

# UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN



**THE ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY SIX (186<sup>th</sup>)  
INAUGURAL LECTURE**

## **“POETICS OF LEGISLATION AND DE-LEGISLATION ON PLAY DIRECTING”**

**By**

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### **Courtesies**

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Directors of Units,  
Heads of Departments,  
Members of Staff (Academic and Non-Academic),  
My Dear Wife and Children,  
My Lords Spiritual and Temporal,  
Distinguished Students of the Department of the Performing  
Arts,  
Great Students of the University of Ilorin, and our Sister  
Institutions,  
Gentlemen of the Press,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

### **The Pre-text and Cultural Mapping of my Identity in the Theatre World**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the performing artists are men and women of sublime characters working as the creative gatekeepers of our heritage. Indeed, they are our assertive and reflective cultural ambassadors. They also manifest and re-invent, materially and dialectically, the endless creative will of God, and present, in elegant or subversive form, the abundant activities of man.

Therefore, let there be no outpouring of emotion by those who read and are still reading the wrong side of books or spreading the abstract of illusion, and the absurd: the existence of the Almighty God is incontrovertible. God is the first artist, the uncreated excellent creator and the original designer of everything that can be found in the universe. As I respond to the trope of scholarship by presenting the fourth inaugural lecture from the most visible public Department in the University of Ilorin, the Department of the Performing Arts today, I give special thanks to the Almighty Allah, the Owner of the universe and the day of judgment for making this day a reality.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the symbolism of Banana in Yorùbá proverb is a love for words and caution that should not be ignored: *Ògèdè lórò tìkò bàgbó, enìkan kíbẹ*. Certainly, words that are not ripe should not be delivered. The inaugural lecture is like a ripe Banana; it confers on the lecturer the power to tell the whole world his or her tribulations, successes and achievements as the professorial chair is ultimately celebrated.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, I accept the fact that my predecessors in the Department of the Performing Arts, who had presented three inaugural lectures in the past – Late Professor (Mrs.) Zulu Şófólá (Dramatic Theory and Criticism), Professor Ayòbámi Olú Akínwálé (Sociology of Drama and Theatre) and Professor Àkànjí Nasiru (Dramatic Theory and Criticism) are all living elephants because of the timelessness of their scholarly works. As a Tiger, I cannot hunt in the same forest with them. However, I hunt extensively within the Postcolonial Theatre, which centres on cultural revival, deliberate fight against the oppressed and the marginalised, struggle for equitable distribution of national resources, bringing back lost memories and re-claiming ruins, and re-invention of relevant dramatic and theatrical conventions. In fact, I will simply allow my cock to crow slowly, noting that my small tree has its humble beginning from a small seed. Today's inaugural lecture is in the area of the Art of Play Directing, a special area in the Performing or Theatre

Arts. As you follow my journey through this inaugural, please note that there are so many meanings attached to names in Africa. If you come across Musa, Rasheed Abíòdún (my former name) and Adéoyè, AbdulRasheed Abíòdún (my new name) in this inaugural lecture, indulge me. I am the one who owns the two names. My research works bearing Musa, R. A. are evergreen like the ones I am currently doing as Adéoyè, A. A.

Consequently, I have tried as much as possible to do a cultural mapping and a brief historical assessment of my theatre career. This praxis of self-appraisal has, indeed, made me to conclude that: I am a product of the split image. First is the mutation of the flourishing Christian culture in which I learnt greatly from through Baptist Primary School, Kano, Nigeria that I attended. Kano also afforded me the great opportunity to practice and appreciate Islamic culture in which the theatricalities of Islamic songs and music, graceful but slow dance from children and other sub-texts necessarily increased my infant knowledge. Religious theatre, therefore, serves as my first musé of reality structured within the polemics of serious apprehension, configuration, characterisation, mischaracterisation and the contest for supremacy among my peers.

I was fully back to my root to grapple with the real omnibus African traditional humanism of several patrimonies and typologies in Òşun State for my secondary school education. I started early to create my literary identity through the understanding of various creative works, and their counter-narratives. Indeed, as a native intellectual at secondary school, my universe of arts only awaited a profound existence at the University. My five years' testimonial at Òşun, precisely Àgbéyè, the deeply rooted cultural town in Odò-Òtìn Local Government Area cannot be forgotten in haste. Certainly, I constructed my identity as a Postcolonial artist without understanding the narrative of Postcoloniality at Òşun because I watched, with extreme caution, all the traditional festivals and their forms: Ògún and Ìşípà Òḍe, Oya and the trance process, Òşun, Egúnḡún and others because of the fear of being consumed by the followers of these festivals. The entertainment

and functional values of these festivals were enticing but I feared the possession and their deeply ritualistic aspects. The questions were that: would all these “sinful or idolatry displays” not contradict my Islamic Religion? How can I kill the disease of my not knowing anything about my culture and weaning myself partly away from the appellation of “*Omọ Hausa*” or “*Omọ Malla*” (a child of Hausa man) that I am being called? How can I fight cultural illiteracy through the Yorùbá children theatre?

In reality, my arts, theatre and scholarship have helped me to break off from the “supposedly dangerous” aspects of the cultural hegemony that produced me. However, I am also a product of two serious hegemonic combinations that can be found in the expanding manifesto of Africanism: royalty and political power through the families of my mother and father. Palace songs and music, unstoppable punctuation of daily events with drumming, innocence of bridal wailings, crowning of important chiefs, poetic renditions and so on made me to appreciate the fact that the Yorùbá people are sophisticated and cannot be on trial when it comes to cultural liberation and religious tolerance in spite of their primordial differences through various cultural and artistic representations. Indeed, the transition of the Yorùbá people to the Postcolonial site of pluralism has helped them to succeed within the larger canvas of the Nigerian multicultural setting.

Interestingly, all that I appreciated at home pale into insignificance when compared with what I learnt at Òyó (the headquarters of various Yorùbá cultures) and Ìbàdàn (the cosmopolitan yet communalistic city of Yorùbá warriors) after my secondary school education. Ìlṛin city also galvanised my commitment and rekindled my hope in the survival of a multicultural society in Nigeria. Ìlṛin housed me, and from Ilé Olóbi at Ìta Kúdímóh, I had the opportunity to know the total essence of the progressive people of deep spiritual candour who, paradoxically, have no masquerade but use horse as masquerade. I did not change or look for any course; it was straight to the Department of the Performing Arts, University of Ilorin where



my university education started. I started the spirit of progressive unionism during my undergraduate days, becoming in the process, the President of Faculty of Arts Students Association and winning the Senate Award for the best Departmental graduating student of my set with Samuel Àmòó.

I served my nation, Nigeria at the University of Uyo for the National Youth Service Corps, and later, I was employed in the Department of Theatre Arts of the same Uni-Uyo. From Uyo, I came back to Unilorin where I have been lecturing since 1999. I also did my M.A. and Ph.D. (Theatre Arts) from the University of Ibadan, specialising in the Art of Play Directing.

#### **Four Related Macrobiotic and Vicarious Variables**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, four related, inspiring and important variables are important to this inaugural lecture. They are; the Poetics of Legislation, the Poetics of De-legislation, the Art of Play Directing and the Play Director. In essence, the four variables have produced dialectical roads that can lead to the house of macrobiotic foods. Just as macrobiotic foods (vegetables, grains, seeds, fruits and so on) remain natural and healthy to the human body because they have no chemicals, so also is the intellectual ambience of the four inspiring variables to this inaugural lecture.

To legislate is as simple as to make law. Presumably, legislation finds theoretical solace in rule, constitutionality, democracy, politics and the legal profession. Thus, the Poetics of Legislation is the configuration, the making of laws or rules to guide any work of art. Let us not forget that there is a contention that art cannot be legislated upon because of its aesthetic, moral, subjective, individualistic, philosophical and ideological values. I will, however, return to the core mantra or the manifesto of the Poetics of Legislation very soon and as it affects Play Directing.

To de-legislate, on the other hand, is an attempt to put a stop to, correct or provide a new legislation to an existing legislation. De-legislation is a counter-reaction to known law or a set of rules. In fact, contested or controversial legislation will, indeed, lead to de-legislation. The De-legislators in the Poetics

of De-legislation in the Humanities, generally, and in the Performing or Theatre Arts in particular, exist to provide fresh insights or critical alternatives to the celebrated works from the Legislators in their Poetics of Legislation. In this inaugural lecture, the character, duties and functions of the Play Director and his Art of Play Directing are interrogated along two reflective divides: the Legislators in their Poetics of Legislation and the De-legislators in their Poetics of De-legislation – all aimed at providing successful or artistic headway in performance articulation.

Play Directing is, arguably, the most important art of the theatre if performance articulation is considered. Play Directing is the organisation, management, interpretation, coordination and manipulation of human and material resources towards the sole purpose of creating an artistic whole for the audience. Play Directing is leading and it is teaching what to do. It is the artistic demonstration of what is being taught. It is communicating and it is the artistic visualisation of the thought process. It is analysing, picturising, projecting, observing, reflecting and revolutionising the performance process (Musa, 2001a and 2002).

The Play Director is the intelligent leader, the rounded artist, and the *primus inter pares* of the performance team, who cannot be pigeonholed because of the expanding nature of his duties and the numerous theatre conventions he has to work with and learn from. Furthermore, the Play Director is a confirmed ubiquitous personality, an artistic octopus with sprawling tentacles, who must be a willing collaborator with other theatre designers. Certainly, the Play Director is the accentuator and architect of the Postcolonial Theatre.

In fact, Play Directing started as an elitist art and in the annals of theatre history, Emperors, Dukes, Kings and Heads of States were the first set of theatre directors to emerge. A few among them also instructed other artists to direct plays for them. For example, it has been confirmed that King Usertsen, the III of Egypt, instructed the then interpretative artist, I-Kher-Nefert in 1887, to assemble performers for the production of the “Egyptian

Abydos Passion Plays” (Fort and Kates, 1935, p. 4). I-Kher-Nefet was thus seen as the first known director in that context.

Another essentially ignored historical context remains that of Julio-Claudian Roman Emperor Nero who reigned (AD 54-68) and was also reputed as “the first director in the modern sense of the word”. Zelenak (2003, p. 107) insists that, “Nero fancied himself a major ‘theatre artist’... He instituted his own theatre festival (the *Neronia*), presenting everything from visual spectacles, such as aquatic dramas (*naumachia*) on artificial lakes, to performance pieces representing lurid and aberrant sexual stories from mythology”.

Another King, George II, the Duke of Sax-Meiningen, did the needful on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1874 by becoming or making himself “the prototype of the modern director. As both head-of-state and head-of-his-own-theatre, he was uniquely empowered to create and enforce ‘unified’ production concepts in the staging of plays” (Zelenak, 2003, p. 107) through his Meiningen Court Theatre Troupe. Interestingly, theatre directors were seen as great teachers or instructors, the *Choregus* and later, the *Didaskalos*, in the formative period of the Greek theatre. The theatre director was accepted as a stage manager - the *conducteur de secrets* in the Medieval theatre while the theatre director was seen as a *maitre de jeu* - the brilliant play maker in the Middle Ages. In the Nigerian example, Play Directors and Play Directing are present in the literary, popular and indigenous traditions to define the Nigerian multicultural theatre (Musa, 2002).

### **African Performing Arts and Artists in the Amassing Literary Tradition of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The theatre is an inspiration for all positive things, and at the same time, a subversive instrument against corruption, illegality and irrationality. It is a weapon of development for the individuals and nations at large. The theatre is the lion in the house of Humanities that makes other academic courses to green with envy. The trade mark known as Hollywood remains a

success story in the making of the American economy. Indeed, it has been confirmed that it is the musical theatre that makes Houston Texas in the United States of America wild. It also gives direction to the Indian economy through Bollywood, and in spite of its present challenges, the Nollywood industry is defining the Nigerian economy.

