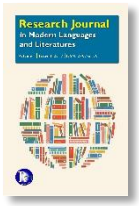

Functions of Secondary Texts in the Depiction of Characters in Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and The Jewel* and Olarotimi's *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi*

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Abstract

Drama texts have both dramatic and narrative elements, which are presented in the primary and secondary texts of a written play. This study examines the narrative role of the secondary dramatic texts in the portrayal of characters in Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* and Ola Rotimi's *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi*. The study adopts the School of Poetic Drama's theory of Narratology to explore the narrative function of secondary texts in written drama. Through a textual analysis of the secondary texts of the two plays, the study has shown that stage directions, speech prefixes, stage props and stage set, expose deeper dimensions to characters' actions and reactions in the selected plays. It concludes that, close reading and interpretation of the secondary texts in the plays provides important information on character development, motives and traits, which contribute to in-depth understanding on the characters. The study contributes to existing knowledge on characterization, which are based essentially on the primary texts of the plays.

Keywords: character, drama, narrative function, secondary texts

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1.0 Introduction

The original word in ancient Greek for drama means 'action', therefore, drama, as a literary form is designed to be performed. This is also evident in Aristotle's analysis of classical tragedy as purely a text to be acted on stage, in his *Poetics*. However, since plays are written for performance, a play is important in its written form and the reading experience is significant as well. Written drama has been variously analysed for its dramatic conventions. According to Manfred Jahn, "In the framework of reading drama . . . dramatic text and dramatic performance though related are media in their own right. . ." (668). He points out that "a play's text must be used as . . . a recipe for performance, containing instructions by the playwright" (672). In drama, stage performance offers the audience a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic elements that promote understanding and interpretation of the drama. Information is primarily provided linguistically through characters' actions and utterances, such as dialogue, monologue and soliloquy, or through the meditative function of a narrator, aside or chorus. Information is also provided through sensory medium of voice pitch and tone. Non–linguistically, the audience relies on music, sounds effects, lighting and gestures for understanding and interpretations. Reading, on the other hand, offers a different experience since it draws upon the primary medium of the play as a text. Lethbridge and Mildorf have pointed out that the way information is conveyed and how much information is given are important things to note in drama analysis (95). The written play, like the stage performance, consists of the various forms of direct utterances by characters as well as authorial commentaries, such as stage direction, speech prefixes, stage props and stage set. Roman Ingarden proposed the popular idea that the verbalised dramatic text is the main text while the authorial commentary is the secondary text (Quoted in De Toro 43). According to Ingarden, quoted in Tornqvist, the primary text (Hauptext) includes everything that is verbalised on the stage, while the secondary text (Nebelltext) is stage and acting directions. The secondary text performs the function of providing the reader with the needed information for deeper understanding and interpretations, since the written text is void of audio and visual properties. Secondary text gives information about time, place, scene descriptions, characters' physical appearance, feelings, personality, tone of voice, movements, actions and even inactions. Secondary texts provide important information on the characters, who carry the plot of a drama.

This study does not seek to establish the significance of a play as a written text as opposed to being a performance. While this argument has been subjected to a wide range of hypotheses that may require further studies, it is not the focus of the study. This study

aims to identify the function of secondary text, which has not received adequate attention in critical studies in drama. This study has the primary objective of examining the characters as portrayed in the secondary texts of the selected plays. The drama texts selected for the study are not new drama texts. *The Lion and the Jewel* was first published in 1963, and *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi* was published in 1974. Both books have been subjected to numerous criticisms and evaluations. They have however been carefully selected for the purpose of this study. Based on the fact that several studies have been carried out using the books, they will provide the background for the argument that the function of secondary texts has not been given the attention it deserves in studies on drama, particularly in Nigerian literary studies.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

The theory that has been adopted for the study is the narratological approach. Narratology traditionally, is a theory of narrative texts. Developments in postclassical narratology have led to new use of narratological theories in drama. Popular proponents of narratology include Gerard genette, Segmour Chatman, Biran Richardson, Manfred Jahn and Monika Fludernik. Chatman has emphasised the narrative nature of drama and the applicability of narratology. Narratology of drama has been discussed from a variety of perspectives. The School of Poetic Drama prioritizes the drama text. They regard the actual performance as abounding in shortcomings while the reading experience is considered to be rewarding. Their "interpretive strategy is a close reading, which aims at bringing out the dramatic works full aesthetic quality and richness" (Jahn 662). Another School of thought, the School of Theatre Studies, however privileges the performance over the text, since a play's text is intended to be performed, thus the performed play is "the only relevant and worthwhile form of the genre" (Jahn 662). The School of Reading Drama however, "envisages an ideal theatre goer . . . . Its interpretative strategies include performance-oriented textual analysis" (Jahn 663). This study adopts the School of Poetic Drama's theoretical postulation. The theory is appropriate for the study because its concept of close reading for aesthetic value of drama texts will provide the needed framework for analysing the interpretive function of the secondary texts in the plays selected for the study. An evaluation of changes in characters and motivation for characters' actions, as well as significant physical and personality descriptions of characters as portrayed in the secondary texts is the framework for analysis.

