



PLAY DIRECTING AND THE ISSUES OF MORAL STANDARD IN A FAITH-BASED UNIVERSITY

By

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Abstract

The role of a director in a theatrical production cannot be overemphasised. He possesses directorial prowess that empowers him to conceptualise his directorial approach in the course of production without recourse to anyone. Hence, he is assumed to have a wealth of artistic concepts and interpretations. However, his artistic conceptualisation and interpretation as well as the use of other theatrical elements in production are sometimes delimited by his environment. This environmental delimitation was observed in religious environment, due to standards of morality and religious ethics, thereby compromising with theatre ethics and guiding principles. To this end, this paper examined directing and the issue of religious ethos in a faith-based university. Amongst its many findings, it was observed that the director of a faith-based University is sometimes delimited in his directorial approach due to environmental factors and peculiarity. Additionally, it was found that the director in a faith-based University sometimes compromises standard to accommodate the peculiarity of their environment. In conclusion, the management of the faith-based university must come to terms with the distinct nature of Theatre Arts in this age of realism. This is not to suggest accommodation of immorality but instead campaign against it. Directors in faith-based institutions should find a middle ground in conceptualising and interpreting their works without compromising the ethics and principles of the profession. Finally, directors should also find common ground to accommodate and promote the values and norms that define such an environment in the discharge of their duties.

Keywords: *Directing, morality, faith-based, universities, directors.*

Introduction

The art of theatrical performance, whether; social, cultural, improvisational, scripted, commissioned or religious, can only be brought to reality through the creative artistic vision of the theatrical director. The director conceives his idea of presentation and concept for the work of art that he is tasked with. He is therefore charged with the responsibility of building up the performance from the early stage of production to the final stage. In order to paint the picture of society properly, the director interprets the script through the actors and brings it to realisation with the help of the technical crew, such as the light designer, costume designer, make-up artist, sound man, and stage manager, to mention but a few.

Bogart (2010, p.2.) opined that “the artist becomes the creator of the future through the challenging and difficult act of articulation”. This means that the artist foretells the events that are to happen through the instruction and interpretation of the director. There are different interpretations that each artist gives to a piece of art. Hence, the artist, in his way, tries to create or conceptualise his presentation of the art. In the light of this, the artist is a creator in his own right whose creativity is artistically guided by the director. Ultimately, the artist delivers the form of art the director has conceptualised through his vision.

Additionally, the environment in which performance is being prepared determines the directorial approach or entire construction of the work of art to a certain level. Since the theatre is a mirror of the society, it becomes expedient to present theatre the way it is in society. This is because, the audience is also from the society, and in order to bring them close to life, the society must be represented in the appropriate way hence the job of a theatre director is complex and tasking. The director, his actors and crew members are the artists in this context, and their sole responsibility is to replicate the society in its true form and pass across their messages irrespective of the environment in which they find themselves.

However, when the actors and the crew members are called to participate in any theatrical production, the director becomes the first interpreter of the script, and he makes sure he understands the setting of the play, which is also the environment in which the play is set. Therefore, the director is saddled with the responsibility of understanding two different environments; his immediate environment and the one in which the play is set. After the director

has successfully understood these two environments, he reflects on the symbols and language of the play because these two elements are also crucial to any play. While a director directs a play, he is guided by his artistic vision, which he has created after his understanding of the play.

When a director is saddled with the responsibility of directing a play in a faith-based University, a faith-based university is described herein as a university founded by a particular religious body of a given faith and belief, he must endeavour to create a balance irrespective of the challenges and limitations he might encounter in directing such a play in his immediate environment. This is because the presentation of the play must reach the height of the artistic vision and concept the director has conceived. The environment of the director must not be a limiting factor or burden that hinders the successful interpretation and submission of the play. He must create a meeting point between his artistic vision and that of his unique environment. This is the thrust of this article.

