

DRAMATIC RE-ORDERING IN THE STAGE PRODUCTION OF OLU OBAFEMI'S *OGIDI MANDATE*: A DIRECTORIAL APPROACH

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*[*http://www.ajol.info/index.php/cajtmms.v13.1.6](http://www.ajol.info/index.php/cajtmms.v13.1.6)*

Abstract

*Increasingly the need for a more creative approach to directing stage productions is growing by the day. This results from the fact that theatre audiences like the society are fast changing. As such, theatre directors have responded to this need by experimenting with different approaches to create theatre that is responsive to the people and meets the ever-changing yearnings and expectations of theatre audiences. This paper therefore, contends that interpretation of play-texts on stage is the prerequisite of the director; as such the director as a dramaturge is at liberty to create, recreate and re-order the dramatic events of text to suite the desired vision/message intended for the audience. The paper thus, makes a case for Dramatic re-ordering as an experimental dramaturgical approach to stage directing. Experimenting with the stage production of Olu Obafemi's *Ogidi Mandate*, the paper explores Dramatic re-ordering as a process of directorial intervention on play-text, which seeks to ultimately transcend to providing a fluid performance narrative, which meets the expectation of the audience. The paper argues that action analysis; organic objective and performance fluidity are critical processes of Dramatic Re-ordering, which should be considered by directors while creatively intervening in the dramatic structure of a text. The paper concludes that the process of transiting from text to stage is an odious task; therefore, theatre directors must continue to experiment with more innovative approaches to interpreting texts.*

INTRODUCTION

The success or failure of any production is almost at all times credited to the creative ingenuity or a lack of it by the director. This is because the director occupies a significant position as the artistic/creative head of every theatrical production. His ability to combine the heuristic requirements of textual appreciation with the

comprehensiveness of performance visualization and physical staging is indeed a very important creative endeavor crucial to the production process. As such, the articulation of a play's production idea, insights and meanings are expressly dependent on the coordinated efforts of the different personnel in theatre and the director must provide the creative direction for the entire process. This is because play production is inelastic. It is the recreation of the text, which according to Adeoye, moves from the grand metaphoric expressions in the text to the physical reality of the theatre, a task that can only be performed through human and material resources (15). This is why Dean and Alexander described play directing and production as the presentation of a play on the stage for an audience, interpreted both in terms of dramatic action and dramatic sound and in terms of emotional and intellectual concepts of the author's script/text (24).

Consequently the director's responsibility in every play production process is to ensure that the messages inherent in the performance are effectively communicated through motivating dramatic actions expressed in signs, images, symbols movements, music and moods which are manifestations of his vision. Vision drives a play production. It is the sum total of the directors understanding of the production material/text, resulting from a deep analysis of the ideas therein. The director's vision therefore informs his interpretation and the overall objective of the production expressed by the symbiotic interrelatedness of the visual as well as the ideological components of the theatrical elements.

The challenge of every director in a play production process is always to successfully oversee a smooth transition of ideas from text to stage. The text to stage phenomenon is a constant feature in the endeavor of any director who intends to effectively communicate with the audience. At the fore of the quest towards a successful staging are the ideas, idiosyncrasies and visions of the playwright, which the director must first try to understand before

attempting to stage. Often times in an attempt to interpret plays, directors are caught between two creative choices; (i) maintaining the dramatic structure of a play-text and; (ii) tampering with the structure of the play-text to evolve a performance text. The concern of this paper is with the latter, therefore evolving a new terminology called “Dramatic Reordering” to describe the creative process of restructuring the dramatic activities of a play-text engaged in, by the director in order to bring to live the interpretation of his/her vision.

CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN DRAMATIC REORDERING

Critical to every play production is the task of delivering an exciting theatre experience to the audience alongside passing across a distinct socio-political message. As such, the director’s interpretation of a text critically navigates both the aesthetic and philosophical compositions of the text. For a production to efficiently communicate its message to the audience, the overall visual and aural aesthetics of the performance must achieve synchronicity with the overriding vision/message of the production. This is vital because the aesthetic quality of a performance is a measure of how well the performance can endear and sustain audience’s attention for a robust theatre experience (Lind, 119). According to Isijola, the holistic impartation of the audience in performance communication is the value of performance aesthetics, which is capable of holding and sustaining the attention of audience members, who in turn, respond with the vulnerability that makes performance engagement fulfilling (100).

