
Deconstruction in Performance for Audience Aesthetic Preference: An Experiment with Tyrone Terrence's "A Husband's Wife"

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Abstract

Deconstruction, which allows subjective interpretation of literary texts, warrants performance text to assume a different meaning from the literary text for a change or an up-to-date signification. This article investigates African audience aesthetic preference for morality and value for human life, and it deploys deconstruction to re-order the unwholesome Euro-centric value that "A Husband's Wife" propagates. Having observed that the drama holds an unresolved "Medean-impulse", the study engaged a sample audience in the different performances of the drama for two consecutive days: day one performance was approached according to the dramatist's prototype, while the day two performance drew on the deconstruction of plot, style and characterization, to repose the unresolved factor, which rebates its aesthetic essence. The investigation combines the quantitative and qualitative methods for data capture and analysis, and thus deduced that the audience aesthetic preference was in favour of the day two performance. Hinging on the theory of deconstruction, the paper recommends that all such African plays bestowed with the shortcomings of African aesthetics, should be subjected to appropriate "deconstruction" in the interest of drawing on audience preference for increased patronage and the development of theatre in Nigeria, while contributing to the enhancement of wholesome moral values.

Keywords: African aesthetic preference, "Medean-impulse", Performance deconstruction

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Introduction

The theatre, as a collaborative art, harmonizes its constituent creative activities to communicate a social vision through performance engagement. Apart from the value of amusement or entertainment, which theatrical performances offer, they also educate and instruct the audience. That is why Hagher describes theatre as 'a weapon of mass instruction,' which reinforces the fact that theatre attains great essence when it serves as a platform for social mobilization (199). History records that the theatre of every society is themed by the happenings and issues that are peculiar to such society, and Shakespeare accedes in his play *Hamlet* (nd), as Hamlet addresses a group of actors:

I the purpose of playing, whose end, I both
of first and now, was and is, to hold as
twere, the mirror up to nature; to show
virtue her own feature, scorn her own image
and the very age and body of the times and
pressure. (1090)

Hence, the aphorism 'theatre is the mirror of the society' is true. Esslin attests to this when he states that 'the theatre is the place where a nation thinks in public in front of itself' (101). However, when the theatre takes on issues of universal essence; be it religious, moral, political or social, it treats it against the background of the uniqueness that is peculiar to the society the performance is made for. It follows that the theatre is not a tool that reflects social culture like a plain mirror does with the exactitude of impressions. Else, it may also achieve the proliferation of the ill aspects of the culture, instead of curbing them. Plato, thus worried about such counterproductive tendency, recommends that all performances, except 'hymns to the gods and praise to famous men,' should be banned from his utopian society (29-31).

Against this position, Aristotle, differs, and opines that tragedy (drama performance) seeks to deploy a number of artistic devices in the presentation of actions that exhibit incidences of 'pity' and 'fear' for the 'purgation' of these 'emotions' in the audience (39). It is such cathartic experience of audience members

that the theatre have continuously deployed for social transformation. Hence, Dasylyva's remark that "the theatre serves as a veritable means and mirror by which it is either reflected or refracted" (96) alludes to the transformation propensity of the theatre. In other words, raw materials for the theatre are mirrored with altered appearance in order to achieve its objective. In *The Marriage Coup* (2013), Umukoro describes such deployment of theatre performances as "renovations by innovation":

Director: "Renovation by innovation. It is no longer just a matter of holding the mirror up to Mother Nature or merely painting society in its own colour. That would mean merely depicting her in such contorted images in a way that has become her lot today. It is now for us to conceive more artful ways of recreating models after our own heart." (19)

The charge above made to a crop of actors underscores the essential nature of theatrical performance, and its capacity to transform society. Thus, by refracting, the theatre manipulates images via a diminishing-magnifying device. Such devices, according to White, include the manipulation of "spectatorship in either direction; increasing or decreasing aesthetic distance" (21). Through the coordination of a director who harnesses the different arts of the theatre, performance materials sourced from the society are processed in appropriate dimensions, in order to fulfil theatre objectives to end users. To this end that Esslin claims that:

The peculiar nature of drama as an instrument of knowledge, or perception, thought, insight about society; its correctness and the fact that drama never makes an overt statement, that by its very nature it is always an experiment which always carries its own control-mechanism, its own verification, within it. (96)

Consequently, this "control mechanism" serves to process real life incident(s) into aesthetically preferred performance, with which the theatre communicates its social vision. At any rate, theatre audience members do come with some pre-conscious notions that inform their aesthetic preference, and "verify" the theatrical process. Thus, there is the need to consider the aesthetic preference of the target audience, foregrounded on their pre-judgment for performance engagement. This article contends that Tyrone Terrence's *A Husband's Wife* is a true reflection of life happenings on the theme of marital infidelity in the Nigerian society, and considers the resolution of the drama, which ties to an unresolved "moral-impulse" as an exactitude of real life. In so doing, it seeks to investigate audience aesthetic preference by experimenting with "A Husband's Wife", in the variant performance of the drama.

