



Yorùbá Performance, Theatre and Politics: Staging Resistance

Glenn Odom

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Nigerian politicians speak about national identity, the past and future of the nation, the value of strong authority, and the need for a firm moral standard. These same categories of identity, time, authority, and morality emerge in the construction of Nigerian theatre and Nigerian performance. Masked dances like the Gélédé rituals, the prophetic performances of Ifá divination, the recitation of praise poetry and other performances that have been part of Yorùbá society for generations shed light on how these categories have traditionally been used. When politicians manipulate these categories, theatre can act as resistance to this manipulation by using identity, time, morality, and authority in different ways. This book looks at five performance traditions, five playwrights, and five different moments in the political history of Nigeria to explore the resistant potential of the basic structures of Nigerian theatre and performance.



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