

CREATIVE DIRECTING AS DECONSTRUCTION: AN EXAMINATION OF BAKARE'S
APPROACH TO WALE OGUNYEMI'S *LANGBODO*.

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ATTESTATION

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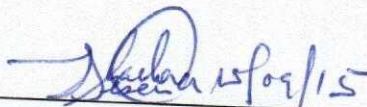
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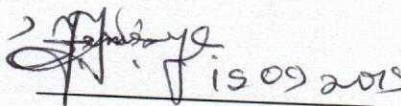


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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to God, the reason behind my existence and sailor of my life who has made it evident before my eyes that the race is not for the swift but for the humble and diligent. Also to my Late Father, Reverend Omolayo, Israel Oluwarantinmi who taught me the conducts of a man irrespective of how little I was, and to My brother, My friend, My second version, Omolayo Israel Richard you mean a lot me. Finally my First love, the one who brought me to this world, who pours out her tears for my survival of which I swim, My Mother, Akinmejiwa Abigail Oluwakemi I say thank you for your sacrifice throughout my life's voyage.

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ABSTRACT

The relevance of creative directing cannot be over-emphasized, as it finds new meanings to an author's play text. Unfortunately, most dramatists view creative directing as a means of degrading their creative work. They believe that since they wrote the text, they understand its meanings better than anyone. This study seeks to correct that notion, with the theoretical concept of Derrida's deconstruction, a form of textual analysis which scrutinizes the dramatist textual inferences deeper than it was constructed with a performance analysis of Bakare's creative approach to Wale Ogunyemi's Langbodo. It also endeavors to exemplify the writer and the creative director as both creative individuals whose destination differs. The writer writes for the reader, the creative director builds stage premises and placement for an audience. Hence the work of the latter exhumes a greater level of creative ingenuity. The study submits that creative directing is a form of textual transformation because, texts are written in words, and they can mean, infer and be interpreted in numerous dimensions. The study concludes among others that, the creative director as a deconstructor amends textual frailties before the theatre percipient who invariably are the reason behind any theatrical piece.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background to the study.

It has been noted that over epochs and paradigm shifts that scholarly debates have sprung up regarding the ultimate meaning of a play text, whether it lies in the hands of the author or the director. Hence, some scholars posit that since the play text is the author's work, no one understands the dramatic structure of the play script better, therefore an author or playwright should direct his own plays. Harold Clurman considers this premise as hollow logic, he explains in his work *In a different language* that "we all know playwrights who are rendered tongue-tied the moment they are asked to deal with a company of actors" (272). Except the playwright is a skillful director then he has the liberty to direct his plays. Even at that, he must be creative in handling his own plays, because it is unprofessional to be stereotyped to what he has written. As Harold Clurman further instructs "...that playwright is an idiot who cries out: 'But all the actor has to do is to understand my lines and repeat them as I wrote them.' Any playwright of experience knows that if that is all the actor did, he (the playwright) would be induced to commit murder, probably followed by suicide" (275).

Before a director shoulders the responsibility of directing a play text, he must be an ardent reader of the text to understand every word and open his psyche towards imagination. As cited in Bartlett, Barthes posits that "the essential meaning of a work depends on the impressions of the reader, rather than the passions or tastes of the writer; a text's unity lies not in its origins, or its creator, but in its destination or its audience" (5). The destination or audience in this axiom refers to the director, who reads a script and performs this as a routine, then he begins to see new dimensions towards the play script, because he is not tied to the fabrics of the playwright's vision. Once a director picks up a play script, he sees the text in a

different light than what was written by the author, hence he ensures that the script under goes the creative function of deconstruction.

Deconstruction according to the Encarta dictionary refers to a method of analyzing texts based on the ideas that language is inherently unstable and shifting and that the reader rather than the author is central in determining meaning (Microsoft Encarta 2009). In addition, as stated by Encarta Encyclopedia, deconstruction is a method of analyzing literature that seeks to uncover multiple layers of meaning, including the author's intentions and other meanings that are based on how the same language, images, or ideas have been used before. It was introduced by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida in the late 1960s (Microsoft students 2009).

