



Stage Directing in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye and Segun Adefila

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Abstract

Many scholars of theatre directing have credited the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen – the theatre manager as the first acknowledged Western theatre director. The position is based on the history of theatre performances as found in many Western literatures on the subject, even when there are visible evidences to the contrary in other materials. As there were civilizations earlier than that of Greece, invariably, there existed forms of theatrical performance which included directors or managers as well. In many of the ancient religious and ritual performances there were theatrical performances and the priests, priest-kings and or chiefs gave direction for the performances. Therefore, one can argue that priests were among the earliest of theatre directors. Religious priests and troupe leaders of the Yoruba travelling theatre or *egungun* and strolling players have been known to command and direct the performances of their actors. Non-western theatre directorial techniques have been known to inspire many Western directors like Bertolt Brecht, Antonin Artaud, Jacques Copeau and Peter Brook. This paper looks at the development of different directing technique on Nigeria stage and influences with theatre directors by emphasising the directorial styles of AbdulRasheed Adeoye and Segun Adefila. These two stage directors were purposively selected based on their work with youthful and amateur actors and consistency in play productions. The paper adopts a qualitative research method with descriptive approach to the study of the selected directors by relying on existing literature, performance observation and interview of the subjects.

Keywords: Stage directing, Segun Adefila, Abdulrasheed Abiodun Adefila



Introduction

Play directing in Nigeria has a history that was before the commencement of the Ibadan Drama School in 1961/1962 academic year. In fact, it dated back to the emergence of the masquerade and ritual performances. This is because ritual procession and masquerade performances are always under the supervision of a leader who is either the chief priest and or the head of the family that is involved in the art of masquerade or his appointed person. Adedeji (1981) ascribes the emergence of *Egungun* – masquerade performances among the Yoruba people to Alaafin Sango who was the paramount ruler of Oyo Empire sometimes in the fourteenth century. Of course, the performances of the New Yam festivals among the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria follows the direction of the monarch and or the clan head. Years before the appearance of Hubert Ogunde on the Nigerian theatre, stage... drama at the university college Ibadan. According to a long-standing convention about the "Director's" role in the theatre, he is in command of everything during the play's production. The tasks and procedures involved in directing different plays, however, take on different shapes as a result of a variety of circumstances, including the director's interpretational approach, concept, style, audiences' qualities, and the socioeconomic environment of the society. These components, play a vital part in how plays are produced and directed.

According to Adeoye, directing can also be described as the organization, management, interpretation, coordination and manipulation of human and material resources towards the sole purpose of creating an artistic whole for the audience. It is communicating, as it is interpreting. It is analyzing, as it is organizing. It is watching, as it is picturizing and visualizing (48). He views the director as an all-encompassing and larger than life artist who is doing everything that the audience must see. Of course, the director is communicating the playwright's story in his own way, and he can watch it unfold as the actors are animating the characters. In an interview conducted by Adelugba on Segun Akinbola, the latter says, "theatre directors have a way of seeing their characters and of assessing people to play that role" (76).

We believe that the director's ideology has a big influence on how a play turns out, nevertheless, in the theatre; actors and the designers have the biggest influence on the overall production. The level of professionalism assigned to the theatre company or the people involved in the play's production is what is meant by "character" in this context. A director serves as the organization's main executive



and is responsible for organizing all artistic endeavours inside a theatre company.

The artistic director is the person in charge of the theatre company's production choices, directing choices, and overall aesthetic vision. A director's job is to make sure that every element and quality of a play is conveyed to the audience, and that his actors accurately portray not only their characters but also the idea and utilize the improved effect made possible by the supporting technical elements. The director must possess an abundance of these traits in order to be able to fulfill the expected tasks, as the entire theatrical production process demands organizational expertise as well as aesthetic sensibility. (Wilson and Goldfarb,) posit that; the director is indispensable, though his role was not always so comprehensive in the periods before now (35).

