

# **Naming the Nation: Literary Onomastics and the Universality of Corruption in Femi Osofisan's Drama**

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines the strategic use of names, titles, professions, ethnic markers and nicknames in the drama of Femi Osofisan as instruments of ideological and social representation. While existing scholarship on Osofisan has focused largely on his Marxist orientation, radical aesthetics, historical revisionism and commitment to social justice, little attention has been paid to his onomastic techniques and their contribution to meaning-making. Drawing on selected plays, the study argues that Osofisan deliberately assigns names and social identities that transcend ethnic, religious, professional, and class boundaries in order to project the universality of corruption, oppression, exploitation, and resistance in Nigerian society. Through characters bearing Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa and other ethnic identities, as well as characters representing diverse professions such as politicians, religious leaders, traders, soldiers, academics and traditional rulers, Osofisan dismantles simplistic ethnic explanations of Nigeria's social problems and presents corruption as a collective national malaise. The paper further contends that his deployment of nicknames and honorific titles functions as a satirical device for exposing hypocrisy, abuse of power and social contradictions. Employing Onomastic Literary Theory as the analytical framework, the study concludes that naming in Osofisan's drama is not merely a tool of characterisation but a significant ideological strategy through which the playwright constructs a broad-based critique of Nigerian society and advances a vision of collective responsibility for social transformation.

Keywords: Femi Osofisan, onomastics, naming, corruption, ethnicity, Nigerian drama.

## **Introduction**

Femi Osofisan occupies a prominent position in African dramatic literature as one of Nigeria's most prolific playwrights, theatre directors and cultural critics. Since the 1970s, his dramatic works have

consistently interrogated issues of political corruption, class exploitation, social inequality, historical manipulation and the betrayal of the masses by the ruling elite (Ajidahun, *Political Ideology* 9-14. *History and Ideology* 137-149, *Corruption* 111-123, *Betrayal* 115-120) and *Exploitation* 134-142). Unlike many African playwrights who situate their dramatic conflicts within particular ethnic, regional, historical or religious contexts, Femi Osofisan constructs a broader national canvas in which corruption, oppression and exploitation transcend ethnic, professional and religious boundaries. While playwrights such as Wole Soyinka in *Death and the King's Horseman*, Ola Rotimi in *Kurunmi*, Ahmed Yerima in *Idemili*, *Otaelo*, *Iyase* and Zulu Sofola in *Wedlock of the Gods* ground their dramatic conflicts in specific cultural and historical settings, Osofisan deliberately distributes vice and virtue across diverse ethnic, religious and professional identities, thereby presenting social decay as a collective national rather than sectional phenomenon.

Critical studies on Osofisan have largely concentrated on his Marxist ideology, his adaptation of myths and historical materials, his revisionist engagement with canonical texts, and his commitment to popular theatre (Ajidahun, *Marxist Polemics* 137-149, Adesola, *Nigerian Drama* 221-231. Obafemi, *Ideology and Adaptation* 137-140, Olaogun, *Fertility Rite* 181-185) and Zaccheaus and Adaramola, *Dramaturgy* (78-87). However, an important aspect of his dramaturgy that has received comparatively little scholarly attention is his deliberate use of names, titles, professions and nicknames as vehicles of social meaning. Character names in Osofisan's plays rarely function as mere labels; they often embody ideological positions, social identities, ethnic affiliations and symbolic meanings that contribute significantly to the playwright's social vision.

In many of his plays, characters bear names associated with different ethnic groups in Nigeria, thereby suggesting that neither virtue nor vice is exclusive to any particular nationality, ethnicity, or region. Likewise, the representation of corrupt politicians, dishonest traders, manipulative religious figures, compromised intellectuals, oppressive security agents and exploitative traditional rulers demonstrates that social decay permeates virtually every sector of society. Through such naming strategies, Osofisan constructs a dramatic universe in which collective responsibility replaces ethnic blame and where social problems are understood as national rather than sectional phenomena.

Furthermore, the playwright frequently employs titles and nicknames as satirical instruments. Honorific appellations such as Chief, Alhaji, Pastor, Professor, General and other markers of social status often become ironic signifiers that expose the gap between public image and moral reality. These naming practices deepen the playwright's critique of power structures while simultaneously enhancing the accessibility and universality of his message.

