing nature and patterns of man's life." This is why trends of events remain based on the historical contents of the society. Knowledge, developments and consciousness therefore work hand in hand and history stands as an imperative for many disciplines and not for literature alone. Let us reflect on any subject that does not require some historical composition. Hardy, Johnson and others in the Victorian Europe, told the stories of the happenings at this crucial development period of the English people.

They use literature as a means of information and a reflective media of the existing historical nature of the fertile land underutilized. Writings at this period, visualize the individual man having a cumulative effect on the societal growth and stability. Members of the agrarian society became famished. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the protagonist, Tess was ruined through the practices of the society. Values and standards were not upheld during the Victorian era. Tess is an individual character in the society in relation to other beings. She is being exposed by other characters and on gaining experience and coming to terms with reality, she progresses from being innocent to a corrupt female character.

Victorian literature reveal in totality the British Empire, hence involve pro-imperialist, themes, and engaged with forms of opposition to the empire. These themes include "imperial historiography, mimicry representations of characters and events, race, orientation, and valuable cultural resources serving as primary materials" Bratlinger (2009). The impact of Great British Empire on the literary creativity of this time cannot be under estimated. The innovations and practices of the works of art at these periods is to criticize and correct the English anomalies and deviations from the existing tradition in the process of expansion and development. Suvir Kaul (2009) refers to this as "a redefinition of the writers' sense of home, nation and the world in its better form as presented by George Elliot in *Middlemarch*, Joseph Conrad in *Nostramo* and Charlotte Bronte in *Jane Eyre* etc.

5. Romantic Theory

The Romantic writers believe that anything that appeals to man's intellectual mind cannot be considered a complete art unless it exists in the world of the beautiful; the refined and the aesthetic. Aesthetics are those values that serve as the forms appeal to the reader's interest. The romantics opine that the thematic basis of a piece if material should be based on the functional essence of nature which has given us so much endowment. This theory negates the satiric mode of the epic theatre for particular example for to them, satire cannot create any sense of appeal to the readers' minds and the emotional response from the audience cannot also be achieved through the satiric mode moralistic writings too cannot appeal to one's sense of beauty. Among the romantics William Wordsworth, John Keats, Robert Browning, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge etc. the totality of the impression created by a piece of work is what should be the aim of a writer. The romantic goes ahead to use his creative power to achieve this crucial effect. Let us examine for example. In *a Balcony, that is my last Duchess* by Robert Browning, *To Autumn* by John Keats, *Ode to a Nightingale*, Coleridge's *'Kubla Khan, Ancient Mariners*, Wordsworth's *'The solitary Reaper*. In each of these poems, emphasis is on the style. The poets use free verse system with simplicity of language use. They select common everyday diction, they meditate and introduce varieties of rhythms and melodies to the reader

to be sensitive to the reviving nature like grass, river, sun, air, flowers moon birds' sand etc. The romantics write in quiet places appraise aforementioned natural objects and sensitize man to the usefulness of these free natural gifts used by man but not valued. The romantics revive the past and compare it with the present. Their themes are therefore solitary themes with sad tones of melancholy. This is more pronounced in the literary works of Edgar Allan Poe who has been labeled as both a Victorian and Romantic Writer.

6. Naturalist Movement

Writers that fall under this category of theorists include Henrik Ibsen, George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, T.S. Eliot, Jonathan Swift, August Strindberg among others.

A pointer at the historical base of writings at every theoretical period in time is the fact that Henrik Ibsen for an initial focus in this theoretical category was fascinated by "his parents' strange incestuous marriage". Hence, he treats this historical experience of incestuous relationships in many of his plays notably, his masterpiece *Rosmersholm*, *Peer Gynt*, he was Norwegian folktales (his home stories). He introduced new ideas into drama and used the term "drama of ideas" to explain what he means. He concentrates on household setting of the individuals and brings out controversial issues which he uses as crucial components of actions produced in his plays. He presents the society as the antagonist of the individual. In *An Enemy of the people* (1882), he opines that the ideas of the individual who are seen as "ignorant and sheep like" are often more right than that of the mass people of the society. Hence, Ibsen as a naturalist challenges the so called nobility of the English society in terms of its conservativeness and present so called liberalism of the civilized time. The naturalists put their heroes as the physicians of their societies. They use numerous ironies to justify this fact they emphasis on realism and truth. For this reason, the naturalists are referred to as the avant-garde writers of the nineteenth century. They have become part of the history of theatre. Ibsen introduced self sacrifice and personal alienation from society to the drama of his time which became an applaud forum for social criticism.