In a research work on the theatre, Nigerian Prison and Prisoners, I have reflected on the dual image of the theatre, concluding that, the theatre has always been in the hot spot of avoidable and unavoidable criticisms (Musa, 2006a) by haters or people who see nothing good about the theatre profession. They can continue to expose their ignorance about the discipline of Performing or Theatre Arts that resides, in the critical evaluation of Umukoro (2010, p. 109), at the “curricular crossroads where humanities, education and sciences are in perpetual interaction”.

Apart from the above, Effiong Johnson insists that the artist is not inferior and that people should stop “reducing the entire syllabus of the course from one year to four to just ‘dancing’ and nothing else”. He also re-affirms the submission from Emeritus Professor Femi Osofisan that:

Theatre Arts is perhaps the most viable of all the courses in the Humanities...Here for instance is a sample list of the several fields of specialisation normally covered by our syllabus in Theatre Arts: Dramatic Literature and Theory, History and Sociology of Drama, Children’s Theatre and Creative Dramatics, The Media: TV, Radio, and Film/Video, Music and Sound Effects, Costume Design and Construction, Set Design and Construction, Make-up Design and Construction, Playwriting and Criticism, Play Directing (for stage, film and Radio), Acting, Mime and Movement, Dance and Choreography, Publicity and Theatre Business Management, Stage Management (Johnson, 2014, pp. 49-50).

The theatre is now playing important roles in the development of the Nigerian economy through Nollywood and others within the creative and cultural industries. Because the cultural economy of the Nollywood has improved, the Federal Government that has hitherto marginalised the theatre profession

is now gradually beating a retreat through series of interventions meant for the protection, promotion and development of the creative and cultural industries. Recently, Jake Bright, a Whitehead Fellow of Foreign Policy Association submits that Nollywood is the second largest movie industry in the world. He recalls that “in 2014, the Nigerian government released data for the first time showing Nollywood as a \$3.3 billion sector with 1,844 movies produced in 2013 alone” (Bright, 2015, p. 1). In 2016, 2017 and 2018, the following movies made their impact in the development of the Nigerian economy. They are the highest-grossing Nigerian movies:

**Table 1: List of Highest-grossing Nigerian movies (2019)**

S/N	Title	Year	Domestic Gross	Studio(s)	Director
1.	<i>The Wedding Party 2 – Destination Dubai</i>	2017	₦502,000,000	Ebonylife Films/Film One/Inkblot Production/ Konga Studios	Níyí Akínmọláyan
2.	<i>The Wedding Party</i>	2016	₦453,050,000	Ebonylife Films/Film One/Inkblot Production/ Konga Studios	Kẹ́mí Adétíba
3.	<i>Chief Daddy</i>	2018	₦387,028,949	Ebonylife Films	Níyí Akínmọláyan

Our scientists in the narrow-prejudiced school need to blow their ego with caution and be careful not to always condemn the theatre profession. This is because Qbáfẹ́mí (2017, p. 17) has also celebrated the Kẹ́mí Adétíba’s success stories in *The Wedding Party*, reflecting that the success stories explain why she was commissioned to produce *The Wedding Party 2*. We dare not forget that the movie is a literature in motion and in its profound practical realisation. Thus, Nollywood remains the most successful instrument of diplomacy, cultural retrieval, velvet revolution, identity formation, historical reflection and didacticism in Nigeria (Adéoyè, 2019, p. 1).

Consequently, the universe of the African theatre artists in the literary tradition of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is challenging. This is

because a committed African theatre artist will have to do so much to reflect on his own imagination within the contradiction of the public imagination extended to the digital and biological worlds. The phenomenon of nature is also his forte in spite of the impact of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution mostly consolidated by artificial intelligence. Whatever his choice is, he finds himself frequently romancing the subject of literature and or its genre that he likes. He has to also note the essence of art – its endless creative nature and its ability to re-create itself in different forms: transplantation, translation, transliteration, imitation and adaptation. For example, the import of adaptation should not be lost on us because it is the “art of deliberate re-rendering of an already existing work of art in a new form” (Adéoti, 2010, p. 9). Indeed, the courage of the African artist is unwavering even in the face of daunting local, national and global challenges, starring anger or calamity in the land. He often stands out as a great restorer of people’s hope and tradition. If the African artist, the confirmed town-crier, whose gong often pierces across all age grades, goes beyond his calling or crosses the carpet of artistic suicide to the capitalist theatre by singing for kings, praising and turning them to immortal beings through his performance, he, nonetheless, does this temporarily. To be permanent on this kind of theatre means that his king must be progressive and must run people’s oriented programmes. If his king fails (at least in most African countries), he risks being dethroned.

Since art has no permanent colour, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the discourse on the classification of the African living artists in the saturated literary tradition, whether as playwrights, poets, novelists, producers, directors and so on, can continue from the eight groups that I have carefully contextualised from different creative zones, engagements and silos. These are the:

1. ebullient beholders of myths, mores, ethics, folklores and individual ethos;

2. forerunners of *mass populi* in the aesthetics of popular struggle;
3. virtuous octopus moderators;
4. feminist anti-servitude legislators;
5. Euro-American-African comparatists;
6. *mutatis mutandis* in the renaissance-revivalist-decolonisers' gamut;
7. factionalist-deconstructionist's chroniclers; and
8. theatre for development's scenario builders.

J. P. Clark and Wólé Şóyínká, in particular, belong to the first category due to what many scholars perceived as “mythical tendencies”, “ritual aesthetics” and “the cultivation of obscurantism”. The second category of the African artists in the literary tradition consists of those who are involved in the taxonomy of massification. Ngugiwa Thiong’o, Althol Fugard, Fẹ́mi Ọsófisan, Bòdé Şówándé, Olú Ọbáfẹ́mi, Àkànjí Nasiru, Hussein Ebrahim and others are the standard sword bearers of the popular struggle’s group. The virtuous octopus moderators have many sprawling tentacles spread across different socio-cultural and ideological divides. They often balance the literary tension and tradition between the ebullient beholders and the forerunners of *mass populi*. In Nigeria, Ahmed Yerima, Bakare, Ọ́jó Rasaki, Alex Asigbo, Ọ́tún Rasheed and others are members of the virtuous octopus moderators, who have redefined the federal theatre of Nigeria through multicultural aesthetics.

The fourth category of African artists in the amassing literary tradition, the feminist anti-servitude legislators, are the promoters of feminist theatre and aesthetics in Africa. African playwrights and novelists such as Tess Onwueme, Flora Nwapa, Catherine Acholonu, Buchi Emecheta, Stella Oyèdépò, Mabel Ewrierhoma, Irene Sàlámì-Agúnlòyè, Julie Okoh, Charity Angya, Olúdq́lápò Ọ́jẹ́diran, Tósìn Tume and others have succeeded and encouraged ladies and women to regain their ‘suppressed’ voices in the consciousness that feminism offers.

The Euro-American-African comparatists are group of African artists led by Late Abíólá Ìrèlé, Bíódún Jéyifò and so on.

They attempt to universalise the African arts through their comparison with those of their counterparts in Europe and America. The *Mutatis Mutandis* in the renaissance-revivalist-decolonisers' gamut includes Ọlá Rótímí, Sam Ukala, Ayò Akínwálé, Emmy Unuja Idegu and other neo-African artists whose main concern is the rebirth of African lost glory, culture and history caused by colonialism and its rebirth in neo-colonialism. This has been partly reiterated by Babalọlá (2002, p. 10) who reflects that "the prime objective of the desired African renaissance is the transformation of the people or peoples of each African country into understanding modern societies".

The literary construct of the factionalist-deconstructionist's chroniclers is that they promote the use of Factionalism in historical works which created backlash and, at the same time, celebrated intertextuality in the Nigerian theatre. Yerima (2003, p. 190) has written extensively on *fact* and *fiction*, romancing Factionalism in the process. In fact, the intellectual war in the house of the theatre between Late Ọlá Rótímí and Ahmed Yerima on the authentic history of Oba Ovonramwen through their plays, *Ovonramwen N'ogbaisi* and *The Trials of Ovonramwen* respectively, remains evergreen in our memory. Bakare, Òjọ Rasaki and Late Ọlá Rótímí have also engaged in intellectual argument and what led to this is Ọlá Rótímí's *The gods are not to blame* and Bakare, Òjọ Rasaki's attempt at wanting to create a dance drama out of it. Whether it is fishing in literary shallow market or feeding on existing works, Ọlá Rótímí will not have his works bastardised through his notion of intellectual coup mentality while Ahmed Yerima and Bakare, Òjọ Rasaki are confirmed apostles of Jacques Derrida's deconstruction, patrons of intertextuality and defenders of audience-response or reception theory in their theatres. The last group in my classification is the theatre for development's scenario builders. The TfD tradition is a popular weapon used for conscientisation and it is rooted in taxonomy of mass appeal.



At this juncture, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, it is curious to note that a work of art or a creation of the artist can fall under what I termed *multiple and all in all ideology*. This is a situation where an artist's work, if properly scrutinised can lend itself to many ideological divides. A play can have political, economic and national ideologies, and such a play can easily be labelled or derided as Marxist, mythic, conservative, traditional, modern, contemporary and post-modern in the zero-sum game of *multiple and all in all ideology*. This is the situation with the third generation of Nigerian artists in the literary tradition.

The theatre in Africa is the totality of man's action and the topography of his inaction. It is about his eventful and uneventful "pasts" captured through the physical and spiritual levels of his essence. Thus, man's innate state of consciousness, which is a move away from unconsciousness, re-affirms the functionality of the theatre in Africa. Consequently, the renewed consciousness on the part of the African dramatist is as a result of bad government, corruption, unemployment, insecurity, social disequilibrium and the destruction of the dramatist's cultural values, which he has to fight. Whether through downward and or upward class suicide, the African dramatist in the theatre of political consciousness is thus seen as the *bridge-builder* by the masses, the oppressed "Others" or the vulnerable "Subalterns" and the *bridge-destroyer* by the oppressors or the hegemonic capitalists that the works of the *bridge-builder* hunt.

### **The Poetics of Legislation on Play Directing**

Some examples of legislations from the Legislators promoting the Poetics of Legislation against Play Directing should be instructional here:

- (1.) In 1938, Jacques Copeau, the father of modern theatre, is arguably, the first set of Legislators to legislate against Play Directing. He insists that we should "hope for a dramatist (dramaturge) who replaces or eliminates the director" (Zelenak, 2003, p. 105). This is a legislation that calls for the elimination of the director and his directorial art.

- (2.) The Copeaurian legislation above is amplified by his Postcolonial sympathiser, Michael Zelenak, who insists that “we don’t need directors” through his demystification:

It is time to abolish the director and return theatre to the dramatists...We do not have much to lose in our attempt to abolish the director. Theatre has become marginalised, elitised and trivialised to the point of irrelevance...Save us from the directors!...Let us destroy the parasitic directors and return theatre to the dramatists. Give us the theatre of Sophocles, Hroswitna, Shakespeare, Moliere, Glaspell and Ibsen (Zelenak, 2003, p. 108).

Frankly speaking, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Moliere and so on are gone with their theatres and it is curious why Michael Zelenak detests the director and his inventiveness.

- (3.) Writing and condemning credit-grabbing by credit-grabbers in the theatre, Arnold Wesker raises three questions in his clear legislation against Play Directing and Play Directors:

- (i.) “From where does the director obtain his license? Does a director have the right to rearrange or cut a writer’s text so that the play no longer communicating what the author wishes to communicate?”
- (ii.) “And we asked the question: can a director or actor interpret what is already an interpretation?”
- (iii.) “Or must we learn to live happily with the director as fascist?” (Wesker, 1988, pp. 68-75).

Arnold Wesker also extends his legislation of illusion on the Art of Play Directing by condemning Play Directors and ascribing superiority of intellectualism to playwrights, a group that he supports and belongs to:

The original play should be considered the primary work, the director’s production the secondary work. But a strange metamorphosis is taking place: the director is treating the play as *his* primary source, as *his* raw material to do with it as he fancies. The playwright endures the life and from it shapes a play; the director then robs, scavenges, rapes it (Wesker, 1988, p. 64).

