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## **PRESERVING CULTURE THROUGH NEW ARTISTIC FORMS: THE CASE OF DURO LADIPO'S FOLK ORIC THEATRE**

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### **Abstract**

This study has asserted that art does not only exist for the mere titillation of the senses, but rather, it performs a functional role, its main objective being to affect man. The popular tradition of drama in West Africa by the traveling theatre troupes, and which they are still dominating through the television and film media, is one of the new permanent forms through which the mythical repertory is transfused with new life and vigour and stored for posterity. These forms also serve as propaganda machineries through which traditional cultural practices are disseminated to the world at large. This study examines some of Duro Ladipo's folkloric plays and how they disseminate a message of moral re-armament and cultural renaissance in 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria. The African mythical repertoires, which are important manifestations of the African culture, have been used as source materials for these plays. Newer artistic forms such as writing and television production have been used to bring the myths alive and make them available to a wider audience. Relevant themes presented in the plays include patriotism, the womanist ideal as extant in the traditional African society, the African moralistic ideal revealed through the presentation of religion as an indispensable part of the Yoruba existence, etc. Duro Ladipo's plays have sought to catch up with the dynamics of Nigerian life and have attempted to establish the relevance of the mythical repertory to the Nigerian condition.

### **Introduction**

In the early societies, religion, through its doctrines embodied in the myths and rituals, served as a force of socialization and social control. This is achieved through informing the people about social structure and expected social behaviour. The gods are portrayed as ever present on the periphery of human affairs to ensure compliance with moral, social, and religious laws and meting out punitive measures against rebels and defaulters. However, the pressures of modern life have eroded the moral and religious sensibilities of people, thereby culminating in a situation of anomie. The situation can however be rectified with a re-introduction of cultural and moral values. The African mythical repertory becomes useful in this respect. There is a need for a moral and cultural re-armament to prevent a total collapse of the modern world into a state of anomie worse than that experienced by Europe during the dark ages. Concerning the African myths, which are important manifestations of the African culture, Osofisan sounds a note of warning. According to him, the total disappearance of the mythical repertory is only a matter of time, if conscious efforts are not made by succeeding generations to adapt such myths into *new artistic forms* – forms that would be more permanent and relevant to modern society (Osofisan 1973: 137). The New Artistic Forms in this regard can be seen as art forms that can be used to present the mythical repertoire in a more permanent and less ephemeral structure. Such forms include the written/published form and recordings (radio, film, television, etc.). Such new forms also make the dissemination of knowledge about the mythical repertory easier. Books, tapes and film reels can be distributed widely, both locally and internationally. Also, people who would never attend live performances of the traditional presentations for various reasons would have the opportunity of enjoying such recorded versions.

The popular tradition of drama in West Africa by the traveling theatre troupes, and which they are still dominating through the television and film media, is one of the novel and permanent forms which Osofisan is advocating. Through live performances, play texts, film and television recordings, the mythical repertory is transfused with new life and vigour and stored for posterity. These forms also serve as propaganda machineries through which traditional cultural practices are disseminated to the world at large. Such plays also succeed in illustrating and simplifying the message of the myth and showing how relevant they are to modern life. According to Adediji,

Folkloricism... explains why and how the contemporary African creative artist relates traditional beliefs, folkways and mores to present consciousness. It is seen as a lifeline of man in his dynamic relationship with the element of being and becoming (Adediji 1985: 54).

This emphasizes the fact that the dramatist is definitely a product of his historical background as well as his current socio-political milieu. The elements and materials from his background constitute the pivot on which his work is built.

