

The Post-Colonial Yoruba Poets as Agents of Political and Economic Emancipation in Nigeria

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Abstract : One of the major peculiarities of man is the ability to communicate and interact with language. The original Yoruba society, before the advent of the Europeans, was purely oral. That is the major means of inter- personal communication was through speaking. The abolition of slave trade by Britain marked the beginning of development of Yoruba alphabet and introduction of writing around 1800. However, most of the writing was Christian religion-focused. Later, the introduction of British colonial rule led to the introduction of writing that dwelt on political and economic emancipation. On October 1, 1960, Nigeria was granted independence by the British colonial masters and self-rule started in Nigeria. Unfortunately, the military and civilian administrations brought about political and economic oppression instead of comfort. The discomfort brought about by Nigerian political and military rulers turned the Yoruba poets to activists, reactionaries and critics. This paper will give a brief preamble on the history of Nigeria and how she got her political independence from the British in 1960. It will thereafter go further to mention some political and economic hardship brought about by Nigerian leaders. Using literary theories called semiotics and structuralism, the reactions and criticisms of some Yoruba poets will be mentioned and analyzed vis-à-vis the counter reactions of the governments in power. Moreover, the paper will bring about a conclusion on how to create a conducive atmosphere for the Yoruba poets to operate in Nigeria. Finally, suggestions will be offered on how the Nigerian government and Yoruba poets can co-exist positively to bring about a better standard of living to Nigerians and also promote good governance

Keywords : Yoruba, Yoruba language, Yoruba poets, political leaders

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