Thus, the decision as to what shape or form a production should take remains the exclusive reserve of the director. In reaching this decision the director who works closely with other creative personnel considers several factors. This is why Adeoye notes that:

As a play director strives to put up a good performance, dramatic issues of the appropriateness or otherwise of the plot, conflict, genre, language, theme and sub-themes and character types of the play must be considered within the precinct of the text. All these must be matched with physical properties (costumes, make-up, props, lighting, set design) and human artistic qualities (speech delivery, movements, tempo, rhythm, picturization, composition) and the overall aesthetics of the performance must also be considered.... (231)

Taking this trajectory often leads the director to creatively take a different path from the playwright in terms of interpreting a text on stage. The primary step to achieving a beautiful interpretation of a play on stage begins with understanding the text. The play-text as conceived by the playwright is a repository of endless meanings and possibilities. While this remains true, it is important to note that the playwright writes with a certain vision regarding his/her play, and as such, the director must be able to decipher the playwright's vision through in-depth interrogation of the text. This is because as Johnson notes: "The playwright's vision simply stands for his perception of views of the world in a particular play, under a particular theme/preoccupation. If the director applies the sub-textualistic aesthetics in the interpretative process, the vision re-discovered, may very well go beyond the dimension anticipated by the playwright" (29-30).

Johnson's, position above is reminiscence of Artaud's postulations regarding the text in theatre. Artaud a foremost Avant-gardist notes that "instead of continuing to rely upon text considered definitive and sacred it is essential to put an end to subjugation of theatre to the text and to recover a notion of a kind of unique language half way between gestures and thought" (55).

Consequently Artuad's submission gives credence to the director as an unassailable interpreter of texts and as such inadvertently implicates Derrida's postulations on deconstruction. According to Harmon:

the term deconstruction should be taken in its original sense: meaning analysis or, simply, taking something apart. It designates an advanced, meticulous analysis that allows one to disclose infinite potential meanings of the text, mostly not intended by the writer, who is no longer considered as master of his own creation: the linguistic and literary construct. Such an approach definitely ignores the author's possible statements about their own work, made from the viewpoints of their intentions, and treats the text as a relatively autonomous linguistic product that enters interaction with each singular reader equipped with certain concrete knowledge and experience of a linguistic and textual nature ().

Harmon's explication of deconstructions though simplified provides a clear insight into the creative endeavour of the director in the attempt to interpret a play-text on stage. In engaging in the process of analysis to understand the playwright's vision, the director discovers new meanings that provides impetus to move his interpretation towards a new direction. He therefore is involved in a dual process of construction and reconstruction. By construction the director engages in an act of creation; this requires a design that corresponds to the purpose and execution that follows the design. While reconstructing, the director engages in an act of re-creation and this requires disclosing the design and its purpose, along with copying the execution that followed the original design. As such, the director carries out an act of rejection and selection; it does not recognize the original design as a whole but selects some

elements in order to attempt an alternative construct (McQuillan, 19). The latter is never meant as ultimate, though, but only as a tentative proposition to understand a work of literature. Therefore, deconstruction can serve as a device through which a reader or an interpreter of literary text, re-constructs new meanings from a text, in an informed manner that is most applicable to a social context (Isijola, 103).

Theatrical action is virtually a new medium, a different language from that which the playwright uses, although the playwright hopes that his words will suggest the kind of action that ought to be employed. The director must be a master of theatrical action, as the dramatist is master of the written concept of his play (Clurman, 275). The director as an interpreter does this with recourse to the manifestations of performance elements and aesthetics. Thus, in arriving at new meanings, the director creates and recreates from the primary text; of course being conscious of, but not restrained by the initial intent of the playwright. His creative decision and choices to select and reject are propelled by the strong forces of aesthetic and theatrical elements that at the long run helps to properly contextualize the performance. In contextualizing the performance to fashion out a new performance text, "the director takes liberty to engage in an informed re-ordering of a play-text, without the interference of the playwright, when the need arises (Isijola 103). The crux of the director's task in this stance is to achieve dramatic verisimilitude from his creation through his interpretation of the text on stage; the outcome of which should resonate with the audience as an unforgettable theatrical experience.