- (4.) The suspicion about what some playwrights such as Jerzy Sito, David Edgar, Ivan Boldizar and Arnold Wesker termed

“directorial arrogance” and “diminishing importance of the playwrights’ plays” led to the Budapest Conference in June, 1979. These playwrights wrote what is known as the “Playwrights Manifesto”, “Blue Book” or the “Playwrights’ Ten Commandments”. The participants at the Conference agree that:

The director’s power can become a tyranny, stifling and inhibiting original creative work. The director’s profession is only a century old, the result of stage managers rising above themselves, as it were! Partly because of the imbalance between new and classical work, playwrights feel the director has achieved a position of power in the theatre that sometimes work against their interest. The living playwright is somewhat disconcerted to find himself undercut and pushed aside by his dead predecessors (Wesker, 1981, p. 9).

The 1979 Budapest Conference agreed to give to playwrights their values and worth but it indeed, ended as a Conference of conspiracy against theatre directors.

(5.) After the production of Signor Visconti’s play, *Old Times* at Teatro di Roma (Italy) in 1973, Harold Pinter, a renowned playwright showers encomium on the playwright of the *Old Times* and condemns the director:

It is certainly an inventive production. Signor Visconti has in fact invented a new play where major, significant and quite crucial pieces of action are introduced into a play by the director, without consultation with the author. Let me remind you that a play is not a public property, it belongs to its author (cited in Wesker, 1981, p. 9).

(6.) In 1985, Gerald Rabkin examines the anger of two playwrights; Arthur Miller and Samuel Beckett against the supposed “unauthorised and/or allegedly distorted productions” of their plays; *The Crucible* and *Endgame* respectively. The two plays were produced in 1983 and 1984 by the Wooster Group and American Repertory Theatre. It is important to appraise the legislation from Arthur Miller (recalled by Gerald Rabkin) who feels that the production of his play remains a “blatant parody” and he reflects sarcastically that, “I don’t want my play produced except in

total agreement with the way I wrote it...I am afraid people might see their version and not realise I never intended it to be staged that way” (Rabkin, 1985, p. 144). Samuel Beckett’s disgust has also been initially expressed in 1973 when *Endgame* was directed by Andre Gregory. He sees Gregory production as “a complete parody of the play”, “unacceptable” and that “the omnipresent massacre and abuse of directorial function” (Rabkin, 1985, p. 147) by directors can no longer be tolerated by playwrights who now seek legal/copyright protection for their plays.

- (7.) Peter Hall pulls a fast one in his push for the writer’s theatre as against the Postcolonial vision of the director’s theatre. Hall (1972, p. 7) submits that:

One way of preserving a piece of theatre is to write it down, whether it be in notes or in movements or in words. Write it down. If you improvise, write the words down, make the actors learn the words, make them try to act the words...I propose a writer’s theatre tonight...

- (8.) Examining “who should be the boss of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Theatre” among the playwright, director and actor in 2005, Effiong Johnson legislates on Play Directing by making the following propositions:

- (i.) “I am declaring that the playwright is the boss. He is the convener of event, the very reason for other professional to assemble”.
- (ii.) “Without the playwright and his script, on what would the director and his cast and crew base their construct? Would they build castles in the air?”
- (iii.) “...in a performance situation, the playwright is first, because the script dictates for the director, the actor, the designers and the audience. For this frontal and first place signification, the playwright is Boss on the performance floor” (Johnson, 2005, pp. 6-8).

Interestingly, Effiong Johnson’s writes from a balanced position and his de-legislations on Play Directing will be appraised soon.

Whether in 1938, 1972, 1973, 1979, 1981, 1985, 1988, 2003, 2005 and so on, the legislations against the play directors

by playwrights are real but essentially designed to relegate Play Directing and validate the supremacy of the playwright.

### **The Poetics of De-legislation on Play Directing**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, the Poetics of De-legislation rests squarely on the granite of counter-discourse, a Postcolonial perspective which offers us the opportunity to examine the interconnection between the creator or initiator of a work of art and the subsequent reactions, negations, reflections and counter-reactions to such work. The “second opinion”, “other people’s opinion” or a reaction to a misleading assumption on a work of art will allow for the “confrontation between constructed reality and its subversion” in which “cultural and historical change” (Terdiman, 1985, p. 13) cannot be overemphasised. This is because counter-discourse “does not seek to subvert the dominant with a view to taking its place” (Tiffin, 2000, p. 96).

The nature of Postcolonial Theatre has made textual interpretation of “a well-made-play” or “a closed text” to be contested by Play Directors and some examples below can be used to validate the manifesto of the De-legislators in their Poetics of De-legislation:

- (1.) Ronald Mitchell makes some critical reflections about the limitations of the playwright in the social process of the theatre in his support for the Poetics of De-legislation on Play Directing:
  - (i.) “In directing plays, one often wishes that the playwright, even the established and venerated playwright, had paid a little attention to how the thing was going to be staged”.
  - (ii.) “The playwright is going about like a bemused hen, laying eggs all over the place without the faintest notion of what is in them until an artistic director hatches them into fluffy marvels” (Mitchell, 1952, pp. 190-192).
- (2.) Gordon Craig, the supposed “spoilt child in artistic Europe” whose Craigian physical theatre has great design potentials in which Kenneth Tynan has researched on, concludes that: “the playwright was a destructive intruder in the theatre, and

was detracting from the person who really thought to be in charge, director...the playwright is somehow the enemy of the theatre” (Tynan, 1977, pp. 21-27).

- (3.) In a brief historical reflection, Reilly and Phillips (1998, pp. 117-118) have de-legislated upon the powers of the playwrights, insisting that whether they like it or not, the theatre from 1850 to date remains the director’s theatre. They conclude that, “the theatre of the past 150 years has on the whole, been a director’s theatre...The director came into existence as some who would impose the style upon the performance of a play”.
- (4.) Peter Brook also shares in the Cragian artistic vision and there is no speculation about his love for the theatre director in his artistic conceptions. He insists, dialectically, that the theatre director should play and act as the God of the theatre (Brook, 1968, p. 45).
- (5.) Condemning the slavish approach to Play Directing and de-legislating on the larger-than-life posture of the playwright, Kenneth Cameron and Theodore Hoffman reported by Johnson (2003, p. 68) warn that, “the playwright is only a novelist who chooses to work extensively with dialogue”.
- (6.) Writing on various numbers of modernisms, Kennedy (2005, pp. 37-39) insists that the director is “god-send to the theatre”, predicts “the death of the author”, examines “the managerial and aesthetic skills of the director” and also reflects that “it is modernity that shaped the director” while concluding optimistically that the theatre world awaits what Post-modernity will do to the director.
- (7.) Max Reinhardt, one of the makers of the modern theatre, affirms critically that, indeed, “you might say that the distinguishing mark of the modern stage had been, not the development of scenic decoration, but the emergence of the director” (cited in Cunning, 2005, p. 52).
- (8.) Effiong Johnson also de-legislates on the playwright’s legislation that if “the director does not interpret the playwright’s vision, the best of it would remain

moribund...the director becomes the boss on the performance by interpreting the vision of the playwright... the director convenes the events” (Johnson, 2005, pp. 14-15).

Thus, in 1952, 1968, 1977, 1998, 2003, 2005 and so on, theatre directors and scholars have defended the Art of Play Directing.

### **The Conceptual and Non-conceptual Aspects of Poetics of Legislation and De-legislation on Play Directing**

A careful consideration of the main themes and tendencies that define the Poetics of Legislation and De-legislation on Play Directing will show that most of the variables, arguments, sweeping criticisms and arrogance of pronouncements against the play director or the playwright bother on the conceptual as well as the non-conceptual aspects of the two poetics. A table is, therefore, necessary to foreground the contentions between the playwright and the director:

**Table 2: Poetics of Legislation versus Poetics of De-legislation on Play Directing**

<b>Poetics of Legislation on Play Directing (The Playwright’s Musé)</b>	<b>Poetics of De-legislation on Play Directing (The Director’s Counter-musé)</b>
Closed Text	Open Text
Poetic License	Artistic License
Personal Property	Public Property
Words	Actions
Playwright’s Intention	Director’s Theatrical Interpretation
Text (Textuality)	Performance (Performativity)
Textual Artist	Interpretative Artist
Supremacy of the Playwright	Supremacy of the Director
Theatre of Literature	Theatre of Performance
Author of Play-text	Author of Stage Production
Dominant-discourse	Counter-discourse
Textual Conservatism	Textual Revolution
Script of the Playwright	Script of the Director
Playwright-director	Writer-adaptor (Director-playwright)
A Well-made-play	Experimental Play or Script as a Mere Guide
Encounter	Experiment
Personal Vision	Public Vision
Writer’s Theatre (Playwright’s Theatre)	Director’s Theatre

The structure and superstructure of the Poetics of Legislation and De-legislation on Play Directing have produced interrelated texts. These texts have also emerged within the expanse of Postcolonial Theatre and their importance cannot be overemphasised. They are the written text, performance text, critical text, inter-text, metatext, hypertext and so on. However, my micro searchlight, especially as it concerns the Poetics of Legislation and De-legislation, has shown that three types of theatres are inevitable. They are; the actor's theatre, playwright's theatre and director's theatre while the text and the theatre can also be seen as two small silos if the expanding dynamics of performance is considered within the Postcolonial Theatre.

### **My Neo-alienation Style and Theatre**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, the superstructure of a theory remains its reconstructive ability while its second face value is its counter-discursive assertion (Adéoyè, 2018). Consequently, I have de-legislated upon the sentiments and misleading criticisms against the directors by the playwrights and others in the hypercritical school. I teach Play Directing and I have directed many plays within different theatre traditions. My first major spine of the Poetics of De-legislation on Play Directing is my new theatre that I created, which is known as Neo-alienation Style and Theatre.

My Neo-alienation Style and Theatre critically reinvents the ageless Bertolt Brecht's theatre and, at the same time, radically departs from it. We should not forget that the Brechtian theatre falls into the praise poetry of continuity, no magical thesis. Thus, the canonisation of the Brechtian theatre is because of its timelessness, romance with major global theatre styles, multiple but realistic dialectics of politics, eclecticism of social vision in spite of the numerous misbegotten notions, potent aesthetics and multicultural flexibilities. Therefore, the Neo-alienation Theatre is a new prototype of Afro-Brechtianism in which the narrative, rewriting and experimentation of the Brechtian philosophical and performance dialectics are



valourised into twelve aesthetic possibilities and projections. These are:

- (1.) The Aesthetics of Theme Song of Audience/Players' Systemic Fraternisation
- (2.) Multiple Role-playing Aesthetics
- (3.) The Aesthetics of Artistic Deconstruction
- (4.) The Aesthetics of Human Props and Demystification
- (5.) The Multiple Narrators' Aesthetics
- (6.) The Aesthetics of De-technicalisation
- (7.) On-the-Stage Make-up and Costuming Aesthetics
- (8.) The Aesthetics of Complete Instrumentation on Stage
- (9.) Photographic/Captions' Aesthetics
- (10.) The Modern Operatic Aesthetics
- (11.) Trado-modern Dance Aesthetics
- (12.) The Critical Recalling Curtain Call Aesthetics

These twelve directorial aesthetics under Neo-alienation Style and Theatre are workable and realistic theatrical aesthetics which prospective directors are free to experiment with (Musa, 2007a).

The Neo-alienation Style is a theatre of contrast and that which creates alternative vision in stage iconography. This performance dialectics, to all intents and purposes, relies heavily on the "theatre of performance" (Poetics of De-legislation) rather than "theatre of literature" (Poetics of Legislation) in which we have three types of audiences. The first are members of the conventional *primary audience* who will pay to watch the performance. The second are members of the *stage audience* who will stay permanently on the stage to engage in the activation and re-activation of many roles in the production. The *stage audience* will work with stage orchestra as communicators and curious silent listeners. The last in the group are members of the *player audience* who will join the primary audience to watch the performance, perform as members of the audience and come back to the stage to join the *stage audience*. Thus, members of the *player audience* would have navigated the three groups.