3.0 Methodology

To establish how secondary dramatic texts provide information on characters in *The Lion and the Jewel* and *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi*, the secondary texts in each play were written

down as the unit of analysis for the study. Secondary texts in drama texts are usually represented by italicized fonts and brackets. Through a textual analysis of details such as characters' actions, appearance, reactions, as well as stage props and set in the secondary texts, the evaluation of characters in the two plays is carried out. Only the materials taken from the unit of analysis will be used for direct illustration and quotations in the interpretations of the secondary texts.

3.1 Theoretical Antecedents

Narratologists have different opinions about the narratoloy of drama. Gerard Genette has posited that because drama lacks a narrator's discourse and voice, it is a non-narrative medium and that "it is the story dimension of drama, at best, that admits of narratological analysis" (quoted in Jahn 668). According to Genette, in stage direction, the statement, "Hermani removes his coat", is simply the author's description of the character's behaviour. In a similar argument, John Searle has viewed stage direction, for instance, as having "purely directive illocutionary status", that is, instructions on how to perform a play (quoted in Jahn 667). Chatman, as cited in Jahn, has refutted Genette's exposition. Chatman argues that the statement, "Hermani removes his coat", is "a process statement", thus, it is narrative (or diegetic). Jahn agrees with Chatman's view that "Hermani is the textually manifest subject of the narrative discourse" (668); the author is simply the originator of the text. Jahn's position is based on the assumption that, a narrator, not the playwright is "the enunciating subject of the stage directions" (668). Also, in the light of Searle's proposition on the purely illocutionary status of stage directions, Jahn asserts that this is the way stage directions are understood by actors and directors. In his Reading-Drama model, which is text-centred, as opposed to performance-centred, Jahn argues that, to ordinary readers who are not stage practitioners, stage direction is not an instruction to the performer; it is, for instance, a description of characters' behaviour (667). Jahn has described stage directions as speech prefixes. He points out their narrative function, using Chatman's proposition that "there is no difference between a sentence in a novel like, "John left the room" and the playwright's instruction to an actor to exit stage left. To Jahn therefore, stage direction serves more of narrative function than descriptive. Monika Fludernick has argued that narration is present in drama. (quoted in Dahlgren 173). It is in the same vein that Ansgar Nunning and Roy Sommer have posited that there are diegetic narrative elements in drama, as distinct from mimesis (Dahlgren 173). Lethbridge and Mildorf are of the view that when there are no narrative elements, information is conveyed verbally or non-verbally through

props, costumes and the stage set. According to them, the secondary text of a drama provides a reader with first-hand information on characters' looks, how they act, and react or speak, as well as the type of setting that forms the background to a scene (90). Lethbridge and Mildorf have also stated that the setting can serve the purpose of "indirect characterisation", which gives the reader a better understanding of the characters' behaviour (104).

3.2 Literary Antecedents

The function of the narrator in drama is not a new subject of studies in drama. In a study of Tenesee Williams plays, Nancy Anne Cluck has identified that Williams's drama has disguised and undisguised narrators, and that the persona of the stage direction supplies additional information, comments on action and theme (89). The works available on characterization on *The Lion and the Jewel* and *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi* have relied, essentially, on the primary texts of the plays. Usman Ambu Muhammad has evaluated Soyinka's distortion of female image in the light of feminism from the African perspective. Mekwanent, on the other hand, has analysed character relationship, with focus on dramatic dialogue in the play. Since its publication several years ago, up to recent times, several studies have been undertaken to establish an understanding on the character of Oba Ovonramwen in Rotimi's play. Sam Ukala has argued in support of earlier views on the not-so-pleasing portrayal of the character of Ovonramen Nogbaisi as a tragic hero and has concluded that Rotimi has failed to project collective Heroism (24). Anyoku Christopher, on the contrary, has rejected the conventional reading of Rotimi's tragedies as tragedies of "individual heroism of Aristotelian paradigm" and has insisted that chiefs and warriors in the play are dimensions of the psychic, martial, intellectual and philosophical dimensions of the character of Ovonramwen; therefore, "the King functioned in the collective sense of people persona" (83). In a different light, a syntactic – semantic analysis by Okanlawon and Akinmade has shown that appositive noun phrase plays an important part in the changing relationship between characters and the presentation of conflict in the play (40). In the light of the expositions reviewed above, this study has identified the significance of narration in drama. It has also established that the information used for studies on characterization in the two selected plays have been mostly accessed through the primary texts of the plays. Using *The Lion and the Jewel* and *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi,* this study takes on the proposition that the secondary texts of drama provide information that give deeper understanding on the characters beyond the primary texts.

