POLITICS OF SPACE IN SELECTED PLAY-TEXTS OF IRENE SALAMI-AGUNLOYE AND EMMY IDEGU

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PERFORMING ARTS, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.) DEGREE IN PERFORMING ARTS

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CERTIFICATION

This thesis has been read and approved as meeting the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree in Performing Arts in the Department of the Performing Arts of the University of Ilorin.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty who provided me the strength and resources to carry out the research. It is also dedicated to my immediate family members who consitently gave me the encouragement and support to do it.

ATTESTATION

I, AGBOOLÁ, Michael Olánrewájú, with matriculation number 82/3629, hereby declare that this thesis titled, “Politics of Space in Selected Play-texts of Irene Salami-Agunloye and Emmy Idegu” is a record of my research work. It has neither been presented nor accepted in any prevous application for a higher degree. All sources of information have been specifically acknowledged. In addition, the research work has been ethically approved by the University Ethical Review Committee.

…….. ……..…..

Michael Olánrewájú Agboolá **Date**

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ABSTRACT

The struggle for political power in post-independence Nigeria has been a subject of attraction to dramatists over the years. Although the political strategies employed in the process of politicking have created obstacles in the nation's drive for a meaningful and holistic development, dramatic critics are yet to focus their attention on the politics of space in Nigerian drama. The aim of the study was to analyse the selected play-texts of Irene Salami-Agunloye and Emmy Idegu. The objectives of the study were to: (i.) identify the problems of post-colonial Nigeria in relation to the politics of space; (ii.) examine the context of the politics of space in Nigeria's post-colonial theatre; (iii.) investigate the dramatic representation of politics of space in the military and democratic dispensations; (iv.) analyse the dramatic concerns of Salami-Agunloye and Idegu's selected play-texts; (v.) assess the nature of theatrical intersections of postcolonialism in the selected play-texts; and (vi.) evaluate the relevant alternatives of good governance and democracy provided in the selected play-texts.

The study adopted the content analysis and descriptive methods to examine eight Nigerian post-colonial play-texts, four each from the two playwrights. The selected play-texts from Salami-Agunloye were *More than Dancing, Sweet Revenge, Emotan: A Benin Heroine,* and *Idia, the Warrior Queen of Benin* while those of Idegu were *Beloved Odolu Kingdom*, *Another Odolu Kingdom*, *Great Odolu Kingdom* and *Ata Igala the Great*. The Eclecticist and Nativist models of postcolonial theory were adopted as theoretical framework for the study.

The findings of the study were that the:

(i.) problems of post-colonial Nigeria, in relation to the politics of space included political assassination, electoral violence, electoral fraud and ethnic politics;

(ii.) context of the politics of space in Nigeria's post-colonial theatre resonates in form of competitive struggles for political power;

(iii.) dramatic representation of politics of space in the military era was characterised mostly by coercion while agency and binary nuances of power are more dominant in the democratic dispensation;

(iv.) selected play-texts portrayed the absurdities of the political space which manifested in prebendal politics, gender discrimination, exclusionism, clientelism, injustice and selfish leadership;

(v.) intersections of theatre and postcolonialism are that the dramaturgies of the playwrights also serve as counter-narratives to colonial knowledge and hegemony; and

(vi.) alternatives offered by Salami-Agunloye and Idegu's play-texts to enhance good governance and a healthy political struggle included restructuring of the society, sacrificial and selfless leadership, political tolerance, inclusive political participation and commitment to democratic tenets.

The study concluded that the dramaturgies of the two playwrights strive to effect change and correct socio-political dislocations through democratic governance than violence. The study recommended that the theatre of this democratic dispensation be tagged "demo-theatre", a post-colonial theatre of democratic possibilities.

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