As a modification to Bertolt Brecht's alienation effect, the Neo-alienation Style aims at re-awakening audience sympathy and emotion towards theatrical and dramatic enactments. At the same time, the Style aesthetically calls on the

audience to participate, attach, familiarise and associate themselves with all the theatrical and dramatic enactments in the theatre *without losing* their sense of reason.

In the theatre of Neo-alienation, I call for association instead of disassociation. The Neo-alienation Style reworks the Brechtian alienation effect with theme songs such as, “Don’t alienate yourself”, “Believe our actors”, “Theatre is the house of truth”, and so on. In this theatre, there must be theatrical attractions and deliberate distractions, the metaphors, the conjectures and the radical demystification of conventions in which conservative, retrogressive and inartistic theatre rules are broken for a unique experimental performance.

Neo-alienation Theatre is pro-African as it aesthetically recreates the African festival theatre and remoulds the epic theatre of the Western world into one unique performance motif for creative artistic inclusion. Under the Neo-alienation Theatre, the artistic director is in total control of the theatre. He is expected to unify all theatrical activities into one unique performance without playing God as Peter Brook will want us to believe.

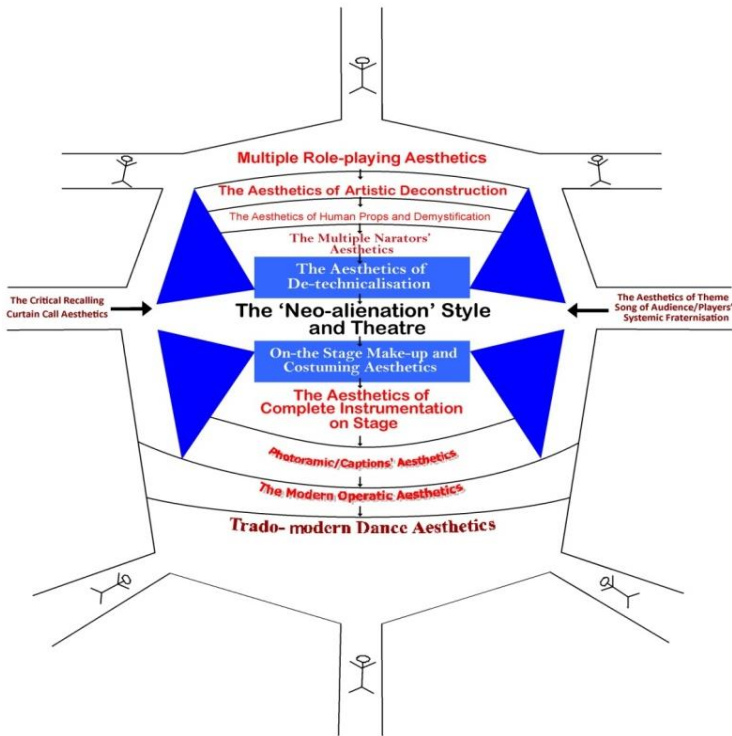
Neo-alienation Style is not a dirge for the death of dialogue for dialogue itself is the essence of the theatre. However, Neo-alienation Style is a theatre that gradually seeks for the decline of long dialogue or wordy plays in performance. This is a theatre which sees every spoken word as capable of numerous meanings. There is wisdom in the spoken word, a common refrain among Africans, but I must add that silence connotes many deeper meanings such as decision, indecision, against or in support of, and many more. In the theatre of Neo-alienation, pictures are not turned into rituals, but they must be arranged creatively with other physical actions such as nodding, frowning, smiling, weeping and fighting to achieve successful dramatic communication.

In my theatre, I am mostly concerned with pictures which should be aesthetically satisfying, artistically creative, didactically communicative, reflectively eclectic and culturally

celebrative. My creative pictures must advance the frontiers of language, query the irrational use of state power, command and speak truth to power, encourage the powerless or the ignored “Others” in the tropes of Counter-discourse and Subalternism, and my pictures must reduce the spoken words to a tolerable level. I see pictures as language, which is the essence of the theatre. In my Neo-alienation Style, theatre language must accommodate the main themes and tendencies in the semiotic field with positive inclination towards logonomic variables.

I know that imaginative metaphors pierce into human souls while other figures of speech created by playwrights are themselves superlative ingredients of the theatre. I still believe, and accept to make meaning out of the numerous assemblages of pictures. The theatrical potentials of every movement, every step, running, crawling, jumping, pulling, dribbling, pounding, fishing, farming, weaving, cooking, eating and so on must be meticulously blocked and imaginatively created in a theatre where every improvisation must be done with precision.

In the Neo-alienation Theatre, every creative experiment must reflect human essence and social ambience because nothing seems impossible. Figure 1 below is the diagrammatic representation of the twelve aesthetic projections of the Neo-alienation Style and Theatre:



**Figure 1: The Twelve Aesthetic Projections of Neo-alienation Style and Theatre (Musa, 2007a)**

The Neo-alienation Style and Theatre, my dramaturgical intervention on the Nigerian stage, has been used to produce Wólé Şóyínká's *The Lion and the Jewel*, *The Smart Game (A 'Neo-alienation Script')* written by me and other plays. I have also compared dramatic theatre and epic theatre with the Neo-alienation Style and Theatre, theorising in the process, on the double edge swords of dialectics in relation to the performance philosophy of African theatre, and the development brought to its literary tradition through the borrowed, reworked ideas, styles and dramaturgies of the saturated Western theatre.

The table below captures the relationship between Neo-alienation Style and Theatre, and Dramatic Theatre and Epic Theatre:

**Table 3: The Relationship between Neo-alienation Style and Theatre with Dramatic Theatre and Epic Theatre**

<b>Dramatic Theatre</b>	<b>Epic Theatre</b>	<b>Neo-alienation Style and Theatre</b>
Plot	Narrative	Multiple narration and a medley of modern and traditional African festival theatre forms
Implicates the spectator in a Stage situation	Turns the spectator into an Observer, but	Domesticates and turns the spectator into a participant
Wears down his capacity for action	Arouses his capacity for action	Makes him have a sense of belonging while reflecting
Provides him with sensations	Forces him to take decisions	Challenges him to join in the cycle of sensations and decisions
Experience	Picture of the world	Historicity and the dramatisation of life happenings
The spectator is involved in something	He is made to face something	He reacts realistically to actions that he sees and which he is part of
Suggestion	Argument	Argument and provision of solution to issues by the spectator
Instinctive feelings are preserved	Brought to the point of recognition	The collective spirit determines point of recognition
The spectator is in the thick of it,	The spectator stands outside,	The spectator sees himself in the performance and he is creatively and minimally involved in it
Shares the experience	Studies	Enjoys the experience and learns from it
The human being is taken for granted	The human being is the object of inquiry	The human being is in a period of interrogation. Other forces beyond him can also help in the interrogation
He is unalterable	He is alterable and able to alter	His situation can fluctuate-he can be alterable and systematically unalterable
Eyes on the	Eyes on the course	Eyes on the process and works for

finish		a good ending
One scene makes another	Each scene for itself	One scene stands alone and cyclically revolves round others for significant transformation
Growth	Montage	Aesthetically episodic
Linear development	In curves	Linear and simple dramatic developments
Evolutionary determinism	Jumps	Transformational and ideological
Man as a fixed point	Man as a process	Man in a process
Thought determines being	Social being determines thought	Combination of factors determine thought
Feeling	Reason	Minimal emotional involvement and intellectual stimulation of actor-audience relationship.

Musa (2007a) and Adéoyè (2009a) are my studies in which the manifesto and layout of the Neo-alienation Style and Theatre have been contextualised through different artistic and intellectual dimensions.

### **The Transposition of the Periphery to the Centre in which I De-legislated Upon my Legislation**

In context, discourse on the Centre and the Periphery is premised on the colonised and the coloniser in Postcolonial studies. In this conversation, disputation, interpolation and counter-discourse are used as reflections on “confrontation between constructed reality and its subversion” and the envisaged “cultural and historical change” (Terdiman, 1985, p. 13). The Dominant or Imperial Centre in this inaugural lecture remains the Legislators in their Poetics of Legislation on the Art of Play Directing while the Periphery remains my counter-discursive weapon of the De-legislator in my Poetics of De-legislation on the Art of Play Directing. Consequently, I wrote two plays (legislations) which are also at the centre of Postcolonial Theatre and in the plays (legislations), I deliberately transposed the Periphery (de-legislation) to the Centre. I brought to the fore, my experience as a theatre director in the Art of Play

Directing to Playwriting. Indeed, I crossed the performance border as an artistic director to work in the den of playwrights.

For efficient textual interpretation in the Postcolonial Theatre, we should not forget that border crossing is inevitable. Border crossing is a pastiche of moving away from the core to somewhere else. For example, the boundaries of “a well-made-play” or “a closed text” will certainly be contested within the reality of Play Directing. Thus, there is a link between border crossing and counter-discourse, especially in Playwriting and Play Directing.

My two plays which were published in 2009; *The Smart Game* (A ‘Neo-Alienation Script’) and *The Killers* (A Social Drama) that should ordinarily be in the domain of the Poetics of Legislation were written specifically to celebrate the Periphery (Poetics of De-legislation) which Play Directing has been temporarily relegated to. *The Smart Game* (A ‘Neo-Alienation Script’) is, in fact, my border crossing from the Periphery to the Centre. In crossing the border, I equipped myself with the metaphor of counter-discourse while, at the same time, I courted Bhabha’s (2002, p. 4) “Beyond” which “signifies spatial distance, marks progress, promises the future”. It is a 77 page play that accommodates most of the 12 aesthetic projections of the Neo-alienation Style and Theatre. The play thematically condemns, as can be found in the back page blurb, the issues of bribery and corruption, laziness and poverty, prostitution and infidelity, exploitation of HIV health hazard victims and many more, which are weaved through the single motif of inhumanity to man. The play is an experimental re-invention and reconstruction of the Brechtian theatre, and within the creative resources of verbal and non-verbal theatricals. It revives the dying culture of experimental theatre in Nigeria while the dramaturgy of the play is simply effective, transformational, affordable yet didactic. The multiple narrative aesthetics in the play is anchored on multi-rhythmic techniques, which are also intellectually gripping and satirically captivating. The play is deliberately created with linguistic and poetic uniqueness that

alternate between crisp prose, sharp poetry and with a few but philosophically penetrating words (Adéoyè, 2009a).

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, all over the world, violence has assumed dangerous dimensions. It could be organised and unorganised, domestic, communal, political and religious. Meditatively, I have reflected and, most often, psychologically disturbed about the evils associated with violence. Perhaps, as an interested dramatist, I have asked repeatedly that: what can the artist do in the seemingly impenetrable tragedy of violence? What with the conspiracy of the state, which is constantly watered by the bourgeoisie and permanently nurtured by their deadly political wings – military or civilian regime? Can we have a violence-free society in the face of glaring exploitation, oppression, unemployment, dehumanisation and political injustice?

My humble voice, *The Killers (A Social Drama)*, is a social play set in Wazobia land. It celebrates, in a melodramatic form, the various antics of murderers and the culture of violence threatening the Nigerian society. The play is also a manifesto for peace and social justice within the credo and dramaturgy of politics. Certainly, violence knows no barrier, no exception because everybody is directly or indirectly involved in it. This is why pixilated animals in the jungle of injustice are paraded in the Epilogue of the play. I, therefore, appeal in the play that everybody must fight and wage war against all forms of violence so as to avoid being consumed by it. In relation to this was my first publication (Musa, 1999) which was my search for peace through the theatre of religious tolerance and a dramatist's condemnation of evils in the two major houses (church and mosque) of God (Adéoyè, 2009b).

