

LITERARY ARTIST AS A TEACHER: THE CASE OF GODDY ONYEKAONWU

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the literary responsibilities that earn a literary artist a teacher using Onyekaaonwu's Oku Uzu Daa Ihube. Literary artist are these who write with creative or artistic intent. The role of literary artist as a teacher is to re – educate his society about the past and the present. Because of poor reading culture, many people do not know that literature responds to the reality of human experience and broadens the readers' knowledge about other field of discipline apart from storytelling. This is a survey research. To carry this study effectively, the researchers studied series of related literature about literary artist, what is teaching and who is a teacher. It was observed that literary artists are not only storytellers but are teachers of history, religion, mathematics, political science as seen in Onyekaaonwu's Oku Uzu Daa Ibube. It is hoped that this research will be useful to students in all discipline as well as to the future literary artists.

Keywords: Literary Responsibilities, Literary Artist, Teacher, Goddy Onyekaaonwu, Oku Uzu Daa Ihube.

Introduction

Literature is a means of self-expression, a mirror which reflects the societal ills, values and transition. It has become an integral part of any society and one of the trusted avenues through which a society could be well appraised and judgement passed, all geared towards making the given society more viable and productive. Literature exists for the sake of society which provides it with materials at all time. Society in so many ways is indebted to literature for its growth and transformation whether this is acknowledged or not. There is hardly any society without its own literature; neither will one encounter literature without a society.

Duvignand (1971:67)says literature “not just as reflection; rather it is a projection of the people's aspiration for the future”. According to Maduakor (1986:487) in Asika (2012:184-185) “literature has become an important means of understanding and interpreting human beings and aspects of society such as politics, religion, economics, social conflicts, class struggle and human condition through the medium of language”. The role of literature in society can never be over-emphasized neither can its definition be exhausted. Writers play

significant roles in the re-education, re-orientation and re-direction of their societies. Writers are the soul of a society and reflect the hard socio-political as well as cultural and economic realities of the people.

Literature is about experience of men and their concept of life in any society. It is the collection of books of high merit containing works which are products of creative use of imagination in a particular language. Literature could be books fictions, drama and poetry. Egudu (1979:1) in Obi (2012:176-177) says that literature “is a mode of expression”. According to Obi (2006:487) literature “is an important means of understanding and interpreting human beings and aspects of society such as politics, religion, economics, social conflicts, class struggle and human conditions through the medium of language”

Literature may represent life; a social truth where human beings are regarded as objects of literary creation. Literary artists are part and parcel of the society with specific social status, social recognition and reward. A literary artist writes for his society. Literature raises some social questions as regards the culture of people and their customs, standards, styles, symbols and myths. Literature may reproduce life as well as help in molding life. People in the society may be taught to pattern their lives as seen in the struggle by fictional characters to free themselves from oppression. Literature may be used as social weapon to reveal some outlines of history as can be seen in some Igbo historical drama or poetry.

Who is a Literary Artist?

Literary writing is an artistic form like sculpture, painting and music. It has its references points in human lives. It is a process of producing work of literature. Literary writing among other things centre on lives, hatred, jealousy, greed, justice, pride, devotion vanity ,pity, fear, success and future. According to Duruaku (2006:7) in Oguamalam (2014:393) literary writing “is a form of self-expression in written form. It is of us, evolving and emanating from imagination. Literary writing is a special kind of writing actualized through the use of the imagination”. Marksberry (1963:39) says “literary writing at the need for keeping records of significant experiences, the need to free individual expression which contributes to mental and physical health. In all, literary writing is considered to be any writing, fiction, poetry or non-fiction, that goes outside the bounds of normal professional journalistic, academic and technical forms of literature. Literary writing involves literary criticism.

Literary criticism is the act of interpreting literature. It analysis, interprets and evaluates work of literature. Most often, one may find criticism in the form of an essay. Criticism may also examine an author’s body of work. Besides, in depth book review may also be considered as criticism.

Peck and Coyle (1984:165) in Nnyigide (2012:116) says that literary criticism “has traditionally been regarded as the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of literary work. It does not mean finding fault with”.

Criticism as an academic activity expresses reader’s sense of what is happening in a text. In addition, literary criticism is the assessment and interpretation of literary works. It is a discipline concerned with philosophical descriptive, evaluative inquiries about literature, including what literature is, does and what is required from a writer. Also, literary criticism

is a view or opinion on what a particular written work means. It is a discourse about literature includes description, analysis, interpretation as well as evaluation of literary work. It is often informed by literary theory which is the philosophical discussion of its aim and goal.

