

A critical explication of selected songs by John De' Mathew

Thiong'o, Joseph Kanyi
Date: 2009

Abstract:

In this study we set out to examine the literariness inherent in selected songs of John De' Mathew. We set out to analyze the major concerns encompassed in the songs of John De' Mathew. These include love, politics, relationship, women issues and philosophical issues. In addition, this study examined De' Mathew's ideological stand points and the motivation which informs his ideology. This study also analyzed the use of the following stylistic devices, which feature prominently in his songs. Tone, extended metaphor, dramatic monologue, biblical allusions, Metaphor , proverbs, sayings, imagery, symbolism, rhetorical devices, similes, and the effect of modern technology in these songs. Finally we analyse the major elements that define his performances. This study employed an eclectic approach in its theoretical frame. This was considered in order to meet the set objectives. To analyze thematic concerns employed social realism since the artiste articulates the world of i reality which defines the material reality of his target audiences. Stylistic criticism was used to explicate the immanent stylistic devices which the artiste employs in his choice of language which makes the songs artistic in form. Music theory was considered in order to explicate melodic elements inherent in the songs which enrich their literary meaning. We found out that different social concerns define De' Mathew's songs. These include, love between couples, family relationships, politics, women issues, philosophical insights. Here De' Mathew underscores the major problems that people face in the society regarding these topics on the one hand. On the other hand, he prescribes solutions to most of these problems by creating a persona who articulates his conceived solutions while the presumed audience within these songs reflects the social follies committed by members of the society. Further research is necessary because a theory that concretely grounds the aesthetic structures that define and inform the production of popular songs to this date does not exist. I suggest that an application of grounded theory could serve as a secure point of departure in the quest to undertake the above task. In addition I recommend an interdisciplinary approach as a means to greater discernment of a literary theory under which popular artists operate. There are very few researches that have been carried out on popular songs as literary discourses. Further researches thus need to be carried out on popular songs in order to understand the nature of literary knowledge inherent in these songs. Such a theory can aid in the dissection of popular songs to the finest detail, since it is my strongest belief that popular songs contains a lot more than meets the eye and the ear.