In the early days of the traveling theatre in Nigeria, the focus of many of the troupes was on the utilization of traditional folklores, consequently; they became known as folk-theatres. The idioms of their performance resemble those which are observable during traditional performances such as festivals and story-telling sessions. The myths and legends which they borrowed from are those which have grown out of the fertile cultural humus of their society. Examples of the folk theatre plays include *Moremi* and *Oba M'oro* by Duro Ladipo. According to Osofisan,

This theatre... has all the ingredients of the epic stage, with much colour, and movement and agitation... the idioms of the grandiose; we see the splendour of courts... with the brouhaha of courtiers, courtesans and musicians... the towering figure of the hero himself. The playwright takes the figures of extant legends or myths and brings them on stage, mostly to revive a tradition, identity with a glorious past and reclaim a heritage (Osofisan 1973: 354-355).

The playwright brings together traditional and cultural ideas, packaging them through the medium of African aesthetic ideals—these comprise materials which bring out the creative genius of the people. They include:

The verbal arts (proverbs, riddles, folktales, epigrams, etc) the fine arts (carving, painting, etc). The performing arts (dancing, singing, drumming and dramatizations). These are the basis of socialization and social control. But the theatre utilizes all three categories in synthesis (Adediji 1969: 49).

Indeed, this synthesis is manifest in the works of the folk theatre artists, both on stage and on screen. Every aspect of life in the African society is reflected within the ambience of this folk theatre performance.

### Duro Ladipo's Folk Theatre

Duro Ladipo (1931- 1978) was one of the most prolific theatre artists that Nigeria has ever produced. His forte was the promotion of the Yoruba culture. He was born into the Christian family of a catechist, but from a very early age, he cultivated the habit of following masquerades and being a very attentive member of the audience at various festival performances. This imbued him with a determination to promote the beauty of Yoruba culture and this became his focus when he turned out to be a theatre artist. His plays include, among others, *Oba Koso*, *Oba M'oro*, *Moremi*, *Ajagun Nla*, *Obatala*, *Oba W'aja* and *Oluweri*. All these plays can be described as historical plays. Ladipo cited the following as the reasons for his plays:

I wrote these plays for the following crucial reasons: 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 splendour of Yoruba as a language never become things of the past... (Ogunbiyi 1981: 340).

His primary source of information was Samuel Johnson's significant book, *The History of the Yorubas*. After reading the history from this book, Duro Ladipo would then go to the towns and villages where the stories occurred to ascertain the veracity or otherwise of such stories and also, to source for more information. After all these, he would then interpret the stories artistically and creatively in writing his plays.

Duro Ladipo traveled widely in his short career. In 1964, he took his group to the Berlin Festival in Germany and his play won the first position at the festival. In 1965, they also performed at the Commonwealth festival in Britain, also touring in that year, Brazil, Australia and Germany. In 1973, he was at the Festival Mondial in France, in 1974, he performed at the Yoruba Festival in Zurich, in 1975, he toured Brazil again, in 1976, he performed at the Theatre Festival in the United States of America, and in 1977 he performed in Paris. He also won much acclaim both at home and abroad. He became the first African to bag the National Arts Trophy in Western Germany. He also won the Model for Outstanding Performance for *Oba Koso* at the Commonwealth Festival. At home, the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1965 awarded him the national honour, Member of the Order of the Niger (MON) in recognition of his outstanding effort in promoting Nigerian culture. In 1962, he opened a cultural center at *Osogbo* named *Mbari - Mbayo*. There, his first full-length play, *Oba M'oro*, was premiered. It became a very important center for cultural performances. The hallmark of Ladipo's theatre can be described as "the dexterous use of traditional musical instruments, chants and dance steps" (Ogunbiyi 1981: 339). Before his death, Duro Ladipo took up a research appointment at the Institute of African studies, at the University of Ibadan. There, he engaged in research work on Yoruba mythologies and history. He also began to explore avenues to record his works on celluloid. However, this was not to materialize before his demise in 1978. His only venture into cinematography was his participation in two feature films titled *Ajani Ogun* (the first Yoruba film) by Afrocult films and *Ija Ominira*, an adaptation of Bayo Faleti's *Omo Olokun Esin* directed by renowned director, Ola Balogun. Some of his plays were however recorded by the first television station in Africa, the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV), Ibadan, later known as Nigerian Television Authority, Ibadan. Columbia Broadcasting Corporation (CBS) also recorded *Oba Koso* during Ladipo's U.S tour, and the production still enjoys quarterly revivals (Ogunbiyi 1981: 352).