An Overview of "A Husband's Wife"

Tyrone Terrence, a Jamaican-Nigeria creative artist, is a man of many parts, and has established himself as one of Nigeria's contemporary playwrights. He has about twenty (20) plays to his credit, and *A Husband's Wife* is the most popular. The synopsis, plot summary and thematic thrust of the drama under investigation follows accordingly.

After twenty-two years of marriage, the union of Femi and his wife, *Tomi* is hit by an overwhelming mid-life crisis. This ensues while their two daughters and son are schooling and working abroad, respectively. When *Femi* invariably admits to infidelity after incessant accusations by his wife, he hinges his indulgence to her negligence: *Femi* blames her for devoting herself to her career, at the expense of their conjugal essence, and *Tomi* succumbs. She submits herself that night, but *Femi* is firm to hold on to his mistress. In spite of *Tomi's* pleas, *Femi* discloses that his mistress is pregnant, and he has to move out of their matrimonial home. The can of worms opens, when *Tomi* discovers from a hidden picture photograph that her husband's Mistress is the older friend of their daughter. Afterwards he poisons *Femi* and clears her conscience of guilt.

A Husband's Wife is a domestic drama that consists of only two characters in the five-scene one-act play structure, and, it is set in the tastefully furnished modern bedroom of the couple- *Femi* and *Tomi*. The play has a simple plot that runs on climatic plot structure, and modelled after what Eugene Scribe describes as a well-made play:

The plot of a well-made play regularly revolves about a secret known only to some of the characters; revealed at the climax, it leads to the downfall of the villain and the triumph of a hero. The action, which centres on conflict- especially a duel of wits between the hero and his opponent builds with increasing intensity through a series of (minor) reversals that culminates in the climactic revelation scenes (Beckson and Ganz, 301).

The play opens with a point of attack, where *Tomi* presses her husband for confession to an adulterous act, which her friend, Susan, had disclosed. Throughout the play, the secret, unveils in bits, and this serves to heighten the tension of dramatic action till climax. In Scene one, *Femi* admits to his lecherous life, reveals her mistress name as Linda. He discloses her age, which is twenty-two years younger than his, all to irk his wife. Tension accentuates in the second scene to a point of complication as *Femi* opens up further that Linda is pregnant. In spite of *Tomi's* hysteria in Scene three, she holds back to know more. When it gets unbearable, *Tomi* walks out of the bedroom to catch her breath. Upon her return in scene four, she stumbles at her husband's mistress's picture photograph, and identifies her as their daughter's older friend. At that point, dramatic actions hit climax and begins to fall swiftly, as the play comes to an end in Scene five, where *Tomi* poisons her husband to death and alludes to *Medea's* experience for justification.

The thematic thrust of the play is topical in the contemporary African society, touching on the social problem of marital

infidelity. The sub-themes of the play, which include love, hate, betrayal and revenge, tie up to enhance the play's phenomenon, which the dramatist succinctly described as the "psycho-sociological study of aging marriage." *A Husband's Wife* is styled for a realistic drama. This is evident in the prescribed setting, language, characters and dramatic happenings. The dialogism is smooth and lucid; underscoring characterization, delineating ideological positions and personality types. Noticeably, the dialogue is reminiscent of the conversations between Jason and Medea in Euripides's *Medea* (431BC), which, according to Worthen, is "as though they were arguing in the courtroom or conducting a philosophical demonstration" (64). The language is imbued in philosophical and psychological colours, and confrontational, persuasive, and emotional, being deployed in a rhythmically pleasing fashion. Also, the techniques effectively used in the play include: flashback, soliloquy, and language repetition.