Drawing from the foundations laid by Isijola, this paper conceives "Dramatic Re-ordering" therefore as a deep-seated directorial intervention that borrows from the ideals of deconstruction to implement performance aesthetics true to the creative ingenuity of the director in a play production process. The process of Dramatic

Re-ordering as a dramaturgical approach to play directing is therefore, sacrosanct to any director who breathes authorial capacities into the primary text by the playwright. This because as Wright avers, an experimental director has a special flair for creating stage business, ingenious of interpretation, or other embellishment through which he thrusts upon a play more, of himself and his own abilities that are good for the production (147). It is in this light that Dramatic re-ordering is being crystallized as an approach to evolving an aesthetically significant performance, which responds to the aesthetic and ideological yearnings of the audience.

ABOUT OGIDI MANDATE

Olu Obafemi's *Ogidi Mandate* is a creative recreation of the Nupe/Okun wars. The play creatively combines facts and fiction to recount the travails of the Okun people in their fight against the conquest of expansionist power -seeking Nupe warriors. Olu Obafemi tactfully attempts to merge two distinct plots together; one reflects contemporary times and centers on young University students hungry to know about their heritage, while the other captures the events of the wars between the Nupes and the Okuns. Obafemi experiments with the African story telling performance approach to episodically navigate between the past and the present worlds in the play-text.

The play begins from a historical point in the 'first Movement' with Mallam Dendo a Fulani Jihadist in Nupe land intervening in a fight between his two sons who are apparently at loggerheads and lusting over who will become the next Etsu (King) after their father. Mallam Dendo admonishes his sons and reminds them that when he took "the flag of Jihad after the Islamic Faith... it was not to seek political power, it was in service of Allah, to spread his faith and save the souls of people" (14). His words fall on deaf ears as immediately he departs, Masaba and Zaki resume hostilities, both of

them vowing to build armies to conquer neighboring communities to show their supremacy.

Zaki: The royal blood flows in my veins. My mother is Fulfude and I am destined to rule since our father will not.

Masaba: Precisely that is the point. Blood is the point. You are only half Nupe from our father. I am a full-blooded Nupe. My mother is Nupe and the Etsu throne is mine. I shall be installed the Etsu of Nupe land.

Zaki: Then the battle, let the battle fields decide. The guns and calvaries determine who rules the land. An empty mouth does not make watery sound.

Masaba: Yes! War! War is my favourite game. Whoever commands the hearts of the people rules them. Whoever possesses the might rules the heart and ascends the throne.

Zaki: From now on, keep away from me; I go now to Raba to build my force. May the better warrior win.

Masaba: Save your prayers for yourself alone. Let each of us seek political power from the barrel of the gun. Let each count his blessings from the number of heads we cut down from the enemy forces. I Masaba, shall go to hoist my strength in Lade. And your force shall be the enemy force to be mowed down (15). (*They both march off with equal rage. Song filters in to match the passion of the disputants, as the narrator emerges from offstage*)

The play then proceeds to the 'second movement', which happens in the present, where young students on campus are celebrating Okun day. Olu Obafemi therefore, uses the love interest between

Tsobaza, and Seye to instigate an enquiry into the past to understand the present. In the midst of the celebration Tsobaza a young Nupe boy attempts to woo Seye a female Okun student. She rejects him on the bases that there is a deep-rooted historical conflict between the Nupe's and the Okuns; stating that he is from the "monstrous savage tribe that killed and sold her people into slavery" (22). Tsobaza replies that the Okuns were cowardly people who always ran away in the face of superior Nupe attacks. This doesn't sit well with Seye and she is determined to clarify the comment made by Tsobaza about her people. She proceeds in the 'third movement' to meet her fellow Okun friends Tope, Dapo, Lola and Lekan, she shares her encounter with Tsobaza with them and asks if what he said is true.

