

MINSTRELSY, APPRENTICESHIP, ORIGIN AND FEATURES OF BIRIPO, THE ILAJE FOLK-POETRY

by Stephen Ola Ajimisan

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MINSTRELSY, APPRENTICESHIP, ORIGIN AND FEATURES OF *BIRIPO*,
THE ILAJE FOLK-POETRY

BY

STEPHEN OLA AJIMISAN
ajimisanstephen@gmail.com

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES,
ADEKUNLE AJASIN UNIVERSITY,
AKUNGBA-AKOKO, ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

Abstract

Issues of minstrelsy, apprenticeship, origin, features of Biripo, the Ilaje oral performance in chanting and singing modes, and the influence of modernity and technology on it have never been subjects of any known research in folkloric literature or other fields of human knowledge. This paper thus, investigates the issues of minstrelsy, apprenticeship in Biripo, origin and features of Biripo among the people. The paper employs sociological approach to the study of Biripo since it operates within its society of origin. Sociological approach to the study of literature or folklore examines a text or indigenous oral performances through sociological binoculars with a view to examining how the text has been influenced by the society and vice-versa which justifies the adoption of the theory. The paper also gathers information through oral interviews and secondary materials such as textbooks, journal articles and cyber materials. The research finds out that: the issues of minstrelsy, apprenticeship is present in Biripo the way it is in other indigenous forms, the oral (Biripo) artist occupies special place in his community and enjoys special privilege from the community leaders and the people, Biripo is a product of the people's tradition and quotidian existence from the pre-literate and post-literate eras and that modernity and technology have tremendously influenced Biripo, functional application and that the use of ideophones, call and response, affinity with ritual and masquerades songs etc are features of Biripo. The paper advocates the technologising of Biripo for the 21st century exigencies and realities.

Keywords: Minstrelsy, apprenticeship, modernity and technology, people's tradition, oral performance.

Introduction

Several ethno-cultural prejudices and biases have been precipitated and propagated about the existence and survival of *Biripo*. For many years some members of other Yoruba sub-groups have concluded erroneously that there is no folklore worthy of literary attention from that part of Yoruba land from where *Biripo* originated. This is due largely to ignorance on the part of some of them while on the parts of others, it is due, incontrovertibly to chauvinistic prejudice, supremacist tendency and the insidious human propensity to downplay what belongs to others and promote theirs; a postcolonial dialectics. The kernel of this paper is the investigative voyage into the issue of minstrelsy, apprenticeship, which boils down to the issue of learning, transmission of the form before the advent of modern technology which culminated into the invention of books and other technological gadgets of documentation and electronic retrieval, features and origin of the form.

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