

**Directing Aesthetics in Selected Performances of Femi Osofisan's
Plays**

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this Ph.D. Thesis has been read and approved as meeting part of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of the Performing Arts, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to:

- i. God Almighty, the creator of the world and the universe.
- ii. the memory of my caring late father, Mr. Adebayo Adumati.
- iii. the memory of my loving Mother, Deaconess Funmilayo Idowu Adumati.

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ABSTRACT

The ability to infuse essential and appropriate directing aesthetics in play performances reflects the diverse artistic identities of theatre directors across theatre conventions and traditions. However, there is a dearth of critical attention both at the professional and academic levels to the issue of directing aesthetics on the Nigerian theatrical space. The aim of the study was to examine directing aesthetics in selected performances of Femi Osofisan's play-texts by six Nigerian Directors. The objectives of the study were to: (i.) examine the effectiveness of directing aesthetics in the selected performances in relation to dramatic communication; (ii.) investigate the features of textual directing in the selected play-texts of Osofisan and their relationship to the performances; (iii.) interrogate the prevalent directing aesthetics in selected performances of Osofisan's play-texts; (iv.) evaluate the selected directors' creative inventions in the six performances of Osofisan's play-texts; and (v.) explicate the relevance of their directorial styles and approaches to the theatre directors in Nigeria.

The study employed the descriptive method. This was complemented with the tools of interview and participant-observation to examine, through random selection, directing aesthetics in the performances of Osofisan's *Women of Owu* as directed by Ojo Rasaki Bakare and Tunde Awosanmi; *Once Upon Four Robbers* as directed by Muyiwa Awodiya and Sola Adeyemi; and *Yungba-Yungba and the Dance Contest* as directed by Femi Ayeni and Ola Ifatimehin. Eclecticism as modified by Alizadeh, Ghulam-Sarwar and Effindi (2012) which is rooted in multiple styles, logical and pluralistic metaphors was adopted as the theoretical framework for the study.

The findings of the study were that the:

- (i) effectiveness of directing aesthetics in the selected performances of Osofisan's play-texts was high as determined by the audience's reactions, theatre designers, performance critics and scholars;
- (ii) features of textual directing in the selected play-texts of Osofisan such as dialogue, imagery, conflict, language, plot structure among others, shared remarkable relationships with some of the directors' styles and approaches which enhanced their interpretations;
- (iii) prevalent directing aesthetics such as picturisation, blockings, mise-en-scene, rhythmic beat and silence were theatricalised in the selected performances;
- (iv) selected directors' creative inventions in the six performances, which are theatrical space animation, trans-cultural aesthetics, cross-gender casting, visibility of the invisible and democratic spacing are open for use by Nigerian theatre directors; and
- (v) styles and approaches of the six directors are relevant to theatre directors in Nigeria through their creativity.

The study concluded that the directorial approaches and styles of the six selected directors thrived on the trajectories of the Nigerian culture. The study recommended that play directors should adopt the theoretical and practical frameworks used by the six selected directors. This is because the identified frameworks were determined by culture, environment, performance motif and the audience. Indeed, the identified frameworks will continue to define the directorial aesthetics in the Nigerian performances.

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