Directing and the Issue of Morality

The issue of morality and theatre can be traced back to the medieval period when different plays were written to convey religious or moral ideas. Occasionally, in medieval plays, the allegories dramatised human characters' journey through life, their temptation, their encounters with death and their pursuit of salvation. Sometimes, these plays question the morals of Christians and Godly living. However, in recent times, a lot of values have been eroded due to civilisation, disregard for culture, exposure and new beliefs, which the church is trying to resuscitate among their members. One of the ways the church is trying to curb this is through drama, but unfortunately, other issues are arising from the use of drama in churches. The church has always had reservations concerning some scenes in drama, such as; rape scenes, prostitution, sex, hooliganism, etc.

In our society today, the issue of morals is one of the burning issues the custodians of culture and parents face. It is believed that the youths are taking civilisation to the extreme with their mode of dressing, manners and way of life. For some time now, the issue of sex and adult content has pervaded the Nigerian entertainment industry so much that ladies expose their bodies in the name of video vixens and acting. As a director, it is believed that these actions can be curtailed, and there are better ways to improvise than making actors and actresses practically go nude. Due to these reasons, a lot of people have made their concerns known towards this new trend in the

entertainment industry as long as the issue of sexuality and nudity continues. At times, one is prompted to ask if the Nigerian film censor board is active due to the number of adult content movies that are produced yearly in Nigeria. As a result of this insensitivity of the Nigerian censor board, parents, teachers and every other concerned citizen of Nigeria have voiced out their discontent over how the youths, especially teenagers, have taken to this new trend. In this aspect, one can also say that Nollywood industry has contributed her fair share to the negative trend. Nsikak-Abasi and Ekaette (2013, p.83) attesting to this unfortunate scenario in relation to Nollywood, concluded that “Nollywood movie contains sexually explicit content. These sexual contents are watched and assimilated by everyone including youth in secondary schools”. Endong (2019, p.9) corroborating this assertion opined that “...nudity and sex have always constituted a very enticing bade used by filmmakers to attract audience and achieve economic success”

The question here is whether or not the onus of moral living rests on the shoulders of the director. Ideally, if a director is presented with a script for directing, if he so accepts the script, his sole responsibility will be to conceptualise an artistic and unifying vision for the final outlook and presentation of the dramatic performance. The mode and tone in which he directs it gives birth to his line of thought concerning his approach towards directing whether or not they deal with the issue of morality. The role of the director is interpretation, devoid of any limitation or hindrance as to his artistic or creative submission of the given dramatic piece. However, for the director, who is bound by religious expectations and environment, the issue of morality most definitely comes into play.

Challenges of Play Directing in a Faith-Based University in Nigeria

A certain religious group or mission establishes faith-based universities. Apart from the vision or goal to set up an academic institution by these religious leaders, the universities are also set up for the purpose of strengthening the students' faith and moral values even while they are studying. Most of these universities, such as; Redeemer's University, Babcock University, Bowen University, Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Covenant University, Mountain Top University, Crescent University, and Fountain University, to mention but a few, are established and funded by religious institutions. For this research, Redeemer's University, which is the first faith-based University to establish a Theatre Arts course, is used as a template.

Some Performed Plays at Redeemer's University

The history of play productions at Redeemer's University can be traced to the premiere production of 'Atunto' by Bunmi Julius-Adeoye, which is the first commissioned play for the first convocation ceremony at Redeemer's University. The then Vice-Chancellor, Professor Oyewole Tomori had contacted Bunmi Julius-Adeoye to write a play that was to serve as the first Convocation play at Redeemer's University. Bunmi Julius-Adeoye was the pioneer Head of the Department of Theatre Arts and was a dominant force in what we know to be the BOJA Arts Theatre at Redeemer's University.

The plays performed in Redeemer's University can be divided into two categories; the commissioned plays and the regular plays. The commissioned plays in this context are plays that have been commissioned for major events in the university, such as; Convocation ceremonies, conferences, and workshops, while regular plays would refer to class workshop ensembles and students' projects. Commissioned plays are usually for a select audience and are mostly on a strictly by-invitation basis. The performances would usually have in attendance the vice-chancellor and high-ranking members of the university community. The regular plays usually entertain more of the student body on a ticketing-based system. These performances do not usually entertain high-ranking members of the university community except on special invitations.