4.0 Data Analysis

To answer the research questions that have been raised in this study, a narratological analysis of the secondary texts in *The Lion and the Jewel* and *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi* will be done to establish the extent to which stage direction, speech prefixes, stage props and stage set provide a reader with first-hand information on characters (Lethbridge and Mildorf 90).

4.1 The Lion and the Jewel

Lakunle:

The description of Lakunle, the school teacher at his first appearance is presented through a secondary text, which provides significant insight into his character. His face "appears at the window" and then he 'disappears' only to 'reappear' below the window "and make for Sidi. He gives two of his pupils "admonishing whacks on the head before they can duck", for making "a buzzing noise at Sidi". "The schoolmaster is nearly twenty-three (1). The picture one immediately gets is that of an impulsive and distracted young man. His impulsive and distracted nature is evident all through the text. For instance he "seizes the pail from Sidi and some water spills on him" (1). There is also significance in the description of Lakunle's dressing in the opening scene of the play. Lakunle's "old-style English suit", which is "threadbare but not ragged, clean but not ironed" draws attention to his economic status. The reader can conclude that his refusal to pay the bride price is not entirely because he considers it an outdated custom. In another scene, he "bounds forward dropping the wood" he was carrying for Sidi (19). Later we see him as he "rushes out after the procession and returns to fetch the discarded firewood" (26). Another important trait to note is that Lakunle can be many things at the same time, and ultimately he is an unstable young man. His erratic behaviour is seen how, almost simultaneously, he is "instantly soulful" (6) and tender, (8); he speaks both "wearily" and "violently" then again "changes his tone to a soulful one . . ." (9). It is therefore not surprising when Lakunle, who has relentlessly wooed Sidi, quickly accepts her rejection of him. As soon as a young girl at Sidi's bridal dance flaunts her dancing buttocks at him, he rises to the bait and is "last seen . . . clearing a space in the crowd for the young girl (64).

Sidi:

Sidi goes through a series of transformation in the play. She starts out as the simple pretty village girl. She "enters from left, carrying a small pail of water on her head . . . balances the pail on her head with accustomed ease. Around her is wrapped the familiar broad cloth which is folded just above her breasts, leaving the shoulders bare" (1). This

description of Sidi shows that she is graceful and beautiful, but nothing indicates that she is conscious of it. However we see a different Sidi after she sees her pictures in the magazines. She becomes exceedingly excited and proud: she excitedly "caresses the page". It is in this state of excitement that she runs off "gleefully" to taunt Baroka for his impotence (35). This excitement is seen throughout her conversation with Baroka (44). On page 19, Sidi is "happily engrossed in the pictures of herslf in the magazine" (19). She "runs her hand over the surface of the relevant parts of the photographs tracing the contours with her finger" (22). In her self-consciousness, she "unconsciously pushes out her chest" and "smiles mischievously" (22). By "night" time of the play, Sidi is still seen standing "by the schoolroom window admiring the photos as before" (32). Baroka succeeds with his plans to have her, by preying on her pride. When he promises to have her beautiful face on stamps, "Sidi drowns herself totally in the contemplation, takes the magazine but does not even look at it, and "sits on the bed" (51).