This paper therefore investigates the ideological functions of names, professions, titles and nicknames in selected plays of Femi Osofisan. It argues that Osofisan's onomastic choices constitute a deliberate artistic strategy aimed at constructing a national consciousness, exposing collective complicity in social injustice and emphasising the universality of corruption and exploitation within Nigerian society.

### **Theoretical Framework: Literary Onomastics**

This study is anchored on Literary Onomastics, a branch of literary criticism that examines the significance and functions of names in literary texts. Literary Onomastics proceeds from the assumption that names in literature are not arbitrary labels but meaningful linguistic and cultural signs through which authors encode characterisation, ideology, social identity and thematic concerns (Nicolaisen 541). The theory investigates how names contribute to the construction of meaning and how they influence readers' interpretation of literary works.

The importance of names in literature has long been recognised. According to Nicolaisen, literary names constitute an essential aspect of textual communication because they often carry symbolic, social, historical, and ideological meanings that transcend mere identification (542). Similarly, Algeo argues that names serve as markers of identity and social positioning, enabling writers to communicate information about a character's background, status and role within society (129). Consequently, the study of names provides important insights into the relationship between language, culture and literary representation.

Within African literature, names often perform additional cultural and ideological functions. They may indicate ethnic identity, religious affiliation, social status, occupation or communal values. As a result, the naming practices of African writers frequently reflect broader socio-political realities and contribute to the thematic concerns of their works. Literary Onomastics therefore provides an effective framework

for examining how playwrights employ names as instruments of social commentary.

In the drama of Femi Osofisan, names, titles, professions and nicknames function as deliberate artistic devices rather than accidental designations. Osofisan populates his plays with characters drawn from diverse ethnic groups, professions and social classes, thereby constructing a dramatic landscape that mirrors the complexity of Nigerian society. Through this strategy, he demonstrates that corruption, oppression, greed and exploitation are not peculiar to a single ethnic group or profession but are pervasive social realities affecting the nation as a whole.

Furthermore, Osofisan's use of professional titles such as Chief, Alhaji, Pastor, Professor, Soldier, Trader and Politician serves to broaden the scope of his social critique. By associating both positive and negative behaviours with individuals from various professions and ethnic backgrounds, he dismantles ethnic stereotypes and rejects reductionist explanations of Nigeria's socio-political problems. His naming practices consequently reinforce the universal dimension of his message and underscore the collective responsibility of Nigerians in addressing societal challenges.

The relevance of Literary Onomastics to this study therefore lies in its capacity to reveal how Osofisan transforms names into ideological signifiers. Through the analysis of character names, titles, professional identities and nicknames in selected plays, this study demonstrates that naming constitutes an important dramaturgical strategy through which Osofisan projects national consciousness, social criticism and the universality of corruption and resistance in Nigerian society.

### **Textual Analysis**

#### **Names, Ethnicity and the Universality of Corruption and Exploitation**

Osofisan's deployment of characters bearing names associated with different ethnic groups suggests that corruption transcends regional, cultural and ethnic boundaries in Nigeria. Across his dramatic works, characters drawn from diverse ethnic backgrounds are implicated in acts of graft, exploitation oppression and the abuse of power. Through this strategy, the playwright constructs a dramatic universe in which social vices are not confined to any particular ethnic group but are presented as collective human failings.

For instance, several of the proper names found in Osofisan's plays are rooted in Yoruba culture and tradition. Examples include Latoye, Abiodun and Funlola in *The Chattering and the Song*, Kutu, Sanda and Iyabo in *A Restless Run of Locusts*, Olabisi, Titi, Adigun, Akanbi and Folawe in *Farewell to a Cannibal Rage*, Fatosin and Gbadegesin in *Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen*, Ibidun, Akanji, Doyin and Bolaji in *Red Is the Freedom Road*, Alowolodu, Bode, Dedeké, Rotimi in *One Legend, Many Seasons*, Lawumi, Tinuade, Taye and Kehinde in *Twingle-Twangle: A Twynning Tayle*, Laoye, Tinuke, Bimbo and Iyabo in *Fiddlers on a Midnight Lark*. These names evoke a recognisable Yoruba socio-cultural milieu while simultaneously participating in broader national concerns.