The naturalist writings are opened to varieties of interpretations since the works involve serious critical dialogue among the characters presented in the plays. The plays therefore ginger the reader's intellectual interpretation. August Strindberg also presented an elusive character in *Miss Julie* in absolute realism. In this work, Strindberg exposes the unreliability of life and one's immediate society most especially. Eric Bentley (1962) wrote Strindberg "lived out all the phases of modern militancy and modern defeatism and second to embrace everything from Juvenile radicalism to a final mystical mix of science and occultism" The naturalists use a lot of symbolism to buttress their themes of the individual in reality against the societal idealism other naturalists are Tennessee

Williams, Edward Albee, Maxim Gorky, John Osborne Eugene O'Neil. They felt that true naturalism' was "a psychological battle of brains; two people who hate each other in the immediate moment and strive to drive the other to doom. This is the kind of picture presented in the naturalist movement.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia Josh R (c) 2001 by Jalic Inc.) refers to Naturalism as "a literary movement or tendency from the 1880s to 1940s that used detailed realism to suggest that social conditions, heredity and environment has inescapable force in shaping or moulding human character. It was a mainly

an unorganized literary movement that sought to depict believable everyday reality as opposed to movements like Romanticism or surrealism, in which subjects are highly symbolic, idealistic or even supernatural.

The concept of realism in Naturalism was an initial development in the mid-19th century France by Emile Zola (1840-1902) whose tenets are basically derived from Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859). But in addition to Darwin's theory of evolution which stipulates the underlying forces like the environment and heredity as influential factors for man's actions, the naturalists advance further by making their realistic subject matters somewhat scientifically analyzed with the use of sordid and frank dictions leading to constant tragic endings. The plot construction of the naturalists is geared toward envisaged doom for the hero even if not in bloodshed like the classicists. The Naturalists believe in the harshness of life which remains perpetually uncomfortable as a result of individual vices implanted by environment and hereditary factors. Hence, the Naturalists dwell on subject matters like poverty, racism, prejudice, corruption, diseases, filth, prostitution, sexuality. This is a great divergence from misery stories told, acted and recited by earlier theorist before renaissance. Another quality of Naturalism is the writer's detachment of the story by being objective. In terms of characterization, the Naturalists character is a determined individual ready to break the yoke of streamlined stereotyped pattern of existence. This makes the Naturalist character influence to be in control of his/her life instead of being supplanted by nature, fate or the unseen supernatural. Realism is therefore the opposite of idealism. In earlier theories, characters lives are predetermined by fate based on certain environmental factors and the character can do nothing about it. He/she does not struggle to avert the fate but thread on the fate and fall into tragedy. The Naturalist character has been able to prove that fate can be averted through human struggle and corrective changes. Actions are no longer based on beliefs Naturalism point of view is emphatically realized from the logics in the schematization of the plots and character construction of generation. A poor adventurer from a poor heredity does no longer see his poverty background.

7. New Historicism

This theory was propounded and coined by Stephen Greenblatt (1963) as an interpretive practice that began in early period of enlightenment and modernism. Some refer to this theory as cultural materialism i.e. 'the production and analysis of all form of signs in writing, within the actual mean and conditions of the production' (Raymond Williams (1963) the historical composition of a writing taken into cognizance in the writing of a text rather than the formalizing method of influences of previous theoretical studies, structuralism' and deconstruction. The other theoretical types seem to place less emphasis on the history and social context of their literary texts but the new historicism fuses the non-literary parts of the text into its literary content and produces a better social other this fact differentiates new historicism from traditional historicism in literary studies as new historicism make necessary possible, historical value judgments