Any play's director is responsible for managing all artistic activities in a way that produces a precise theatrical impression. He approaches this task in a variety of ways and from a variety of perspectives. It is important to note that the director's work is one of the last aspects of a production that the audience notices because other aspects, like the set, costumes, lighting, props, and actors, are immediately apparent to them. In contrast to the other parts stated above, the director's labour consists of interpreting and fusing various elements; as a result, he is generally unknown to the spectator.

Professionals in the theatre sector are eventually produced by educational theatre, and this study is interested in the distinctions in the directing processes used in the two theatre practices. Therefore, this study examines the areas where professional and educational theatre's' directing styles converge and diverge.

Theatre scholars have defined directing in numerous ways, and it has come to signify many different things over time. A behind-the-scenes action between the director and his actors to create the three-dimensional beauty that is seen on stage in production in the 'private' seclusion of the theatre, away from the curious and prying eyes of the audience, according to Inih Ebong (27). The process of converting a personal vision into a public performance is how Robert Wills describes directing (3). This implies that the director makes an effort to use the theatre's people and material resources to bring his unique vision to life in front of an audience. Johnson cites the management of artistic individuals and creative techniques towards the purposeful shaping of a perceived vision into its most sublime form as evidence that directing is an intellectually demanding, creative theatrical stage



activity (57). Bell-Gam defines directing as the artistic director's interpretation of a playscript through sound or vision (71).

Theatre directing is the artistic director's imaginative interpretation of a playscript, employing both artistic and non-artistic theatre participants to perform a play to an audience at a specific time and place. A play director's artistic and directorial inputs are embodied in the play during rehearsals as part of the aesthetic concept of directing, which aims to produce a performance that is dazzling, enjoyable, and delightful and that can be appreciated by both the audience and academics who study directing and performance.

Directing aesthetics involves guiding components that are creatively included into a play in order to interpret it for the benefit of an audience. With their amazing mise-en-scene and mise-en-actor, massive dramatic strategies, amazing spectacles, and fascinating dramatic actions, these performances are skillfully presented. The following are some of the components: flawless line delivery or rendition, drumming, chanting, incantation, invocation, blocking, movement, rhythm, songs, planes, levels, sound, choreographic direction, spectacle, silence, freezing, and so on. For the audience's advantage, a play must be interpreted

Adeoye's "Neo-Alienation" Aesthetics

Bertolt Brecht's epic theatre served as an inspiration for neo-alienation aesthetics, which improves the overall aesthetics of theatre and fosters performer-audience engagement. It entails the adoption of strategies intended to break the emotional connection between the audience and the play. In the Neo-alienation theatre, it is a cry for association as opposed to dissociation.

Adeoye, a theatre director, thinks a director should hone their directing technique. He reveals this in an "interview session" and advises that a play director should develop a directing style. He claims that "without an approach, the director is not contributing anything to knowledge" (11). He further underlines his concern about play directing, particularly in Nigeria, by requesting directors to think about the philosophy and theory underlying their directorial practices and by describing how directing is split into theoretical and practical frameworks.

The Influence of Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre (Alienation Effect) On Adeoye's 'Neo-Alienation' Aesthetics



Many contemporary dramatists around the world have been affected by Bertolt Brecht's ideology, writing, and directing methods. In 1926, he put forward his grand theatre and over the years, it has had a profound effect on actors, fans, and—most significantly—theatre directors. This is because of Brecht's creative conception of the "distancing devices" that characterize epic theatre, including actors only partially identifying with the characters they portray while the audience is urged to unwind because the events are not real but rather a play. The Brechtian actor plays the part from outside the character, making all of the action hypothetical rather than inevitable. Every time a decision must be made, the actor makes it obvious to the audience that it is only inevitable due to conditions that both the actor and the audience are in complete agreement with (146). Hansen explains that Brecht taught his performers how to become somewhat detached from the character. The alienation effect of Brecht is useful for theatrical performances. With numerous songs that add additional meaning to the play's plot, is also a technique of narration that aims to make theatre more engaging for viewers. In addition to the "distancing devices," Hansen claims that the following other devices characterized the epic theatre:

- i. Reinterpreting classic plays in ways that would compel a deeper comprehension of the sociological dynamics at play.
- ii. Narrators may accompany mime passages.
- iii. The practical use of roles in daily life is highlighted by the usage of masks and their symbolic transformation.
- iv. Loudspeakers and signs may be used to comment on the action.
- v. The fact that this experience is occurring in a theatre is never forgotten by the audience.
- vi. Lights might stay on.
- vii. The purpose of stage rigging, which may be openly employed, is to keep viewers from becoming emotionally invested in the dramatic action. (146).

Numerous directors have used one or two aspects of it as inspiration to develop and build their own approaches. For instance, various dramatists in Nigeria, like Ayo Akinwale and Femi Osofisan in *Mountain of Wealth* and *Morountodun*, have experimented with Brecht's writing approach. In various works, such as Femi Osofisan's *Many Colours Make the Thunder King* and *Tornadoes Full of Dreams*, Biola Fasoranti,



AbdulRasheed Adeoye, and others have all examined Brecht's epic drama.

Others adhere to Brecht's philosophy and ideas while others borrow his writing or directing style. As an artistic director, Adeoye is one of those playwrights who has been influenced by Bertolt Brecht's works. He embraced Brecht's alienation effect repeatedly till he was moved to develop his own theory, the "neo alienation aesthetics."

Ola Rotimi, however, argues that Bertolt Brecht did not create epic theatre because many of its components were used in African theatre for a very long time prior to 1898. He claims that because they are recklessly applied to the African World, the majority of the features that define epic are not solely the product of Brecht's genius. Instead, it is clear that such components were present in our African theatrical past long before Brecht, who was born in 1898, even began working with Erwin Piscator to test the idea in the 1920s (254).

The African theatre has always been a manifestation of every element of the epic theatre that Hansen described in the native African theatre tradition. The claim made by Adeoti that, "Brecht borrowed the epic theatre concept from Piscator who used the term to designate plays that depart from Aristotelian theatrical principles and dramatic codes of naturalism/realism" is actually more compelling (56). Whether or not it was directly adapted from Piscator or has been utilized in African theatre for a very long time, the epic theatre has proven incredibly helpful to directors in both Western and African theatre.

As a result, many theatre directors now find it very beneficial to draw insight from it and apply a few of its elements to create their own unique directing styles, giving rise to AbdulRasheed Adeoye's "neo alienation aesthetics." Adeoye stressed his "Neo-Alienation

Aesthetics" in an interview, adding, "I have employed the Brechtian approach multiple times. I have transformed the Brechtian aesthetic into the neo-alienation aesthetics."

The Features of AbdulRasheed Adeoye's 'Neo- Alienation' Aesthetics

In 2004, Adeoye first suggested using his "neo alienation aesthetics" as a method of directing. *The Lion and the Jewel*, a comic play by Wole Soyinka, which he produced and directed as a PhD student, exposed the style.



In contrast to the theatre of literature, Adeoye's "neo-alienation aesthetics" lay a heavy focus on the theatre of performance. The "Neo-alienation" theatre is an authentic remake of the potent African festival theatre that honours the full theatre idiom artistically while also benefiting from Aristotelian empathy, it also functions as an action theatre.