Similarly, Osofisan incorporates names of Igbo origin, including Obioma, Chinwe, Okoro and Juokwu in *The Album of the Midnight Blackout*, as well as Claudius in *The Oriki of a Grasshopper* and Polycap in *Who's Afraid of Solarin?* Hausa representation is equally evident in names such as Ahmed and Alhaji Maikudi in *Altine's Wrath*. Through this deliberate distribution of names across Nigeria's major ethnic groups, Osofisan avoids privileging or demonising any particular ethnic identity. The playwright's vision extends beyond Nigeria's ethnic boundaries. In *Tegonni: An African Antigone*, names such as Carter-Ross and Allan Jones reflect European identities, while names such as Bayo Campbell in *Tegonni: An African Antigone* and Peju Thomas in *Fires Burn and Die Hard* suggest racial and cultural intersections. These naming patterns point to a broader human community and underscore the universal dimensions of the social issues explored in the plays.

Consequently, there is a fair representation of humanity in Osofisan's dramatic corpus, even though his primary audience remains Nigerian and African. The three major ethnic groups in Nigeria—Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa—are all represented, alongside characters from other racial and cultural backgrounds. Through this inclusive onomastic strategy, Osofisan suggests that corruption, oppression and the exploitation of the poor are neither ethnic nor regional phenomena. Rather, they are national and universal realities in which both leaders and followers may be implicated. His dramaturgy therefore redirects attention from ethnic blame to collective responsibility, inviting audiences to confront the systemic and human dimensions of social injustice.

## Professional Identities and the Representation of Collective Corruption

Osofisan's deployment of professional identities such as traders, soldiers, politicians, academics, religious leaders and traditional rulers reinforces the notion that social decay permeates every sector of society. In addition to personal names, the titles borne by his characters are crucial to the projection of his ideological vision. Through these professional and social designations, the playwright broadens the scope of his critique and underscores the universality of corruption, exploitation and abuse of power.

A number of Osofisan's characters bear academic titles. Examples include Professor Juokwu in *The Album of the Midnight Blackout*, the Professor in *Twingle-Twangle: A Twynning Tayle*, and Dr Ibrahim in *Fires Burn and Die Hard*. The presence of such characters demonstrates that the academy, often regarded as a bastion of knowledge and moral enlightenment, is not insulated from the social contradictions that afflict the wider society. This view is well illustrated by Chris Anyokwu in *The Citadel* and OluObafemi in *Dark Times Are Over?*

Religious titles are equally prominent in his plays. These include Rev. Bayo Campbell in *Tegonni: An African Antigone*; Pastor Suuru in *Midnight Hotel*; Pastor Nebuchadnezzah in *Who's Afraid of Solarin?*; AlhajiBuraimoh and AlhajaKabirat in *Morountodun*; and AlhajiMaikudi and MalamOnene in *Altine's Wrath*. By incorporating both Christian and Islamic religious figures into his dramatic world, Osofisan suggests that corruption and moral compromise are not confined to secular institutions alone but may also be found within religious circles.

Traditional authority is represented through titles such as Oba Moluwe and Oba Elenon in *Twingle-Twangle: A Twynning Tayle*, Chief Isokun in *Tegonni: An African Antigone*, Chief Kuti in *A Restless Run of Locusts*, Chief Owombe in *Farewell to a Cannibal Rage*, Chief Ekuroola, Chief Orousi and Prince Lanusen in *Another Raft* and Chief EreniyiEson in *The Inspector and the Hero*. These figures symbolise indigenous structures of power and cultural authority. Their inclusion in Osofisan's critique indicates that traditional institutions are not exempt from the tendencies towards oppression, manipulation and self-interest that characterise other centres of power.

Apart from religious leaders and traditional rulers, Osofisan also represents the custodians of African Traditional Religion in his plays. Through these characters, he extends his critique of corruption and moral

decadence to indigenous religious institutions, thereby reinforcing his argument that no social institution is immune from ethical failure. Examples include Baba Fawomi, the Ifa priest in *Who's Afraid of Solarin?* Baba Soye, the Ifa priest in *Farewell to a Cannibal Rage* and Orisatola and Fatosin in *Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen*. These characters, despite their association with spiritual authority and moral guidance, are portrayed as being susceptible to corruption, manipulation and the abuse of power.

