

A critical analysis of cultural celebration in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o plays: Mother sing for me and I will marry when i want (co-authored with Ngugi Wa Mirii)

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Abstract:

This study examines cultural celebration in Ngugi's wa Thiongos Mother Sing for Me and I Will Marry When I Want (co-authored with Ngugi wa Mirii). The study investigates the Presentation of Gikuyu cultural forms in the plays. It seeks to show that Ngugi's drama celebrate thtmkuyu marriage customs including celebration of certain forms of masculinity. It further , examines the past of struggle of the community and the valorization of Mau Mau and Freedom Fighters and the presentation of land as an insignia of masculinity which is tied to their cultural life. Further, the study explores the mediation of these cultural forms through the application of intertextuality, characters and orature. The study employs performance theories such as semeiotics, relevant aspects of feminism, cultural studies, Gayatri Spivak's theorizing on strategic essentialism and Ngugi's own perception on culture. The research involved a close reading of the primary texts. Further, I made use of the library and the internet for secondary readings. Internet data bases were consulted especially Project Muse, Jstor and Google Scholar. I also utilized on line reading when given readings could-not be found in the library. The study has critically analysed two of Ngugi's play, Mother Sing/or Me and I Will Marry When I Want (coauthored with Ngugi wa Mirii), which have not been subjected to a critical analysis of cultural celebration, considering that cultural project is an important component of Ngugi's literary preoccupation. The study concludes -that Ngugis drama celebrate some Gikuyu cultural forms and critique those that are not in tandem with contemporary living and calls for their revision. This is not the last word on Ngugi's cultural project in his drama. Further research need to be conducted. This study was concerned with the cultural celebration while relying on the written texts. A study should be mounted to investigate how the Kamiriithu people understood the cultural forms as presented through the live performance of Mother Sing for Me and f Will Marry When I Want and how if the same plays were acted today, would be received. Further study should also be conducted on how cultural celebration is manifested in Ngugi's later works after 1982, such as Devil on the Cross (1982), Matigari (1986), the Journal, Mutiri. Wizard of/he Crow (2006) and his childhood memoir, Dreams in a Time of War: a Childhood Memoir (20 I 0).