Drama and Theatre as a synergy for Education Development in Nigeria Schools.

By

Zaccheaus, O.J
Department of Theatre Arts
College of Education,
Ikere Ekiti, Nigeria.
Akeredoluo50@gmail.com
&
Olorunsomo, Adeniyi Temitope
Department of Theatre Arts
College of Education,
Ikere Ekiti, Nigeria.
olorunsomoadeniyi@gmail.com

Abstract

Drama, as applied to theatre, embraces all works composed for performance. It is a make belief phenomenon by which it becomes possible for an imitation to present and for the audience to receive an explanatory image of those physical and conflicts which govern and control human conduct. So, drama may be defined as a story presented through the speeches of diverse characters in such a way that these characters may by impersonated by actors, including words spoken or chanted before an audience. Meanwhile, method applied is exploratory. The paper then looks at how drama and theatre challenges the scope of educational development in Nigerian schools. The conclusion then is that there is a way when there is a will for the school development.

Keywords: Drama, Theatre, Education, Nigeria Schools.

Introduction

Drama and Theatre is as old as man itself. It relevance in all facet of discipline cannot be overlook. Though the word *Drama* and *Theatre* can be used interchangeably but has diverse meaning. A situation with creative activities, involving a lot of actions can be referred to as Drama. While Theatre is more extensive than drama when an audience and the stage is taken into consideration. It is worthwhile to note that when drama involves a wider audience as well as scripts and an elaborate stage, then drama becomes Theatre. According to Umukoro, Drama and Education are possibly the two oldest phenomena in the history of mankind. In its purest and most natural state. Drama is an integral aspect of individual self-expression and social communication, while education is a life-long process of attempting to come to terms with the realities of the human society.

With the above definition liking drama and education to be an old phenomena in man history and in modern times, drama and theatre has continued to grow in influence and significance, performing the traditional functions of information, entertainment and education, in addition to its effective use for political propaganda and ideological persecution. This paper shall therefore focuses on the challenges of drama and theatre on educational development in Nigerian schools.

Drama

Drama refers to the genre of literature in which a story is told and celebrated mainly by action and dialogue involving actors and actresses. Whne human beings come together, they interact and influence one another through speech and action. A situation where creative activity, involving a lot of doing, is present can be referred to as Drama. Therefore, drama includes actions, performed by an individual, as well as a limited number of observers and space, with the intention of conveying a series of messages relevant to the action performed. The arts of drama as a process involves

the originating of forms relating to action, language, characters of a story and a play.

Theatre

The theatre, as an English word according to Babatope (1998) connotes a number of things; a room where medical operations are performed, a place for acting plays, the profession of acting playmaking and everything connected with it. Conceptually, theatre involves practicability, which is the utmost necessity for performance. Theatre therefore, is not just performing but performing for an audience. According to Yinka Adedeji *for the purpose of effective performance theatre presses science and technology into services*. The above statement is as a result of the emergence of modern technology which equally affects theatre as it enhances good performance. With the above, technical theatre must have emerge as a result of necessary needs to provide certain impressions like that of moonlight, sun light, rain, sound of thunder and lightning etc. posed a lot of problems and which created certain limitation on their activities.

With or without these effects, theatre is the presentation of life before a live audience. No theatrical activity can take place without an audience. In most cases, in Afolabi`s word (2003) the size of an audience determines the success or failure of a theatrical programme because the audience size naturally influences the output of the performers.

Education

Education consists essentially in the initiation of others into a public world picked out by the language and concepts of a people and structured by rules governing their purposes and interactions with each other. (R.S. Peters; 26). He went further to assert that education is wider and more profound a concept than training. The latter is often used in a specialized form of the word, whereas, education is no longer compatible with any narrowly conceived enterprises (54).

Gordon Vallins opined his own definition towards what amount to drama/theatre. The general purpose of education is to foster the growth of what is individual in each human being at the same time harmonizing the individuality thus seduced with organic unity of the social group to which the individual belongs.

Drama/Theatre for Educational Development

It may seem strange that drama should be considered to be of any use at all other than as relaxation and entertainment. But it is being used, and abused, in many other and varied ways. Theatre has a unique role to play in an attempt to fulfill the ultimate goal of education which is to achieve a blend between self-awareness and social integration between self-discovery and practical knowledge of life. Drama romances with education entails a well-blended collaboration between principles and objectives of drama and education.