Lekan who seemed to know more about the historical conflict between the Nupes and Okuns recounts an incidence he was told by his grandfather. Lekan story in 'fourth movement' then takes the plays event back to the historical events where Okun warriors are seen counting their losses resulting from Nupe raids and strategizing on how to also retaliate. One loophole or perhaps unexplained event in Obafemi's narrative is that there is no progressive link whatsoever between the historical events in the first movement and the rest of the historical events in the play-text. The encounter between Mallam Dendo and his sons Masaba and Zaki in the first movement was not referred to or explained within Obafemi's narrative. This therefore, created a gap between the first historical event in the first movement and later historical events in the play text, which of course would need to be clarified.

After Lekans narration, the play returns back to the Okun day celebration in the 'fifth movement' with Seye and her friends where Baba who they have been waiting for, comes in to meet them. Seye quickly informs Baba about her worries and encounter with Tsobaza and asks him to tell them about the Nupe /Okun wars.

Baba engages them with riddles and begins to recount the events of the conflict to them. Baba's encounter with Seye and her friends takes the play back into the historical context, revealing several events in Okun land where the Okun people were terrorized by conquering Nupe warriors. Baba's account also revealed events of Okun resistance and collaboration with British colonial forces, which eventually brought an end to the Nupe conquest and dominance in Okun land (all these happen between the sixth to ninth movements). Baba's account leads Seye to realize that the Okuns were not cowards, as she states: "does it mean from your narrative that our people were not cowards? They fought back only that they did not win. That's no cowardice. "Look Baba. We fought, also showed courage and wisdom, wisdom and humility to seek help" (62). Baba however, in concluding his account in the tenth and final movement of the play, noted that there were strong links between the Okuns and the Nupes due to the intermarriages that occurred during the conflict period. As Baba was making his remarks Tsobaza walks in, Baba then gives a speech that captures the authorial intention/overall message of the play:

Baba: it's okay, my children. My son, Tsaobaza. Come here (He Steps forward) Seye my own daughter. Come here, too. (She is shy but steps forward in obedience) My children all of you. I plead with you it is time to sink our differences and come together as one. After all, you have said it yourselves; a bond and a chord tie us all together, as peoples. All good wars end in peace. All hatred based on biases and prejudices produce love such as this. (He takes Seyes's hands and places them gently on Tsobaza's) my children, only love survives. It outlives years of war and hatred (63).

DRAMATIC RE-ORDERING EXPLAINED

The experimental director is constantly searching for “a theatrical universe with its own style and technique which are invaluable guides for the dramatist’s imagination as well as that of the director” (Copeau 223). Thus, dramatic re-ordering is a dramaturgical approach to play directing borne out of several years’ of experimentation of directorial intervention on dramatic texts. By dramaturgical here the paper borrows from Barba’s position on dramaturgy. According to Barba, dramaturgy is “a particular way of looking which focuses upon the *layered nature of the performance*; it also deals with the multiple relationships between the many parts of the performance” (9). As demonstrated with the performance of Ogidi mandate above, this has become necessary due to the fact that some play-texts might in terms of the issues raised have contemporary relevance within the period they are being considered for performance, but in terms of their dramatic structure, locale, aesthetics, and most importantly message they, may be alien. This often times prompts the director to engage in dramatic reordering to ensure that the performance speaks convincingly to the audience. This process entails recreating, relocating and deleting scenes to reorder the dramatic narrative of a play in performance.

Critical to the process of dramatic re-ordering is the thorough consideration and interrogation of the dramatic activities of a play-text. This is consequent upon the fact that every play is made up of events and activities. Characters are conceived in events and activities; as such it is through these activities that we see emotions unfold to evoke empathy. An activity in this sense is the specific dramatic condition within which characters interrelate to express their feelings and intentions. Thus, this approach therefore allows the director to concentrate on distilling the activities within the text in-order to realign them to meet his vision. Action analysis is therefore critical to dramatic re-ordering as conceived by this paper. This is because the easiest and most accessible way to come

to terms with a play is through the events in the plot. Thomas accentuates this by stating that:

Action analysis starts with the process of identifying and explaining the play's events and then builds on this foundation. An *event/activity* is something that generally would not or should not happen. As a result, it changes everything, causes new ideas and feelings in a character, forces a character to see life in a new way, and changes the direction of a character's life. The bigger the event, the bigger the change is (3).