### **Military Show of Might versus Political Theatre in the Celebration of Theatre for Development (TfD)**

Whether in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 or 2019, the Nigerian politicians have used the theatre to their advantage. Thus, the subversive nature of political theatre has been de-ideologised for mercantilism. In 2003, I carried out a research on



the theatre of electioneering campaign in Nigeria. In that research work, I concluded that the power of oral performances, theatre of human mannequins, musicians and the musicality of election campaign, live theatre and literary contraptions, cinematic tradition and the home video industry, radio and television jingles and advertisements (Musa, 2003a) have been used to promote, mobilise and re-orientate the Nigerian masses on the essence of political theatre in a democratic society.

In 2007, the Nigerian living dramatists and musicians, considering the need for money, *actively lived beyond the objectivity of the artists by dramatising everything good* about their sponsors; and paradoxically, too, they *activated everything bad* about their sponsors' political opponents. They heat-up the system by reviving the age-long ethno-religious rivalry in the Nigerian power relations. Expensive vehicles were bought for local musicians, who followed the Nigerian politicians to perform during electioneering campaigns. Popular musicians such as Wasiu Ayindé, Sunny Adé, Obesere, Wasiu Àlàbí and so on sang directly or indirectly to reap abundantly from the 2007 elections. Certainly, the Nigerian politicians tried as much as possible to outdo themselves in the area of live theatre, radio jingles, television adverts, and the theatre of human mannequins among several others.

The tension in Ilorin, the capital of Kwara State, two days before 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2007, the actual date of the Governorship and State House of Assembly elections, can be likened to a state waiting for the commencement of war. Politicians were involved in last minute calculations, which were characterised by intrigue, horse-trading, betrayal and outright deceit. While this was going, over four thousand supposedly impartial military men in full military regalia drove round the city of Ilorin chanting war songs, dancing and battle ready as they intimidated the electorates. I was almost going to urinate on my body in the middle of one of our performances at Saw-mill Garage, Ilorin, when three big military vehicles parked and requested to know what we were doing. I summoned courage and led by example

by providing a response that I did not know where it came from: “you are parading for peaceful elections, we are also performing for peaceful 2007 elections”. Some members of the audience were already running away. However, the aesthetics of multicultural songs and drumming that reinvigorated the performance made the military men to wait and watch our performance after their show of military might. This show of might never deterred the performers from performing the political sensitisation play titled, “Do it Right” for the Ilorin audience. It should be noted that People’s Theatre was commissioned by Joint Donor Basket Fund (JDBF) for UNDP to produce the play. Adopting the Theatre for Development (TfD) approach, the play was performed at the popular Saw-mill Garage in Ilorin, Offa and Omu–Aran, three cities in Kwara State. The desired result was achieved and our post-production research on the TfD performances showed that the would-be-electorates in the three cities, where the Kwara experiment took place, refused to collect bribe, and those who collected claimed sincerely that they voted for the party of their choice. The theatre was the winner (Adéoyè, 2011b).

### **The Production of Art and Culture in the Postcolonial Age Demands a Potpourri of Styles**

A study of mine has examined some directing styles that are clearly articulated by some creative and experimental theatre directors in the Nigerian literary theatre tradition. Directing styles, such as the preconceived or pre-blocking, actor’s freedom, inner and outer resources, the improvisational, the director’s theatre, the editing, the computer, the folkist and the “Straight-Take-Theory” (Adéoyè, 2011a), are important in the Nigerian theatre. These styles are created and re-invented by Báýò Odùńẹye, Dàpò Adélùgbà, Qlá Rótímí, Fẹmi Q̄şşifisan, Olú Qbáfẹmi, Sam Ukala, Ayò Akínwálé and so on, and I concluded this study by insisting that directing style is individualistic; it is intrinsically linked to the director’s creative

vision, passion and emotion in the theatre. It gives any production its spine, life, identity and, ultimately, its popularity.

I have also conducted researches on the need to understand the texts, dramaturgies, directorial styles, poetics, and the use of language on the creative works of Wólé Şóyínká, Dàpò Adélùgbà, Qlá Rótímí, Olú Qbáfẹmi, Ahmed Yerima, Ayò Akínwálé and Bakare, Qjọ Rasaki. My researches on these directors and playwrights sought to create alternative textual, directorial and interpretative visions in stage iconography.

My M. A. and Ph.D. degrees rest majorly on Wólé Şóyínká and in relation to Play Directing. Thus, as a Soyinkaerian, I have re-examined some submissions of Şóyínká on Şóyínká and those of some notable researchers, directors and so on on his plays. I discovered that the paralinguistic and extra linguistics variables, total theatre deployment of dance, Yorùbá folkloric songs, lyric-related-dialogue, English music, ritual aesthetics, drama of Ògún, messianism, Aristotlelianism, scapegoatism, Yorùbá cosmology and metaphysics, and communal tragedy cannot be ignored while conceptualising Şóyínká's tragedies for theatrical direction. Indeed, I concluded in the study that Wólé Şóyínká is essentially sub-textual. As such, intensive play analysis, the use of experimental directorial styles of sub-textualism, Neo-alienation and so on, can lead to effective dramatic communication while directing Şóyínká's plays (Musa, 2007b and Adéoyè, 2015a).

Researching on Qlá Rótímí's socio-dramatic transition of language use and through my experience while directing some of his plays, and within the sites of other scholarly works, I have brought to the fore that: the first law in Qlá Rótímí's socio-dramatic use of language is his adoption of neo-classical language, the use of multicultural linguistic aesthetics, deployment of the silent language of reality, and the use of street language. In fact, street language has been accepted as a Postcolonial language of a majority of the Nigerian youths (Adéoyè, 2015b).

I have carried out a study on the directorial styles of Dàpò Adélùgbà, one of the foremost Nigerian theatre directors,

and I concluded that: Dàpò Adélùgbà's rehearsal sessions are always long, intensive and stressful where there is no imposition of acting style or styles on actors in the theatre. Adélùgbà also creates pictures and concerns himself with the visual as well as the technical aspects of production (Musa, 2000 and Adéoyè, 2013a).

I have researched on the directorial summations that guide the satirical plays of the supposed Marxist voice in the Nigerian Postcolonial Theatre, OlúQbáfẹmi. These directorial summations include the theatrical aesthetics of intellectual tension, dramatic summation of an eclectic type, Brechtian-Afrocentricism, dramatic subversion, actuality-reality-topicality re-engineering style, socialist reformation approach and the use of campus vernacular in Qbáfẹmi's clear embrace of Postcolonial communication (Adéoyè, 2013b).

From the perspective of Play Directing, I have researched into Ahmed Yerima's plays and insisted that his plays, if not properly and dexterously handled, may turn to be a director's nightmare. This is because his plays are evidently powered and loaded with the best of Western and African aesthetics, saturated with a multiplicity of idioms and full of scathing parables. Thus, a director willing to direct Yerima's plays should solve the problems of duality of interpretation, fake start, transitional theatre, total theatre contraptions, theatre of literature, the "untragic" muse in his tragedies and so on (Musa, 2007c).

A study on aesthetics, dramaturgy and directorial poetics of Ayò Akínwálé's theatre has enabled me to discover that Ayò Akínwálé makes use of: the poetics of audience-actor-director's opening glee, the dramaturgy of ensemble acting, claptrap aesthetics, the dramaturgy of power play, the aesthetics of the director's theatre, cyclical plot continuum, the pre-blocking poetics, the dramaturgy of traditionalism, town-gown-gown-town poetics and de-intermission aesthetics which reflect on Akínwálé's "Straight-Take-Theory" and show-off-closing glee in his theatre (Adéoyè, 2012).

I have also conducted a research (Adéoyè, 2014a) on Bakare, Òjó Rasaki's plays by linking his reflections and introspections to the tropes of Pax-Nigeriana and Pax-Yorubania in which the renaissance of the Yorùbá cosmology, ethics, ethos, mores and so on, are clearly negotiated within the larger space of the Nigerian nation.

In fact, my understanding of many unique directorial styles has made me to deploy their uses in my artistic direction of many plays such as: Ikanaba Idegú's *Amina*, Fémí Ọ̀ṣọ́fisan's *Who is Afraid of Solarin?*, Ọ́lá Rótímí's *The gods are not to blame*, Tewfik Al-Hakim's *Fate of a Cockroach*, Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and so on.

### **My Directorial Texts in Selected Unilorin Convocation Plays**

As an experimental theatre director, the directorial texts that I created while directing some Convocation Plays in the University of Ilorin were meant to advance dramatic communication and to stimulate the audience through various styles housed within the reality of the Postcolonial Theatre. Let me reflect on some recent examples.

In 2012, I directed *Èdá* written by the versatile Late Dúró Ládípò for the 28th Convocation Ceremonies of the University of Ilorin. It was my second major artistic experience at directing the operatic tradition. As usual, I rearranged the original text, de-legislated on the setting of the opera from Yorùbá land to the spatial location of the omnibus Nigeria. I used relevant musical media, created overlapping dramatic actions of point-by-point's character self-development and the deliberate exaggeration of the major conflicts in the opera to complete the production's satiric plot continuum. The 2012 Unilorin Convocation Opera also allowed me to raise four critical questions that I expected any of my critical audience then, and all of us listening now, to reflect deeply on and answer:

- (1.) Do you worship money? Re-interpreted as: Do I worship money?
- (2.) Why is our society increasingly becoming Godless? Re-contextualised as: Why am I increasingly becoming Godless?

- (3.) Are you a merciful or merciless person? Individualised as: Am I a merciful or merciless person?
- (4.) How often do you think of death? Finalised as: How often do I think of death?

Definitely, man's immanent philosophy of the unrestrained illegal accumulation of wealth will be deconstructed by death.

In 2014, I directed my play, *The Killers (A Social Drama)* and de-legislated upon my own legislation. After consultations and reflections from the initial animators, I insisted on the inclusion of the birth of post-humanism in Nigeria through the introduction of Boko Haram Scene in which a projection was made for anti-violence dramatic experience. Life was replicated in the performance through series of overlapping violence related dramatic events. My main transformation in the performance was the political space of violence which I problematised and resolved through the spirit of "velvet revolution". I opened the border of ideas that were producing violence and dialectically, too, I dismantled bridges of hatred, jealousy, terror and other illogicalities giving birth to violence. As I dismantled old bridges in the performances, I also opened new bridges of (love, unity, justice and truth) that were capable of putting a stop to the atmosphere of violence in Nigeria. I directed *The Killers (A Social Drama)* through the Brechtian style encased in the total theatre tradition of a fraction of the Neo-alienation Style and Theatre. Two questions were also raised in the performance and I still want to raise them:

- (i.) Why are we not organised to fight violence?
- (ii.) When are we going to be organised to fight violence?

Let us not indulge ourselves by promoting violence because it is a lie and a relic of our society which we must all fight.

Bòdè Şówándé's *Tornadoes Full of Dreams* was directed by me in 2015 for the 31st Convocation Ceremonies, which coincided with the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of the University of Ilorin. This performance was the re-creation of the 1789 French Revolution and it was, indeed, a historical parody of the disasters of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in which the conspiracies of several continents against African men and

women were relived. The performance also promoted African renaissance, and brought to the front-burner, the essential reality of counter-discourse on Eurocentricism in which the lingering controversies of white brain versus black brain, high culture versus low culture, the coloniser versus the colonised, superior race versus inferior race, and technological superiority versus weak technology were dramatised. Four Commentators/Critical Narrators were created to lock and unlock the crises of the performance for effective dramatic communication. My major artistic weapon in the performance was the elaborate use of pantomime, claptrap aesthetics, the dramaturgy of cyclical plot continuum, transition aesthetics and de-intermission which allowed the audience to have unhindered free-flow drama.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, I directed Kólá Ògúnmólá's *The Palmwine Drinkard* (*Òmùtí*) for the 32nd Convocation Ceremonies in 2016. It was the re-enactment of the follies and foibles of man and the directorial summation used was conceived as the vanity of human desperation in a clear subversion-reliving cycle of life. Interestingly, my directorial interpretation was the re-invention of the folkloric tradition of the Yorùbá opera in which the interplay of folk songs, chants, myths, proverbs, magical displays and so on were connected to other aspects of the African total theatre aesthetics. This poetic theatre also drew its strength from the trado-modern dance and a little spice of the enervating popular music.