Commissioned Plays

In the case of commissioned plays, the production is most likely to be within the given theme for the function for which the play has been commissioned. *Atunto*, being the first convocation play in Redeemer's University, had its precedence set in the theme of rebirth or revamp as explained by the then Vice-chancellor. Hence, with a lot of interference by the management, the play was subsumed in so much Church ethos that according to findings, the director had to infuse into her own artistic vision.

Due to this, the freedom of expression and liberty given to the arts, (herein, Department of Theatre Arts, Redeemer's University) was censored. Ideally, for effective and efficient practice, there should be minimal interference from external bodies where directing is concerned. However, this is hardly the case in a faith-based private university like Redeemer's. This presents some conflicts

in marrying the ideals of the University under the leadership of the Church, without necessarily jettisoning theatre ethics.

The first play *Atunto* written by Bunmi Julius-Adeoye was commissioned for the occasion of the first convocation ceremony as one of the activities of the first convocation in the university. The play was under the supervision of the first Vice-Chancellor of the University, and thus language, diction and similar tools of communication were used consciously by the playwright.

Birthright, as written by John Iwuh, was the second convocation play of Redeemer's University. The play, which plunges into the Biafra war and the circumstances surrounding it, served more as a historical play; therefore, the audience, including the high ranking in the university, viewed it as such. Since most of those that constituted a large percentage of the audience were elderly and at least had a glimpse of the history and happenings of the Biafra war, it was not a story that was far-fetched from their intellectual and historical knowledge.

The first play to be performed in 2012 upon the arrival of a new administration was *Truth to Vipers* by Isaiah Ilo, a senior lecturer in the department of theatre arts on sabbatical leave (now a Prof. of Theatre Arts University of Abuja). The play is set in an imaginary country named Shoboko. The play mirrors the character of the vital institutions of a corrupt modern state in a time of national upheaval. Despite the risks, individuals like the protagonist- Dr Ishaka Wada- assert their conviction to hasten their dream state's realisation. The tension and conflict reach a boiling point, ready to explode into a conflagration. In the long run, Shoboko casts the image of a nation redeemed by truth, spoken at great personal risks. Despite the domineering message in the play, which emphasises purging society and depicting the ills and menace of society at that given time, some blockings and dialogue were still tampered with because of the sensitive nature of such scenes. In a chat with the director, Dr Eunice Uwadinma-Idemudia, she recalled an instance wherein a particular blocking was removed as the preview committee was of the opinion that it might generate or instigate religious intolerance.

As play productions became more frequent in the university community, so did the attention and popularity that came with it as it reflected on the department. The commissioned plays had now taken a particular form of performance which could be said to be plays written and performed for the Redeemer's University audience. Since the management of the Theatre had become conversant

with the direction the university was headed in terms of dramatic representation, the Theatre now fully dived into the 'gospel' theatre, especially for the commissioned plays since it was glaring that this was the popular demand at least for convocation plays. The future series of convocation plays depicted the exact idea that is prevalent in a faith-based university and the idea towards dramatic representation. Music, dance, dialogue and even action on stage that represent everything that the church stands for is acceptable and most definitely the expectation of the university management.

In the series of these plays, the first is *Night of Praise (2015)*, as written and directed by Ahmed Yerima, a foremost playwright in Nigeria who was at a time the Director-General of the national theatre and national troupe of the country. As a prominent playwright in the Nigerian scene, Yerima has written across different cultures in the country and has directed plays he wrote and by several other writers both within and outside the country, with his work *Hard Ground* winning the NLNG Prize for literature in 2006.

This short introduction about Ahmed Yerima is instrumental in describing the level of professionalism he possesses and the calibre of plays he has written, and how understanding the society in which he found himself cornered him into writing a play which dances rigorously to their tune as Yerima is the head of the Department of Theatre Arts as at that time in (presently he is the Deputy Vice Chancellor in the same university) Redeemer's University. What Ahmed Yerima was able to do was cleverly avoid the future shredding down of his work of literary expression and write a play which the University would be most convenient with as they had a different idea as to what drama should look like. Yerima had mentioned in a chat that he was asked by a group of individuals representing management; if he could begin to write plays that would talk more about the vision of the university and putting her in the best of light which also is one of the essences of art.