Another important thing to note about Sidi's is that Lakunle has never really stood a chance with her because she has never taken him seriously. While Lakunle rants on about his western ideas, Sidi is "attentive no more" and is "deeply engrossed in counting the beads on her neck" (8). She is also seen "plunging into an enjoyment of Lakunle's misery" (12). The fact that she does think highly of him or his education is revealed in the way she "points contemptuously to the school" (18). After her encounter with Baroka, Sidi's contempt for Lakunle becomes stronger. When he comes to her, she "pushes him so hard that he sits down abruptly" (58). When Lakunle tries to stop her from moving to Baroka's house to become one of his wives, Sidi "gives him a shove that sits him down again, hard against the tree based" (63). The setting of the scene at Baroka's house provides a better understanding of Sidi's character. The purpose the setting serves is what Lethbridge and Mildorf have described as "indirect characterisation" (104). From the moment she enters the palace, Sidi is psychologically conquered by Baroka long before the final physical conquest. She is seen entering "nearly backwards, as she is still busy admiring the room through which she just passed" (38). Apart from the effect of the setting on Sidi, she is also repeatedly intimidated by Baroka. She hesitates and has her "eyes to the floor, but she darts "a quick look up when she thinks the Bale isn't looking" (40). He is able to make her turn away, "very hurt" and "she is easily cowed by Baroka's change of mood . . ." (42). By the time Baroka has succeeded in convincing her that he has some big plans to make her popular, "Sidi is capable only of a bewildered nod . . ." and "a tearful nod". And finally, "Sidi's head falls slowly on the Bale's shoulder" (53-54).

Baroka:

Baroka is given a rather impressive description in the play. He is "wiry, goateed, tougher than his sixty-two years" (1). We further see him in "baggy trousers, calf length" in bed and his room has "weapons round the wall . . ." (26). Even at his age, Baroka engages "in a kind of wrestling" with a man who is a ". . . figure of apparent muscular power" (38). When Sidi refers to him as being old, in reaction, "with a sudden burst of angry energy, Baroka lifts his opponent and throws him over his shoulder" (44). Baroka's desperate effort to get Sidi is seen more in the various descriptions of his actions and reactions than in what he says in the play. From the onset he "admires" "the heroine of the publication (18). Later in his bedroom he ". . . reaches down the side, and comes up with a copy of the magazine. Opens it and begins to study the pictures. He heaves a long sigh" (28). After he has succeeded at getting her to let down her guards, he "goes progressive towards Sidi, until he bends over her then sits beside her on the bed" (52). Baroka initially "sighs" with "hands folded piously on his lap", then he "pats her kindly on the head" (53). He "remains in his final body-weighed-down-by-burdens-of-state attitude", even after "Sidi's head falls slowly on the Bale's shoulder" (54).

Sadiku:

The secondary texts that describe Sadiku, the Bale's senior wife, offer two different portrayals of her character. Sadiku is referred to as "an old woman" (19). She "goes down on her knees at once and bows her head into her lap" as soon as she comes into her husband's presence (27). However, when she is tricked into thinking that Baroka has become impotent, the reader sees a personality that depicts anything but old or content with her subservience. Sadiku bursts into derisive laughter at the carved image of the Bale, "naked and in full detail". She sets it "standing in front of the tree and her laughter is "ghoulish" (32). "With a yell, she leaps up" and "begins to dance round the tree chanting . . ." (32). She dances, laughs and leaps repeatedly and energetically in celebration of Baroka's conquest.

4.2 Ovonramwen Nogbaisi

Oba Ovonramwen Nogbaisi:

The development of the character of Ovonramwen, the Oba of Benin, with the plot of the story is portrayed in a number of secondary texts of the play. The secondary texts that illustrate this have served more than "directive illocutionary status"; they are what Chatman has described as "process statements" (Jahn 667-668). They reveal the process of the Oba's transformation. At the beginning of the play, the Oba appears on stage, "Right hand resting on the left shoulder of the royal page that is bearing the 'ada' (royal schemiter). "The Oba is supported at each arm by two chiefs" (4). At this point of the play,

the support the Oba receives bears a significance of his royalty, power and authority. The Oba is totally in charge and the support bears a dignifying relevance. It is with dignity that he "disengages himself from his supporters and strides unrushed toward the prisoner", glowering down at them (4). This point of view is affirmed in the way Ovonramwen's support begins to takes on a different significance as the play progresses. When his chiefs return "carrying decapitated heads of white men" as "trophies" to the Oba, He appears, as usual, supported by Iyase and Osodin…." (37). When the gravity of the woe that awaits his Kingdom dawns on him, he began to sway dizzily . . . and leans heavily on his supports . . ." (37). After his speech, he is "helped out" (37).