Fémi Ọṣọfisan's *Many Colours Make the Thunder-king* was directed by me for the 34<sup>th</sup> Convocation Play in 2018. My artistic direction was conceptualised as the parable of uncountable colours in a performance in which Shàngó, the Yorùbá god of Thunder and Lightning was made to display several conflicting and unpredictable characters which were interpreted specially. These multiplicities of interpretations focused on character, mood and intensity of a diversified artistic re-creation in which the major characters, particularly Shàngó, recreated as; Maximum King, General, Warrior, Husband, Lover Boy, Diplomat, Artist, Lord of the Kingdom and Judge through

David Garrick's acting theory of trans-substantiation. The festival theatre was re-worked with various old tunes and artistic forms of the Alárinjò theatre by me. Here, seven major dance groups representing seven major Yorùbá sub-cultures, signature and salutation tunes of the beginning of a performance were re-created to set the pace for the festival theatre. Thus, cultural songs of power, supremacy, diplomacy and courage were also re-mixed to lift-up the opening scene with a little infusion of the Craigian theatrical form under the Postcolonial style of the director's theatre. As a performance of power, the theatrical platform was, indeed, a call on our leaders to embrace social change as they remove the dangerous uncountable colours and replace same with good uncountable colours in our lives.

I have worked with other theatre directors in the Department as the Standing Assistant Director to produce some successful convocation performances such as Don Pedro Obaseki's *Azagidi*, Fẹ́mi Ọ̀sọ́fisan's *Restless Run of Locusts* (Operatic), Ayọ̀ Akínwálé's "Hello Prisoners" and Fẹ́mi Ọ̀sọ́fisan's *Yungba Yungba and the Dance Contest* in the University of Ilorin. The success stories of my artistic ingenuity would be incomplete without the innovative creators who were our committed students (cast and crew) and exceptional colleagues. My most memorable moments in this University are when I am directing plays and these are moments in which I normally construct and deconstruct myself by creating alternative styles with numerous possibilities, dismantling them and re-creating them for dramatic communication. My restless and critical nature as an Artistic Director in the Art of Play Directing has never made me to be artistically satisfied. I task myself to the limit of my potentials while also noting that the five Convocation Plays and Opera that I have directed represent, on a serious note, about 10% of my directorial works in this University.



## Cross-multidisciplinarity and the Endless Space of Play Directing

Be it documented in anthologies or biographies, weaved in the naturalness of the African folkloric tradition, textualised within the expanse of various dramatic forms, deconstructed or reconstructed, tendered in poetic gaze or fictionalised in the parody of logicality or illogicality, I am always fascinated by the allure of history. It is, therefore, curious when in 1989, Francis Fukuyama celebrates “The End of History” and no matter his ripe imagination, history has not ended and will not end as much as human beings are in existence. What will end is one civilisation, which will lead to the existence of another irrespective of the Fukuyama’s somersault. Ôşófisán (1998, p. 35) has also condemned the Postmodernists of the West in their celebration of the End of History, submitting that “History is still at its vibrant, challenging dawn”.

Thus, history has, indeed, served as my creative musé in the majority of the plays that I have directed. I see directing history as reliving reality. As such, I have directed numerous historical plays and encouraged students under my supervision to select for artistic direction, historical plays such as; *Madam Tinubu* by Akínwùn mí Ìshòlá, *Ijaye* by Wálé Ôgún yémí aptly known as Ìjàyè War, *Basorun Gaa* by Adébáyò Fálétí, *Julius Ceasar* by William Shakespeare, *Umabatha* (metaphor on Shaka Zulu) by Welcome Nsome which is a South African adaptation of *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare, *The Mulatto* (an American play) by Langston Hughes and recently too, Vijay Tendulkar’s *Sakharam Binder* (an Indian play). I have also directed *The Trials of Dedan Kimathi* by Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Micere Mugo, *Qba Mama* by Isiaka Aliagan (with Felix Emoruwa), *Queen Amína of Zazzau* by Wálé Ôgún yémí, and acted professionally as Standing Assistant Artistic Director to other historical and mytho-historical plays such as *Yemoja* by Ahmed Yerima, *Efunsetan Aniwura* by Akínwùn mí Ìshòlá, *Treasure Chamber* by Kwesi Kay and so on. In most of these historical plays, the action and inaction of our heroes and heroines, the

failure and success of our horrible and dignified “pasts” were re-invented and re-lived.

My fascination with History as a discipline has also made me to carry out a research on the theatre of Ovonramwen, channeling my discourse on the dramaturgy and politics of historical reconstruction in the Nigerian theatre. I also concluded in the study that historical reconstruction, through the rewriting of Ovonramwen’s heroic deeds should continue, and that theatre directors, should consider directing the three plays of Ovonramwen for stage experimentation in one single major outing or in a festival of plays. It is hoped that the theatre of Ovonramwen is a necessary dramaturgy that will reshape other historical related theatres (Musa, 2006b).

My interest in history made me to carry out a study on the historical evolution of play directing and directors in the Nigerian theatre. There is no study, to my knowledge, on play directing and the history of theatre directors in Nigeria before this particular one. I discovered six schools of theatre directors such as the community/traditional theatre director, actor-manager-theatre director, playwright-theatre director, literary or academic theatre director, student or apprentice director and professional theatre director (Musa, 2002) in the study.

Apart from history, I have also directed several plays that celebrated issues affecting African national development, appraising in the process, the essence of verbal and non-verbal theatricals in the interpretation of African national development. My proposal on the director-humanist approach is the one that assigns multidimensional roles to the theatre director in which he, as a critical imagist, must communicate developmental and non-developmental variables of viable economy, unemployment, corruption, nepotism, social disequilibrium, African technology, localisation, liberal education enshrined in the “Winconsin Idea” and so on (Adéoyè, 2010a) to the audience.

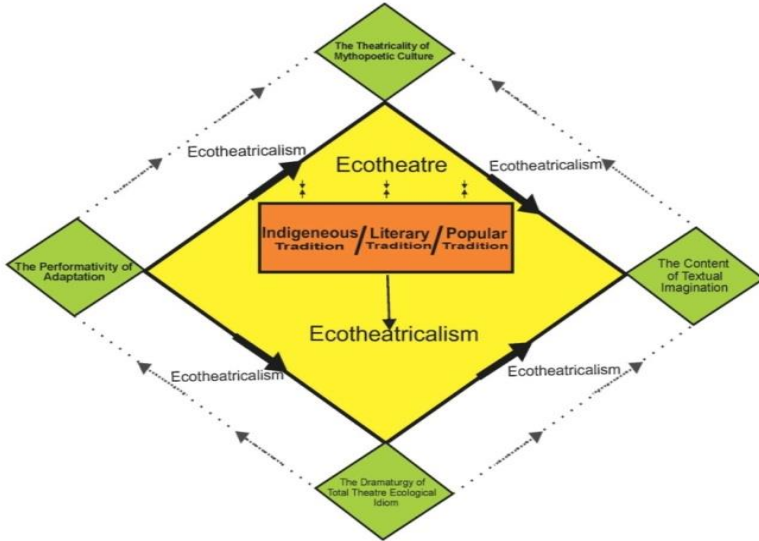
Another study of mine examined the legacy of inclusion in which there is a link between Play Directing and Sociology. This link has also made the theatre director to be seen as a

theatre sociologist (Musa, 2001a). The submission to be made here is that the two schools of theatre sociology (the radical and the conservative schools) have equally produced two schools of Play Directing: the experimental school with inclination towards the Poetics of De-legislation and the conservative school, which leans heavily on the Poetics of Legislation in play production.

In this Postcolonial age, contradiction remains a combatant or a portmanteau of illusion and the performing artists are not exempted because nudism sells and indecent dressing through body exploitation brings money to the table of some Nigerian performing artists. However, the little theatre sociologist (identity of relevance should be given to Ayò Akínwálé) in me led me to conduct a study that condemned nudism in our creative industry. This empirical study showed that 52% respondents in age bracket (15-35) agreed that they can watch nude or semi-nude play while most female respondents agreed that nude theatre usually arouses their sexual feelings, and a few among them agreed that it usually affects their religious belief. Our respondents (who were theatre workers) agreed that: Actors and Actresses (22%), Artistic Directors (40%), Producers (18%), Film Censorship Board (10%) and the Society (10%) should be blamed for nude theatre. This result indicted the Artistic Directors, some of whom placed economic gain above other positive issues that performance engenders. They also allowed the pressure from the Producers to override their artistic ideologies. Interestingly, 87% of respondents, who were not theatre workers, disliked actors and actresses who often act nude, half-nude or dress indecently. The last leg of this study was that 100% of respondents agreed that no culture in Nigeria is in support of nude acting and indecent dressing. I concluded in the study that the culture of copying bad Western tendencies and behaviours should be discouraged (Musa, 2004).

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, climate change has de-ordered our ordered society through ecological problems. Climate change has practically, technologically, environmentally, biologically, socially and culturally affected our agriculture, transportation,

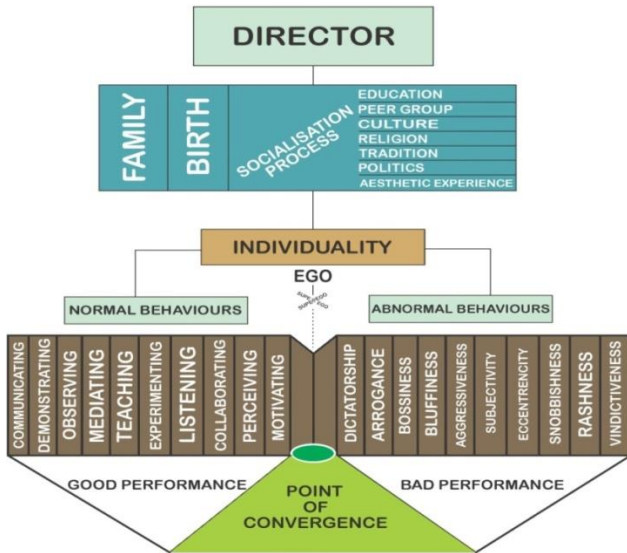
water resources and ecosystem, weather, health, electricity and power generation, military operations and security, culture and tourism. Climate change remains the metaphor of man's wounded heart which he has to contend with. How we manage the wounded heart will equally determine whether we will survive the injury or not. Thus, my fascination with making our environment habitable, using the theatre and its development communication manifesto, has made me to become an Ecodramatist/Ecodirector in the neo-Darwinist's school through my directorial and research activities on ecotheatre and climate change in Nigeria, courting the Environmental Sciences in the process. My dialectics of Ecotheatricalism, a new creation from the aesthetics of ecotheatre, is captured in Figure 3 below:



**Figure 2: Dialectics of Ecotheatricalism (Adéoyè, 2014b)**

The endless space of Play Directing and its connection to Psychology has also been researched into by me. As a behavioural science, Psychology remains an indisputable science of the human mind. The link between Play Directing and Psychology is very germane because the theatre director's psychological, emotional, intellectual, artistic, creative,

imaginative and aesthetic state of mind and his socio-cultural, traditional and political behaviours must be good when dealing with the performers under him. It is, therefore, important to see the theatre director as a psychologist who, most often, uses his theatre to achieve social stability for his patients. In reality, he assists the medical doctor to perform optimally by encouraging his patients to be mentally alert for speedy recovery out of depression, stress, anxiety, social disequilibrium and other health challenges. The diagram below (Figure 3) is the summary of the behavioural pattern of the theatre director, which I arrived at through surveys, interviews and observations of other directors and performers at rehearsals.



