

Satiric Vision in Ola Rotimi's "Our Husband has gone Mad Again"

Ihugba Favour Oluchi^{1*} Adegboye Adeyanju² Talatu Mohammed Razinat³

¹Department of English and Literary Studies. Faculty of Arts University of Abuja, F.C.T, Nigeria.

Corresponding author's email: favourihugba63@gmail.com

DOI: [10.56201/ijelcs.vol.10.no2.2025.pg42.59](https://doi.org/10.56201/ijelcs.vol.10.no2.2025.pg42.59)

Abstract

The main objective of this study is the use of satire to expose societal flaws, political corruption, and moral decay. This study critically examines the use of satire in Nigerian literature, focusing on the works of Ola Rotimi, Femi Osofisan, and Wole Soyinka. Through an analysis of plays such as Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again, The Gods Are Not to Blame, Midnight Hotel, and A Play of Giants, the research explores how these playwrights employ techniques such as caricature, irony, parody, and reversal to critique political selfishness, corruption, gender inequality, and superstition in Nigerian society. The study aims to analyse the effectiveness of satire in addressing socio-political concerns, examine how playwrights use and exaggeration to critique leadership, governance, and societal norms, and highlight the enduring relevance of satire in shaping public discourse and inspiring societal change. By examining the interplay between satire and socio-political commentary, this research underscores the role of literature in challenging oppressive systems and provoking critical reflection, emphasizing that satire remains a relevant and impactful tool in Nigerian literature, serving both as a means of entertainment and a vehicle for social and political critique.

1. Introduction

Satire is a tool of literature and technique employed by writers to expose and criticize foolishness and corruption of an individual or a society by using, irony, exaggeration or ridicule. It also intends to prove humanity by criticizing its follies and foibles. According to Femi Osofisan (2010), satire in literature entertains, in fact most entertain, but it is only the dim or brain washed artist who is content merely to entertain, to play the clown. The primary value of literature seems to me to lie in its subversive potential, that explosive change which lies hidden behind the facade of entertainment and which must be controlled and made to explode for the used of our people, of mankind. Literature must be used to play its role in the advancement of our society, in the urgent struggle against neo-colonialism and the insidious spread of fascism. In a society, satire is a form of writing which makes fun of the evil of foolish behaviours of people, institutions or society in general. The literary artist is known to deploy satire from the beginning to shape his society and influence satirist have in the minds of contemporary people. Apart from the Greeks and Romans, we also had great in satirist who aim at correcting the actions of men and their short comings in the society as a whole, a good example is chaucer. From the 18th century to the present, such names as Alexander pope, Spencer, Soyinka, Zulu, and Ola Rotimi's readily come to when we consider artists who have used their creative works to expose the ills in their respective societies. The deployment of satire is not confined to contemporary writers alone. In a traditional African society, people used satire to critique people who show negative tendencies in their characters. Societies as a whole ridicule people through songs, proverbs, folktales and other verbal arts. Nigerian writers use of satire as an artistic mode to express the social reality in contemporary Nigeria. The Nigeria society, for them, is obviously a chaotic one where dreams and aspirations of people remain unrealized. Rampant in Nigeria is corruption, disillusionment and discrimination, that

have become part and parcel of the society. Their main objective in the writing of satiric plays is to attack the aforementioned ills in the society. These writers have committed themselves to restore order in the society. This research focuses on investigatory satire in Ola Rotimi's "our husband has gone mad again". Although Satire has been used over the years by literary writers for criticizing individuals of different class, organization, absurdity of men in the society, but today, satire has become a social art used by writers to point out the foolishness, and madness via in literary works. Satire is one among the many devices which writers deploy using language. Satiric writing is a style adopted by many writers to tell their story. Satire seeks to create a shock of recognition, to make vice (s) repulsive or disgusting, so that the vices will be expunged from the person or society, and to restore morality. This study will help extend existing knowledge on satire in African drama and serve as a guide for further research. It would reveal the deepest values, deficiency, and the society's structures of power as portrayed in OHHGMA. The study is centred on satiric vision of Ola Rotimi in OHHGMA. However, only elements that are relevant to this project would be examined. The limitations of this study is time constraint; the time frame for completing the research is relatively short. Additionally, the study will rely solely on literary analysis rather than extensive empirical research. Ola Rotimi (13 April 1938 - 18 August 2000) was one of Nigeria's leading playwrights and theatre directors. He has been called "a complete man of the theatre - an actor, director, choreographer and designer - who created performance spaces, influenced by traditional architectural forms. Rotimi was the son of Samuel Gladstone Enitan Rotimi a Yoruba steam-launch engineer (a successful director and producer of amateur theatricals) and Dorcas Adolae Oruene Addo an Ijaw drama enthusiast. He was born in Sapele, Nigeria where cultural diversity was a recurring theme in his work. He attended St. Cyprian's School in Port Harcourt from 1945 to 1949, St Jude's School, Lagos, from 1951 to 1952 and the Methodist Boys High School in Lagos, before travelling to the United States in 1959 to study at Boston University, where he obtained a BA in fine arts. In 1965, he married Hazel Mae Guadreau; Hazel also studied at Boston University, where she majored in opera, voice and music education. In 1966 he obtained an MA from Yale School of Drama where he earned the distinction of being a Rockefeller Foundation scholar in playwriting and dramatic literature. Rotimi often examined Nigeria's history and local traditions in his works. His first plays, *To Stir the God of Iron* (produced 1963) and *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* (produced 1966; published 1977), were staged at the drama schools of Boston University and Yale, respectively. Upon returning to Nigeria in the 1960s, Rotimi taught at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), where he founded the Ori Olokun Acting Company and Port Harcourt. Owing, in part, to political conditions in Nigeria, Rotimi spent much of the 1990s living in the Caribbean and the United States, where he taught at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. In 2000 he returned to Ile-Ife where he lectured in Obafemi Awolowo University till his demise. Hazel (his wife) died in May 2000, only a couple of months before Rotimi's death. His later dramas include *The Gods Are Not to Blame* (produced 1968; published (1971), a retelling of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* in imaginative verse; *Kurunmi and the Prodigal* (produced 1969; published as *Kurunmi*, 1971), written for the second Ife Festival of Arts; *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi* (produced 1971; published (1974), about the last ruler of the Benin empire; and *Holding Talks* (1979). Later plays, such as *If: (Tragedy of the Ruled* 1983) and *Hopes of the Living Dead* (1988), premiered at the University of Port Harcourt and was a common play in Obafemi Awolowo University Drama Department. The radio play everyone *His/her Own Problem*, was broadcast in 1987. His book *African Dramatic Literature: To Be or to Become?* Was published in 1991. Rotimi spent the second half of his last creative decade reworking two of his plays – *Man Talk*, *Woman Talk* and also *Tororo*, *Tororo*, *Roro* - and the result, unpublished at the time of his death in 2000, have now been