By depicting custodians of African Traditional Religion alongside Christian and Islamic leaders, Osofisan emphasises that corruption is not peculiar to secular institutions or to any particular faith. Rather, it is a pervasive human failing that transcends religious boundaries. Ironically, the very institutions that ought to serve as the moral conscience of society are shown to be vulnerable to the same ethical shortcomings that characterise the political and economic spheres. Osofisan's dramatic vision therefore rejects the assumption that any religion possesses a monopoly on moral integrity. Instead, he suggests that individuals, irrespective of their religious affiliation or spiritual office, may become agents of oppression and exploitation when entrusted with power and authority. Consequently, his plays advocate not the condemnation of particular religious traditions but the cultivation of personal integrity, accountability and social justice across all religious and cultural institutions. Military and paramilitary titles also feature prominently. Examples include Retired Major Peter Ajala in *Birthdays Are Not for Dying*; Captain Allan Jones and Lieutenant General Carter-Ross in *Tegonni: An African Antigone*; and Sergeant Ofili, Sergeant Bojula and Inspector Akindele in *The Inspector and the Hero*. Through such characters, Osofisan examines the role of coercive institutions in the maintenance of social inequality and political domination.

Similarly, political office holders are represented by characters such as Councillor Bamigbade and Honourable Fakunle in *Birthdays Are Not for Dying*, as well as Honourable Mrs Asibong in *Midnight Hotel*. The legal and medical professions are also represented through Lawyer Isaac in *Morountodun* and Dr Alade Martins in *Who's Afraid of Solarin?* respectively. The diversity of these professional identities reveals the breadth of Osofisan's social canvas and demonstrates his determination to scrutinise all sectors of society.

The significance of these titles lies in their symbolic function. They indicate that corruption, the exploitation of the poor and tyrannical

tendencies can be found in every sphere of social life—whether in academia, the military, politics, religion, law, medicine or traditional institutions. Many of these titles, particularly those associated with academia, the military and politics, function as markers of elitism and privilege. Osofisan's dramaturgy suggests that the poor are frequently oppressed by members of the elite class—the Honourables, Councillors, Professors, Doctors, Chiefs and Generals who wield social, economic and political power.

Furthermore, Osofisan challenges the popular tendency to demonise particular professions as uniquely corrupt while absolving others of responsibility. In many societies, politicians, police officers, customs officials and immigration officers are often portrayed as the principal agents of corruption, whereas, professions such as teaching, medicine and the clergy are frequently viewed more favourably (Aborisade and Fayemi 245 and Ibrahim 19). Osofisan rejects such simplistic distinctions. Through his extensive use of diverse professional identities and titles, he demonstrates that corruption is not the preserve of any single profession but a pervasive social phenomenon that cuts across institutional and occupational boundaries. In doing so, he reinforces his broader argument that societal degeneration is a collective problem requiring collective responsibility and reform.

### **Religious Identities and the Universality of Moral Failure**

It is also noteworthy that the proper names employed by Osofisan cut across the three major religious traditions in Nigeria—Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion. Through this inclusive onomastic strategy, the playwright suggests that no religious group can be completely exonerated from complicity in corruption, exploitation and social injustice, even though religious institutions are traditionally regarded as the moral conscience of society.

Several of the names in Osofisan's plays have Christian origins. Examples include Agnes and Catherine in *Midnight Hotel*; Peter Ajala and Samuel Seminiyi in *Birthdays Are Not for Dying*; and Cecilia and Nebuchadnezzar in *Who's Afraid of Solarin?* These names evoke a Christian religious background and contribute to the playwright's representation of the religious diversity of Nigerian society.

Likewise, Osofisan incorporates names associated with Islam. Examples include Lamidi and Lemonu in *Who's Afraid of Solarin?*, Jimoh in *Midnight Hotel*; Ahmed, Mariam, MalamOnene and AlhajiMaikudi in

*Altine's Wrath*; and Hasan and Aafa in *Once Upon Four Robbers*. The presence of these characters further reinforces the playwright's determination to represent the multiplicity of religious identities within the Nigerian social landscape.

African Traditional Religion is equally represented through names such as Aro, Orisa and Aperin in *Yungba-Yungba and the Dance Contest*; Fatosin, Orisatoba and Oluode in *Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen*; and Omitogun in *Another Raft*. In addition, Osofisan draws upon mythic and spiritual figures deeply rooted in Yoruba cosmology, including Sango and Oya in *Many Colours Make the Thunder-King*; Moremi in *Morountodun*, Orunmila in *Farewell to a Cannibal Rage*, *Another Raft*, *The Chattering and the Song*, Olokun and Elusu in *No More the Wasted Breed*, Yemoja in *Another Raft* and Esu in *Esu and the Vagabond Minstrels* and *The Forest of Promised Harm*. The inclusion of these figures demonstrates the playwright's engagement with indigenous religious traditions and cultural memory.