At this point, Ahmed Yerima, the playwright and politician, understood perfectly the message the university management had sent to him. That year's convocation play came *Night of Praise*, a metaphor for the religious history of the founder of the University, Pastor Enoch Adeboye. The play is set in a fictional village, Ilu Ipago in which the king of the village represented the founder and the villagers, his congregation as they all come out in different scenes, testifying of the goodness of God, and how God has so gracefully used their king in areas of miracles, healings,

blessings and much more to transform the village. Through Godly music, dance, dialogue and actions, the plot of this typical example of what a drama should be according to Redeemer's University was completed. The play had the members of the university community singing along as though in a worship centre; commenting on the development of the story and even completing some of the lines for the actors because this is a setting in which they are already used to; at least, it is one of such rituals every Sunday. The play enjoyed very brilliant and flattering comments from the high-ranking officers of the university as the play, according to them, marked the manifestation of great things to come in the Theatre.

The Vision 2016, written and directed once again by Ahmed Yerima, followed closely as the 7th convocation play of the University. The play looked more like part two of *Night of Praise*, only this time it spoke more about the movement of Redeemer's University from her then temporary site at the Redemption camp, Mowe, Ogun state, to Ede, Osun state. The play highlighted the coming together of two communities, The Redeemer's University and the people of Ede, meeting to fulfil the message of the establishment of the university over thirty years ago by the founder. The play uses music and dances to introduce each community's history, culture and essence to the other. The play ends on a positive note of fulfilment of dreams and great hopes for a shared future.

The Crossroad (2017), written by Eunice Uwadinma-Idemudia and directed by Susan Olubukola Badeji is another convocation play performed at Redeemer's University. The play, which did not take the historical and traditional fictional pattern of *Night of Praise* and *The Vision* by Ahmed Yerima, cannot be said, however, to be farfetched from the line of plays that are considered suitable for the Redeemer's University community. The play, though contemporary in nature, still carried every form of religious and moral undertone which was tailored at convincing anybody that saw the play that Redeemer's University is still in line with the vision and still abides strictly to the doctrines of the church even in dramatic representation.

The play is about Grace, a 'Born-again graduate of Redeemer's University' who is caught among several choices. Unknown to her, Eucharia her mother, out of helplessness has promised her to chief Osondu, her late husband's wealthy friend. Soon, they are all caught up in a web of intrigues, secrets and rivalry. The play does not go without the usual Christian music and dances, which has almost become a ritual for convocation plays in the university now. Grace is a member of the choir

and thus the moment of choir rehearsal is used to fill in the space for gospel music. Also, the expression of Grace's character forces her to sing some songs replicating a subtle plea to God to come to her aid in her moment of confusion. The play, however, is not far from the typical gospel story of someone who does not believe in God or is not born again and thus, victimises others in one way or the other. However, one way or the other he finds Jesus gives his life to him, repents and all returns to normalcy. This is what the University management expects of a convocation play, at least Redeemer's University and that is what was given.

In *Crossroads* (2017) we could yet sight instances wherein the blockings already made by the director had to be tampered with as they did not pass the litmus test of the preview committee in terms of what or what not is appropriate to be shown to the university community. An example of one of these adjustments made by the committee is an instance in the play where Chief Osondu is supposed to make some sort of body contact with Grace. Representatives of the University asked that chief Osondu should not make body contact with Grace as she is a graduate of Redeemer's University, and she represents the university anywhere she is and thus would and should not let her body be defiled.

Again in the course of preparation for another convocation play performance; *Plume of the Falcon* (2021), written by John Iwuh and Directed by Babarinde Damilola, the University convocation ceremony committee in a bid to uphold ethical standard, instructed that a particular actor who carries a plaited hairstyle should not appear on stage with his plaited hair. The male actor with the plaited hairstyle playing the role of *Olorisa* (Ifa Priest) was asked to lose his plaited hairdo which they considered an un-conforming style to the ethics of the university. While the actor's plaited hair style theatrical adds a symbolic aesthetic to the appearance of the character of Olorisa (Ifa Priest), the convocation committee had a negative interpretation of the plaited hairstyle worn by a male actor which to them is contrary to the standard of a faith-based University. This and some other imposing changes in a play performance process usually stampedes a director's right to interpretation and creativity or could even demoralise the director's morale since he or she must dance to the tune of the commissioners of the performance.