In new historicism textual history of the past is embedded, synthesized in the present historical text. traditional historicism merely records the past on the text without merging present occurrence. i.e. it explores tradition this does not allow for the fundamental challenges introduced by new historicism the practice of new historicism is to delve into the cultural condition and fish out how these historical deposits reveal the economic and social realities of the present there by represent existing social norm in non-normative behaviour. The purpose is to legitimate history itself take for example peasant revolt in a text. It is a demand for an alternative treatment, an adjustment or change of power. For this reason Claude Lévi-Strauss (1966) refers to the history of new Historicism as a cultural self regulating system Louis Montrose (1989) refers to New Historicism as "the textuality of history and the historicity of texts" concepts such as Inheritance, marriage, Dynasty, political power Domesticity, population, and racial oppression serve as thematic frameworks for the New historicist writer, as a hindrance for or determinant of her/she financial rise. The aesthetic frameworks of a Naturalist writer brings out the specific qualities of such characters that could serve as hereditary limits but diversifies the character traits though for instance, the streams of consciousness technique which enables the character to think of a change in his/her social woes. Characters in the earlier literary theories like the classicists and neo classicists lack the investigation ability. They rather remain under his cultural dictates. A situation where human characters remain guided by their social environment by some things they do not fully understand but predicted must happen. The line of thinking came into literary device by the Naturalists who systematized, ready used and scientifically penetrated the environmental and hereditary establishments to synthesize possible areas of change. This done through the inner workings of the minds of the characters; the introduction of psychology into human reasoning in literature for inspirational purposes. Characters became subjected to various stimuli in order for them to be able to react to situations and challenge existing placements.

By so doing, negative social environmental conditions are negated for reality sake. This presupposes the fact that the ethnical world as it were, whether good or bad, cannot be applicable to the real world of the present existence without changes. Instead of living in an atmosphere of uncertainty, with the fear of the unseen and the supernatural, the Naturalist character is allowed to react to circumstances. Hence, we observe in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* written by Stephen Crane (1871-1900) that Maggie the hero portrayed in object poverty goes on street to acquire hefty sum of money as a routine venture. From the point of view of Maggie's psyche, her actions are realistically battles against her environment, and heredity. Her agenda was to show the unforgiving nature of life which led to her prostitution.

However, in as much as crane remains sentimental to the environmental expectations as seen in his narrations and other literary productions in the text, he remained objective and clinical and still allows Maggie to fall from grace to grass despite her determination.

8. Post-Colonial Theory

The post colonial criticism investigates the relationships between colonizers and colonized after the colonization period. The post colonial writer yet uses the historical conditions of the contents of colonization to observe the post colonized state. There is therefore an imaginative marginal point to be geographically rived at; a center for the white (the colonizer) and the black (the colonized) dichotomy for the post colonial criticism to be subjective. The post colonial thoughts are therefore on divisions and contrasts between West and East, the civilized and the uncivilized, the first and the third worlds. It aims at the achievements of the two different settings after the colonization process, thereby bringing new thoughts for development into the minds of the colonized and the colonizer. Division of the parts as in the historical recounts and references is the major target of the post colonial criticism. What is crucial to the post colonial discourse is the new life of the people; their raw culture, its increasing globalization and the way forward toward reestablishment and stability.

9. Theory of Feminism

Many refer to the feminist theory as gender criticism since it involves gender/sexual categories and the female, identities (the girl-children sisters and women). Feminist gender theory began in Western Europe during the 1960s out of political feminism of the so called, "second wave" which had its practical emphasis on women identity and the representation of women in culture and politics. Elaine Showalter (1979) refers to the movement as a "gynocriticism". Gynocriticism is derived from the theories and techniques of *post structuralism and psychoanalysis* as a female struggle for a reconstruction of gender in the social realm.

The feminist gender theory challenges the paradigms and intellectual premises of western thought of the female person being relegated to the background as subordinates at the domestic, social economic and political domains of the society. Feminist gender writers began to present the female character in alternative positions of men with the aim of changing the social order that makes the male character domineering and chauvinistic.

The biological distinction between man and women are seen as sexual categories produced by the culture and as such social reality should be readdressed. Feminist thought is based on the assumption all over that the philosophical tradition subjugates and structures the limits of the female in negation to the Lordship position prepared for the male. All spheres of activities in the societies are male dominated. Women advocate for a culture where the voice of the women can be heard and the stereotyped position given her can be reverted and the male-female status can be equalized.

10. Principles of Formalism

Formalism as the name implies dwells on the forms and devices applied for the beauty of a work of art. The formalist believes that literature should be based on forms and not to be too thematically bored. Oscar Wilde (1998) asserts: The secret of a work of art is in the form. Give me the form of an art work and the secret of it will be revealed.