Similarly, Abcarian and Klotz (1975:5), say that Literary criticism has to do with the value of literature, its goodness or badness, not with the history of literature. This is because value judgement tends to be highly subjective, lively and sometimes even acrimonious, debates among literary critics accompany their diverse responses to and judgements of the same work. The judgements literary critics make about a story or poem are bound to reflect their own cherished values. The truth of a work of art is, obviously, very different from the truth of a mathematical formula.

According to Ezejideaku's (1996:1) literary artist or creative writer "is a man of many parts. He is at one and the same time a visionary, a reformer, a political or socio-cultural watchdog, a satirist, a praise singer, a chronicler of events, teacher and the people's spokesman". That is to say that the literary artist performs all these functions above as he is part and parcel of his society.

Literary artist, by nature of his vacation, is often considered eccentric, primarily because his personal perception of society and reality is usually different from that of his other members of his society. He more often than not, uses the third eye to see what has eluded the sight of other members of his society or what they are yet to see; consequently, he arouses and gears their consciousness towards such issues. The literary artists by virtue of their natural endowment manipulates language in various ways to create something out of nothing.

According to Ikeokwu (2002:167) in Obi (2014:535) the literary artist "regards himself as duty bound to sensitize his people on historical or socio-cultural issues, created or recreated, formulated or reformulated, through his spokesman ship". His role becomes ironic if he fails to make his audience react according to issues or he ends up only talking to himself. The literary artist employs certain devices like ridicule or satire, caricature or praising or applauding good virtues to warn, build, reflect, to bring to view his point etc. The literary artist is a teacher that teaches the entire members of his society. He is the mirror through which the members of his society see themselves as they are. According to Bamidele (2003:28) "The playwrights sometimes see their role as that of a political leader, a leader of opinion or that of a moralist and even a scientist with the effective power of a seer, a priest and a hero". They function as heralds of social and moral betterment.

Bamidele (2003:37) in Oguamalam (2014:394) commenting on Soyinka's Opera Wonyosi says the playwright should expose, reflect, indeed magnify the decadent rotten underbelly of a society that has lost its direction". When no change occurs, the playwright is frustrated and his art is of no other value outside mere entertainment. Iheakaram (2001:3) maintains that a literary writer talks of having influence in society by way of reformation through his writings.

Who is a Teacher?

Teaching according to Onwuka (1981) is an attempt to help someone to acquire or change an attitude, knowledge, skills or appreciation. Henderson and Lenirer (1973) in Obih (2016:103) noted that teaching is, "manipulating the variables of instruction to produce intended changes

in learner behavior.” For Smith (1987) in Onyemerkenkeya (2002), three approaches to teaching were proposed as: descriptive teaching, teaching as success, teaching as an intentional activity and teaching as a normative behavior.

- . Descriptive Teaching, according to Smith gives information to show someone how to do something; give lesson in a subject and imparting knowledge or skills.

- . Teaching as success, signifies the idea or fact that learning is implicated. In other words, teaching is suggested by such expression as teaching-learning essence, signifies the fact that both teaching and learning are interrelated / interwoven and cannot be separated. Practically, it is believed that teaching will facilitate learning or result in learning itself.

- . Teaching as intentional activity, expects that it will result in learning. To teach successfully, a teacher should not teach anyhow but must pay close attention to what is going on, make some diagnosis and try to change the learner’s behavior. It is intentional because it aims at inducing learning, exhibiting certain behavior(s) at the end.

A lot of definitions of a teacher have been given by different people specially to suit their discourse. A teacher is one whose duty is to teach or facilitate the learning process. Teachers guide and nurture their pupils or students until a desirable outcome takes place (which is what is known as learning). They impart knowledge and shape the minds of students. Agwu(2015) defines a professional teacher as the one possessing knowledge and methods that could bring about change and he/she must possess the willingness and ability to change human behavior.

According to Senge (2000:26) in Agwu&Iduma (2016:40-41) defines a teacher “as a person that transmits knowledge that will aid learners in building, identifying and acquiring skills that will equip them for life’s challenges”. It is through learning especially in the education setting that students are prepared for solving the problems of the society of which in Africa, the major ones are: illiteracy, poverty and diseases.