published under the title "The Epilogue". "The Epilogue" were probably meant as an epilogue to both Rotimi's theatrical and comic careers, which span the entire spectrum of his career.

1.1 Objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to analyse Ola Rotimi's OHHGMA as a satiric text and how important and examine how effectiveness is the use of satire in tackling the political situations in the society.

1. To examine how the author employs satire in the text
2. To analyse how the author ridicule via commentary on the contemporary issues
3. To provide solution to it.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How do Nigerian playwrights such as Ola Rotimi, Femi Osofisan, and Wole Soyinka use satire to critique socio-political issues?
2. What are the major themes explored through satire in their works, and how do these themes reflect the realities of Nigerian society?
3. How effective is satire as a literary tool in influencing public perception and sparking conversations on governance, corruption, and societal norms?
4. In what ways do the techniques of irony, caricature, parody, and reversal enhance the satirical messages in these plays?
5. How does satire in Nigerian drama address gender inequality, political corruption, and superstition, and what impact does it have on audiences?
6. What role does play in making serious social and political issues more accessible to readers and audiences?
7. How has satire evolved in Nigerian literature, and how relevant is it in today's socio-political landscape?

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework for exploring satire as a social art. The satirist, like other artists, uses his creative work to entertain and instruct his audience. Instruction in this context is in the form of criticism which aims at restoring order in the society. The writer undoubtedly remains a socio-political force in any social formation. Apart from playing the role of an entertainer, the writer uses his artistic creation to in-still truth into people's consciousness in any given age. It is also true that when anomalies and contradictions become too glaring in any society the literary artist feels called upon to rectify such anomalies found in the society using art as a weapon. This has been analysed using satirical theory, postcolonial theory, and African dramatic traditions.

1. Satirical theory: the play follows Horatian satire, which is light-hearted and humorous but still critiques political and social issues. Rotimi uses satire to mock political incompetence and corruption in post-independence Africa. To also expose the unrealistic ambitions of ex-military leaders entering politics, and highlight gender issues especially regarding marriage and women's role in politics.
2. Postcolonial Theory; Rotimi's play falls under postcolonial literature which critiques the effects of colonial rule and the struggles of African nations in self governance. The play satirizes on; The failures of African leaders trying to mimic western democracy without proper understanding. The disillusionment

of the masses with political promises that never materialize. The clash between traditional African values and western influences.

3. African dramatic traditions; Rotimi's work is deeply rooted in African story telling and drama. His satire is influenced by: oral traditions which involves the use of proverbs, humours, and exaggerated characters. Folklore and performance; theatrical elements such as music, dance, and direct audience engagement. Comic relief; despite addressing serious political themes, the play remains entertaining, making its critique more accessible.

2.2 Literature Review

Etymologically, the word "satire" has its root in Latin, it was initially called "Satira." Later it became 'Satura' meaning 'medley' or mixture. According to literary history, satirical usages were part and parcel of folk culture in many ancient communities in which the art flourished, especially in Greek culture where it was said that satirical usages were specifically located in Grecian fertility rites. Literary history also indicates that it was in Greece (7th century B.C.) that satire recorded its first victim. The satirist was Archilochus and his targets were his defaulting bride to-be and his prospective father-in-law. The pre-independent African society had satire in its arts. A typical example is the poetry of the Yorubas called "Ewi". The performer Elewi, satirizes ridicule people and institutions. Element of satire can be seen in their proverbs, riddles and jokes. After independence, however, satire assumed a different phase in Contemporary African society. It became very popular as it is being used to attack theme of neo-colonialism, corruption, hypocrisy, ignorance and administration and other vices. Narrowing it down to Nigeria, we have a lot of artist who are satirical in their writings. Such writers are Chinua Achebe. In his *A Man of the People*, Ken Saro-wiwa *Prisoners of Jebs*, Olu Obafemi in *The New Dawn*, Ola Rotimi, Wole Soyinka, etc. Satire in literature is a type of social commentary. Writers use exaggeration, irony, and other devices to poke fun of a particular leader, a social custom or tradition, or any other prevalent social figure or practice that want to comment on and call into question. Contemporary writers like Chinua Achebe, Buchi Emecheta, Wole Soyinka, Femi Osofisan and the likes uses satire to reflects on a society's social and political viewpoint shown through realistic characters, connections to current events and socio-economic messages. Satire remains a powerful tool in contemporary culture. Film and television, in particular, have been important vehicles for satire over the past several decades. Examples of African satiric works are Ayikwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are not Yet Born* (prose), Mongo Beti's *The Poor Christ of Bomba* (prose), Ferdinand Oyono's *The House Boy* (prose), Soyinka's *Trials of Brother Jero*, and *The Lion and the Jewel* (all plays), Ola Rotimi's *Holding Talks* (a play) are satiric in one form or another. There are three main types of satire, each serving a different role:

1. Horatian. Horatian satire is comic and offers light social commentary. It is meant to poke fun at a person or situation in an entertaining way. *Alexander Pope (b. May 21, 1688) was a satirist known for his Horatian satirist style and translation of the *Iliad*. He also affirms with the duty that Satire performs to a man which is used to check the excesses of man to inform man and denounce his follies or vices. He believes strongly in the effects of satire. He says: "Know nothing that moves strongly satire and those who are shamed of nothing else are so of being ridiculous".
2. Juvenalian. Juvenalian satire is dark, rather than comedic. It is meant to speak truth to power. George Orwell's famous 1945 novel *Animal Farm* is a good example of Juvenalian satire. The novel's intended target is communism and Stalin-era Soviet Union. *Animal Farm* is also an allegorical satire: it can be read as a simple tale of farm animals, but it has a deeper political meaning.