From this point, the image of the Oba is that of one who relies on the support of his chiefs, not only physically, but emotionally. This is seen clearly during the Oba's surrender to Consul- General Moor and Acting Resident Roupell. "Aided by some of his chiefs, he is led forward, stopping about mid distance from Roupell" (53). They give him their support by "gathering around" him (53). The chiefs plead on their Oba's behalf but when it becomes evident that he has to pay obeisance to the Queen of England, they turn their faces away, shaken, after which they "support him gently back to his stool" (54). By the end of the play, Ovonramwen hides in the bush and at this point, he no longer receives any physical support and no longer seems to rely on anyone for it. He and Uzazakpo, his court jester, act as support for each other. When they hear a "terrifying thud" from their hide out and Uzazakpo "starts rising up, slowly, cautiously" (68), Ovonramwen reacts by "jerking him back" the first time and later he "pulls him back again and down to a crouch." (68). Ovonramwen also "lowers himself to a sitting position" and when Uzazakpo offers to carry him on his back, the Oba declines and simply seeks help with rising to his feet, as he "holds out a hand to Uzazakpo who takes it, pulling him up (71).

Through various instances of the stage directions and speech prefixes, which serve narrative function in the description of behaviour (Jahn 667), the different personality traits of Ovonramwen are revealed. The Oba is seen to be proud, irritable and at the same time fearful. In Act 1 scene 1, when he interrogates the two chiefs who have murdered his chief adviser, he is angry and "emotional". The Isikhien have to "sing to placate the Oba" (5). He faces Roupell with "subdued anger" during the interrogation that follows his surrender. At one point "he rises aggressively, chiefs Iyase and Osodin come closer and restrained him" (52). Ovonramwen however expresses fear and helplessness following the Ifa Priest's divination. He is "visibly shaken" as he rises and moves away a couple of paces" (15). He "is lost in thought" and talks to himself "absently" (16). When his chiefs suggest taking war to the white man, Ovonramwen speaks to the chiefs with a voice that

rises "with emotion", "himself unconvinced of the wisdom of his very stance" and his words become "softer" (34). He "retires into privacy, leaving the chiefs to deliberate among themselves" (35). Ovonramwen does not take a stand. His helplessness and confusion is further revealed after the conquest of Benin by the Whiteman. He rises "dreamily" and talks to himself, unable to listen to Osodin and Ezomo's urging for him to run away. Finally, "Absently, Ovonramwen descends the dias and follows Uzazakpo still muttering" (44).

In spite of the fact that the Oba is visibly shaken by the priest's divination of the impending bloodshed in the kingdom, he has continued to exhibit a high degree of pride and self-worth. His response to the Queen's emissaries, Gallwey and Hutton does not only reflect mistrust but portrays the Oba as a very proud man. He does not take the frame portrait or the inflated tube they offer him (17 and 18). Even during his trial, "all except Ovonramwen rise automatically in deference to Moor's presence" (54). At the end of the scene, despite the humiliation of paying obeisance to the queen, he "rises proudly", "Dons his crown and strides off with dignity" (62). At the end of the play, after he is discovered in his hideout, Ovonramwen is "stoically calm" as he "rises slowly from the debris of the crashed hut" (76).

The Whiteman:

Through the stage directions, stage props and settings, the White men in the play are depicted in three different ways; they are thus studied collectively in the three categories under which the different characters fall. Hutton and Gallwey adopt a diplomatic approach towards achieving their purpose of establishing British rule in the kingdom. They have had to be subjected to the Oba's rejection of their Queen's gifts. The Oba gestures Gallwey "to move backward so as to allow for better appraisal from his vantage point", "to come forward to about mid- distance" to enable him study the portrait more closely, then "to the right", to "come closer" and finally their scroll is returned to them(18). Both Gallwey and Hutton are "embarrassed" and "silent" at the King's biting remarks (19). "Gallway jerks up his head in utter bewilderment", shocked that the Oba has not signed the trade treaty (19). However, the way Gallwey "caustically" responds to the Oba before their departure foreshadows the events that follow. After Hutton and Gallwey, Acting Consul-General Philips comes. Philips comes in a procession, with African porters bearing some luggage (28). Unlike the seeming humility of Hutton and Gallwey, the Whiteman comes with boldness on this second visit. Consul General Philips also insists on entering Benin and sends his "swagger stick" to the Oba to announce his intentions (32). It is also important to note that this time around, the Whiteman has the allegiance of some Benin men such as Idiaghe, who runs off to deliver Moor's message to the Oba,

after Moor "hands him his swagger-stick and pats "him on the back" (32). The murder of Acting Consul-General Philip brings British plan of an occupation to its climax and ushers in the next group of white men. This last group comes out in plain terms to declare Benin an extension of the Queen's territory, carrying out a forceful military invasion. Consul-General Moor faces Ologbosere in a physical combat "bearing the British flag flown from a medium – length pole" (39). The consul general makes the ultimate goal of the white man clear in the following narrative secondary text on page 45;

> Consul Moor, accompanied by other British officers, Roupell and Rawson, rush in, heading directly for Ovonramwen's throne. They ransack the general area greedily removing elephant tusk, carvings and bronze work from the palace shrine.
> Officer and Plantoon charge out again, rifles at the ready General Moor, Resident Roupell and Admiral Rawson begin to leave, furtively over – burdened by the looted treasures.