Consequently, the proper identification of a play's structure through its events is crucial to a director's application of dramatic re-ordering. Through action analysis the director must be able to see the linkages between events and activities carried out by characters; the relationships that exist between them, the characterizations' and location in which interactions take place within the play. Having a grasp of the smallest detail in the playwright's composition of events allows the director to comprehend the subtext and identify the unsaid realities that the text points to. This step enables the director ultimately identify areas to isolate, discard, recreate and project to effectively arrive at a unified performance narrative tied together by carefully determined events.

Further to engaging dramatic re-ordering by the director is the discovering of the super objective or rather what this paper refers to as organic objective of the play. Every play-text has an organic objective, which drives the actions of characters and inadvertently the events in a play; the director's task is to discover it and engage it in the process of his interpretation. The organic objective of a play is the overall purpose of the play, the aggregation of all characters' actions and inactions that contribute to arriving at the communication of the idea intended. In other words, the organic

objective of a play is what gives the play a sense of forward motion. Without this feeling, a play remains flat and uninteresting in performance. As such, identifying the organic objective of the text allows the director to purposefully create and realign events in a play to achieve a fluid performance narrative.

Striving for Aesthetic fluidity becomes the next step in the experiment of dramatic re-ordering. This consolidates the creative inputs of all the creative personnel in the production process. As such, the director ensures that the entire team understands the new structure of the play and shares with them his vision, form and style in order to get everyone at the same interpretative premise. The process of creation is therefore heightened at this stage as every creative personnel works in tandem with the entire production team to achieve the performance objective. Ultimately, Performance fidelity is critical to the outcome of dramatic re-ordering. To achieve performance fidelity, the director must as a matter of creative competence ensure that all collaborative aesthetic components are well knitted together into a unified whole. The musical interpretation; costume and makeup execution, stage designs, lighting design all must be part of the reordered, which has been agreed upon and articulated by the production team. Production philosophy thus has a role to play in achieving performance fidelity through dramatic reordering. This is because:

Basically, production philosophy is a conceived kernel that radiates or permeates through a theatre performance. It is a motive that determines the overall aesthetics of the final production. It also determines the director and the designers' choice of costumes, props, use of movement, acting style to employ, type of set to use, manner of delivery/speech, characterization and the general kinetic aesthetics (Adeoye, 234).

Thus, the goal of dramatic re-ordering is to provide an enhanced dramatic interpretation on stage for audience appreciation. The fluidity of all dramatic elements as required in all performance production is therefore of utmost importance. This is because the end game of dramatic reordering is to ensure that the actors, the director and the spectators meet in a form of life, which speaks to an intimate truth of the experience being shared by the dramatic enactment. The performance text, which emanates from dramatic re-ordering, is one, which responds to the aesthetic needs of the audience in terms of performance. It therefore, strives for communion between the performers and the audience, an empathic romance that ultimately leads to the comprehension of the ideas conceived in the performance.

APPLICATION OF DRAMATIC RE-ORDERING IN THE PERFORMANCE OF OLU OBAFEMI'S *OGIDI MANDATE*

The performance text of *Ogidi Mandate* as performed in the Ahmadu Bello Studio theatre on the 25th of May 2019 offered the audience a Re-ordered interpretation of Olu Obafemi's text. The play as directed by Emmanuel Tsadu Gana took the creative decision to re-order premised on the need to offer a cohesive dramatic narrative that will make contemporary meaning to the audience and satisfy their aesthetic theatrical desires. Thus as part of the process leading to the dramaturgical creation of dramatic re-ordering, the director engaged in action analysis of the text to understand the actions in each movement of the play and determine their interrelatedness and interconnectedness to one another. The action analysis carried out by the cast and crew as facilitated by the director revealed some inconsistencies in the episodic narrative of the playwright. These gaps generated something new, something more valuable: a potentiality of links and approaches different from those already existing, imagined and imaginable (11). Therefore, in correcting and filling in the gaps, the performance text deviated structurally from that of the playwright.