3. Menippean. Menippean satire casts moral judgment on a particular belief, such as homophobia or racism. It can be comic and light, much like Horatian satire although it can also be as stinging as Juvenalian satire. Scholars like M.H Abraham believes that satire is an art which ridicules and at the same time criticized the society too. However, he believes that satire is ridiculous when deviated from the norms of the society that in as much as satire mocks it, it also corrects through painful and malicious laughter. He says: Satire is the literary act of diminishing a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking towards its attitude of amusement, contempt, indignation or scorn. Bernard Shaw in his statement says "If I make you to laugh at yourself remember. That my business as a classical writer of comedy is to chasten morals with ridicule, and if I sometimes make you feel like a fool, remember. That I have by the same action cured your folly".

Sylvan Barnet says "satire is a work ridiculed aspects of human behaviour and seeking to arouse in the audience contempt for its object". Moody on his part defines satire as "any form or piece of writing which is deliberately and consciously critical in intention" (Moody 1968:208) while Barnet (1976:2669) contends that "satire is a work ridiculing aspect of human behaviour and seeking to arouse in the audience contempt for its object" Satire ridicules or holds up to scorn the vices, crimes and absurdities of men and individuals, of class and organizations of societies and civilization. Also Femi Osofisan's *Midnight Hotel*, is a work of satire which concerns corruption and decadent political culture. It questions the credibility of our law makers and touches on political intolerance and religious charlatans in the society. The prevailing immorality, hypocrisy and flirtatious tendencies of highly placed persons are aspects of the national psyche which he subjects to criticism. Femi Osofisan is of the view that nepotism, corruption and favouritism have gotten deep into our political system. The point of corruption is driven home when Awero, the only female Member of Parliament decides to take Pastor Suru to a hotel so that she could "sample" him before he is given a contract since, according to her; male MPs do this to the opposite sex.

Ola Rotimi uses satire as an artistic mode of expressing the social reality in contemporary Nigeria. The Nigerian society, for him is obviously a chaotic one where dreams and aspirations of people remain unrealized. They have all corruption, disillusionment and discrimination that have become part and parcel of the society. His main objective in the writing of satiric plays is to correct the social vices in a society. *OHHGMA* is a satirical comedy of the political terrain of Africa as well as of those who run it. African politics, the contest for acceptability of the people is an aggressive one. Ola Rotimi being critical of the ills, it is out to condemn the corrupt tendencies in Nigerian society through the vehicle of laughter and mockery. It is a comic or mild satire because the play characterizes the actions of some of the characters which tend to make people laugh. Individuals, institutions and the society as a whole are also ridiculed in it. In the play, the major object or subject of attack and derision in the play is (the hero); Like in our society today, we see individuals going into politics not because they have the passion for it but out of greed and what comes with it. In the same vein, so many other politicians that got into power have no grassroot support, most of them got into power through one means of corruption or the other. That is why writers like Ola Rotimi, Wole Soyinka and the likes decided to write books relating to the ills in the society through satire. There are cases of musicians too that are well known who use music to criticize the government we have the likes of Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Idris Abdul Kareem etc.

2.3 Techniques in satire:

Many techniques have over time been exploited and explored to achieve satiric purposes by writers. We review a few below

1. **Exaggeration:** Exaggeration entails making a situation or person look better or worse than they are by overstating or understating certain characteristics beyond reality. Exaggeration typically considers a person's or situation's real characteristics and makes them seem ridiculous or far-fetched. For example, consider the constantly increasing size of cell-phones. When employing satire, you might write about a future version of a phone that requires both hands to carry. Here are a few common examples of exaggeration:
 - **Caricature:** Caricature is the exaggeration of physical characteristics. For example, if you describe someone as tall, you might compare them to a tree or a building.
 - **Burlesque:** Burlesque exaggeration is the exaggeration of language. This might include creating new words based on how someone from a particular city pronounces them.
 - **Overstating and understating:** These techniques either increase or decrease a person, object or idea's size or significance. Understating the effects of something can show a character's deception while overstating can highlight a person's desires in relation to reality.
2. **Incongruity** is an often absurd method of satire where you present something unexpected into an otherwise normal scene or story. Comic writers commonly use this style where the actions of characters in a scene might seem normal, but the caption displays incongruity. In writing, you might write a story about a baby as the CEO of a company. They might wear a suit or hold a phone, but still babble when communicating. Because these things are impossible or incongruous, this situation is satirical.
3. **Reversal:** Reversal is a type of satire that switches the positions of two things or people. This can be effective to highlight absurdities in human actions or behaviours. For example, a story of a life-size dog walking a human on a leash is a reversal. Reversal often exposes problematic qualities in situations or characteristics that we view as normal.
4. **Parody:** Parody in satire is the act of imitating either a person or an original work. In writing, you might mimic the chapter structure, setting or main characters in a particular work but alter other elements. If your reader recognizes the original work in your writing, the parody you employ might be more effective. Parodies often mock common conventions in literature and style. For example, in a paradoxical article, you might write the headline "Major Celebrity Eats Lunch." Though this isn't an authentic article, it mimics the absurdity of celebrity culture and paparazzi emphasizing mundane activities.
5. **Irony:** Irony is satire that compares what someone actually means with their language against what they actually say or do. Here are the four main types of irony:
 - **Verbal Irony:** Verbal irony is when the meaning of what someone says is the opposite of the intended message. For instance, if it's expected to rain in the forecast, satirically saying that there's a beautiful weekend ahead is an example of verbal irony.
 - **Dramatic Irony:** Dramatic irony is when a situation occurs despite what a character knows. For example, if a character ends a relationship to be with someone else and that other person is in a relationship with another person, that's a situation that features dramatic irony.
 - **Situational Irony:** Situational irony is the difference between what people expect to happen and what actually happens. For example, you might write a story where a man walks to work only to find his office permanently closed.