The Whiteman's success at intimidating and subduing those who have resisted them is seen in the way their "soldiers hustle chiefs roughly together, and start tying them up at the wrists and ankles". Roupell jerks "Ezomo towards him" and prods his ribs with a pistol" to make him disclose Ovonramwen's whereabouts (67).

The Chiefs:

The chiefs of Benin Kingdom represent different things to the Kingdom and to the Oba at different points: support, courage, faith, loyalty, cowardice and treachery. As pointed out earlier, the chiefs physically support the Oba on several occasions. They are however confronted by "displeasure, disbelief and wounded pride" (34) when the Oba speaks of caution. These loyal subjects therefore decide to defend their kingdom. Okavbiobge has earlier confronted Philip and his entourage "with hostility" (29). He is also angry at his fellow Benin men who are in the company of the Whiteman. He "charges "aggressively at the porters who scamper off his path" (31). Ologbosere, the warlord, in a show of enthusiasm for their cause, despite the fact that he is "numbed by the awareness of the profound charge that is now formally his", he willingly bears the "ada", the symbol of the Benin Empire (41). He leads the fight against the Whiteman. Furthermore, after "Uso, Obayuwana and Obakhavbaye each picks up a pole with a white man's head" "Ologbosere gathers the remaining four together and bears them in a bunch on his shoulders…" (37). He faces the enemy bravely but "takes to his heels" when he loses ground (43). Obayuwana on his part, after their defeat, "whips out a dagger from under the folds of his girdle" and "stabs himself" (61). The attitude of some of the chiefs begins to change

as pressure mounts. As Osodin and Obaseki are "waiting expectantly, presently, Acting–Resident Roupell comes in, and the chiefs greet him respectfully", they talk "uneasily", "fidget briefly", "hesitate" and "hurry out" (49-50). Out of fear of the Whiteman, the actions of some of these chiefs finally turn to outright betrayal. At the end of the play, while Ovonramwen sleeps in his hideout, Chief Ezomo appears "at the head of a coterie of armed British soldiers under the command of Acting Resident Roupell" and "with a nod of the head, Ezomo indicates to the soldiers the location of the hut, then withdraws" (75).

5.0 Conclusion

This study has set out to answer the questions on how effectively secondary texts perform the narrative function of providing information on characters in Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* and Ola Rotimi's *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi*. The narratological approach to drama has been suitably adopted for the evaluation of the selected plays through an analysis of the secondary texts to examine how characters are depicted. The study has found that a close reading of the various character and scene descriptions in the stage directions, speech prefixes, stage props and stage set, serve more than directive functions in the plays. They provide insight into motives, actions and the development of characters. The development of the character of Oba Ovonramwen Nogbaisi is seen in the movement from that of the obligatory support he relies on from his subjects, to his emotional needs, His strength and weakness are also revealed in the description of his response to situations throughout the conflict and finally the Oba is able to stand alone. The character traits of the white men that are identified in the secondary text have also shown the different strategies of false humility, deception and outright aggression, which they have employed in their quest for domination. The study also identifies the personality traits of the chiefs of Benin kingdom, as well as the changes that take place within the Oba's council as the conflict rises. In *The Lion and the Jewel* the secondary text pointedly illustrate Lakunle's impulsiveness and his tendencies to be generally erratic. Sidi's transformation is brought to the fore through vivid description of the changes that take place in the once simple village belle. Baroka's cunning nature is more evident in the secondary texts, than in his words. The portrayal of Sadikiu, the Bale's first wife, as a character with dual personality is also supported with details in the secondary texts. The study concludes that when secondary texts in a play are examined closely, their narrative functions are identified. They also provide deeper insight into the development of characters, as well as significant character traits that contribute to general understanding of the play. The narratological analyses of the characters in the selected plays contribute

to the body of knowledge available on approaches to character analysis on the two plays. The study also recommends the adoption of similar approach in the analysis of themes.

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