How the work of art is aesthetically presented is the concern of the formalist writer. The context is not of importance to the formalist form is the content that give the context its desired meaning. For instance, the formalist will aim at how the plot device, narrative technique and other aesthetic strategies function in a given text to aid the thematic comprehension. The formalist popular adage "make the stories stonier" is therefore an appropriate expression for their notion of literariness and aestheticism. The formalist like the Roman Jakobson and Victor Shklovsky view literature as an aesthetic object independent of historical context. They make use of formal structures like paradox, ambiguity, irony, foregrounding, metaphor, Simile, symbolism, anecdote, allegory etc. through these, the formalists works are believed to yield humanizing influence on readers. Some aesthetic forms are employed to deliberately beautify the literary material to retain the readers interest and showcase traditional and historical values the term aesthetics has been defined in various ways. However, the most relevant definition for our purpose is the one by Richard, Ogden and Wood, (1946):

Aesthetics is that which is conducive to synaesthetic equilibrium, that is, a particular and harmonious kind of response in the audience brought about by the stimulus of a work of art.

This explains the delivery and response mode implanted in plays and the communication purpose of the writer. However, all the various definitions of aesthetics known, centre on beauty and the value of this beauty. For instance John Hosper (1969) also opines:

An object is aesthetic only when it holds the audience or the reader's attention. Consequently aesthetic parts include the linguistic, stylistic and the dramatic stimuli that brings about a kind of instant response in the audience, during and after performance. Aesthetics includes the general physics of the lives of people.

Aesthetics as a component of performance is the scientific study of beauty and sometimes its opposite (ugliness). It is a discipline on its own concerned with the general and theoretical studies of beauty in works of arts. Efforts to understand it, explain it as forms of evaluation appraisal critique of literary materials.

11. Marxism and Post-Modernism

The modernist theory can be dated back to Karl Marx (1844) part of his observation is that: The genus in human society is economic under the economic structure, there are two things: the mode of material production and social relationship between the different groups. The economic structure forms the foundation that dictates the law political structures and the ideology of that society. And this is called superstructure.

The Marxist focuses on the presentation of class conflicts between two different categories of people on different status; the poor and the rich, the haves and the have not's the bourgeois and the downtrodden. The Marxist use existing historical and traditional materials techniques for their literary analysis and use other aesthetic derivations by the way. This theory introduces the economic production into literature and the people's culture with a revolutionary commitment. The Marxists, through the exposition of a certain thematic aspects of greed, corruption, political power economic savagery agricultural depression, extortions, deceit by the capitalists in the helms of affairs, those at the grass root are made to see happenings around them for which they have been unaware. The creation of awareness in them leads to the challenge of the authority, riots and violence and the demand for effectual change in status quo. The aim of the Marxist is to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. And this can be achieved only through bloodshed teaching to a collapse of the government to be restructured by the oppressed. Examples of modernists writers are William Golding's in *'Lord of the Flies'*, Charles Dickens' in *Animal Farm*, James Joyce's *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*. These texts are highly innovative and fall into the category of new centralism.

Marxism is a weapon for class struggle and class stratification is therefore an instrument of power against bourgeoisie's prejudices. It is a theory entrusted to

the proletariat which has a wider horizon than the bourgeoisie. Its aim is to change the society and look into the future. Marxist theory is an ideological vision propounded by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Their philosophical perception of society hinged on class dichotomy in socio-economic situation of life.

Karl Marx sees a capitalist society as basically a class society where the oppression of a class by another is Engel's came up with an economic theory that demands that "the value of a commodity be determined by the amount of labor required for its manufacture". They also discovered that "the value of the commodities purchasable by the workers' wages is less than the value of the commodities he produces". That means the workers is exploited while the bourgeoisie flourishes in exploitation.

The Marxism philosophy or theory is therefore a term that covers works influenced by both Karl Marx and Marxism is a loose term describing criticism based on socialists and dialectic theories. According to the Marxists, even literature itself is a social institution and has a specific ideological functions based on the background and the ideology of the author. Terry Eagleton (1976) defines Marxist criticism this way:

Marxism criticism is not merely 'a sociology of literature' concerned how novels get published and whether they mention the working class. Its aim is to explain the literary work more carefully; and his means sensitive attention to its forms, styles and meanings as well as the product of a particular history'

Revolution should be observed as a tool for social change in a stratified and a classified society. The elements or features of Marxists as a theory should be critically understood. A text is needed to analyze revolution as a sub-theme in Marxism. The revolutionary voices in the Marxist plays are used to illustrate the major themes and issues raised by the Marxist scholars and writers. Types of revolutions should be identified as: Proletarian Revolution and Social Revolution. The Post Modernists texts remain related to their context of production as the Marxist. In them a close relationship between cultural philosophies and the regulation of these philosophies are re-established. This clearly points at the fact that the concept of morality in early theories cannot be totally rejected by the modernist since art establishes the motion of aesthetic values from this notion. Art gives the expression of its nature; its audience so to say. Literature has henceforth been used as political propaganda, economic eye point and social rehabilitation forum.