Dramatic Re-ordering			
Play-text		Performance text	
First Movement	Mallam Dendo warns Masaba/Zaki about their political ambition and leaves. Masaba and Zaki engaged in a heated argument and both furiously exist as narrator comes in.	Scene one	Mallam Dendo warns Masaba/Zaki about their political ambition. Songs fade in, as he moves out in a spirit like manner, Masaba and Zaki engage in a heated argument which transforms into a battle between them. Masaba wins and lets out a shout of victory
Second Movement	Okun day celebration on Campus; Tsobaza meets Seye	Scene Two	Okun day celebration, Dancers come on stage to introduce the Okun day, Tsobaza approaches Seye; they get into an argument, Song is raised as Tsobaza leaves the stage while Lekan, Dapo, Tope and Lola enter to meet Seye. She informs them of her encounter; Mama/Narrator comes on stage to tell them the Story of the Okun Nupe wars
Third Movement	Seye meets her fellow Okun friends; Tope, Lola, Lekun, Dapo. She informs them about Tsobaza	Scene three	Masaba's Palace
Fourth Movement	Lekun's narration: Okun warriors meeting and resolving to stand against Nupe invaders	Scene four	Sixth Movement from the play-text
Fifth Movement	Back to Okun Day celebration, Baba comes in and begins to tell the enquiring students about the history of the Nupe /Okun wars	Scene Five	Fourth Movement from the play-text
Sixth Movement	One of the Okun communities, the Oba and chiefs lament about the evils of the Nupe forces, two Nupe emissaries enter and demand tribute from the Oba.	Scene Six	Created Market Scene: traders are in the market complaining about how they have been losing their farmlands and family members, resulting from the raids by Masaba's warriors. Nupe warriors invade the market, Okun forces come in to attempt a rescue but were overwhelmed by superior Nupe attacks.
Seventh	A group of Okun	Scene Seven	Eight movement from the play-text

movement	warriors sit together to plan their war strategies		
Eight movement	A group of Okun Obas in a place discuss how to handle the terror of Nupe forces, they agree to send representatives to seek for help from the British forces in Ilokoja.	Scene Eight	Ninth movement in the play-text; performed in rhythmic movement to music and drumbeats.
Ninth Movement	Representative of the Obas meet with the British colonialist in Ilokoja	Scene nine	Created Scene: Masaba and his warriors fortifying themselves for war with Okun warriors.
Tenth movement	Baba with Seye and her friends, he narrates how the British brings an end to the Nupe/Okun wars	Scene ten	Created Scene: Masaba and his men Battle Okun forces, just when they are about to claim victory, British forces come to the rescue of the Okuns.

DRAMATIC REORDERING OF OLU-OBAFEMI'S OGIDI MANDATE

While the performance text maintains the opening action between Mallam Dendo and his sons as conceived by the playwright, it takes the action beyond a mere expository event to one that establishes the performance style and framework for the understanding of events, which were to unfold in the performance. As such the performance text established a generic link between the events of Mallam Dendo/his sons with the entire performance; establishing it as the cause for the forage into Okun lands. Consequently, this helps in synergizing the performance narrative towards actualizing the organic objective. The objective of the performance was therefore, to show the futility of war occasioned by the irrationality of man's actions; and to establish that though we come from different ethnic stock, what joins us together as humans is our humanity and that is what should be celebrated.

In re-ordering the events of the first movement, instead of ending with Masaba and Zaki angrily moving offstage, the performance

text heightened the conflict between both characters by transiting into a battle given impetus by the dialogue below:

Zaki: From now on, keep away from me; I go now to Raba to build my force. May the better warrior win.

Masaba: Save your prayers for yourself alone. Let each of us seek political power from the barrel of the gun.... I Masaba, shall go to hoist my strength in Lade. And your force shall be the enemy force to be mowed down (15).