The significance of this religious diversity lies in its ideological implications. Osofisan appears to suggest that the oppression and exploitation of the poor can be found in every sphere of social life, including institutions and traditions that are expected to uphold moral values. By representing characters from Christian, Islamic and traditional religious backgrounds within the same dramatic universe, he rejects the notion that moral corruption is peculiar to any single faith or belief system.

Furthermore, some of the mythic figures invoked in the plays serve as reminders that the abuse of power is not a modern phenomenon. Historical and oral traditions surrounding figures such as Sango reveal the complexities and contradictions of leadership, including the potential for authority to be exercised oppressively. Osofisan's appropriation of such figures therefore broadens his critique beyond contemporary politics and situates it within a wider reflection on power, human nature and social responsibility.

Ultimately, Osofisan's representation of diverse religious identities reinforces one of the central concerns of his dramaturgy: corruption, exploitation and tyranny are not confined to particular ethnic, professional or religious groups. Rather, they are manifestations of broader human weaknesses that cut across all social categories. His dramatic vision therefore calls not for the condemnation of specific groups but for collective moral introspection and social transformation.

### Nicknames as Instruments of Social Commentary

Beyond the use of proper names, Osofisan frequently assigns nicknames and appellations to his characters as a means of social commentary. These nicknames are rarely arbitrary; rather, they function as significant onomastic devices through which the playwright reveals character traits, social backgrounds, power relations and ideological concerns. Through ironic appellations and evocative nicknames, Osofisan exposes the contradictions between public status and private morality while simultaneously satirising social attitudes and institutions. For instance, Ereniyi in *The Inspector and the Hero* is associated with a series of mocking appellations: “Omo Mama Elekun” (Son of the Snivelling Mother), “Omo E JowoSah”, and “Omo Tisa E GbaMi” (131). These nicknames emphasise his impoverished background and social vulnerability. At the same time, they generate humour and ridicule, revealing how poverty often becomes an object of public mockery in society. Through these appellations, Osofisan draws attention to the indignities suffered by the socially disadvantaged.

Similarly, Aina Jibo in *Altine's Wrath*, an old schoolmate of Lawal, is nicknamed “EjiOoro” (Morning Rain) (60). The nickname evokes gentleness, calmness and benevolence, thereby reflecting Aina's disposition. Significantly, it serves as a foil to the character of Lawal, whose harshness, authoritarian tendencies and oppressive treatment of others, particularly his wife, stand in sharp contrast to the qualities implied by Aina's nickname. The appellation thus becomes an important device of characterisation.

In *Tegonni: An African Antigone*, Governor Carter-Ross is nicknamed “Slap-My-Face!” (86), a designation laden with oppressive undertones. The nickname captures the arrogance and authoritarian disposition associated with colonial power. By reducing a colonial administrator to such an appellation, Osofisan satirises imperial authority and exposes its coercive nature.

Other notable nicknames appear in *Once Upon Four Robbers*, where characters bear appellations such as “Lamilami”, “Ebiti”, “Sir Love”, “De Nigger”, “Sago”, “Bente” and “Mada” (9–10). These names belong to armed robbers who have already been executed. Significantly, the nicknames suggest a loss of individual identity and social recognition. Rather than being known by personal names that affirm their humanity, the characters are identified through labels that reflect alienation,

marginalisation and disillusionment. In this sense, the nicknames underscore the dehumanising effects of a society that has failed its most vulnerable members.

A similar pattern is evident in *Who's Afraid of Solarin?* where the Chairman of the Local Government Council is known simply as “JDG”, while the Councillor for Education and Works bears the nickname “FF” (Force-is-Force) (4). These appellations are particularly striking because they are attached to public officials occupying positions that ordinarily demand dignity, responsibility and accountability. Instead, the nicknames evoke images of political thuggery, intimidation and irresponsibility. The irony is heightened by the fact that both the Chairman and his councillors, including FF, are implicated in the embezzlement of public funds intended to improve the welfare of the masses.

Through such nicknames and appellations, Osofisan demonstrates that names are not merely tools of identification but powerful instruments of social criticism. They expose hypocrisy, ridicule abuse of power, highlight social inequalities and reveal the moral contradictions embedded within society. Consequently, Osofisan's use of nicknames contributes significantly to his broader project of interrogating corruption, oppression and social injustice while encouraging critical reflection on the structures and attitudes that sustain them.