12. Structuralism, Post- Structuralism, and Deconstruction

Structuralism, stipulates a set of objective criteria for analysis and can be seen as an extension of formalism since as the word structuralism implies, its criteria is the structure rather than the historical content.

The idea in structuralism was collated by Swiss Ferdinand De Saussure who observed that all structural elements in a work of art should be pointers at the signified (what it refers to). The underlying structures of signification are what make meaning possible.

The philosopher Roland Barthes (1985) divided structuralism and post structuralism and refers to post structuralism as "Deconstruction" semiotics therefore is applicable here. Post structuralism is the study of uncertainty. The signified are realistic cultural concepts. The post structuralism and Deconstruction argues that there could be a lot of reference without a final signifier. For this fact, Sigmund Freud (1954) stresses the need, for post structuralism to be extended to Deconstruction where "the self is a decent trace left by our encounter with signs, visual symbols, paralinguistic language etc.

Conclusion

Many developmental literary times have made the growth of literature a reality and sustenance for man. Part of the findings of this study is that all theoretical literary theories use historical context one way or the other as their source materials. The various schools of thought on literary writings are developmental stages improving on the previous literary theories however became shifting areas devoid of total cultural acceptance but characterized by some debates, arguments philosophies and ideas that can make writing better for consumption and communication. All theories carve weapons of defense for the individual within the communal set-up the cultural compositions and historical deposits began to be challenged for a progressive and more stable existence.

The moment we ask ourselves about why, when and how a literary text material is written, we would be making the right historical placement of such materials. Our thinking emphatically, is in terms of history. The rise and development of the genres of literature are better understood through their historical context and contents. History is therefore a thing of the past reoccurring in the present; relevant to life. This is perhaps all arts are archetypal representations of events and persons. And by archetype we mean reoccurrences of settings, themes, characters, events that reflect in modern times, with some kind of their types in the past. These reoccurrences can be in symbols or imageries. Thus, Carl Jung (1954) refers to archetypes as a priori determinant of individual experiences" conclusively Archetypes are what give the historical content in literary works their universal relativity and functional; essence. They enhance the stability and progress of a visionary society since the historical contents such as myths, legend and epics are put with the changing socio-economic and in political order.

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ECONOMIC IMPACT OF BRITISH COLONIAL RULE ON BENIN WOMEN

Oghogho Oriakhi & Ikonnaya Okomba Kalu*

Abstract

Several studies have been carried out on the impact of colonial rule on African societies including Nigeria. Benin has been the subject of some of the studies, being one of the major communities that were of economic importance to the colonisers. The main objective of this paper is to unveil the specific effects that colonial had on Benin women vis-a-vis their roles in the pre-colonial era Benin society. However, the submission of this paper is how British colonial rule transformed the economic role of the Benin woman and her contributions to her society.

Introduction

Africa before the coming of the European was considered a dark continent. Thus, European colonial rules Africa sought to influence every sphere of the people's life that was erroneously considered as timid and barbaric. The above description of Africans could be understood on the premise that the Whites were ignorant of the people they studied and moreso, they needed to justify their rule. Indeed, many of them concluded that they were bringing the first light of civilization to a benighted people lost in primitive barbarity. As it is elsewhere opined, they were nevertheless fully convinced that the imposition of their rule was of unquestionable benefits to the Africans.¹

The European foothold became solidified in Benin by the 19th century, and all the political and administrative structures necessary for the effective exploitation of the human and material resource of the conquered territory were put in place. This introduced a new philosophy to the people their indigenous institutions were suppressed but not completely eliminated.

The establishment of colonial rule followed the abolition of the slave trade and its replacement by legitimate trade. The intrusion of the Whites into Benin land and the consequent introduction of colonial rule in 1901 were quite strange to the people, especially, in view of the forced employed during the conquest.²

* Oghogho Oriakhi, Department of History and International Studies, University of Benin, Benin City, oghogho.oriakhi@uniben.edu & Ikonnaya Okomba Kalu, Department of History and International Studies, University of Benin, Benin City, ikonnaya.kalu@uniben.edu