### Moremi

One example of a play braided from the tradition and culture of the African universe is *Moremi* by Duro Ladipo. The play is based on the popular Ife Moremi myth. The setting of the play is pre-colonial Ile-Ife. Moremi (Ladipo 1971), the Queen of late king Oranmiyan has just been conferred with a chieftancy title in appreciation of her outstanding achievements as a trader and because of her concern for the welfare of the generality of the Ife people. The town is however going through a rough time with incessant attacks from the Igbo (a tribe from the eastern part of Nigeria) raiders. This embattled city bears an uncanny resemblance to modern day Nigeria with her diverse socio-political problems, especially the excessive incidence of armed violence. Moremi heroically surrenders herself to be captured by the Igbo invaders in order to discover the secret behind their success in war. She marries the Igbo king and tricks the diviner, Dibia, into giving her the Igbo's secret. She returns to Ife and helps her people to overcome the invaders.

## Theme

The overriding theme of the play is Patriotism. This is shown in Moremi's desire for the continued existence of Ife as a polity. She risks her life to discover the secrets of the enemies so that Ife would be able to triumph over them. This theme is of utmost relevance to modern African society, which is bedeviled by mercenaries of all sorts, and they are only interested in what they can milk from the country without giving anything in return. Moremi's selfless patriotism is a direct challenge.

Another important theme in the play is the celebration of *womanhood*, putting paid to the fallacious misconception that the African woman is nothing but a second class citizen in society, a slave to her husband and nothing better than a baby-making machine. We see Moremi as a force to be reckoned with on the economic front as she mobilizes the women to ensure better sales in the market. Also, we see the celebration of *motherhood* in her desire to ensure that the *children* of Ife are no longer taken into captivity. To achieve this, she selflessly gives up her only son for the good of the general populace. This emphasizes the fact that the womanist ideal is not a strange phenomenon in the traditional African society.

The play also stresses the human dependence upon the gods in their daily activities. Moremi and her women pray to the gods of the market for good sales, Moremi depends on Esinmirin (the river goddess) for guidance and protection. Also, *Oba Igbo* (The Igbo King) depends on his *Dibia* (Diviner) to reveal the future and what the gods are saying. So, the gods are presented as an indispensable part of the Yoruba existence.

## Characterization

The most outstanding character in the play is Moremi. On an extra-textual level, Moremi is a Yoruba goddess but on the textual level, we see her apotheosis, the process of her becoming a goddess. In the Yoruba setting, when great heroes and heroines die, they become deified so that their great deeds would continuously be remembered and appreciated. In the television version, the difference between Moremi and all other women in the play is first established through her costumes and hair-do. She is an *Olori* (Queen) and the head of Ife Women, so she dresses in brightly coloured traditional woven materials, while the other women wear more subdued colours. On formal occasions, she wears a head-tie while the other women's head remain bare. When she leaves her hair uncovered, she has an elaborate hair-do, woven with beads while the other women's hair-do is the simple traditional *suku*.

The most striking element of her character is her intense patriotism. The first sign of this is seen when the Ooni and his chiefs are looking for a woman to be the head of the women. The choice unanimously falls on Moremi because of her past activities in the town. Her crowning efforts at patriotism are reflected in her willingness to go to Igboland as a slave, consenting to marry the Igbo king whom she does not love and finally, giving her only son, Oluorogbo as a sacrifice for the redemption of Ife. She puts aside personal feelings and inconveniences to save the town of Ile-Ife from extinction.