Thus, the above dialogue positioned both characters at opposite sides of the stage in confrontational postures accompanied immediately by a war chant, which ushers the warriors of both characters on stage. Through a creatively choreographed pantomimic dramatization, both armies engage in a fierce rhythmic battle and Masaba's army comes out victorious. They let out a shout of victory, which ushers in the narrator. Masaba's victory as conceived in the performance ensured that his presence remained central to the spine of the performance text. His drive for continued conquest across Okun land as well as his desire to hold on to the throne as it played out historically was appropriated as the cause of conflict between the Nupes and the Okun people.



Masaba Immediately after his victory over his Brother Zaki

The use of the narrator also played a significant role in the performance text. Unlike in the play-text where the narrator appeared to be an erroneous introduction who appeared only once, the performance text in re-ordering the play engaged the narrator as the connecting rod of the performance narrative. In deliberately positioning the performance as a fluid interface between past and present events, the narrator in the performance text utters the following lines to the audience, which led the performance to the Okun day celebration:

Narrator: Our story tonight is a re-telling of history, a re-counting of the Nupe – Okon provocations and a re-collection of the past to re-direct our present and future.

Another intervention occasioned by dramatic re-ordering is the collapse of the second, third, fourth and sixth movements in the play-text into a single scene (scene two) in the performance text. The character of the narrator was also generically appropriated as the Mama who interacted with the students in the Okun day

celebration. As such, instead of having two inconsistent storytellers, the performance text had one, which was generic. Thus, the Okun day celebration as conceived in the performance text was a combination of four different scenes from the play-text, and this allowed for fluidity in the rhythm of the performance. The scene opened with a celebratory dance, which then progresses to the confrontation between Tsobaza and Seye after which the narrator referred to as Mama by the youth comes in to help clear the ignorance regarding the Okun/Nupe wars. The collapse of four movements allowed the director to create a new scene to enhance the narrative. The third scene in the performance text therefore was a scene in Masaba's palace created to enhance the vision of the performance text:

Masaba's palace well decorated with traditional Nupe cultural ambience, somewhat animistic and Islamic. On both sides are spiritualists; one representing the traditional Nupe medium of spirit worship and the other an Islamic cleric fully engulfed in his karatu. Song continues as the palace is busy with activities, Masaba walks in from back stage clad in warrior like royal attire accompanied by his guards and loyalists. He sits on his throne and immediately the music stops abruptly.

Praise Singer:	All hail our Leader
All:	Gbagadozhi
Praise Singer:	Kpako Enkpa!!!! Anyone who is against you will never see you, you are fire and you are rain, may you live long!
All:	Gbagadozhi!!!
Chief two:	Your highness may you live long, some of your subjects from the neighbouring village have come to pay you tributes shall we bring them

in?? (*Masaba beckons in the affirmative, celebrative songs usher in different groups as they dance in to present tributes to the Etsu, a group of women dancers dance in with the traditional nupe {tsakan dance} to entertain the Etsu*)

Chief One:

Your highness since, you ousted your brother Zaki and ascended the throne; Kin Nupe has enjoyed great prosperity. Our forces have grown stronger and have increased our boundaries beyond our lands. And most importantly our kingdom has increased in wealth. May your reign be long.

All:

Gbagadozhi

Masaba:

(*With a sense of accomplishment*) My people, I thank you, My father may his soul rest in peace, and my brother never saw the vision I had for our people, they were contented with just spreading religion. But I said no, we the Nupe's are a superior race, we deserve more, we are rulers.

All:

Yes

Masaba:

And most of all we are conquerors

All:

Gbagadozhi

Masaba:

Failure they say is only friends with those who never aspire. We must continue to spread our dominance across the neighboring lands.

All:

may you live long.

Chief Three:

Your highness, there have been reports of growing resistance from

the Okun people towards the west, they are beginning to stand up against our men and refuse to remit the stipulated taxes imposed by the kingdom.

Masaba:

(Angrily) What rubbish. They dare to disobey me?? *(Rising to his feet with his right hand raised as if giving a decree)*. From henceforth, we will double their taxes, no longer shall we show mercy to the okun people. We shall treat them as slaves, anyone who dares to defy us will be crushed.

