

ABSTRACT

Convergence of many disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, religion, economics, gender studies, history and anthropology in literary scholarship points to blurred disciplinary boundaries and interconnectedness. This study was an examination of the intersection between classical Greek and African drama as mediated by notions of spirituality, justice and gender in selected plays of Sophocles, Euripides, Wole Soyinka and Ola Rotimi. The objectives of the study were to interrogate the role of spirituality and justice in making sense of kinship ties in selected classical Greek and African plays; to investigate the interplay between individualism and communitarianism in the depiction of notions of spirituality and justice in selected classical Greek and African plays; to analyse prophecy as trope of spirituality and justice in selected classical Greek and African plays; and to explore how Greek and African notions of spirituality and justice manifest in the portrayal of the female gender in selected classical Greek and African plays. The study set out to achieve its objectives using two theoretical approaches: Carl Jung, James Frazer and Northrop Frye's archetypal literary theory and Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic literary theory. Studies on spirituality and justice, dramatic adaptations, classical Greek drama, classical dramatists' plays, African drama, and the dramaturgy of Wole Soyinka and Ola Rotimi were reviewed to expose research gaps. The literature review revealed that no study had been done to explore the interface between classical and African drama from the dimensions of spirituality, justice and gender. The study used purposive sampling to select texts which were examined. Close textual reading was used to collect data from primary and secondary texts. Content analysis was used to interpret and analyse data from primary and secondary sources. In the study's exploration of the role of spirituality and justice in making sense of kinship ties, the study found out that aspects of spirituality and justice fostered and destabilised ties among family members, leaders and marginalised demographics in the society. In regard to individualism and communitarianism, the study made the finding that self-centredness of deities and political leadership act as enablers and hindrances to social justice. The study also made a finding that prophecy plays a great role in examining the discourse on spirituality and justice in Greek and African drama. In the study's analysis of the relationship between deities and female characters, it was found that gods and goddesses enhance marginalisation and oppression of women in the society while at the same time, empowering them. The study draws the conclusion that there is an interface between classical Greek and African drama in regard to the similar manner in which the two dramatic traditions grapple with notions of spirituality, justice and gender. The current study's approach gives a fresh reading to Sophocles, Euripides, Ola Rotimi and Wole Soyinka's tragedies by adding to the interpretation of the metaphysical dimension of the plays. The findings of the present study enrich the discourse on intertextuality in literary studies. The study's findings are also beneficial to literary critics, literary theorists and students of literature because they provide invaluable information on the place of intertextuality in literary scholarship. The study is useful to literary scholarship because by exploring points of convergence and divergence in the manner classical Greek and African drama reflect notions of spirituality, justice and gender, new insights on levels of interconnectedness between classical Greek and African drama are gleaned.