Bubb (2010) defines a teacher “as having knowledge, skills, and special trainings in teaching, explaining and educating”. The teacher is a channel through which behavioral changes are facilitated in the cognitive, psychomotor and the affective domains. It is only the professional teacher that can effectively and efficiently effect this change in these three areas.

However, literary artist as a teacher is the person who uses literature to impart knowledge, mold and reform characters, inculcate discipline and the right value as well as equip an individual for a lifelong learning. Literary artist as a teacher also aims at bringing about a desirable outcome not only in the life of an individual but the society at large. He teaches the society about culture, mathematics, language and history using literature.

Societal Expectations of Teachers

When members of society speak of good teachers, it means that a teacher must be a model of faith and piety and should have a fairly good knowledge. A teacher should consider it his duty to educate and train his students and should feel responsible for them. He should feel that his students have been entrusted to him and he should avoid any breach of the trust the society has reposed in him. He should be a sociable person with his roots in the society. People should take him as their well-wisher and a sincere friend who cares for their children. It should be ascertained at all costs that a candidate for this profession has a natural acumen and aptitude for teaching.

He should actively participate in the social activities in a positive way. Ikpeazu (2016:88) says teacher “should know the art of teaching with a deep insight into psychology. He should always deal with the students and member of the society in a just manner” should not lose his self-control on mistakes his students may commit, and instead he should respect their feelings and ego, and should try to understand and resolve their difficulties with grace while keeping his cool. He should be able to smile in the face of bitter criticism on his opinions, and should not feel ashamed or humiliated to accept his mistakes wholeheartedly.

He should be proud of his culture, his national dress and his national language. He should be a missionary, a mentor, a reformer and a guide besides being a dedicated tutor. In other words, he should be a perfect teacher and a perfect educator in the process of character building of the society.

Synopsis of the Text *Oku Uzu Daa Ibube* By Goddy Onyekaonwu (2014)

Oku Uzu Daa Ibube is an affectionate description of the culture of Igbo people told from author's view point as a member of Igbo tribe. The customs and religion of Igbo people were describe with sympathy and simplicity creating a sense of nostalgia as seen by the writer from within. The book is loaded with memorable characters, conflicts and dialogue is though-provoking, captivating, informative and simply brilliant. The Igbo culture and the impact of colonialism in Igboland are some of the elements that make the book one of the best political dramas in Igboland. The coming of the white men in Igboland abolished many culture and tradition of Igbo people. The story was set in Isuebe a community in Igboland. People were no longer throwing twins to the evil forest. People that were suffering from swollen stomach, leg were spared by the British government. It was Oduuga who sent the god of thunder Amadioha to wreak havoc on the lives and properties of Isuebe community. To placate the gods and prevent further destruction, people carried the Mgbogo's twins and Ekweribe that was suffering from swollen stomach to the evil forest to die. The colonial government rescued the victims and took them to hospital where there are receiving medical attention. Court messengers were sent to arrest the culprits. For daring to interrupt and interrogate them during the meeting, Ukaoha in anger cut off two messengers' heads. Ukaoha was arrested and sentenced to death, the chief priest got five years jail sentence. Eze Omaliko, was dethroned, estranged, humiliated and was sent exiled to Portugal with his pregnant wife for twenty years.

Maazi Ugonna, a convert was a spy, an informant to the British government. However, immediately Eze Omaliko, was dethroned and sent exiled to Portugal, Ugonna was made Eze by the British government. Coincidentally, Ugonna's daughter Mma and Ezenwa. Omaliko's son born in exile, met at Portugal and decided to marry. On coming home for the introductory ceremony to Mma's parents, Ezenwa's identity was revealed to Maazi Ugonna who plotted to kill him. Okwudiwa (Ugonna's servant) told Ezenwa, Maazi Ugonna's plan to kill him, Ezenwa escaped and secretly returned to Portugal. In spite of the opposition, he married Mma in Portugal.

During the election of new Eze Isuebe, Ezenwa returned and made his identity known to Isuebe people. The people voted for Ezenwa and he won the election. Ezenwa was crowned the Ebu 11 of Isuebe.

Literary Artist A Teacher of Other Discipline

Literary artist as teacher of Customs/Social Studies

Using Igbo language, Onyekaonwu teaches Igbo people's customs and social studies to the readers. The story told in the text, the activities and thought pattern of the characters are informed by a direct and factual presentation of the Igbo people's culture. For the purpose of analysis, I shall extract some major activities which clearly buttress the point. Customs such as taboos like rejection of twins and throwing to the evil forest to die anybody with swollen stomach and leg, and purification rites, were seen in these pages of *Oku Uzu Daa Ibube*.