Adeoye's "neo-alienation aesthetics" is a style that combines "total theatre aesthetics" with indigenous elements and African flavour. Maintaining the audience's interest and focus is the primary objectives of the style. The use of "alienator devices" such as "episodic structuring of events," "trado-modern dance aesthetics," "critical recalling," "curtain call aesthetics," and "multiple roles playing" characterizes this technique. The following are the features of neo-alienation effect:

the aesthetics of the theme song of the audience and players' methodical interaction,

- i. the aesthetics of multiple role-playing,
- ii. the aesthetics of artistic deconstruction,
- iii. the aesthetics of human props,
- iv. the aesthetics of multiple narrators,
- v. the aesthetics of de-technicalization,
- vi. the aesthetics of makeup and costumes on stage,
- vii. the aesthetics of full stage instrumentation,
- viii. the aesthetics of photoramic captions,
- ix. the aesthetics of contemporary opera,
- x. the aesthetics of trado-modern, and
- xi. the aesthetics of critical recalling curtain calls (2).

"Neo-Alienation" Style in the Production of Adeoye's Play Performance *the Smart Game*

Similar to traditional African theatrical presentations, dance, drumming, and singing were all incorporated to the show. With some players already positioned in the centre of the audience and others



receiving their signals from other parts of the auditorium, Adeoye's Smart Game theatrical production got off to a very exciting start. The drummers rolled the drums, and the performers emerged, singing in various directions and passing out flyers with the lyrics to the song listed on them to the audience:

Theatre is the house of truth,

And what you are about to see and to watch,

Is nothing but the truth and the essence of our being,

Bury your head in deep thought. Learn greatly still

Do not alienate yourself (2ce) From this artistic
experience (26).

Because they share the same social group as the actors, African Total Theatre's audience may identify with the play's theme and recognize the songs being sung because they are a part of their culture. This was incredibly socially engaging, and the audience began to sing along with the artists as they danced and performed. The "aesthetics of theme song of audience and players' systematic fraternization" is how Adeoye characterizes this (7).

The drummers scaled the stage to furnish the dancers with drum rhythms. They remained in the rear of the stage after singing the opening theme song as the other actors all ascended. Some of the actors who played more than five roles are examples of the "multiple role-playing

aesthetics". Several players served as staging props in order to "de-technicalize" the production. The fact that players were present on stage from the beginning to the end of the play was its most astounding and engaging feature. Following stage directions, they returned to "upstage centre" to join others in braiding their co-players' hair or helping to apply cosmetics to the actors' faces.

The advantage of "neo-alienation aesthetics" is the ability to do multiple duties at once on stage. For instance, the costumier is assisting an actor who has just ended a performance in changing his wardrobe for the following scene while the makeup artist is hard at work. While some performers may be in the spotlight performing, others may be reacting to what is happening on stage. The director typically masterfully stages these many acts without producing conflict.



The narration in Adeoye's *The Smart Game* was performed by three performers. They each spoke one at a time while narrating at the same time. The stage was filled with the sophistication of their combined narration, which gave the show a glitter that drew in the audience's ears and eyes. In keeping with the "on-the-stage make-up and costuming aesthetics" of the "neo alienation aesthetics", costumes were worn on stage and makeup was applied in front of an audience. In order for the audience to see some of the play's lines, they were written on cardboard, this showed how well "Photographic aesthetics" was used.

This is an attempt to draw attention to the play's main ideas and ensure that they remain in the audience's mind for a very long period. The scene where words were musically chorused, as if the play were a musical theatre production, was another distinctive aspect of the play. The audience thrilled at this scene, participating alongside with the performers. Most audience responses and comments following the performance agreed to the fact that Adeoye's 'neo alienation aesthetics' directing interpretation enhances an African theatre production and creates a play that is highly engaging.

"Neo-Alienation aesthetics" in The Production of Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and The Jewel*

While directing the play, Adeoye engaged in some "neo-alienation aesthetics" experimentation. Similar to how *The Smart Game* was produced, some actors played more than five different characters, while others acted as animals, and still others were used as props. For the scene of the sexual encounter between "The King and Sidi", the director put together a human bed of about six actors, some of whom used their bodies to block the scene from the audience.