Moremi is also portrayed as a courageous woman who shows her toughness in the face of male inertia. The Ooni and his chiefs were wining and dining while the first Igbo attack in the play occurs. Though, Moremi is a new chief, she entertains no fear or timidity in the presence of the Ooni and senior chiefs. She storms into the palace and with heavy sarcasm and annoyance shouts:

You are dancing, you are happy and drinking. War has taken all Ife into captivity...The world is in ruins, in your presence and you say it is getting better. (p.12)

She does not fear that she may be relieved of her post. Her courage is also seen in her daring to wait for the Igbo invaders. They ask her how she dares to wait for them, but she expresses her defiance by insulting them, not caring whether she would be killed. When she tells the state council about her plan, she admits that death is a possibility on her mission, but remains undaunted. She says,

When I go, don't mourn for me. Take care of my only son, Oluorogbo. This is enough for me, even if I do not return. Whoever leaves a child on earth is the one that is the real parent. (p.16)

Her only concern is for her son to be properly taken care of. Moremi is also described as one of the few "old women" who has spiritual authority to speak with the goddess. We however have every cause to believe that Moremi is not an old woman. It is a combination of her youth and beauty that attracts Oba Igbo to her. So, hers must be an exceptional case of spiritual ability and courage. When she goes to give her son to Esinmirin, all the other town people do not have the courage to go near the river, they stand a long way off. Moremi loves to praise herself as a courageous woman. She chants her own praise many times in the play, "I, Moremi Ajaroro (lover of war). I prepare for war when others prepare for dance". This shows her courageous nature and her love for intrigues. Moremi is also well versed in the art of blackmail. She blackmails the Ooni and chiefs to support her suicidal but patriotic mission. She asks them what the difference between a man and a woman is and that if they as men have failed to protect Ife, she as a woman should be given a chance to try (pp. 16-17). She also blackmails the Dibia when, like the biblical Portipha she threatens to accuse him of attempted rape if he refuses to give her the Igbo's magic formula.

Moremi possesses a very strong sense of purpose, which manifests in her attitude that 'the end justifies the means'. During the Edi festival (the festival in honour of Moremi) in Ile-Ife in 1986, a court attendant (Emese) described Moremi as one who overcomes crisis through the use of her female organ (Afolabi 1983: 125). This results from Moremi's use of female wiles and caprices in seducing Oba Igbo and extracting valuable information from him. She also behaves in a way quite alien for an African mother in giving her only child as a sacrifice. When she was going to Igbo-land, she boasts that she has a child that will keep her memory alive, but a short while later, she gives up the same son to Esinmirin. This shows that when she makes up her mind about an issue, she allows nothing to serve as a stumbling block. Her sacrificial attitude, reflected in the forfeiture of virtue and her child, proves her undying love for her people. Consequently as far as the people are concerned, these are the attributes of a god, and she is deified so that she would continue taking care of them even after leaving the terrestrial plane.

Another important character in the play is the Dibia. Dibia is a slave carried away from Ife and who became a trusted Ifa priest for the Igbo chieftain. He even takes an Igbo name because Dibia is an Igbo word meaning 'Diviner'. He is a very faithful servitor who refuses to take the various opportunities that must have been open to him to escape and flee back to Ife. He is the custodian of all Igbo secrets and he wouldn't have divulged these secrets to Moremi if not for the fear of his master's displeasure at an allegation of attempting to rape his beloved wife. He eventually kills himself because he feels that death is better than disgrace.