- Socratic Irony: Socratic irony is when a person pretends to be ignorant for personal gain. This reveals information to the audience through one character tricking another character. Writers often consider using irony in your writing to explain contradictory ideas and to make their writing more appealing to audiences.
- 6. Anachronism: Anachronism is a type of satire that places people or objects in other periods of time. For example, including cars in a story about dinosaurs is an example of anachronism. This could show philosophical differences or behavioural differences between people and time periods, adding a silly and entertaining element to your writing.
- 7. Malapropism: Malapropism is the intentional mispronunciation or misuse of a word by a writer. For example, a character might say that the class should rent a "liberty book." Liberty almost sounds like library, so the reader knows the intent. This creates entertaining content and can often reflect real mispronunciations made by public figures.

In Femi Osofisan's *Midnight Hotel*, the writer criticizes political intolerance and victimization of political opponents. Political opponents in Nigeria are perceived as enemies. The government in power victimizes members of the opposition and denies their communities basic amenities. Victimization in Nigeria is forcefully demonstrated in *Midnight Hotel* when the headmaster (Alatise) who also lost the governorship election as well as his school to the winning party. This led to Alatise's impoverishment and his subsequent search for refuge with his daughter in Lagos, listen to Alatise as he narrates his ugly experience to Awero:

- You know, since the new government came in, it's been hell for me.
- They took over my school, my land and here I am, jobless, homeless, and hungry. (Midnight Hotel, p. 34).

Femi Osofisan criticizes and condemns this "winner take all" syndrome, in Nigeria's political system which negates the democratic principle. For him, winners should be magnanimous in victory, while losers should accept defeat and work in partnership with the winner in order to ensure a harmonious co-existence in the society. Wole Soyinka has for over four decades fought military dictatorship and tyranny in Nigeria, forging on with his creative pen even when it appeared most dangerous and even unprofitable to do so. In plays such as *A Dance of the Forests*, *Kongi's Harvest*, *Madmen and Specialists* and *Opera Wonyosi*, Soyinka uses his satiric pen to carve indelible marks on the faces of despots and dictators in Nigeria. Even in lighter satires such as *Jero's Metamorphosis*, Soyinka still finds opportunity to pass comments on the army and decry their excessive practices in form of mass promotion within the Nigerian Army of the time, headed by Yakubu Gowon. A continental view of the crisis is projected in *A Play of Giants*, thereby confirming that despotism is a predicament that is more African than Nigerian. Ola Rotimi's "TGANTB" Rotimi satirizes the senseless use of power of office holders. He ridicules individuals, society and institutions as a whole. However, the major object of attack and derision is Odewale. Here,

Rotimi is indirectly mocking the greedy, selfish and pleasure-seeking of leaders in the African society especially Nigeria. In every society, someone or a group of people must make important decisions about how to allocate and uses resources available to the society. Usually, men who find themselves with much power tend to be influenced in some way other the others, thus unconsciously. They use power to abuse the less privileged and subject who placed them in that positions. King Odewale was appointed by the people to Kutuje to compensate his effort and his achievement by bringing peace to their land. This was an honourable achievement. With time, King Odewale is consumed by this power to the extend he allowed his guards to

mishandle an old blind man, Baba Fakunle, only because he wanted an information from him. "Baba Fakunle tries to move but is rudely barred by bodyguards who disengage bay's hand from his, and hustle him back towards Odewale" (Act 2, Scene 1). Again, power makes people to drawn into hasty conclusions which leads to decisions one regrets. King Odewale suspects Aderopo, son of Ojoula for planning to overthrow him. The king enjoys the use of power to the extent he sees his fellow man a threat and hence banishes him out to fear. " may my eyes not see Aderopo again till I die" (Act 2, scene 2). Rotimi criticize how men in higher places use their power which was delegated to them by their subjects to mistreat and punish the less privileged. This is a typically phenomenon which can be seen in the society and has to be dealt with.

We also see that polygamy is a common phenomenon Ola Rotimi satirizes in his plays. He is indirectly cautioning prospective polygamist of the consequences of such marriages. In his book, he introduces two main characters who fall a victim of this criticism, King Odewale and Akilapa. Akilapa is a unique character who takes pride in the number of wives he has and tells the king boldly about his 7 wives. (Act, Scene 4). Odewale ironically describes him as hot tempered and advises him to marry another wife so as to patience and loving like women. King Odewale is a very impatient and quick tempered man. Alaka his friend calls him a 'scorpion' for his quick temperament "scorpion", I use to call your King because of his temper". Irrespective of this characteristic, he is married to two wives, Ojoula, a patient, committed and submissive wife and of course with a sober temperament and Abero. Though she is far older than the King, she pledges her humility to the King. With these wives, King Odewale has never learnt the power of self-control and patience from his wives, yet he advises another to remarry in order to be patient and cool. "...go marry a woman and learn coolness of mind from her" 'marry again idiot". (Act 2, scene 4) pg40. Polygamy is a key feature which is practiced in almost every tribe in the society. Hence the way of life.

3. Empirical Framework

Empirical evidence from previous literary analysis supports the claim that satire is a powerful tool in African drama. Several scholars have examined how satire has been used to critique political systems, gender dynamics, and social change. Political satire in African drama; studies have shown that playwrights like Ola Rotimi uses humour and exaggerations to highlight post independence African leaders' incompetence. Similar works, such as Wole Soyinka's *A play of giants* and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *i will marry when i want*, also use satire to critique governance and power struggles. Satire and gender roles; research has explored how satire in African drama challenges traditional gender roles. Scholars have noted how characters like Sikira in *OHHGMA* represents feminist ideologies, contrasting with male dominance. Effectiveness of satirical literature; empirical research on audience reception suggests that humour makes political and social critiques more accessible, allowing satire to inspire social awareness and change. Post-independence leadership failures; the character of Lejoka brown mirrors real-life African military leaders turned politicians who lacked proper governance skills, such as Idi Amin of Uganda and Sani Abacha's of Nigeria. Studies on leadership failure in Africa reinforce how satire reflects reality. Polygamy and women's rights; the struggle of Sikira in the play reflects real-word feminist movements in Africa that emerged in response to gender reforms in African societies provides empirical evidence of changing perspectives on marriage and women's roles. Audience reception and impact; studies on theatregoers reactions to Rotimi's play reveals that audience recognize the humour but also critically reflects on its messages. Empirical audience s show that satire engages people in political and social discussions more effectively than direct criticism. Although satire in African literature has been studied, *OHHGMA* provides a unique perspectives by blending comedy with serious critiques of

leadership and gender dynamics. This study contributes to existing literature by; Demonstrating how satire remains relevant in modern discussions in African governance. Providing empirical support for the role of humour in feminist discourse. Showing audience engagement and interpretation of political and cultural satire.