Conceptual Clarifications

Amongst other things, aesthetics is an essential demand for the appreciation of all artistic endeavours. Adorno reinforces this when he states that "tactility seeks aesthetic quality in the effect that artwork has on the observer" (10). As such, aesthetics is a vital element that distinguishes dramatic performance communication from other modes of communication. Lind's supports this when he argues that:

Phenomenological analysis tends to show that an artwork must be aesthetic as well as meaningful.

Without this further specification, what the artist has to say could not be distinguished from many non-artistic forms of communication. (117)

He further adduces that the aesthetic quality of a performance is a measure of how well the performance can endear and sustain audience's attention for a robust theatre experience (Lind, 119). It is probably in this regard that Adorno asserts that "there is much to be said for the idea that the dignity of artworks depends on the intensity of the interests from which we are vested" (11).

Aesthetics, as a branch of philosophy, is concerned with the subjective principles that define beauty in all relative disciplines; be it art or science. Beckson and Ganz note that there are two distinct views foregrounding the study of aesthetics: the objective and subjective views (7). The objective view holds the position that the quality that defines beauty is intrinsic to the object, and may elude its observer, whereas the subjective view consigns the indicators to beauty to observer's preference. This study, however considers that performance aesthetics aligns with the subjective view of aesthetics. This position pivots from the meaning of the Greek, *aisthetikos*, which according to the Oxford Dictionary alludes to the sense of appreciation of beauty; giving that performance appreciation is the purview of audience members.

Therefore, holistic impartation of the audience in performance communication is the value of performance aesthetics, which is capable of holding and sustaining the attention of audience members, who in turn, respond with the vulnerability that makes performance engagement fulfilling. Such vulnerability, as noted by Brockett and Ball is what Taylor Coleridge refers to as the 'wilful suspension of disbelief' (13). In fact, Kennedy's position about the vulnerability of postmodern audience is that 'wilful suspension of disbelief' amounts to the 'double negative that does not earn a positive', and thus posits that the disposition of the theatre audience is 'not of suspending belief, but of creating belief in (sharing) the embodied intensity of the fiction through absorption with it' (214-215). Therefore, the keenness for aesthetics is essential performance engagement.

Accordingly, Johnson asserts that elements of aesthetics include luminosity (smoothness), clarity of forms and details, complexity of composition (suspense/tension/interest), balance and symmetry, among other things (34-35). Literally, these could be regarded as merely quantifiable attributes. However, aesthetics also consists in qualitative characteristics, which include the values system that constitutes the pre-conscious context of the percipient. According to Adedeji, 'the Yoruba aesthetics postulates is *iwá l'ewa*', [í] Character is cognate with 'good' in its qualitative

senseö (73). This implies that good character traits describe human beauty and essence. Johnson, in the same vein cites Vogelø's remarks, thus: öit should be both beautiful and good, because it is intended not only to please the eyes but to uphold moral valuesö and explains why most African languages, such as Yoruba, deploy interchangeably the two words ögoodö and öbeautifulö, and for the same meaning (35). He further states that öaesthetics is virtuous and propagates it [í] aesthetics and vice or evil, seem not to have a meeting place; definitely not in the theatreö (Johnson, 98). Therefore, given the quintessential of aesthetics to drama performances, there is the need to capture the African aesthetic value in a performance designed for an African audience.

The researcher-experimentalist considers that the play, after climax, fails to conform to the essence of African aesthetics. After Tomi discovers that the mistress is a friend of the family, she poisons Femi to death and states, thus:

In ancient Greece there was a queen named Medea and her husband's name was Jasoní sacrifices? she sacrificed allí her conscience, her morality, her dignityí she killed so Jason would become king! But Jasoní who I believe is a distant relative of my husband betrayed Medea's love with another woman! Dear Godí poor Medea! Oh hell hath no fury than a woman scorned! In her rage she murders the princessí she kills all her children! And Jasoní poor Jasoní he could only ask öWhyí ö? To which Medea replied öTo break your heartí A fair price to pay to take away your smile.öAh tragedyí what tragedyí what a woman would do for love! The gods judged Medea and found her notí NOT GUILTY! They carried her away in a sun chariot because her cause was just, so my dear husbandí MY CAUSE IS JUST (Terrence, 33)

