

## Historical Representation in Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of the Delta*

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### **Abstract**

Literature and history are interwoven because the former is a product of the latter. Also, they have always shared a close relationship as portrayed in writers' works down the ages. Moreover, studies have shown that African literature thrives on historical happenings, either present, past or future; hence, historical representation is no new study. However, while much emphasis has been laid on prose and drama texts as narratives of history, little attention has been paid to poetry as historical narrations. This paper therefore, is a critical close reading of Ikiriko's poetry as a historical chronicle. It is born out of a need to recount the past which has affected the present, and threatens the future of the Niger Delta region. This paper employs new historicism as a theoretical model which emphasises that knowledge of the material and historical circumstances of the production of a text is essential to comprehending that text, because of its connection to the world that produced it. Therefore, a work of literature cannot be read as an autonomous entity. This paper is an attempt to establish literature as recourse to history. In other words, this paper aims at systematically investigating poetry as a representation of historical events.

**Keywords:** New historicism, historical representation, Ikiriko, literature, history