The majority of the songs were well-known traditional melodies, so the audience could sing along with the actors as they were performing them. As a result, the director also looked into the "aesthetics of theme song of audience and actors' systematic fraternization." One of the distinguishing features of "neo-alienation aesthetics" is the wearing of costumes and makeup in front of an audience on stage. The costumiers and makeup artists brought their gear to the stage and set up a mirror "up-stage-left".

Both the actors and the audience found it easier to disengage from the performance when makeup and costumes were worn onstage. The director called the "multiple narrator's aesthetics" used in some of the narratives recounted by more than four performers "the multiple



narrator's aesthetics," while the "modern operatic aesthetics" were used in some of the operatic forms. In *The Lion and The Jewel*, Sidi (The Jewel), Lakunle (the Village Teacher), and Sidi's friends all performed flawlessly in numerous plays-within-plays.

Bode Sowande's *Tornadoes Full of Dreams*, according to Adeoye, was a re-enactment of history that dramatized the African "paste"—trials, victories, conflicts, treachery, disasters, and weaknesses and strengths—on a living stage. According to Adeoye, his direction of Kola Ogunmola's *The Palmwine Drinkard* is a prime example of the revival of Yoruba opera folklore, where the combination of folk songs, chants, myths, proverbs, magical displays, and other elements are linked to other facets of African total theatre aesthetics and also derive their power from trado-modern dance, among other things.

A thorough review of how the two plays under consideration were created reveals that Adeoye utilized at least six of the twelve theatrical aesthetics that make up his Neo-alienation style. In essence, this shows that a director may not be able to use all twelve of the theatrical aesthetic qualities of the style in every production of a play. Nevertheless, given that plays vary in terms of genre, plot structure, elements, technical requirements, and story structure, it does not necessarily mean that the style was not fully utilized. This paper lists some of the theatrical aesthetics used in the plays under consideration, such as: The aesthetics of audience/player systemic fraternization, artistic deconstruction, human props and demystification, multiple narrators, photoramic/captions, modern operatic aesthetics, trado-modern dance aesthetics, and critical recalling curtain call aesthetics are just a few examples. The following explains this dramatic aesthetics: the "critical recalls curtain call aesthetics", "trado-modern dance aesthetics", and "modern operatic aesthetics".

1. The Aesthetic of Audience/players

In keeping with the idea of his Neo-alienation style, Adeoye frequently uses the "performance aesthetics of audience/players' fraternization" in his play performances. He achieves this by encouraging camaraderie between his actors and the audience. He normally opens with a song that the audience can easily comprehend and instructs his performers to hold informational pamphlets that will be distributed, which often include the play's main and supporting topics. By demythologizing the idea of the fourth wall and encouraging call-and-response or questions-and answers fraternization, he accomplishes this artistically. In doing this, an actor raises a song while



the audience reacts, thereby promoting systemic fraternization as he did in *The Palmwine Drinkard*.

2. The Aesthetics of Human Props and Demystification

In theatrical performances, properties, also referred to as "props," are important because they provide context for the play's content, character status, and setting description. The human props from *The Palmwine Drinkard* were employed in the performance in a way that demystifies the hitherto inviolable, immobile property and makes it both mobile and functional as a part of the player. In order to create a lasting aesthetic in the audience's mind and turn the theatre into a place where realistic events occur, Adeoye uses this as an artistic technique in the production of *The Palmwine Drinkard*. It also demystifies the idea that properties that are considered immovable can actually move.

One of the creative strategies used to keep a performance moving forward, eliminate the frequently boring intermission, and remove the audience from excessive suspension is the employment of narrators in play productions. This is to guarantee that information is freely exchanged within the theatre. To further encourage camaraderie between the performers and the audience, a narrator is inserted.

Adefila is a social dramatist and eclectic director. He was first exposed to a world-wide audience when several of its members joined the National Troupe of Nigeria to perform in the first edition of *Contacting the World Global Festival* of young actors in 2002 at the Contact Theatre in Manchester, United Kingdom. In 2009, he was nominated in the category of the Most Promising

Actor for his role in Tunde Kelani's movie *Arugba* by Africa Movie Academy Award organisers.