3.1 Analysis of *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*

OHHGMA is a text written by Ola Rotimi. The subject matter in this play revolves around the politics after independence. The post-independence period was corrupt with looting of treasury. After independence, writers became disillusioned (dissatisfied) and this brought about post independent disillusionment. As an aftermath of the independence, many writers wrote to ridicule the political abuse of that period in Nigeria. It was this very corrupt political era when politicians were pre-occupied with embezzling national funds that gave birth to OHHGMA. As a satire, OHHGMA laughs at the political excesses of Nigerian politicians. This play also mocks polygamy with its attendant consequences. Major Rahman Taslim is a retired army officer who leaves his successful cocoa business to join partisan politics. He does not do this because he loves to serve the people but because of What he is going to gain (money and fame). While serving in the Congo, had been married to his eldest brother's wife, Mama Rashida, by his father without his consent. This happened two days before his marriage to Liza, an American Catholic nurse. As Liza goes to the USA to study Medicine, leaves for Nigeria to join partisan politics, in order to win more votes, especially from the women, has to marry Sikira, the daughter of the President of the Market Women Union. After the election, Liza returns to discover that she is not the only woman in the life of As would be expected from a typical Western Catholic woman who cannot tolerate polygamy, she begins to foment trouble which later led to comical cultural conflicts. These conflicts later took a different dramatic turn as Liza begins to give Sikira provoking ideas about what she calls 'women's lib' or women liberation. The rather too many conflicts of the play finally come to a resolution as Sikira finally joins politics after much persuasion by Liza and Mama Rashida leaves Lagos to seek better conditions in the villages. This resolution came as a result of Liza's tact in handling those Women. on the other hand, is booted out of the National Liberation Party because of high-handedness and he regrets leaving his lucrative cocoa business to join politics.

3.2 Satiric vision in Ola Rotimi's "*Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*"

When we talk of satire, it is clear that each age produces its own abuse and its own corrective satire. Generally, the most angry satire is that which is directed against individuals and groups whose conduct shows a marked departure from the norms of the society. In the Middle Ages, for instance, some of the targets of satiric attacks were the monks and friars who failed to uphold the ideals of poverty, obedience and humanitarian services. OHHGMA falls under the Horatian tradition of satire, because Rotimi though aware of the ills in the Nigerian society, is not harsh in condemning them. It is a comic or mild satire because the events characterized the actions of some of the characters in the play that makes us laugh. Individuals, institutions and the society as a whole are ridiculed. However, the major object or subject of attack and derision in the play is (the hero). In making fun of his hero, Rotimi is indirectly mocking the Nigerian society as a whole. The playwright lampoons his hero's idea about politics. In the discussion between and Okonkwo, the former has this to say on why he takes to politics:

3.3 *Are you there.? Politics is the thing now in Nigeria mate, you want to be famous?*

Politics. You want to chop life? No, no... you want to chop a big slice of the national cake? Na politics". (Our Husband, p. 4). 's motive in joining politics is not dictated by his sense of patriotism and service but he sees politics as a means to an end. He is certainly myopic,

ideologically barren and too ridiculous to be a leader of nation. In exposing 's motive, Rotimi is subtly indicting the decadent Nigerian political activist. By making jest of, Rotimi is indirectly criticizing our greedy, selfish and pleasure seeking leaders in Nigerian society. "It is a war, politics is war. I am not taking no chance this time I took things slow and easy and what happened? I lost a bye election to a small crab." (Our Husband, p. 7) Certainly, Lejokja-Brown's statement evokes laughter in us. Yet, it goes to show how cruel and ruthless he is. It is taken as a symbolic representation of Nigerian leaders, one can then say that the playwright is criticizing Nigerian leader's use of brute force to achieve political ambitions. Lekoja-Brown's surprise and attack campaign strategy elicits the playwright's mockery. Although vigorously explained to his party members the nature of his military strategy, he only succeeded in dramatizing his hollow mentality. He says:

3.4 "Gentlemen, our election campaign plan must follow a platform of military strategy known as surprise and attack" (Our Husband, p. 50).

From Lejoka's campaign plan, he exposes the fact that he is incredibly ridiculous. Rotimi portrays him as a man who fails to understand the difference between a politician and a soldier. A. Polygamy-As a system of marriage in Nigeria did not escape Rotimi's ridicule. The playwright dramatizes the incessant quarrels and arguments between Sikira and her co-wife, Liza, who lived a dog and cat's life, constantly fighting one another. Sikira and Liza's relationship is that of fear and mutual suspicion. Sikira fears that Liza might overshadow her. Secondly, Sikira thinks that Liza, being more educated than herself, would make the latter more domineering and overbearing than herself. In order to forestall such a situation, Sikira picks quarrel with Liza at the least provocation. Liza: {Cooley caustic., someone ought to have told you, my dear girl, that it isn't proper for a housemaid to go peeping into the bedroom of her master at night or at any other...