Regular Plays

Regular performances at Redeemer's University are done under little or no supervision from the high-ranking officials of the University community. The popularity, attention and supervision that comes along with the convocation or commissioned plays are usually absent in regular plays hence, there is some bit of liberality in terms of the performance structure of these plays, however, the director still remains consciously aware of the religious environment in which he finds himself and is therefore careful of the dramatic representation on stage in terms of acting, music, dance, costume, make-up and other elements that enhance dramatic performance. Although there is no scrutiny in terms of the production of regular plays, there could however be one or two invited or non-invited guests in the theatre, hence this is taken into serious cognisance.

In the command performance of *Iyase* as written and directed by Ahmed Yerima, a final year class project, funded by the class, there was no case of any piper dictating any tune here. *Iyase* which can be said to be Ahmed Yerima's submission of the Greek concept of tragedy captures the dramatic fall of the Iyase, a senior chief in the palace of the Omo n' oba of the Great Benin Kingdom. For the play to be properly interpreted, devoid of external influence, a lot of invocation of Ogun a god in the Benin local had to be fondly mentioned by Iyase, and at the same time the character had to declare full obeisance and allegiance to the god. Since the performance wasn't a commissioned play, there was no need for a preview committee to come to preview the play. However, one or two top officials in the university hierarchy were invited to watch the play. After the performance, some of the officials were rather shocked and at the same time taken away by the performance they had seen. Hence, since the play had been performed, one of them quickly led a vibrant prayer session, praying that the members of the cast will not be hunted by the roles that they have played.

Romeo and Juliet by Williams Shakespeare remains one of the greatest love stories to ever grace the world of literary expression. A select class over the years selected the play as a 300l workshop ensemble project. As widely known, the play involves quite some high points of romantic moments, which ordinarily should not be deleted as they represent very emotional moments the directors would want to play on as well as direct the audience's attention to. In a particular scene in which Romeo and Juliet were supposed to share a kiss, the director had to delete that particular

action and play down the emotional moments in that particular scene as the director was just ordinarily conscious of the religious background of the university and most especially because he was a student at that time and would not like to put his studentship alongside that of the other actors who were also students at stake.

In the musical *Shakara* by Damilola Babarinde, the work of art showed the story of a young lady who is ready for marriage and is been approached by different suitors. She constantly turns them down as she claims that she has looked and has not seen her type of man in all the men that have been approaching her. The character of Ife in the musical represents that of a beautiful yet sassy young lady. On the night of the dress and technical rehearsal, the costume which Ife wore, was quite provocative but at the same time suitable for the character as described by her role, and it seemed appropriate for the performance. However, on the day of the performance, Ife had to change the costume used for the dress and technical rehearsal and was now dressed in a less befitting costume which did not adequately do justice to the character she ought to represent. When questions were asked, it was said that the costume had to be changed because it was deemed inappropriate for the environment in which the performance was taking place.

Directing and the Burden of Moral Focus at Redeemer's University

In Redeemer's University, morality is seen as the application of God's law in a student's private and public conduct. The school expects students to obey the rules that guide their behaviour as decreed by God. Although most students have a fundamental understanding of what is right or wrong but as humans and youths, most of them cannot be consistently and constantly right in how they obey God's law and the higher authorities. In a letter Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans while he was teaching on Godly living, he quoted the book of Psalms 14:3 as thus "But they have all gone wrong, they are all equally bold. Not one of them does what is right, not a single one" (GNB). From the above quotation, disobedience and moral understanding has been an issue before the birth of Christ and after the death of Christ. Regarding God's law and personal morality, Jesus himself taught at different times about obedience to the law and therefore every Christian is expected to keep the laws of the holy Bible and the higher authorities.