Observably, Euripides' influence is strong in the resolution of the Terrence's drama under investigation. The resolution is akin to the inordinate expression of intense, but repressed emotional feeling of Medea in Euripides' *Medea*. In *Medea*, Euripides, treats a love-hate relationship between Medea and Jason, in a manner that Medea exhibits destructive emotion impulse (59-63). Such irrationality, as expressed in the deliberate act of murder as payback for hurt is what this study regards as 'Medean-impulse'. As Femi dies, Tomi's statement, which brings the play to an end, is: 'I love you Femi. I will always love you but I will rather see you dead than imagine you in the arms of another woman' (Terrence 34). This manifestation of the 'Medean-impulse' is anti-African aesthetic, and it is not appropriate for African audience engagement, if it is tenable in other society. For Terrence to express the 'Medean-impulse' he could have moderated the dramatic action with the doctrine of 'poetic justice', as did William Shakespeare in *Othello* (1603), Jean Racine in *Phaedra* (1677) and Henrik Ibsen in *Hedda Gabler* (1891). Indeed, John Denis's remark in Beckson and Ganz that any literature work that deflects from poetic justice is either 'an empty amusement or a scandalous and pernicious libel upon the government of the world' (207), is instructive here. With poetic justice, 'balance and symmetry', which are essential elements of aesthetics, are maintained in a drama.

However, there is a point of departure between drama as a play-text, and as performance, which subordinates the whims of a dramatist to the influence of the director and enables the director to re-order a performance in context. The director's duty, which includes, harnessing a collaboration of various artistic inputs towards achieving a common goal, goes along with possible 'deconstruction'. Such inputs, as dramatist, choreography, designs, dance, acting and singing, among others, are harmonised by the director in some sort of unity to express the vision of a drama performance. Pickering recognizes such harmony that he refers to as 'artistic unity' as being exemplified in George II, Duke of Saxe-Meiningen (1826-1914), for which he is credited as the father of

modern directing (156-157). Given that the dramatist initiates the pre-performance artistic process by authoring the play text, which serves as a baseline for the performance preparation, his artistic input is however not sacrosanct.

Modern philosophy underscores the fact that there is no revered text cast in watertight fitting. In fact, there is the recommendation that authors should be detached from their work the moment it gets to the end user. This grants the readers the benefit of subjective interpretation. Such authorial detachment is probably what made Barthes to demand for the "death" (silence) of the author when he states that "the text henceforth is written and read so that in it, on every level, the author absents himself" (4). For this reason, Foucault remarks also that "the writer is reduced to nothing more than the singularity of his absence; he must assume the role of a dead man in the game of writing" (207). Such detachment endows the reader with what Beckson and Ganz recognise as an "acknowledged and controlled subjectivity" (224), which endow a sense of reading pleasure that enables the self-capacity for subjective interpretation. Thus, Barthes succinctly declares that "the birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of the author" (6). For the reader to experience reading pleasure, and the enabled capacity to fill the gaps of subtexts, authorial detachment is vital.

In the same vein, a director takes liberty to engage in an informed re-ordering of a play-text, without the interference of the dramatist, when the need arises. Interestingly, such re-ordering of drama by the director, at performance, has given most dramatists the benefit of improving the play-text. Amadi attests to this in the forward to the reprinted version of his play while expressing gratitude to the production team (n.p). It is in this connection that Pickering considers the director as a "critical interpreter" (161). However, some dramatists hold their published work jealously against subjective interpretation. Thompson supports this view when he states that "anxiety about interpretation has been evident in writers on the art for a number of years" (121), and an instance that attests to this, which African scholars have largely criticized as

unnecessary, is the warning which Soyinka issues the to-be-directors of *Death and the King's Horseman* when he states that:

í one of the obvious alternative structures of the play would be to make the district officer the victim of a cruel dilemma. This is not to my taste and it is not by chance that I have avoided dialogue or situation which could encourage this. No attempt should be made in production to suggest it (6-7).

Based on Barthes's and Foucault's philosophy, such warnings are needless as any play text can be exposed to the subjective interpretation of the director, who seeks to convey a particular social vision to an audience. Thus, when a director engages the performative elements for textual interpretation, he does so taking into cognizance of the aesthetic preference and a timely social vision for the target audience. As such, the director can re-derive a vision, different from the dramatist's, for the drama. Johnson upholds this when he states that:

The playwright's vision simply stands for his perception of views of the world in a particular play, under a particular theme/preoccupation í if the director applies the sub-textualistic aesthetics in the interpretative process, the vision re-discovered, may very well go beyond the dimension anticipated by the playwright (29-30).

Granted that creativity is the currency of the theatre, and given that the demand for authorial-detachment is applicable to play texts, the director is vested with the privilege of sub-textual interpretation, and this may reflect in any of the intrinsic elements of the play; be it language, style, genre, plot, music, spectacle and techniques. Herein, the theory of deconstruction comes to play.