Dibia is a faithful Ifa priest and this is manifest in his disclosure of what the future holds for Igbo people at the expense of his own native Ife. He warns Oba Igbo not to marry Moremi because the gods are against it. He laments in the long run, "Oh my king... what a pity, you disregard my advice and make me an instrument of your fall" (p. 38). There is however an incongruity in the portrayal of the character of Dibia. One wonders how somebody who has refused to desert his master would take the bribe of a mere bead, no matter how expensive this is, when Moremi offers it so that he would tell him the name of the last leaf necessary for the concoction that would give the Ife people victory over the Igbo. This is merely an attempt at giving a dog a bad name so as to hang it. In the television

version, Dibia actually asks for the bribe. This is not in keeping with the faithfulness earlier exhibited. This however, can be equated with current happenings on the Nigerian scene where bribery is the order of the day. Corruption is at such a high level that it has captured even international attention. The moral here is that bribery is evil and destructive. The discrepancy in the character of the Dibia in the television version might not be unconnected with the fact that the recording was made at a time when the 'bribery' problem was becoming a major concern in the Nigerian society.

In the play text, Dibia kills himself after Moremi's escape. This, according to Yoruba custom is a noble way out of a mess and so; Dibia ends his life as a honourable man. But in the television version, Moremi tries the efficacy of the magic he taught her upon him to ensure that she has not been tricked. This leads to Dibia's death. So, the textual Dibia (without the bead bribe) is a noble and faithful character, while the television version is a crook that sells his master's confidence and one feels he deserves the kind of fate that terminates his life. In both versions, his faithfulness to the gods in transmitting their message to Oba Igbo is evident. However, divulging their secrets to Moremi whether willingly or otherwise annoys the gods who allow him to die.

The character of Oba Igbo shows the effect of disobedience to the commands of the gods. He remains successful as long as he allows Dibia to be his eye and ears into the spirit world. His downfall only comes about due to his disobedience to the voice of the gods. His men's incessant and successful raids on Ife show that the gods smiled on him in his war faring career. His downfall shows the evil of moral laxity, the irresponsibility of allowing oneself to be carried away by the lust for beauty at the expense of one's duty. At the end of the day, Oba Igbo ends up ignominiously by being captured by his former inferiors in war. He lives out the rest of his days being under tutelage in an obscure quarter in Ife. This wouldn't have happened if he hadn't succumbed to the lust of the flesh. This implies that for a man to be successful, he must possess a sound respect for the moral laws of the society as constituted by the gods. Oba Igbo laments, "Moremi has betrayed me, but it is my fault, I disobeyed my gods" (p.52). This shows that the fault does not belong to the gods, but lies squarely at the feet of the undisciplined human.

### Techniques of the Play

Ladipo makes use of two main media- the stage and the electronic medium of television. Not surprisingly, his plays appear more convincing on television because of the cinematic devices utilized. Natural locations like forests, rivers, etc. lend credence to the television version of the plays, which the stage version lacks. All his plays were originally written for the stage. However, with the opportunity for audiovisual recording came the opportunity to execute the action in life-like locales. This enhanced the verisimilitude of the productions. Sound and visual effects were utilized to the utmost, e.g., thunder and lightning effects were effectively utilized in the *Oba Koso* production. However, whether presented on stage or screen, there are some basic elements that remain constant in Ladipo's plays and they shall be discussed forthwith.

One technique that runs through most of Ladipo's plays is the festival structure. The plays always open on a festive note- dancing and singing. There is a general mood of celebration in which everyone is involved. This is reminiscent of traditional African festivals. *Moremi* opens with Ife songs and praises chants of the Ooni; finally proceeding to Moremi songs. This technique is utilized to induce audience participation as obtains in live festival performances. This festival atmosphere is fostered through the use of poetic chants in praise of God, gods, heroes and heroines. It tells of their special attributes, spectacular achievements, likes, dislikes, and a lot of other laudable characteristics. Through such chants, the audiences become acquainted with such characters and are impressed or repulsed by their characteristics, depending on what the ultimate goal of the dramatist may be.