Segun Adefila's Directing Process and Style

Segun Adefila's directing process and style is looked at from play selection process, casting and rehearsal procedures, performance procedures, and post-production procedures in relation to

Adefila's directing approach. This serves to highlight the importance of play directing in the theatre just as the play itself does. In analysing Adefila's theatrical directing for the play, his directing methods and approaches will be taken into consideration as well as certain factors like the choosing of the play, the audition process, the casting process, the rehearsal process, the performance, and the post-production process. For clarity of purpose, Adefila's directorial interpretation can be looked at from the following five perspectives:



- i. Process of Selecting Scripts
- ii. Casting and auditions
- iii. Practice Sessions
- iv. Dress and Technical Night
- v. The Performance.

Most of Adefila's performances are not text-based, the process of their performance is called performed texts. While they perform scripted plays that are commercially commissioned at intervals, which is the norm - to pick from the text and perform on the stage –

the process in most of his directed performances are from the stage to the text. The stories they tell are from the things seen and heard by the actors, human interactions, and the temperaments of their social community. All these are reflected in their performances. Another notable feature audition is employed as a method for casting actors into roles. In this process, Adefila and his stage manager carry-out the audition with free and unbiased minds; they both shun favouritism in the selection of actors for role based on their performances at the audition. However, in the absence of new actor, he does not conduct an audition if it is a play that they have performed before because. He always welcomes new members and he tests their abilities through audition.

Every theatrical performance depends heavily on casting since poor casting can detract from a play's excellent performance. His cast also includes the crew. When directing, he frequently selects his crew from among his performers, the majority of whom are members of his troupe. In rare circumstances, he sometimes brings in experts from outside his group. He primarily performs in own plays and, when called upon, assumes significant roles. He thinks that in order to save time during the directing process, specific roles should be assigned to performers who are dedicated and disciplined.

The most important step in the play directing process is the rehearsal phase. My observations of Segun Adefila's rehearsals show that actors are chosen not only through the casting and audition processes, but also from previous productions and even while the play is being read aloud because he already has an idea of the actor who will fit into the different roles in the play.



The stage manager's first task is to create the rehearsal schedule, which is the official timetable that all members of the cast and crew must closely adhere to. The cast should be aware of the rehearsal schedule. It was noted that the actors warmed up and exercised initially during his rehearsals. Adefila reveals that actors need to exercise their bodies to reduce stress and increase their flexibility during the rehearsal process. As a director, he participates in this process as well. He manages the rehearsal by setting an example of leadership for his crew and cast, forbidding tardiness, and prohibiting the use of phones during rehearsals.

In an interview, Wahab, Adefila's stage manager for *Kongi's Harvest*, disclosed that Segun Adefila edits his actors' scripts before distributing them. He is a very ethical man who constantly demands that his actors adhere to his directions. For instance, in order to make his job easier, he sometimes adds blocking, alters lines, and integrates tunes (12). Since Segun Adefila dislikes interruptions during rehearsals and does not want his actors to get disoriented, all performers must concentrate on the stage or be practicing their lines at all times, and his cast is not permitted to walk around or engage in pointless conversation. As a result, he is extremely punctual and severe; even if a cast member plays a significant role, they are not permitted to join once rehearsals begin. A cast member is removed from the production if they miss the call-up time more than three times. Segun Adefila has the authority to abruptly alter his cast in order to reprimand an actor, regardless of the part they are performing. Due to the dances and physically demanding activities on stage, every member of the cast needs to have their practice kit. He is a disciplined director who gives his actors instructions and expects them to comply without question. A final check of the costumes, stage, lighting, props, and entrance and exit cues is done during the dress and technical rehearsal night or day at Segun Adefila's theatre.

Since the majority of his dress and tech work is typically done during the day, Segun Adefila completes all of this in a single day.