In Redeemer's University, the students are expected to abide by all the rules and regulations and out of the rules, morality is emphasised which are; obedience to school rules and regulations, decent dressing, Godly living in relationships, attendance in church and holiness. These standards must be upheld at all times irrespective of the course of study, theatre arts inclusive. As theatre directors or potential directors (student directors) in the University, these rules and regulations become challenges in directing their theatrical pieces because, for everything they do, they will always work within the confines of these rules. Each of these moral burdens shall be explained in relation to how they affect the director in producing an aesthetic theatrical production.

Choice of Play

Before a play can go on stage, there must have been a pre-production meeting where the producers and the directors will sit to choose a play. In a professional setting, the producer gives the director the script to be performed and sponsors the play. In a faith-based university, it is entirely a different situation. The school management is the producer of the play if it is a convocation play. After the play is selected which is expected to be a play that promotes the values of the university and does not negate Christian tenets, representatives of the school management occasionally breeze in during rehearsals to see the level of preparation and offer suggestions that they feel can bring out more the value and norms of the university. Sometimes, these suggestions might affect the aesthetics of the production thus, creating a conflict between the artistic vision of the director and the religious nature of the school. It is now left for the director to find a meeting point to resolve the conflict. After all "he who pays the piper, dictates the tunes" goes the popular saying. In an interaction with one of the first set of directors at Redeemer's University; Dr John Iwuh mentioned that "the issue of the school interfering in the production of the department was very minimal ... because the vice chancellor will always tell us that we are in school to learn and be the best when we get into the industry. This became a propelling force for us to challenge graduates of other schools even during NYSC". He also made his reservations known when he took part in two convocation plays in his words "I am amazed at the interference of the school in selecting and the creation of stories for convocation plays When the students are made to act a particular type of play all the time, it only makes them get used to one genre of play and production style which limits their skills and creative abilities.

Interpretation and Blockings

What makes the difference between a professional theatre director and a self-acclaimed director is the interpretation of the story and the blocking of the cast on stage. A professional director reads his script as many times as possible in order to have at least two different interpretations of the story. Once he gets his interpretation right, he creates a picture in his head which is a separate world on its own and he imagines the play running in his head. After a well-spelt interpretation, the director begins to work on his blocking. During rehearsals, he gives his blockings thereby telling actors and actresses where they should move to for proper dramatic effect and picture to ensure sight lines for the audience and also work with the technical director and light designer so that they will know how to construct the set in order not to interfere with the movement of actors and also know which part of the stage to light.

However, some of these blockings get misinterpreted during productions in a faith-based university. For example, in the play "the crossroad" by Eunice Uwadinma-Idemudia, the director blocked Nnemeka and Mary who are university lovers to hug each other when they met after NYSC. During the preview of the same play by the school management, they suggested to the director to re-block that particular scene; they recommended holding hands instead. This is to avoid giving the wrong impression to both students and the audience coming from outside the university to watch the performance. This is done in good faith even though it affects the aesthetics of that scene because it reduces the level of intimacy that is expected of lovers. The picture below articulates the argument in our discourse;

The researchers felt differently about the change as it was evident on the day of the performance that both characters are not dating because all autumn of intimacy was removed as evident in the above picture. Therefore when blockings are tampered with, it not only affects actors on stage. it also disrupts the picture the director has created. It is the responsibility of the director to direct the attention of the audience to see and hear what he wants them to and learn from it rather than the director dishing out what the audience might want to hear or see. It is only when the director is given free hand that he will be able to know if his performance is below average or not but when the performances are channelled to satisfy a group of people, the level of professionalism in which the director has put in the production is limited.

Another instance where the blocking was also tempered with was during the production of *Vision*, a play written and directed by Ahmed Yerima for the sixth convocation and tenth anniversary of the university. Even though the play was written for Redeemer's University, the issue of morality still came to play as observed during the preview of the performance.

Figure 1

A Picture of Nnemeka and Grace in *Crossroads* A Stage play at BOJA Arts Theatre.