As drama is concerned with action, with doing and seeing and so, teaching is not short of processing of action and communication. The modern day teacher has a lot to learn from the actor in the application of the peripatetic and Socratic principles.

Why then do we need drama/theatre for development among the Nigerian schools? Answer to this question will require brief discussion of some elements of the theatre. These include:

Drama/Theatre is essential for education development among Nigerian schools as it can be used to develop the students and prepare them for the challenges of life which is the main educational objective. To theatre, this is called play making.

Drama and Theatre in education helps in building up a highly organized column of intelligent personality out of students. Theatre played another role in the improvement of communication. It also helps in the

development of the personality of the actor in appropriate modulation of his voice, speech, head, face, limbs, torso and intellect all these combine to lend vigour to the actor's self-expression and creative textual interpretation. Theatre equally plays the role of building a sensitive, strategic, personal organization, an acute sense of punctuality, high degree of dedication and responsibility into a would be student who will eventually fix in comfortability into the society thereby fulfilling the educational objectives of the society.

Drama is one of the best ways to get learners, who ordinarily would be passive in the normal classroom setting, to be fully involved in the teaching/learning process so as to cause a change in the behavior of such learners.

True education is synonymous with total education. That is, the discovery and fostering of the child's natural talents and skills with the ultimate objective of cultivating the full personality. The minds and body comprising the soul, the spirit and the intellect are the things that constitute a whole man. A lopsided educational policy that feeds the mind at the expense of the body vice-versa can only result in stunted physical growth or retarded psychological development.

Education can only be total when the development of all the human senses of sight, hearing, feeling, testing and smelling in addition to the common faculties of perception and imagination had been developed to the highest attainable level.

Conclusion

Theatre develops learners emotionally. This is to explain that in the process of watching or taking part in theatre, man either directly or indirectly learns emotional control, he learns to observe, to tolerate and to consider others. Theatre offers man an opportunity to develop his creative ability. This

implies pushing ones imagination through the boundaries of the present and projecting into the future. Theatre promotes and refines the power of speech and bring about effective communication. Thus theatre develops the standard of speech in learner in terms of audibility, brevity and clarity of expression.

Moreover, theatre promotes self-awareness and diminish negative self-consciousness according to Umukoro (2003).

Having known this, Nigerian schools agitating for rapid growth and development cannot do without drama and theatre as it uses the whole personality of the child for its development in the cognitive, psychomotor and the affective domain of education. It is through doing and struggling and experiencing that children become educated in the sense that the child is able to develop himself through creating, discovering and experiencing as a learning process. Therefore, the educative process accompanied by the technique involving the use of drama is termed Drama in Education and it is essential for effective teaching/learning process in (Nigeria) schools.

Drama as a Pedagogical Tool

It is often said that "action speaks louder than voice". This is no less true in the teaching profession especially when an indigenous teacher can adopt drama as a device in the process of making his learners exhibit a change in behavior. The use of drama in teaching and learning process is that it gives room for "a wide range of experience" (Nzeribe 2000). Having note that, it is worthy to discuss drama as a pedagogical tools using Twingle - Twangle A Twynning Tayle by Femi Osofisan.

> A man wanted to know
> which is better – war or peace,
> the knife or the spoon, blood
> or water?

And the Oracle replied:
have you patience?
Yes, said the man. Apart
from poverty, the only other thing
that I have in abundance is patience.
Well, in that case,
said the Oracle
this is your answer:
I am going to give you twins!

The prologue of the play introduces the audience/reader into the conflicting society especially the black society. Osofisan`s Twingle – Twangle, A Twynning Tayle uses dream motif to portray the ideological struggles of an emergent black society. Representing the society as twin from the same parent on adventure. Taye seems to be weak physically but full of wisdom while Kehinde is energetic, warrior and always alert. The two are to find out who survives best "Ereko or Etido".

Individual difference make the two go their separate ways in search of greener pasture. Settling in different settlement, Taye and Kehinde adopts different method of ruling. One takes to dancing and peace making and the other believe in war. Until they have to face each other. Taye adopts the friendly "Ore wa" method to unite his citizens and empower them while Kehinde utilizes force and war which creates fear among his citizens.

Kehinde says: "All this dancing and dancing… We dance too much, we black people. We are always dancing and that is why we continue to be weak…. We want no more dancers on our streets, only soldiers, only fighters!

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