The music in the play performs various functions. It establishes the mood of the play whether *light-hearted*, as in the maidens' Moremi dance after Moremi commands that nobody should be sad after Oluorogbo's sacrifice, or *sad*, as in the scene where Moremi departs for Igbo-land, or *worship* as in the scene after Oluorogbo is sacrificed to Esinmirin. War drums are also used to herald the arrival of the Igbo, and also, during battle scenes. Music thus helps to create the appropriate dramatic and theatrical signals necessary for the various scenes. The second function of music is seen in its use as dialogue in the plays. Beier and Graham-White have described the structural progression of Ladipo's performances as lyrical rather than dramatic (Jeyifo 1981: 16). This is a result of influence from two traditions-the festival drama, where there are no spoken dialogue' Ladipo was exposed to this tradition as he followed masquerade about in his early life. The other tradition is the church cantatas and the native air opera comprised mainly of lyrical narratives. The native air opera according to Ebun Clark is a type of performance where the performers stand on the stage, swaying from side to side, singing continuously to the accompaniment of drums or the organ, resembling the tradition of the English Oratorio (Clark 1979: 7). These influences are reflected in Ladipo's religious and historical drama, which have been described as operas or musical plays. This is due to his minimal use of the spoken dialogue.

We also witness the visual spectacle of swirling movement and extravagant coloration manifest in the dance, rich costumes of traditional woven clothes and beads worn by actors and actresses. Ladipo utilized the popular Agbor dancers in the premier production of *Moremi* at Osogbo in 1966. According to a critic, this performance

... enriched his drama with new dances, new rhythms and new tunes. ... Only a very skillful composer could blend the Agbor calabash horn with Igbin drums of Ife ... the first performance ... was carried off with great aplomb (A Critic 1966: 157).

This blend of the Eastern (Agbor calabash horn) and the Western (Igbin drums of Ife) parts of Nigeria is in the true spirit of nationalism. Nigeria is a pluralistic society and this plurality sparks off controversy in every sphere of national life. However, through cultural motifs inherent in performances, a fusion of culture, and a new understanding, which breed tribal tolerance is engendered. This symbiosis has seen Nigeria through a deadly civil war, and despite all odds, Nigeria today still remains one polity of diverse ethnic groups. Cultural performances continue to be used as fora for emphasizing this unity in diversity.

Costumes are also used to create appropriate effects, both on the natural and symbolic levels. This is utilized to the utmost in the television version. For instance, the Oba Igbo wears the traditional costume of the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria- George wrapper round his waist and draped over one shoulder, he sports a feathered headpiece; he also carries an ostrich feather fan to show his royal status. The Igbo warriors wear raffia outfits. Some of them are masked while others paint their faces with chalk and charcoal. This is to instill terror into the hearts of the opponents and make them believe they are spirit beings. The Dibia is dressed in Orunmila's favorite colour- the indigo- dark traditional woven material. This is only a large wrapper, which goes over one shoulder and leaves the other bare. He wears the floppy eared traditional cap, (*abeti aja*). This emphasizes the ascetic life of the true Ifa priest. According to Ogundeji,

The colour of the garment and the simplicity of the dressing are meta-symbolic of the deep knowledge, sagacity and simplicity of Orunmila (Ogundeji 1982: 13).

Other paraphernalia of office that sets him out as a diviner are his *opele*, the divining chain, and his *apo ifa*, the bag in which he keeps other accoutrements of his trade. At the beginning of the play, Oluorogbo wears a *dansiki* (jumper), and a pair of trousers made of high quality woven traditional materials. He also holds a horsetail, these signifies that he is a high- born prince. However, in the



sacrifice scene, he wears a skirt made of 'tie and die' material. This is to show how he has been humble from his princely status to a mere servant for the goddess.

### The 'Deus Ex Machina' Factor

Boughedir has worked out some principal tendencies of the African film, one of which is the cultural tendency. Films in this category seek a cultural re-evaluation. According to him,

In these films, it is not a question of idealizing folklore but of restoring with the greatest authenticity the way of life and thought of the African popular masses. Nor is it a question of producing this description with complacency or paternalism. Among the film makers of this tendency, the critique of ill-fated tradition is often accompanied by a truly accurate gauging of the actual aspirations of these popular masses (Ekwuazi 1991: 58).

