

African Politics and the Struggle for the Artist's Freedom: viewpoints from Kenya

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Date: 1997

Abstract:

Kenya is one of the three East African Countries (the others are Uganda and Tanzania). It has a population of over 24 million people and has been independent, at least nominally, from Britain, since 1963. (It is the home country of writer Ngugi wa Thiongo, about whom a lot is fairly well known, especially regarding his 'tangos' with the Kenya government). In recent years, Kenya has gained international focus, particularly because of its 'one man, one party politics' that has dominated the country for practically all the years of its independence. The country's problems with artists are many and varied. This piece is an attempt to highlight the vistas of political dominance that assail the artist in Kenya, especially in the domain of the performing arts. It also makes appropriate references to relevant parallels from other African countries.