The term 'deconstruction' was introduced Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), and the theory draws on the philosophy of Barthes and Foucault, regarding their position about authorial detachment

from literary works, to engender the possibilities of subjective interpretations and meanings. Gnanasekaran suggests this when he remarks that Derrida was a brilliant student of Michel Foucault (211). It is a poststructuralist theory in which Derrida underscores the arguments of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), who contended with the ideal of semiotics in stating that "there is no absolute equivalence between the "signifier" and the concept "signified", and concludes that "language was not a system of positive differentiation (the identity of each signifier laying not in any essence of its own but in it being distinguishable from others)" (Beckson and Ganz 57). On this basis, Derrida propounds that since signification is not absolute, that the reader of a text can indulge in an open ended interpretation of language to derive subjective meanings, which implies a "re-construction" of meaning from the text, thereby rendering the text "deconstructed" (414).

Gnanasekaran notes that the "Theory of Deconstruction" touches "on the innate, interior inconsistencies in language and elucidation", and further explains that its application "incorporates all other related necessities of building radically and tenaciously, and/or contains both obliteration and improvement in itself giving space for illumination" (212). Therefore, deconstruction can serve as a device through which a reader or an interpreter of literary text, re-constructs new meanings from a text, in an informed manner that is most applicable to a social context. However, Johnson warns that the departure, which may be occasioned by "deconstruction" should come as an end product of deliberate construction and not as a result of accidental destruction (36). This experiment of this study, which included the production of Tyrone Terrence's *A Husband's Wife* in both the "slavish" and "interpretative" directorial approaches; the later involving a certain measure of deconstruction, to investigate audience preference in a play text that is otherwise flawed by its resolution.

Performance Deconstruction of Tyrone Terrence's *A Husband's Wife*

At the level of performance, *A Husband's Wife* is a preferred for a director/producer in the contemporary Nigerian theatre. Apart

from its topicality, its appeals to the convenience of production are noteworthy. The economy of cast and setting makes it suitable for low-budget production. It is a play that is capable of inspiring the director, actors and designers towards a robust creative engagement. However, the dramatist preference at the resolution is of serious concern to this study. The performance, as directed by the researcher, held on Thursday 5th May and Friday 6th May 2016 at the educational theatre facility of the Department of Theatre and Media Arts, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, with Ijeoma Izuogu as Tomi and Isaac Gondo as Femi on both days. The Thursday performance was somewhat slavish in approach. This approach is what Johnson describes as a faithful follower of the playwright (97-98). With very minimal and necessary adjustments, the play was produced as prescribed by the dramatist on Day One.

However, Day 2 performance witnessed a deconstruction of the resolution scene, which bothered strongly on style, reflective in acting, scenography, light design, costuming and the introduction of subordinate characters, all in the resolution scene. The performance at resolution was treated to surrealism, after the similitude of August Strindberg's *A Dream Play* (1901). The Dream play attempts to imitate the inconsequential, yet transparent logical shape of a dream, and Strindberg holds that in the dream play "everything can happen, everything is possible and probable" (158). Thus, the Day 2 performance needs not deconstruct the plot and dialogue of the drama severely, hence the Medea-impulse could be transposed to a dream play where all actions are permissive. During the performance, *Femi* experiences a heightened emotion in the dramatic action that precedes the climactic scene to prepare grounds for what Freud describes as "Latent Dream Thought" (151). According to the play-text, after engaging in stretch of conflicts and complications occasioned by charges and counter charges, allegations and defences, augments and all odds that work up the couple, the disengage, and *Tomi* walks away out of the room, *Femi* heaves a heavy sigh to express an overwhelming state that will foreshadow a turning point. In this, he demonstrates self-

realisation, and turns to speak to the audience as in a manner that can pivot a turning point:

(Tomi exits leaving Femi staring at the closed door)

FEMI *(Turns to face audience)* What does a man do when he realizes that he can't find what he fell in love with in the woman he fell in love with? What does he do when he wakes up to discover that the object of his affection has become the subject of his affliction? *(Pause)* You may not believe it but I have discovered a darker truth—every married man is sitting on a Volcano! And one day! one day soon!