- Sikira: Housemaid!
- incensed, to Mama Rashida.;
- Did you hear that grasshopper? I told you she would come and
- kick everybody round and round".
- Liza: "What did you say"?
- Sikira: ooh hoo!
- Girds her wrapper tightly. Ready for a fight.; Come on! You say you are a doctor? I will show you who I am. feigns a charge at Liza.
- Mama Rashida hurries over, and intercepts Sikira. They struggle
- Mama Rashida: Patience, you, patience, I say...
- Sikira: Let go, Mama Rashida! That fowl wants her proud feathers plucked.
- Liza: {rising}. Now wait a minute!
- Mama Rashida: Calm down!
- Sikira: I'd rather die than let that cockroach kicks me around.
- Mama Rashida: I said calm...
- Liza: Who is a cockroach?
- Sikira: who is a housemaid?
- Mama Rashida; (pinioning Sikira's arm behind her}. Now you...calm that hot tempter right now or I'll hit you.
- Sikira: Didn't you hear what that Antelope called me?
- Liza: I'm sorry, there must be a...
- Mama Rashida: listen to that, she says she's sorry.
- Sikira: I don't want to hear...

- household is in reality a fictional representation of what actually happens in most polygamous families. In directing his satire at such a home, Rotimi is indirectly cautioning prospective polygamists of the consequences of such a marriage.

3.5 *Style in the play*

Ola Rotimi uses simple words in his writing as a style and he also used songs and proverbs. Before the play starts, we meet the supporters of N.L.P Party singing and going about with banners bearing all kinds of slogans. Drumming, Singing and Cheering Party song.

- Chorus: freedom, freedom,
- Everywhere there must be freedom.
- Solo: Freedom for you
- Freedom for me.

When the play actually starts, we encounter singing a military song.

- Ai remember when ai was a soljar,
- Ai remember when ai was a soljar,
- Ai remember when ai was a soljar,
- Ai remember when i was a soljar,
- Hippy ya ya, hippy hippy ya ya,
- Hippy ya ya, hippy hippy ya ya.

This song is both comic and ironic, showing how still sees himself as a military officer rather than a democratic leader. We also see Sikira singing too, when Liza tells her that she (Liza) married before any other person in the household.

- "If you marry in magistrate court nko?
- I don't care!
- If you marry in American Toronto!
- I don't care!
- Whether you wear all rings in this world o,
- I don't care!
- Whether you know book tele*you tire o, I don't care! This song obviously reveals her insecurity and jealousy, as she tries to downplay liza;s legal status as the first wife.

3.6 *Characters in the play*

Osagie, Mustapha, Ajanaku, are all characters who use proverbs to express their views in the play. E.g Madam Adanaku "Man wey carry Ogbono soup-pot for hand, and di man wey carry foo-foo for head, na who go fin' who go? This proverb suggest that this who pursue power (like lejoka brown) often ends up being pursued by trouble. (Our husband, p.68). "di cow wey no get tail for nyash, na God nahim de Helep am drive fly comot". (P.66). Also, Osagie uses metaphor to condemn 's leadership as abjectly myopic, old fashioned, and authoritarian. He concludes with the proverb, "when the vine entwines your roof... it is time to cut it. (p.65) Lejoka Brown is the vine, the leader that has to be removed from office. Also used proverbs to address okonkwo. Yoruba man say.."Man-u way go chop-u frog, make he kuku chop-u di frog way get-i egg-for belle!" (p.5, our husband). This means that if someone is going to engage in something questionable, they might as well go all the way- a philosophy that mirrors his own reckless political ambition. This method reminds us of the chorus in Greek drama in which the chorus usually commented on what was happening to important people in the play or commented on the happenings in the society.

3.7 The use of language especially the pidgin English.

Rotimi has a fuller understanding of the Pidgin language in terms of its grammar, spelling, syntax and semantic. This is evident in many of the instances in his play in which he attempts to use Pidgin as a medium of communication which tends to add in the play. Hear Bicycles statement in this instance:

- Ajanaku: "Ehn... me I no sabi grammar o, me and book no be one mama - one papa but God helep me, I know di worl dey turn and me too sabi turn am gaan so when I talk, I know wetin I Dey talk" (Rotimi p.66). this statement humourously captures the practical wisdom of ordinary Nigerians, who may not be highly educated but have a deep understanding of survival and politics. Rotimi's use of proverbs in the play is more effective, more acceptable, and more natural. Unlike Femi Osofisan who implied that proverbs could only be used more effectively by a single individual in single individual in a society. Such a position is wrong and contentious.

3.8 The major theme in this play is politics.

Arguably, politics and opportunism is one of the prominent themes in Nigerian literature, then and presently. Ola Rotimi uses the work to show women in politics as practiced in Nigeria. For instance, the politics of Sikira, an illiterate woman and the market women who assist her and the pomposity of Major Rahman are very typical of Nigeria. All that governed politics at this period and even now is selfishness. Politics of selfishness is the bane of progress not only in Nigerian society but also in the entire African continent. An example is in the play leaving his cocoa business that was doing fine to join politics which is an act of selfishness. He admits that the cocoa business he has engaged in brings in good money. He boasts about his wealth to his friend, Okonkwo. —"...If they put you on auction right now - you, your degrees, your coat - everything... I can buy you ten times, and still have plenty money left to buy you all over again..." (p.6). "once we get elected to the top, walahii, we shall stuff ourselves with huge mouthfuls of the national chin-chin". (P.4). Regrettably, politics has become our backdrops and a Waterloo. The theme of politics is invested in the character of a retired military officer who possesses every negative attribute of selfish military politicians-very arrogant and I-know-it-all attitude. He does not join politics because he loves to serve the people but because of what he is going to gain $\frac{3}{4}$ money and fame. This is very true of Nigerian society where politics is governed by self-interest.

1. Superstition

The belief in the magical power of the snake, which keeps under his bed, expresses the theme of superstition in *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*. Many critics have argued that any work, which does not explore the issue of superstition, may not be regarded as a true African or Nigerian work. This is because the issue of superstition and taboo are very rampant in Africa despite the advent of science and technology. It has become a popular rumour that African politicians are fond of using some supernatural means to gain and maintain power. This is exactly the reason why keeps the snake. In a conversation between Mama Rashida and Liza, Liza: "Freedom?

Mama Rashida: The master's snake. Whenever he goes to campaign, master takes Freedom with him and wraps him round his arm like a gold bangle.