All:

Gbagadozhi!!!!

The scene is particularly significant in the performance because it helped establish the continuity of the performance narrative and created some sort of balance especially as it regards the two tribes. This is because Olu Obafemi presented his story from the Okun perspective dedicating only one scene to the Nupes', hence the need to dramatically re-order the narrative. Thus, as captured in the above excerpt from the performance text, Masaba's victory against Zaki was further consolidated in the scene, to ensure that the audience follows the stream of thought within the performance.



Masaba's Palace, celebrating the victory over his brother

Masaba's decision to double the taxes of Okun communities also was an attempt by the performance text to lay the foundation for the inhumane treatment meted on the Okun people in proceeding scenes. The creation of this scene was premised on the historical fact that during Masaba's reign, the Nupe forces brutally conquered a lot of their neighboring communities. Consequently, this also links to the creation of a market scene in the performance where audience witnessed the brutality of the Nupe forces on Okun people. The high point of the scene shows the killing of a pregnant Okun woman who had lost her husband in one of the raids by Nupe warriors.

Historically, the Okuns in a desperate move to free themselves from the Nupe expansionists, sought the help of the British colonial forces operating from Lokaja, as narrated by Baba/the narrator in the play-text. Although the play-text did not reveal how this happened, the director aesthetically established a basis to show how this happened in the performance by creating a final battle between the Okun warriors and the Nupes led by Masaba (in the last scene). Masaba and his army go into battle with the Okuns, in the concluding event of the performance text. Again through a well-choreographed rhythmic movement of opposing warrior approaching Centre stage from opposite sides of the stage, the performance delivered an aesthetically captivating battle to the audience.



Final Battle between the Okun and Nupe warriors

Thus, after inflicting major damages to the Okun warriors; and just when they are about to claim victory, the British forces arrive in the midst of sounds of gun shots with a British flag conspicuously placed on stage to signify the end of the war and appropriation of the Nupe kingdom under British colonial rule. Several Nupe warriors fall to the ground and action on stage freezes. A dirge filters in from the orchestra as Narrator walks unto the stage accompanied by Seye, Lekun, Tope, and Lola. They look at the bodies on the stage and stare at the Narrator. At this point Tsobaza walks in and joins them on stage. Narrator shakes his head, holds Tsobaza and Seye and utters the following words to end the performance: “My children all of you, I plead with you, it is time to sink our differences and come together as one. War only destroys. Love alone builds. Let us drop our weapons and build for the future. There are greater battles ahead of us all”.



The narrator together with Seye and Tsobaza at the end of the Performance

Ending the performance at this point helped emphasize the director's intention and vision that humanity is the one thing that joins us as a people. Consequently, irrespective of tribal differences, we are first and foremost human beings; if only we see ourselves in that light and allow love reign, then the world will be a better place. Thus, the processes of creating, recreating and re-ordering, which the performance text went through, were all connected and interconnected, leading to the significant statement at the end. The audience at the end of the performance both enjoyed the spectacle showcased by the total theatre style and inadvertently received a cogent message of oneness, which resonates with their humanity. Suffice it to say that dramatic re-ordering as a dramaturgical approach to directing helped the director arrive at a fluid performance text, which ultimately presented a fluid comprehensible narrative to the audience.

CONCLUSION

There is no overstating the fact that the goal of every play production is to effectively communicate with the audience. As such, discovering more creative and effective ways of interpreting stage performances to meet audience aesthetic and philosophical demands is of the essence. It is imperative to note that often times the ideas of playwrights conveyed through their texts might need to be re-evaluated owing to the fact that society changes over time and so do perspectives. Theatre directors as creative beings are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that audiences comprehend the ideas in a play through the interpretation presented on stage. Dramatic re-ordering therefore, contributes to the growing experiments by play directors in meeting the demands of interpreting texts on stage. Consequently, play directors must continuously seek for innovative ways to meet audiences. This results from the fact that for the audience's dramatic curiosity and theatrical expectation to be met, play directors cannot and must not be onlookers in their fruitful search to construct and deconstruct plays for dramatic and theatrical presentations (Adeoye, 236).

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