Lights fade out. (Terrence, 26)

The lights faded as prescribed above delays. *Femi* is in a pensive mood, and with the weariness of heart, he goes to lay in bed, and after covering his entire body with the Duvet, lights fade. The light out serves not just for scene transition, but also for passage of time to occasion the dream scene, and to allow for necessary technical adjustments. At light out, a subordinate character with the same body structure as the actor playing *Femi* goes under the Duvet, while *Femi* goes backstage. Light comes up and loud soars rends the air from the subordinate character buried under the Duvet, to depict such sleeping dimension where dreaming can possibly take place.

Lights come up and reveals the state as it was in the previous scene. Femi is in a deep sleep. He dreams and snores loudly. Lights get dim slightly, and the dreamlike effects of flickers and colour fill the stage. Tomi enters in an attire different from her previous. She is carrying a display board and suspends it across the bed. It bears inscriptions and images which reads:

BY SLEEPING, MAN LEARNS HOW TO DIE.

ADIEU, FEMI.

Tomi sits and on a chair in the room and looks on. Femi enters from within, appearing in different attire too. He hands a bag on his shoulder, and drags a big box by the handle. When he notices Tomi's presence, he affronts her (Production Book, 19).

It is glaring to the audience that the last scene of the Day One performance plays out as dream in Day Two. The murder scene occurs in *Femi's* dream, and as *Tomi's* runs her vindicating monologue, the special effect fades to darkness. She ends it all with a farewell chant that gets the backing of a Chorus of Wishes, while darkness still fills the stage. Then a loud scream and panic attack comes on as lights illuminate the stage to establish the end of the dream.

TOMI (*Chants with ritualistic tempo*) Adieu!

CHORUS OF WISHES. (*from backstage*) Adieu!

TOMI. (*Chants rises to the high key*) Adieu!!

CHORUS OF WISHES. (*Raises key*) Adieu!!!

TOMI. (*Chants falls to a lower key*) Adieu!!!

CHORUS OF WISH. (*Drops key*) Adieu!

Lights come up to reveal Femi as he struggles in his sleep. He throws off the blanket and pillow, while shouting and struggling hard to wake up. He wakes with a loud scream.

FEMI. Jesus!!!

(He sits up in a moment and sighing heavily. As he checks for the display board. Tomi enters in the initial costume, unnoticed. Femi's phone rings again, and as he turns he notices that his wife refuses to take the call in spite of her propinquity. Femi summons courage and answers the call)

FEMI. (*Sighing heavily*) Linda, Linda! please don't complain! I am at a brink right now. I cannot

make it to your end tonight and I don't think I will anymore. Yesí yeh. Yes, you were rightí we should not have started out. There we are at last. I must nip it in the board like you already suggested. I must fix things with my wife before they get out of handí I already lied to her that my mistress is pregnantí You may want to follow up on the vacation arrangementí I can't join you anymoreí I knowí Spend the resources in your coffers judiciouslyí I hate to say it, but- ohí tooí , bye and Farewell. (*Sighs and hangs on*)

With a sense of achievement, Tomi stretches her hands in his Direction. Femi walks into her embrace and they exchange a kiss.

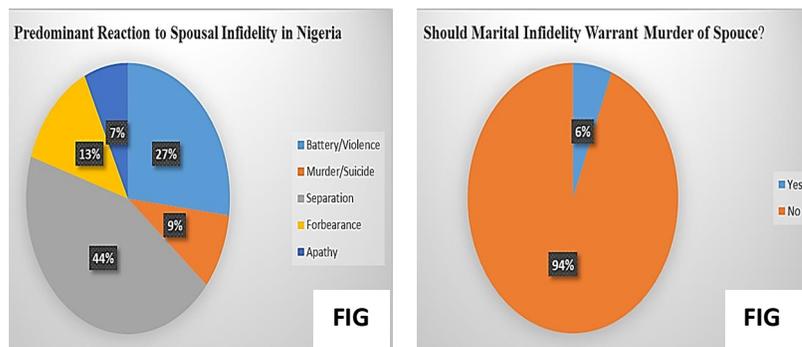
BLACK OUT (Production Book, 23).

