

African Authenticity in John Ruganda's the Flood

Lightness Kokwijuka Herman

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University of Dar es salaam, College of Social Sciences, 2016

This study examines the contestable issues surrounding the question of African authenticity in John Ruganda's *The Floods*. The aim of this study is mainly to examine the presence of African authenticity in Modern African literary works such as Ruganda's *The Floods* in relation to modernist and other seemingly Europhone aesthetic elements. The study also interrogates the implication of the fusion of materials from both African and Western literary traditions on the play's claim to African authenticity. The study has been able to establish that through the play's manner of representation to highlight the reality of Idi Amin's bloody political regime in Uganda, it has been able to retain its African authenticity; this authenticity is realised through the deployment of various African oral techniques such as rituals, myths, stories, African sayings and proverbs, and other African humorous expressions alongside the modernist aspects that the artist adopts from Western literary tradition in shaping the rhetorical agenda of the play. The African elements serve as reminders of place, context and African setting where the events represented in the work occur. In this regard, the adopted modernist elements such as surrealism and to a certain extent the grotesque images are contextualised in the context of the play's African setting to speak of and interrogate the traumatic experience that the Ugandan innocent citizens faced during Amin's reign. Therefore, the study argues that the deployment of modernist literary forms in African literary works does not necessarily undermine African authenticity in works as such manipulation constitute a still evolving African aesthetics that for historical reasons continues to benefit from two literary traditions- African and European – without necessarily losing the African centeredness. The implication of the study's findings is that the question of African authenticity in African works of art is complex and is linked to both the rhetorical agenda and authorial aesthetic and creative endeavour that defies reductive definitions.