Since the majority of the performers in Wole Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest* only wore one outfit for the whole play, Adefila concentrated on spectacle throughout the dress and technical rehearsals, which were completed a week before the play's performance. *Kongi's Harvest* had just two entrances and exits, and the scenery was composed entirely of newspaper with no openings. Segun Adefila used both hand and human props in this play. Humans were utilized as chairs, tables, and cars, for instance, while hand props, such as buckets, spoons, and sticks, were used to improve dances and help with gestures and interpretation.



To commemorate the nineteenth anniversary of Crown Troupe of Africa, the play and numerous other plays were presented for a month. I had the opportunity to see *Kongi's Harvest* being rehearsed and performed at Terra Kulture on Victoria Island in Lagos. Before distributing the scripts to his actors, Segun Adefila worked on them for *Kongi's Harvest*. He said that before he gives the script to the actors he will be working with, as a director, he always wants them to fully follow his directions. To make his job easier, he can, for instance, edit lines, add songs, and even block the actors. In order to relieve his directing of the burden of exit and entry, he also always adopts the Brechtian technique of placing the majority of his performers on stage during a performance. The show began with a scenario in which performers wearing various clothes representing various roles and positions, such as military, ethnic, and religious, were seen entering from all directions to assemble on stage while carrying a stool (chair). As they were discussing what could be done and how "Kongi" was treating them, "Kongi" came out of the backstage area, revealing only his head to the crowd.

I need a good report on 'Oba Danlola' before the end of the week, he shouted at the 'Aweris'... Everyone on stage is terrified by this appearance, and they all flee for their lives as soon as he vanishes. When the council members 'Aweris' first appeared on stage for the play, they began to whine about hunger and how Kongi had been mistreating them. Backstage, Kongi's voice could be heard during their conversation, instructing them to provide a report. When they were unable to do so, he gave the Secretary the order to deny them lunch. The 'Aweris' are furious at Kongi's choice. Segun Adefila played Kongi, who he depicted as a wild and agitated persona while being the director. Kongi's appearance and attire in the production make him unfit to be referred to as a leader, and the secretary handled all of his administrative duties while he slept and yelled at the 'Aweris'.

With the exception of 'Segi and Daodu', the players wore the same costume during the play. The national emblem was represented by Segun Adefila using a table spoon, while the production's setting consisted of a typical structure covered in newsprint. A table spoon was used in place of the national mace, while the white Daodu outfit was worn to signify peace, etc., and the newspaper represents reports about what was happening in the community. Stools, bottles, and baskets were among the useful props used in this show to support the dancing and action.

In Adefila's direction of the musical performance *Mi o ni choice, Mi o fe rob, Ebi de npa mi, Ki le fe kin se?* which translates to "I have no



choice, I don't want to steal, yet I'm starving, what do you want me to do?" The performance skillfully blends Yoruba cultural expression with English rap in an effort to raise public awareness of the factors that contribute to the rise in widespread political weaponry of the youth and armed robberies. The performance challenges popular perceptions of the fearsome and vicious "armed robbers" and challenges the audience to consider the root causes of this: the unequal mobility in Nigeria brought on by class differentiation and high-level corruption.

Segun Adefila asserted in an interview that he occasionally deviates from the theatre's rules to help spectators understand that the actors were merely the playwright's messengers. He referred to the spectators as the recipient, the actors and theatre as a form of communication via which a message can be communicated, and the playwright as the sender. It is noted that in his productions, actors often stand on the stools or chairs to render their lines for emphasis. He regards his theatre form as both a contemporary "Yoruba traveling theatre," and an unorthodox guerrilla approach. His idea of occasionally acting outside of theatres, on the street, allows him to subvert the naturalized meanings and actions of public space and everyday social interaction. Adefila believes that through examining the function of power and its relationships, art may be used to restructure society. His performance techniques serve as an illustration of current African civic resistance movements.

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