Findings

Keen observations made on the audience at both the Day One and Day Two performances are key to the findings of this study. Day One performance was breath-taking, and it witnessed an exhilarating response of excitement from the audience from the first scene. However, it was observed that the resolution for Day One, tragic as it was, did not produce the kind of effect that a tragedy, such as *Othello*, would produce. The Day One performance left the audience with question such as "why?" and "what is next?" in spite of the rousing ovation that trailed the performance. The performance did not occasion what Aristotle regard as "purgation of emotions" (39), which Beckson and Ganz describe as a purifier of dangerous feelings (284). Interviewees expressed a common concern that the ending of the Day One performance was deficient because it "promotes jungle justice." A female member of the audience Titilayo Adeosun in an interview with the researcher on 5 May, 2016 stated that "Femi should have been given the chance to come back to his senses (change),

because he might still change. Besides, his death is a loss and will benefit nobody.

The Day Two experience was different. The researcher-director ensured that all audience members in the sampled population, who saw Day One performance, were present for Day Two. The excitement was more, perhaps, because the sampled population for the survey, were present to see the same play on a second run. The deconstruction deployed to re-interpret the last scene for the Day Two performance was a preferred option for most audience members, including males and females. A female respondent, Lilian Bakare in an interview with the researcher on 6 May, 2016 attested to this when she stated that "the second day performance communicated the message better, perhaps because of the additional components that presented the ending bit as a dream." The results of the survey of the sampled population reveal in figure A (below), an assessment of the predominant response to spousal infidelity in Nigeria:



The result in figure B (above) answers the investigation on the conditionality that may warrant/justify the killing of an unfaithful spouse by the offended partner. Therefore, going by individual preferences, 94% of the sampled audience favoured forbearance and forgiveness, which reinforces the suggestion made by Titilayo Adeosun, while other suggestions include: separation- 9%, divorce- 6%, consultation and counselling- 4%, and prayer and

divine intervention- 3%. Further information on the sampled audience demographics is provided below.

Socio-Demographic Statistics of Sampled Population

AGE BRACKET	FREQUENCY	PERCENT (%)
16-25	58	58.0
26-35	11	11.0
36-45	18	18.0
46-55	11	11.0
56+	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0
OCCUPATIONAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT (%)
University Staff	36	36.0
University Student	59	59.0
Others	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0
SEX	FREQUENCY	PERCENT (%)
Male	36	36.0
Female	64	64.0
Total	100	100.0
MARITAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT (%)
Single	68	68.0
Married	31	31.0
Widowed	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0
RELIGION	FREQUENCY	PERCENT (%)
Christianity	86	86.0
Islam	14	14.0
Total	100	100.0

Further Discussion/Conclusion

Even though this study is not a defence for moral bankruptcy of African husbands who are unfaithful in marriage, it is worth mentioning that infidelity in the African traditional society is an act tolerated and expressed in different dimensions. The practices of

polygamy and the keeping of concubine(s) are earliest forms of infidelity in African families, which women seem to admit as part and parcel of matrimony. Among the *Ngwa*, an Igbo community in Nigeria, when a wife identifies her husband's mistress, she freely addresses her as *Iko dim* (my husband's concubine). This may be considered as one of Africa's patriarchal strains, but it infers that African wives, by nature were more tolerant and accommodative to spousal lecherous indulgence. The survey result from this study, which favours forbearance and forgiveness, also validates this inference. Respondents, who suggest the need to engage in dialogue, and seek counselling by way of consultations, were premised on the basis of experience, and the African optimistic value, as they attest that many almost-broken unions were reordered on this account.

However, modernisation reveals that indulgence in infidelity is not only unfair, but it exposes the reckless individual to a deluge of risks. Recent happenings in Nigeria attest to the fact that the reaction of the offended partner to cases of spousal infidelity has been heightened to unfathomable ends. They have constituted regular news items in the Nigerian media. Such headlines as "Man Butchers Wife Over Infidelity in Delta" (Information Nigeria, online), "Man Kills Cheating Wife and Attempts Suicide" (Information Nigeria, online), "Man Slit Wife's Throat over Alleged Infidelity and Poisons Himself" (Punch Newspaper, online), and "Lecturer Killed by his Wife and his Brother for Allegedly Having a Girl Friend" (Olufamos.com, online), were popular examples across the new media in 2016. While these media, including print, and electronic, are at their best propagating these life-happenings as new items, the theatre medium must expediently create more artful means of engaging the public with the life-happenings in fictitious manner for social change. This is important to the essence of performance communication, and the need to engender optimum audience consciousness. Important, too, it is an established bias that murder should not be an option for a hurt spouse who seeks to vent anger. The manifestation of "Median-impulse" is irrational to the African sensibility. For Africans, murder is a loss to humanity, thus, it is not aesthetic for African art to propagate it.

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