**Figure 3: A Diagrammatic Representation of the Behavioural Pattern of the Theatre Director (Musa, 2001b)**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, theatre is business and Business Studies is a fallout from Economics. As such, I have carried out a study on the economic potentials of the theatre in which I debunked the rhetoric of non-viability of the theatre profession. In the study, I identified; employment generation, educational

development, revenue generation, social engineering, political socialisation, population control and so on as the critical interventions that the theatre arts and artists generally have brought to the Nigerian nation (Musa, 2003b). The development that the Nollywood industry, through the theatre, has brought to the Nigerian economy cannot be over-emphasised. That the theatre has no role to play in the Nigerian economy can be likened to Perelman's (1996) academic outburst in his *The End of Economics* in which he finds no rhythm of idea in the Ricardian and Keynesian economic theories and models. The non-economic variable of the theatre is not a rhetoric or economic somersault because the theatre contributes, in reality, to the making of a nation's economy.

The theatre director is a philosopher and Philosophy itself remains the old discipline which transverses all disciplines. Thus, a recent study of mine focused on the thesis and synthesis of production philosophy in the African literary theatre. This study condemned the lack of production philosophy in some of the recent performances on the Nigerian stage. This has made me to ask some salient, general and specific questions: What type of production is this? Is the performance a tragedy or comedy? Is the performance a revival of the Neo-classical theatre or a little to Classicism? The production to me has no clear-cut directorial concept or am I wrong? The director calls his performance a theatre of the Absurd but we see the development of good plot laced with sensational conflicts and a resolution within the total theatre tradition, where then are the Absurdist's elements? I concluded the study that Play Directors should appropriate the thesis and synthesis of production philosophy for effective, efficient and enduring theatrical direction in the African literary theatre (Adéoyè, 2016). The culture of cross-multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinary dialogue should be accepted because it is cardinal to rounded education which is, indeed, the intellectual quest of wanting to know more (Musa, 2008).

## **The Dynamism of my Deconstruction and Poetics of De-legislation**

The dynamism of my deconstruction and poetics of de-legislation can be found in the beauty espoused by counter-discourse. Some of my research works revisited the controversies surrounding the texts and textuality in which I re-examined the autonomy or authority of the play and the playwright in the process. First was my examination of Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction Theory and its critical link to Play Directing (Adéoyè, 2009c). In this particular study, I accepted the relevance of some literary theories to the development of theatre practice. The implication of this is that the success of the play director, who is a profound translator, depends on his frequent romance with new styles and the creation of new artistic visions. Deconstruction is the relative link to the text of similar genre, and the multiplicity of interpretation that a text can generate. My deconstructionist's approach to Play Directing considered various efforts from some world's foremost theatre directors such as Vsevolod Meyerhold, Gordon Craig, Richard Wagner, Bertolt Brecht, Jerzy Grotowski, Alan Schneider and others that represented the global theatre perspectives.

Copious examples of successful deconstructionists' efforts in Play Directing in the African theatre have been recontextualised in my 2009 research. These are; Athol Fugard's actor's theatre in Apartheid South Africa between 1958 and 1973, Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Kamiriithu theatre in Kenya and London in 1977 and 1984 respectively, Ebrahim Hussein's deconstruction of historical reality of the Maji Maji uprising through his play, *Kinjeketile*, and Efuwa T. Sutherland's artistic deconstruction using the Ghanaian storytelling performance style of "Anansegoro" in the 1970s and 1980s.

In Nigeria, Wọlé Şóyínká has sought a redefinition of Play Directing and theatre practice from his supposed ritual theatre to overtly experimental performances. He deconstructed his texts at will. Ọlá Rótímí on his part deconstructed almost all the major Western directorial tendencies that he disliked and

created alternative forms within the African theatre tradition. Fẹmi Ọ̀ṣọ́fisan's radical/protest theatre under the experimental school was in the beginning, deconstructive and later, reflective of the Derrida's Deconstruction. Sam Ukala deconstructed our traditions, histories, myths, folklores and so on in his Folkism. Most recent creative cum experimental artistic directions from Inih Ebong, Ahmed Yerima, Effiong Johnson, Emmanuel Emesealu, Uwemedimo Atakpo, Bakare, Ọ̀jọ́ Rasaki and so on, also belonged to the deconstructionist/theatre director's school of Play Directing. African directors are admonished in the study to deconstruct so as to create new social vision and articulate them into excellent performances from the endless list of plays in the American, European, Asian and African theatre traditions.

A directorial study of mine, Adéoyè (2011c) condemned and de-legislated upon the problems posed by intermission in the African theatre. Intermission is the imposed stop-gap or frequent break during performance. It is a barrier to tempo, speed, rhythm, character, mood, intensity and the general semiotic articulation of a performance. Intermission is a cultural imposition through Western colonialism and education and its outlay is that it disrupts the flow of dramatic action, engenders decompartmentalised artistic interpretation, affects the psyche of members of the audience and it is often powered by frequent and uncreative blackouts during performance. U Watt (2002, p. 55) has informed that Ọ́lá Rótímí, the confirmed master of stage iconography in Africa, was the first to condemn the proscenium staging laws and intermissions. I also examined six performances at the Universities of Uyo, Ilorin, Jos, and Ibadan and offered some plausible alternatives to the problem of intermissions in the African literary theatre tradition in the study. That: the use of narrator or multiple narrators, the adoption of the master-craftman directing style created through the Craigian physical theatre, the deconstruction of the play-text through intelligent editing where scenes and movements can be restructured for effective dramatic communication, the deployment of the Brechtian style for scene changing and the



dexterous use of total theatre in which music, dance, and pantomimic dramatisation can be used to solve the problem posed by intermissions.

The controversy surrounding the presence or non-presence of the theatre director in the traditional African theatre has been researched into by me. This controversy was stirred by Gbilekaa (2000, pp. 30-36) who insists that we do not have theatre director and Play Directing in the traditional African theatre. I concluded that there is, indeed, the presence of the theatre director and, in fact, Play Directing in the traditional African theatre. No matter the contextual disagreement, collaboration, whether at the level of a communal art, group theatre or formalised theatre, cannot be divorced from Play Directing and that any artist who acts as a catalyst in the play production process is nothing but a great collaborator. He should be indisputably seen as the theatre director (Adéoyè, 2010b).

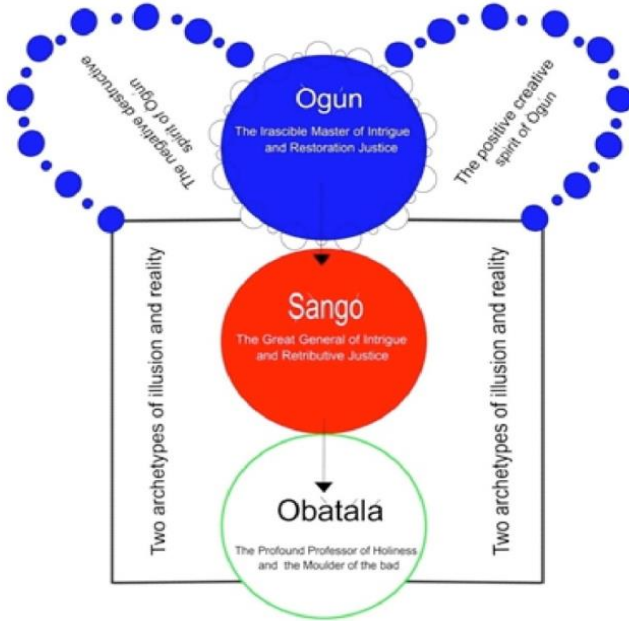
I have carried out two studies on military men in Africa. The first is the Postcolonial military men in which I examined the aesthetics of military theatre in Nigeria (Musa, 2006c). I reviewed the semantics and neologies of self-serving coup d'états, revolutionary coup d'états and so on that have subverted and negated democratic principles in Africa. Let us not forget that in the supreme context for political power in Africa, some political personalities, heroes and leaders such as Patrice Lumumba of Congo, now Democratic Republic of Congo, Ahmadu Bello of Nigeria, and Melchir Ndalaye of Burundi and so on have also paid the supreme price through assassinations. This study also appraised the place of military theatre in world history by reflecting on some of William Shakespeare's plays that celebrate military theatre and warfare, the American Theatre Wing during the World War II, the British Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA) that served as the Theatre Wing of the British during the World War II, the Biafran Armed Forces Theatre during the Nigerian/Biafran Civil War and the critical sites for de-militarisation of Africa represented by politico-military plays from Wólé Şóyínká, Qlá Rótímí, Fěmi

Òṣòfisan, and others. The performance architecture and aesthetics in the Nigerian military Barracks through the annual West Africa Social Activities (WASA), which started during the Colonial period, also served as the spine of the study. I concluded the study that artistic directors are enjoined to take democratically related thematic performances to the Military Barracks so as to allow our Postcolonial military men to imbibe democratic principles and tenets.

The deconstruction of the gods, heroes, heroines, legendary figures, deified characters and so on also account for the transformation of the great ritual and ritualised festivals into secularised performances in Africa (Adéoyè, 2017). Thus, my second study on our pre-colonial military men was on Ògún, Shàngó and partly, Obàtálá, who embarked on intrigues, deceptions, wars and expansionist's desires. Their activities have been de-mythologised into some play-texts and critical works. The second face value of this study was on "The Fifth Stage" and Wólé Ṣóyínká's counter-discourse, and demystification of the leftists/Marxists' criticisms of his works (Adéoyè, 2005). The fact is that Ṣóyínká's "Fourth Stage" telegraphically captures the essence of African tragedy through the cultural heritage of the myth of Ògún - the Yorùbá god of iron in which there is a ceaseless celebration in the grooves through the dance of the hero-gods and the musical fanfare of the metaphysical that resonate in the Yorùbá mytho-historical recollection.

The piety and the often feminist demure appearance of Obàtálá – the Yorùbá professor of holiness, the rascality - the unending destruction, the constant dredging up of anger and the paradox of Ògún (the great field marshal) set the stage for serious discourse in "The Fourth Stage". The power of Shàngó and his ascendance to Òyó throne remain a study in culture of courage and his final transition has recorded series of dissertations in failure in political leadership. This is because the man with fire in his mouth finally burned himself: Obá so – the king hanged himself. This is the true picture of Shàngó against the much deconstructed myth of Obakòso (the king did not hang)

from Shàngó’s worshippers. Wólé Şóyínká’s “The Fourth Stage” remains a genealogical dossier on these three important gods in Yorùbá mythology. I have, however, captured Wólé Şóyínká’s sagacious descriptions of the three gods, who are under Olóddùmarè, the uncreated creator of everything that can be found in the Universe through a model:



**Figure 4: Model of Balance of Positive and Negative Powers among three Yorùbá Hero-gods (Adéoyè, 2005 re-modified).**

For simple explication, there is a balance of force in the character of Ògún because Ògún often restores what he has destroyed and he sees destruction as a necessary ingredient of reconstruction. Let us not forget that the myth of the Yorùbá gods is no longer news, but the news is that; in the night of disillusionment, of long knives among the gods, Ògún makes a statement by taking a short cut but swift walk to stardom – he clears the path to the earth through “the destructive-creative unity”. In the international scene, let me reflect on some

archetypal characters. The former President of America, George Bush Jnr. was the archetype of Ògún. Bush was good at restoring what he has destroyed and his destruction was often mediated and globalised for the American interest. Osama Bin Laden could not restore what he has destroyed before he was eventually destroyed. Saddam Hussein and Maommar Ghadaffi destroyed to rebuild what they considered as Western obstacles to the development of their countries but they lost the war of continuity caused by the superior military strategies of the super powers. Ògún never lost any war in Yòrùbá history. Shàngó of the overweening ambition and through the glamour of monarchical splendor cultivated and became the great general of intrigue and retributive justice, a confirmed double-dealer of yore. Qbàtálá ended as the profound moulder and the tireless professor of holiness.