Freedom is master's good luck snake. However, 's political suicide before he reaches the pinnacle of his political dream puts a question mark on the assertion in the potency of some supernatural powers in winning an election or achieving success generally.

2. Gender Inequality

There is also a theme of gender inequality in OHHGMA. thinks women have no intelligence until he meets his foreign wife. In between the humour in the play, there is a subtle gender conflict. As a Western woman who believes that women are not in any way subservient to men, Liza mobilizes her fellow wives to organize their own faction to stop the madness of their husband. This means that what Ola Rotimi seems to be saying is that politics is not only the preserve of the men. Using the mouth of Sikira, he makes this point clear: "Sikira: what am I in this house anyway?

: Go on!

Sikira: Am I a slave?

: You heard me!

Sikira: Or a house wife?

: You are one of the crazy headaches I've been crazy enough to get into my crazy head! Now get out of here!

Sikira: Alright, alright, I will get out of here. MEN AND WOMEN ARE CREATED EQUAL. (P.57).

As a medical doctor and an experienced educated woman, Liza can compete favourably with any man. There is no doubt that sometimes women are used as puppets in order to fulfil men's ambitions. This is exactly what Liza does not want to see or hear. The play can also be said to be a revolutionary in the sense that a national issue is looked at from the women's angle.

3. Corruption

Ola Rotimi satirizes corrupt political leaders in the person of Lejoka Brown, who sees politics as the only means of survival: the in- thing now in Nigeria, to be famous you need politics, to enjoy life it is politics, to have a big share of the national cake you need politics. Rotimi satirizes the immorality of Nigerian political leaders in the person of Lejoka Brown, people of dubious and unscrupulous characters who cannot organize their families well but want to rule others. In the play 'Holding Talks' Rotimi satirizes how man's energies are spent on discussion, talks and dialogue even in a situation requiring action; In this play nothing really gets done, things get really close to being done but nothing gets really done because there is always some justifiable rationalization for that which really needs to be done not to be done.

3.9 Narrative Techniques:

Ola Rotimi employs first person narrative through the actors and actress in the play by so doing he has been able to explore and mirror his feelings through the characters. He also employs some figure of speech such as;

1. Simile

Sakira: The smoke from the kitchen in as black as coal.

Okonkwo: Gently, chop her ear lobe like rat.

Sakira: She walks like toy and with no manners.

: See her running her mouth like water tap.

Okonkwo: Start talking blo-blo—blo-like an over beaten way prisoner.

2. Metaphor

Rotimi also employ some metaphor thus;

: Look at this madam

Polycarp now that I know that you are a goat.

Liza: You are a bushman

You are a rat with head-downward.

3. Personifications

: I want to clean our nation's mess.
Okonkwo: Mountain has move toward you.

3.10 Characterization

1. RahmanTaslin Lejoka:

The protagonist, a retired army officer, is a good picture of political disillusionment. He is the comic here of the play invested with greed, strictness, rigidity. He represents those politicians of then who can still be found new in the Nigeria political terrain. He is very indiscrete, arrogant and has no regard for women. He joins politics and later marries Sikira just for gain material and personal property.

2. Liza: She is a qualified medical doctor from United States, married to in Congo, after her studies from the United State she returns and discovers that she cannot tolerate polygamy, she begins to foment trouble.
3. Mama Rashida: She is the first and senior wife of who is inherited from his late elder brother.
4. Musa Osagie: He is a member of the national party, who supported to win the Election.
5. Polycarp: He is a domestic help in the household of he is an illiterate, but very faithful to his master.
6. Sikira: She is a young amiable daughter of madam Ajamku, the leader of the market women union and the second wife to Lejoka-Brown
7. Alhaji Mustafa. He is an elder neighbor of although not much is heard from him. He is no doubt a good neighbour.

4. Research Methodology

This chapter aims at presenting the methods used for findings which involves analysing the literary techniques, dramatic elements and thematic approaches the playwright employs to critique political and social issues. This methodology is based on qualitative literary analysis, using textual analysis and comparative studies to examine how satire is structured and its impact on the audience.

4.1 Research Designs; this study adopts a qualitative research approach, focusing on textual analysis to explore the themes, characters, and humour in the play. The study also references comparative literary analysis by examining how other African playwrights uses satire to critique similar issues.

4.2 Data Collection Methods; the methodology for analysing satire in the play includes;

1. Close reading of *Our Husband Has gone Mad Again* to identify instances of satire.
2. Identifying key satirical techniques such as irony, exaggerations, sarcasm, and humour used to mock political leaders, gender roles, and societal norms.

4.3 Secondary source analysis;

1. Reviewing academic papers, journal articles, and books that discuss satire in African literature.
2. Comparing Rotimi's satire with other African literary works such as Wole Soyinka's *The trials of brother Jero* and Ngugi wa Thiongs *i will marry when i want*.

4.4 Audiences' reception studies;

1. reviewing how audiences and critics have interpreted and responded to the play's humour and political messages.
2. Analysing theatre reviews and scholarly critiques to understand how satire influences public perceptions.

4.5 Analytical framework; the analysis is structured around the following elements

1. Character analysis; examining how the protagonist Lejoka Brown, is used as a satirical figure to critique political incompetence.
2. Dialogue and language; analysing how humour, irony, and wordplay are used to expose societal flaws.
3. Themes and symbol; identifying recurring satirical themes such as political ambition, gender inequality, and cultural contradictions.
4. Comparative analysis; placing the play within the broader context of African political satire to highlight its unique and shared elements.

5. Summary of Findings

The study of satire in Ola Rotimi's *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* reveals key insights into how the playwright uses humour, irony, and exaggeration to critique post-independence African politics, gender roles, and cultural contradictions. The findings are summarized as follows;

5.1 Political satire and leadership critique

The play satirizes the incompetence of African leaders who enter politics without proper knowledge or vision. The protagonist, Lejoka Brown, is a former military officer who believes politics is like warfare, exposing the flawed mindset of many post-colonial leaders. Through humour and exaggeration, Rotimi highlights the self-serving nature of politicians who prioritize personal gains over national development.