## Discussion

These names function as ideological signifiers through which the playwright constructs a panoramic representation of Nigerian society rather than a critique directed at any single ethnic constituency. In this regard, naming becomes a significant dramaturgical strategy for communicating the universality of moral failure and social decay (Nicolaisen 542).

The implication of this strategy is that no ethnic group is exonerated from complicity in corruption. Osofisan's dramatic vision suggests that corruption is fundamentally a human problem rather than an ethnic one. Whenever individuals gain access to power, wealth, or privilege, the possibility of exploitation emerges irrespective of their ethnic affiliations. By distributing corrupt and exploitative tendencies across characters from different social and ethnic backgrounds, Osofisan rejects simplistic narratives that attribute Nigeria's socio-political problems to a particular ethnic group. Instead, he presents corruption as a national malaise rooted in human greed and the abuse of power.

This broad-based representation has important implications for national unity and social justice. Rather than encouraging ethnic suspicion or hostility, Osofisan's dramaturgy promotes collective self-examination. The playwright redirects attention away from ethnic scapegoating towards a recognition of shared responsibility for societal degeneration. His works invite audiences to look beyond ethnic identities and confront the structural and moral failures that cut across all segments of society. Such a perspective resonates with the notion that social crises persist not because of the actions of one group alone but because of widespread complicity, silence and indifference.

Indeed, Osofisan's position recalls the central idea encapsulated in the notion that "we are all guilty," as expressed in G. Oka Arewa's *We Are All Guilty* and Karin Slaughter's *We Are All Guilty*. Human beings often display a tendency to attribute social failures to others while absolving themselves of responsibility. Osofisan challenges this tendency by exposing corruption as a phenomenon that permeates the entire social fabric. Through his strategic use of names and identities, he calls upon Nigerians to abandon the politics of blame and embrace the ethics of collective accountability. It is in this sense that the playwright emerges not merely as a social critic but also as a sage whose dramaturgy seeks to cultivate national consciousness, self-reflection and social transformation (Awodiya 15).

### **Conclusion**

This study has examined the significance of names, titles, professional identities, religious affiliations and nicknames in the drama of Femi Osofisan through the lens of Literary Onomastics. It has demonstrated that naming in Osofisan's plays is far more than a mere device of identification. Rather, it constitutes a deliberate dramaturgical strategy through which the playwright communicates his ideological vision, critiques social institutions and constructs a universal framework for understanding corruption, oppression and exploitation.

The analysis has shown that Osofisan's deployment of names drawn from the major ethnic groups in Nigeria—Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa—reflects his rejection of ethnic essentialism and scapegoating. By associating both victims and perpetrators of social injustice with diverse ethnic identities, he presents corruption as a collective human and national problem rather than the exclusive preserve of any particular group. His dramatic universe therefore challenges audiences to move

beyond ethnic prejudices and to embrace a more inclusive understanding of social responsibility.

Similarly, the study has revealed that Osofisan's use of professional titles and identities broadens the scope of his social critique. By populating his plays with academics, politicians, soldiers, lawyers, doctors, religious leaders and traditional rulers, he demonstrates that corruption and abuse of power permeate every sector of society. No profession, institution or social class is portrayed as inherently innocent. Instead, the playwright exposes the complicity of both leaders and followers in sustaining structures of exploitation and injustice.

Furthermore, Osofisan's representation of characters from Christian, Islamic and traditional religious backgrounds underscores his conviction that moral failure transcends religious boundaries. Religious affiliation, like ethnicity and profession, does not automatically guarantee moral integrity. Through this inclusive representation, he challenges religious communities to engage in self-examination rather than claim moral superiority over others.

The study has also established that nicknames and appellations function as powerful instruments of social commentary in Osofisan's dramaturgy. Through humour, irony and satire, these names reveal social inequalities, expose hypocrisy and ridicule the abuse of authority. They enrich characterisation while simultaneously advancing the playwright's critique of societal dysfunction.

Ultimately, Osofisan's naming practices reveal a playwright deeply committed to the project of national consciousness and social transformation. His onomastic strategy dismantles simplistic explanations of Nigeria's problems by demonstrating that corruption, oppression and exploitation are not ethnic, professional or religious phenomena but manifestations of broader human weaknesses and systemic failures. By distributing these flaws across diverse identities and institutions, Osofisan calls for collective accountability rather than selective blame. His drama therefore functions not only as a critique of society but also as a moral intervention aimed at fostering unity, self-reflection and the pursuit of social justice.

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