Interestingly, the positive and negative powers of Ògún can be located in the behavioural nuances of Shàngó and Qbàtálá, who also have their low moments. Qbáfẹmi (1996, p. 120) has reflected on the “destructive-creative unity” of the Yorùbá gods concluding that: “the co-existence of good and evil in most Yorùbá divinities” cannot be overemphasised. My examination of Wọlé Şóyínká’s “The Fourth Stage” has led to my expansion and negation of it in “The Fifth Stage”. Indeed, “The Fifth Stage” is Wọlé Şóyínká’s living stage and the palpable house of reality. The metaphor of the fifth stage in the plays of Wọlé Şóyínká represents Şóyínká’s dialectical romance with the left and it is his critical reconstruction of the progressive ideology of popular struggle, of Marxism in spite of the ceaseless disagreement from the critics of the left who are hyper-critical of Şóyínká’s eclectic and dialectical theatre. In context, “The Fifth Stage” is the stage for social drama and it is a living avenue for the dramatisation of political happenings, no mythopoetic lamentation nor ritual celebration because all semi-demi-gods are derobed, demystified and deconstructed within man’s social reality and vision. In Şóyínká’s “The Fifth Stage”, no instant transformation of performers instead, performers must

purge themselves of everything ritual and mythical to play the characters rather than transforming into the characters. Thus, directors in Şóyinká's "The Fifth Stage" should treat his comedies and satires as socio-historical realities in dramatic constructions. These comedies and satires represent the past and the living African leaders, heroes and characters and they must be treated, acted and deconstructed within our immediate socio-historical realities (Adéoyè, 2005).

### **Conclusion**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, the Poetics of Legislation and De-legislation are tailored towards the invention, reinvention, interpretation and re-interpretation of important theoretical controversies and directorial styles in the Art of Play Directing. Certainly, I have legislated in a very few instances and indeed, most of my research works on the Poetics of De-legislation have enabled me to create alternative and ingenious directorial styles, and theories, which have contributed to the Art of Play Directing. Beyond the fallacy of seeing Play Directing as purely a practical art, my academic works have been able to create, explore and synthesise critical theoretical postulations, the convergence and dynamics of which I have used to extrapolate and justify the relevance of Play Directing in the Performing or Theatre Arts. I have used and linked my counter-discourse on the Poetics of De-legislation and pedagogy to break the anxiety, elitism and difficulty known with the Art of Play Directing.

My experience as a scholar, artist and theatre director has also shown that my illumination into, transformation of the unknown to the living stage, and identification with various disciplines, first in the forte of interdisciplinarity and later in the cross-breeding on the territorial fortune of cross-multidisciplinarity, have been creatively helpful. The pedagogy of cross multidisciplinary has indeed, made my performances to break into imagined and unimagined territories, boundaries, ideologies and margins in which cultural hegemony is restructured to accommodate interculturalism and the competing priority of multiculturalism. I have been constantly

preaching the creative gospel of reality that: the Postcolonial Theatre is a director's theatre and, to their eternal credits, the theatre directors, for a long time to come, will continue to be the ingenious voices of the theatre in the entire world.

The director's work in the Postcolonial Theatre is beyond the battle cry of documentation of directorial styles. The creative zones, themes and main tendencies of the Postcolonial Theatre suggest the creation of deliberate organic styles by committed theatre directors that can invoke everlasting memories on the psyche of members of the audience and that which will make use of, and cope with multi-media facilities. This is because the Postcolonial Theatre will continue to be a paradox. Its spacelessness or fluidity, its sociology or reality has indeed, made the director's work more challenging.

I come across, in my Poetics of De-legislation as a theatre revolutionary, a practical man of the theatre, an experimental director, a playwright, a theorist and a stylist. My commitment to these divides will continue to be reinvented to the greater good of theatre practice and scholarship. I hold on to the future in which new directorial styles will emerge from me, and importantly, my directorial works on the living stage will transform very soon to the filmic tradition. I aim, very optimistically, to revolutionise the human minds by communicating equity and national development while criticising selfish leaders and uncritical followers will be my priority. I will break the barrier of disunity in the process through series of theatre of renewal and social contract. My revolutionary theatre will be consistently ideological through the aesthetics of actionability, and I will continue to interface with the local, national and international theatre markets.

## **Recommendations**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, if we love our culture, we should love the theatre. This is because the theatre is the critical conveyor and the life of our culture and its universality cannot be overemphasised. Thus, no nation should joke with the theatre or its time-honoured

performing artists, who are the philosophers of revolution and reality, and the makers of ingenious artistic and creative works. I, therefore, make the following recommendations, which I think, will be beneficial to the world at large, the African and Nigerian societies, the theatre and its scholars in general, and play directors and the Art of Play Directing in particular:

- (1.) **The Artistic Creation, Direction and Production of Actionable Theatre:** Actionable Theatre is a time-bound theatre which uses important anti-human or posthuman manifestations as thematic concerns in our Postcolonial age. It is a purpose-driven director's theatre of social dialogue, cultural intervention and political orientation in which the performing artists are expected to seize the momentum of current local, national and international issues for the artistic creation, direction and production of performances (scripted or improvisational), which can be based on various theatre platforms and styles. Posthuman issues of sales and harvesting of human organs by organ harvesters, the return of the second slave trade through the selling and auction of Nigerian men and women in Italy, Mali and Libya for prostitution and hard labour, evils and dangers of illegal migration, child labour, the activities of ritualists and their penchant for the use of human parts, gangsterism through peer influence, drug addiction through what can be called "tramadolisation", "codinelisation" and others within the interface of Health Humanities cannot be overemphasised. Also, armed militias, indiscriminate killing through the clash between herders and farmers, the Boko Haram season of madness, corruption, maladministration, unemployment and anti-democratic tendencies are expected to be theatricalised within the organic space of Actionable Theatre.
- (2.) **More Discourse and Counter-discourse on Poetics of Legislation and De-legislation on Play Directing are Expected:** To initiate an original work in any discipline is a great effort. Of great importance is also the counter-discourse or the creation of alternative vision to an original

idea. Scholarship generally needs new ideas or innovations to survive. Thus, more Poetics of Legislation and De-legislation on Play Directing are expected from theatre directors and scholars so as to break retrogressive cultural hegemony, create new artistic territory, construct and deconstruct ideologies and ultimately, promote theatre practice and scholarship. Once we fail to experiment and create new bridges and margins in the theatre, then our conservatism will consign us to the dustbin of history.

(3.) **Development and Production of Software on Play Directing for e-directing:** Software that will accommodate picturisation, composition, movements of performers and body positions on stage can be designed and produced for use by play directors and performers in the theatre. This software should be creatively edited to account for the relevant lines that performers will have to act in the envisaged performance. The software should also accommodate the sub-texts, *mise-en-scène* and *mise-en-actor*, which are within the creative vision of the play director. Play Directing software will reduce labour, save time and maximise resources in the globalised digital economy.

(4.) **Theatre Directors and the Need to Unclose the Supposedly Closed Text:** A well-made-play or a closed text has no place in the Postcolonial Theatre. Accepting this will be the acceptance of the playwright's theatre or the "theatre of literature" against the manifesto of the director's theatre. This will also amount to the artistic subversion of the director's poetic license and creative inventiveness. The closed text is already broken if the text is to be directed by an experimental director. Thus, it is hereby recommended that theatre directors should try to unclose the supposedly closed texts through the experimental re-invention of play-texts that they want to direct. After the performances of such play-texts, theatre directors are at liberty to further unclose the texts by informing playwrights about new additions, new



lines created, sub-texts used, things removed and so on in the play-texts. Playwrights are also at liberty to accept or reject the unclosed texts in the subsequent editions of their plays.

- (5.) **The Production of Counter-culture and Federal Plays from the International Theatre Market should be Promoted:** In a multicultural society such as Nigeria, it is important for us to learn a little from the cultures, religions, politics, institutions and so on, of other co-citizens other than our own. Certainly, it is not a crime for a Department of Performing or Theatre Arts to produce plays from the ethnic region that housed it. However, a dangerous trend is emerging whereby Performing or Theatre Arts Departments are producing plays mainly from their ethnic backgrounds, nothing else. This is reducing those Departments to Department of Yorùbá Theatre Arts, Department of Igbo Performing Arts or Department of Hausa Performing Arts instead of selecting, for artistic direction, plays that advance the codes, symbols, signs and thematic concerns of counter-culture, federalism and the critical ones from the international theatre market. Certainly, the embrace of the poetics of glocalisation on the crest of Babelian performance will allow for ethnic based plays to be competing and existing side by side with plays from international market. Some Performing or Theatre Arts Departments cannot recall when Shakespearean, Greek, American, European, Indian and Asian plays were produced last in their institutions, and may not have been produced at all in others. So also are Nigerian plays that have different settings from the institutions that housed them. The point here is that we should stress our imagination to accommodate the culture of other people other than our own and, ultimately, artists in this category will be celebrated as counter-culture heroes.
- (6.) **Research on the Relevance of the Creative Industries through Cultural Statistics should be Encouraged:** It is easy, if verifiable evidence is not adduced, to dismiss the creative industries and bury it for its supposed irrelevance to

the development of the economies of third world countries. This sweeping assertion can be debunked if constant research on the relevance of the creative industries is sustained through cultural statistics. Cultural statistics is in the domain of cultural economics in which the theatre, culture and the arts can be measured and projected generally within the framework of public expenditure, employment generation, social engineering and so on. Although the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists, Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, British Council and other critical stakeholders have succeeded in concluding the 1<sup>st</sup> Phase of the Mapping of the Nigerian Creative Industries in 2017, yet it is important for scholars, researchers, culture planners and others within this bracket to carry out constant research on cultural statistics so as to wean the arts out of the assumption of its irrelevance.

- (7.) **No Standing, no Waiting – Theatre Directors should Embrace Training and Re-training:** With the reality of the multi-media technology dominating the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the shift in thematic concerns, the numerous territories, the dynamism of the structure and superstructure in the social process, margins, boundaries, traditions and cultures competing for space, the theatre directors should continue to be the intelligent leaders of the creative team through training and re-training. Indeed, the shifting paradigm of the choice of the audience will compel theatre directors to learn about new people, culture and tradition every day. They must be students or learners for life by accepting the sincerity of Peter Brook who changed his thinking and perception about life nay the theatre from his *Empty Space* to his realistic imagination in *The Shifting Point*. Brook (1987, p. 56) warns directors and instructs them to note that, “our art doesn’t last. At least we’re not adding more junks to the museums. Yesterday’s performance is by now a failure. If we accept this, we can always start again from the scratch”. The local artists should be the teachers of theatre directors

while events or happenings in the 21<sup>st</sup> century's mediatised world should be embraced by them.

- (8.) **STEM and SEA should Co-habit:** The entire world has agreed on one thing – the superiority of STEM Education! However, STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics alone cannot redesign the entire world to the expected enviable level of success without Humanities. In a clear metaphor, stem, the body of a tree is important but it cannot exist at all without the root which is the origin of the tree and everything. Thus, founding agents (public and private), promoters, planners and development experts on education should continue to support STEM but should not allow this support to subjugate SEA – Social Sciences, Education and Arts. This counter-discursive submission is a reality that will allow STEM and SEA to co-habit together. The much advertised and celebrated benefits of STEM Education such as teamwork, resilience, knowledge application, problem-solving and so on, are indeed within the domain of SEA. If the interdisciplinary nature of STEM is celebrated today, this celebration is a linear narrative because the main value of SEA can be found in its promotion of interdisciplinary scholarship. Let sponsorship be equal, away with lopsidedness for the embrace of total inclusiveness. Our scientists, engineers, technologies and mathematicians will do better if they learn from SEA as we also learn from STEM. I preach equality here and we dare not forget that we only have one Nobel Prize Winner in Nigeria and he is Wólé Şóyínká. When are we going to have one in the STEM family? Soon, I predict but the conspiracy against SEA Education should stop.

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