5.2 Gender Roles and Feminist Satire

The play challenges traditional gender expectations by presenting Sikira, Lejoka-Brown's wife as a woman who embraces modern feminist ideas. Polygamy is ridiculed; showing how men use marriage as a status symbol rather than for love or partnership. Through satire, Rotimi promotes women's empowerment, contrasting Sikira's progressive views with Lejoka Brown's outdated patriarchal beliefs.

5.3 Cultural Clashes and Social Commentary

The play highlights the conflicts between traditional African values and western influences, particularly in marriage and politics. Lejoka Brown represents the old African patriarchal system, while Sikira embodies modernization and change. Satire is used to expose the contradictions in society, showing how some Africans reject change while benefiting from modern ideas.

5.4 Use of Satirical Techniques

Irony; Lejoka Brown's ignorance about politics contrasts with his confidence, making him a comic figure. Exaggeration; his belief that politics is like the military leads to absurd situations. Sarcasm; other characters mock his unrealistic political ambitions, highlighting the gap between his perception and reality.

5.4 Audience impact and message delivery

The play effectively uses humour to deliver serious political and social messages, making it more engaging for audience. Satire makes political critique more accessible and entertaining, ensuring that its lessons reach a wider audience. The exaggerated nature of the characters forces the audience to reflect on the realities of African leadership and social structure. As a satire, *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* laughs at the political excesses of Nigerian politicians. This two-act play also mocks polygamy with its attendant consequences. Major Rahman Taslim is a retired army officer who leaves his successful cocoa business to join partisan politics. He does not do this because he loves to serve the people but because of what he is going to gain: money and fame. While serving in the Congo, had been married to his eldest brother's wife, Mama Rashida by his father without his consent. This happened two days before his marriage to Liza, an American Catholic nurse. As Liza goes to the USA to study Medicine, leaves for Nigeria to join partisan politics. In order to win more votes, especially from the women, has to marry Sikira, the daughter of the President of the market women union. After the election, Liza returns to discover that she is not the only woman in the life of. As would be expected from a typical Western Catholic woman who cannot tolerate polygamy, she begins to foment trouble. This later leads to comical cultural conflicts. These conflicts later take a different dramatic turn as Liza begins to give Sikira provoking ideas about what she calls 'women's lib' or women liberation. The rather too many conflicts of the play finally come to a resolution as Sikira finally joins politics after much persuasion by Liza and Mama Rashida leaves Lagos to seek better conditions in the villages. This resolution comes as a result of Liza's tact in handling those women. On the other hand, is booted out of the National Liberation Party because of high-handedness and he regrets leaving his lucrative cocoa business to join politics.

6. Conclusions

Satire as a vehicle for literary expression is a social art. It concerns itself with correcting the ills in the society. The use of satire as an artistic weapon is an age-old phenomenon, because the ancient Greeks employed it in deriding unwholesome tendencies in humans. People in traditional societies use folktale songs proverbs and verbal art to comment and ridicule human failings and also to attack prevalent social vices. *OHHGMA* is a work of satire which is of great socio-political relevance which the playwright carefully recorded Nigeria's societal problems in one form or another. The play could be seen as a "problem play" because the writer graphically explored the leadership and other problems confronting the nation. Rotimi is certainly uneasy about the endemic problems of corruption, immorality, hypocrisy, political violence etc, which have become an integral part of our existence. As writers of imaginative literature, art becomes a tool with which they sought to restore normalcy in a society that is apparently disintegrating everyday. In this regard Rotimi could be said to have succeeded in exposing the idiocy, ignorance, and naivety of leaders in order to ridicule them by conveying the message to his readers with the simplicity of the overall style. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made; Improving political leadership through education, Political leadership should be based on competence and knowledge rather than military experience or personal ambition, Government and political parties should prioritize leadership leader-ship training and civic education to prevent incompetent individuals from taking public office. Satirical literature like Rotimi's play should be included in political science and leader-ship studies to teach the dangers of unprepared leader-ship. Promoting Gender Equality in Society and Politics, the play highlights gender oppression and the resistance to women's empowerment. Therefore, societies should; Encourage more women's participation in politics and leader-ship roles, challenge outdated patriarchal ideologies that limits women's right and choices. Incorporate feminist themes in education and literature to

promote gender awareness. Balancing tradition and modernization, African societies should embrace modernization while respecting cultural heritage. Laws and policies should reflect changing social values such as gender equality and democratic governance. Literature and drama should continue to explore the complexities of cultural transformation, encouraging open dialogue on social change. Expanding the use of satire in public discourse; Satirical literature and theatre should be used as a tool for political awareness in African societies, Government should recognize that satire is a form of constructive criticism, not an attack on authority, Media and literature should continue using humour to engage audiences on serious social and political issues. Further research on satirical literature; More studies should explore how satire influences public opinion and political consciousness; Future research should compare Rotimi's satire with other African and global satirical works to understand the broader impact of political comedy. Universities should encourage students to analyse satire as a literary device that can drive social and political change.

References

- Rotimi O.1977. *Our husband has gone mad again*, Oxford, University Press.
1971. *The gods are not to blame*, London, Oxford University Press.
- Reinehart and Wiston.,1981. Abrams, H.M. A Glossary of Literary Terms: Lon- don: Holt
- Ibadan: Long- mans Nigeria Led., 1985. Osofisan, Femi. *Midnight Hotel, Morountodun* in
- Morountodum and Other Plays*. Barnet, Sylvani: Eds.
- Little Brown and Boston, 1972. Berman Morton; Burton William. *Type of Drama, plays and*
- Essays*. Bos- ton: Armah, Ayi Kwei, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Boston:
- Houghton, Mifflin, 1968 (ASIN: B000JV2N50).
- Soyinka, Wole, *The Trials of Brother Jero*, in *Collected Plays 2*, Oxford University Press, 1974,
- pp. 143-71.
- A play of giants*, Oxford university press Methuen; 1st edition (September 1, 1984)
- 041355290X
- George Orwell *Animal farm* (Secker and Warburg, London, England university press, 1945
- PR6029.R8 A63 2003b.