These sentiments are clearly evident in many Nigerian films. Examples are, *Efunsetan Aniwura*, *Aiye*, *Jaiyesinmi*, *Ija-Ominira* and a host of others. These films contribute their own quota in helping to maintain the cultural and moral equilibrium within the society. It endeavours to raise collective consciousness in the areas of social, cultural, economic and political problems (Okome 1993: 71).

In the early days of the European theatre, there was a phenomenon known as the *deus ex machina* whereby technical contraptions would be used to bring, as it were, a 'god' from heaven to solve knotty problems that may defy human solutions. This, in a way, is escapism. The best approach in a society like ours is a theatre that proffers empirical solutions. However, the folk theatre and film seem to thrive on the metaphysical, with the implication that human beings are mere pawns in the hands of supernatural beings without any power to determine their destiny in life. For example, in *Aye* and *Jaiyesinmi*, the battle is between the evil forces, the witches, and the benevolent power of the priest, Osetura. Pragmatic solutions cannot be arrived at in such a setting where the battle has to be fought and won on the extra-terrestrial level. If the 'metaphysical' continues to be the major preoccupation of our folk theatre and film, it will definitely not be to an advantage, rather, it will be to the detriment of our folk theatre and its ideological evaluation. According to Osundare,

One of the flaws the problem of presenting the supernatural cinematographically... is (the) pandering to the clamorous but misguided call for the exotic in culture, a facile glamorization of our disappearing past. The Nigerian film has yet to catch up with the dynamics of Nigerian life and establish its relevance to the Nigerian condition (Okome 1993: 72).

This indeed is a failing of the folk theatre tradition. It is not enough to show elements of our tradition and happenings of a glorious or inglorious past. There is a need to relate such to present society. Culture is dynamic. Any attempt to maintain an ambiguous, romantic and moribund romanticism and rigidity, especially in the area of portrayal of metaphysical materials will result in nothing but monotony and ridiculous predictability. Modern society will not forever be bamboozled by 'deus ex machina' resolutions, hence the need to offer of suggestions that will move society forward.

The area of signification of the folk theatre and film cover the whole vista of culture- the thematic concern, dialogue, action, music, costumes, make-up, etc. However, according to Okome, the folk theatre and cinema scene is yet to be associated with any firm socio-political ideology, which can be utilized for the re-orientation of its target audience. He however stresses that this does not mean that these works are totally devoid of any ideological base. He supports this assertion with the fact that the simple moralistic stories of *Ayanmo* and *Jaiyesinmi*, both made by Hubert Ogunde, carry significant levels of ideological awareness. Be that as it may, the ideological content should not be

merely perfunctory; there should be a concerted purpose and design to it. The emphasis should not be on mere escapist and illusionist entertainment.

### Conclusion

This study has asserted that art does not only exist for the mere titillation of the senses, but rather, it performs a functional role, its main objective being to affect man. This corroborates Ermash's position that art's purpose is not just to accumulate observation, but rather, art cognizes life with intent of influencing man (Uji 1989: 437). When art influences a man, it also affects society because society is made up of individuals. Goodlad has expressed that there are three principal features of the sociological theme in drama. Firstly, the plays inform the audience about social structure and moral rules, which are necessary for the smooth running of the society. Also, such plays express emotions through social arguments on issues where individual desires clash with the good of the society. Lastly, conflicts present in real life are presented in the plays so that the audience may learn from the way such conflicts are resolved (Goodlad 1971: 179). We shall conclude by reiterating Sekou Toure's position that, there is no place outside of the fight for the artist or for the intellectual who is both himself concerned with and completely at one with the people in the great battle of Africa and suffering humanity (Sekou 1986). Art and the artist will continue to be indispensably relevant in the preservation of our culture and our society.

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