Buru Ekweribe toroafu tufuo, gaakporoMgbogo na umu ejima ya tufuo

Throw Ekweribe with swollen stomach away to the evil forest

Also throw away Mgbogo and her twins away. Onyekaonwu (2014:64)

Mgbogo nwunye gi mere aru, a ga-achupu ya, o nochaa afo ato,

o lota, agbaa oriko tupu olotakwa n' ulo gi

Your wife Mgbogo did an abominable act, she will be chased out the community for three years, after three years she will come back to purify herself before returning to your house.

Literary Artist A Teacher of Religion

Onyekaonwu teaches religion and how Igbo people cherished their traditional religion in the past. Igbo people believed in a god which controls them and saves them in time of trouble. With the arrival of white man comes the introduction of a new and strange religion which is different from paganism that the Igbo people are used to. The Igbo black charm and amulet do not affect Christianity adversely and the notion of Jesu Kristi also negates everything the people believe in. They begin to learn to speak a different language English and this leads to culture and religion clash between the white colonialist and Igbo people. During that time, most people joined the white men and their religion, while others insist in paganism and pray to their god as fellows as seen in *Oku Uzu Daa Ibube*.

Amadioha ala lsuebu new anyi bia taa oji

Mmuo anyi kporo aha na ndi akpoghi aha bia taa oji

Land of lsuebu that owns us come and eat kolanut

Amadioha god of lsuebu come and eat kola nut

Spirits both mentioned and unmentioned come and eat kolanut (Onyekaonwu (2014:56). People who joined white men religion say their prayer as fellows;

Ka anyi kpee ekpere

Chineke nna

Chineke Okpara

Chineke muonso

Ato n'ime otu di ngozi

Let us pray

God the father

God the son and

God the Holy Spirit

The Trinity in one God (Onyekaonwu, 2014:62)

Literary Artist A Teacher of Political Science

Literary artist teaches political science using literature. In *Oku Uzu Daa Ibube*, when Isuebu people were contesting for igwe's(king) position, the contestants Maazi Ugonna and Misita Ezenwa were asked to present their manifestoes. Maazi Ugonna who was presently Igwe was asking people's mandate for the second tenure said ;

Aruru m oru kwesiri ka e nye m nri oru.
 Ma naaniihe mna-ariounu ka unu weliere aka, hoputa m ka eze unu
 .Unu agaghikwa atu takisi.

I have worked very hard for the welfare of this community.

I am pleading to all of you to give me your mandate.

Once I am re-elected; there will be no payment of tax.

Onyekaonwu(2014:85)

Misita Ezenwa in his manifestoes said;

Maazi Ugonna adighi ka o siri hu Isueben'anya.
 Onye gara gbaara Bekee ama ihe umunnaya kpara akpa wee mee ka
 o wee rie otutu isi otutu,tuba otutu na mkporo
 mee ka a chupu ufodu n'obodo.

Maazi Ugonna had no love for Isuebu people.

He sabotaged Isuebu people by revealing their secret to the white men.

However, white men killed many Isuebu people, many were kept in the prison.

While many were exiled.Onyekaonwu(86)

Literary Artist A Teacher of Mathematics

In *Oku UzuDaaIbube*, some expressions as follows reveal the people's mathematical knowledge: During the election of IgweIsuebu, people were asked

To raise up their hands in support of theirchoice candidate. Election officials countedthe people's hand and declared the candidate that have the highest vote as winner of the election.Onyekaonwu(87).

Literary Artist and Igbonization

Onyekaonwu made using foreign language possible in Igbo literary writing.He Igbonised those words using Igbo alphabets .Some of these words are;

Odaaodaa
 Order order (84)
 MisitaEzenwa
 MrEzenwa (85)
 Nzeresaikoloji

BSc Psychology(88)

Takisi

Tax(85)

Conclusion

It is important to note that Onyekaonwu has greatly demonstrated his literary versatility through the instrumentality of Igbo language, which has been manipulated as an interdisciplinary interface.Onyekaonwu's code mixing which run through the pages of the text, establishes his dynamic use of Igbo language as a tool for pedagogic impartation of knowledge. Moreover, the themes discussed above are only possible due to Onyekaonwu's

literary creativity and use of Igbo language to express literary artist as teacher who broadens readers knowledge about other areas of study apart from storytelling.

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