Source: Boja Library

Even though the play was written for Redeemer's University, the issue of morality still came to play as observed during the preview of the performance. Two major areas in which the action on stage was tampered with further corroborates the issue of directing and the burden of moral focus in faith-based universities. First, is the scene in which Faramola, a girl representing Redeemer's University and her father who is a staff of Redeemer's University, pay a visit to Oderinde who is an elder statesman in the Ede community and the great grandfather of Faramola. Oderinde offers them palm wine which is a good drink in the Ede community. The director had blocked the girl collecting the drink as a sign of acceptance, however, representatives of the University Management asked that that particular blocking be removed as a potential student of Redeemer's University cannot be seen collecting palm wine, let alone drink it.

Another vivid example of the influence of the religious environment on the director and his interpretation is evident towards the tail end of the play, when Oderinde by virtue of his traditional powers as a hunter and an elder in the land, says some incantations and orders the mirror of life to show to Faramola and the members of the audience the day the founder and other top dignitaries

in the state attended the laying of the foundation ceremony. This was to initiate a flashback and also by some means establish that the traditional mode of religion has not been put to bed, especially since some Ede indigenes who still believe and have their roots in such powers were part of those that constituted the audience. However, for those present during the preview, this was unacceptable, hence the director was asked to adopt the mode of technology as a means of flashback.

When directors are given free hand to work, there is a difference in interpretation, composition, picturisation and narration as relating to the director's own creative and innovative thinking, devoid of external pressure or influence.

Costumes

Stage costumes are clothes used by performers, actors and dancers on stage. Theatrical costumes help actors portray a character's profession, social class, age and gender. However, the use of costumes could be quite challenging for directors in a faith-based university, especially if the character's costume will expose any part of the actor's body. When a prostitute is portrayed on stage and she is given very short and revealing dresses to wear, the likelihood that such costume will be frowned upon in that environment is on the high side, forgetting that she is only acting upon the director's instruction and as to what the role she is playing dictates. The effect of this is that the wrong use of costumes misleads the audience and also disrupts the picture the director has created. When the right costume is used, it helps the actors in their characterisation, and this is because some costumes are specially made for certain roles. The costume designer creates costumes to balance the scenes with texture and colour so when this is tampered with, it affects a whole lot of things such as; light, picture, characterisation and blockings.

Having explored directing and the issues of morality in a faith based university, it was observed that directors in a faith-based University are sometimes limited in their directorial approach to theatrical work because of the peculiarity of the environment, hence, limiting their creativity. The director is too conscious of the religious environment he/she operates in thus the interpretation and application of their directing style most times, align with the dictates of the environment. Also, it was discovered that the director sometimes plays to the gallery in the discharge of their duties in a

faith-based University which affirms the popular saying that "he who pays the piper dictates the tune".

Based on the findings, it is inevitable to state that, the leadership of a faith-based university needs to come to terms with the peculiar nature of Theatre Arts as a course, understanding beyond all doubt that theatre only mirrors society and will not attempt to promote immorality but rather campaign against it. Correcting the ills in society is the watchword of

Figure 2

Picture of guests in a party scene in *Crossroads A Stage play performed at BOJA Arts Theatre.*



Source: Boja Library

every theatre artiste and this must be carried out with humility and the support of the environment the director finds himself. Also, directors in such institutions need to understand the peculiarity of their environment in interpreting their work without compromising the aesthetics that are required of the art. He/she should also endeavour to find a common ground to accommodate and promote the values and norms that define such an environment in the discharge of their duties. The Professionalism that is expected of a theatre director should be pursued with vigour and dignity. The role of theatre in regard to the growth and development of society is very vital and should not be tampered with.

In conclusion, faith-based universities must come to terms with the reality of the intricacies involved in the treatment of Theatre Arts as a highly professional and practical course. Drama is a spice of life and since drama is a major part of the theatre, it is important that in the practice of theatre, there must be a fair and accurate understanding of the course and its administration. The practice must uphold its high spirit of discipline and practical ethics in order to do a lot of services

to the budding theatre artists whose craft and skills ought to be developed to promote the primary function of Theatre which is to mirror society. The director's artistic vision is primal. Hence, regardless of the environment or other factors which could hinder the realisation of the vision he has conceptualised, the director must relay his message creatively and genuinely to the audience.

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