In relation to the arts, deconstruction seeks to unfold diverse meanings inherent in a play text, because texts which are written in languages can imply something different to the reader who in this case is the director who also prepares the performance for an audience, who will eventually 'read' the stage even though they never read the author's text directly. On this plane, Barthes cited in his essay, *Death of the Author* that the poet Stéphane Mallarmé, who said that "it is language which speaks" (3). In other words Language is a universal form of communication that means different things to people, hence its interpretations differs.

Therefore, creative directing can be likened to deconstruction in the theatrical parlance, because the director who is the deconstructor seeks to analyze a text by observing what has been overlooked, de-emphasized, vaguely mentioned, and also finds deeper meanings to the play scripts and breaks its intrinsic dramatic elements into parts to extend its meanings on stage. Sequel to this, Tyrone Guthrie states in his *Audience of One* that:

A great work of art is like an iceberg in that ninety per cent of it is below the surface of consciousness. Therefore in my opinion, the

more important the work of art, the less the author will know what he has written (246).

This implies that a director who has dedicated more time in comprehending the component of the play text is bound to unveil a more profound concept as regards the text and there-in, he begins to create and deconstruct the author's script to suite his directorial vision, without distorting the central message of the playwright.

1.2 Statement of the problem.

Both the playwright and the director are creative individuals, but the function of the latter exhumes a greater pedestal of creativity, because he animates the lifeless work of the playwright on stage through the use of actors. But as established earlier that playwright finds it demeaning when their play text is distorted by the director. On this stance Jacques Copeaus in his *Dramatic Economy* establishes that "...trouble arises the moment he makes use of some of his professional skills to distort the playwright's work, to introduce into the fabric of that work his own ideas, intentions, fantasies and doctrines" (224). The 'he' in this axiom refers to the director, and the problem he faces when he deconstructs a playwrights work. Hence this study seeks to revisit this intellectual brawl between the director and the playwright and give a clear cut distinction of both personnel and to establish the director as a deconstructor who views a play text in a different way beyond the words of the author.

1.3 Purpose of the study.

Often, playwright's get offended and feel intellectually degraded if a director gives his interpretations to the playwrights work. Hence, this paper seeks to project creative directing as the approach in which a director uses his creativity to modify a playwright's work, because he

uncovers several meanings to the words of the playwright. It is in this light that this research work gears towards exemplifying the directorial creative analysis of a playwrights work as deconstruction.

1.4 Research questions.

- (i) What is the relationship between creative directing and deconstruction?
- (ii) Why do directors deconstruct a playwright's work?
- (ii) To what extent and why did Bakare deconstruct Wale Ogunyemi's *Langbodo*?

1.5 Scope and delimitation of the study.

This research work examines a director's creative function as deconstruction of play texts in order to demystify the general notion of the director as a destroyer of a playwright's text. Hence Ojo Bakare's creative approach to Wale Ogunyemi's *Langbodo* will be examined to show textual transformations that occur in the process of utilizing creative directing techniques.

1.6 Limitation of the study.

As a result of the death of Wale Ogunyemi, an interview could not be carried out, asking if he was comfortable with the interpretation of Bakare's approach to his play text. Also since the dramatist is also a creative person, questions would have been asked why he decided to end the play on a pessimistic note.

1.7 Significance of the study.

It is an unhampered verity that drama mirrors the society, by projecting matters of morality and societal issues to the populace who are heterogeneous. But before drama can exist there must be a play script either already designed or improvised. The importance of this study endeavors to assert that a director must scrutinize a play text in accordance with the prospective audience preference, and recreate its textual and dramatic structure to suite the spectator's inclination. Thus, in the process of recreating a play text structure, the director operates on the axis of deconstruction, which enables him to eliminate any bit in the play text that seems unacceptable and degrading to its audience and modify the play script in compliance with the audience predilection.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction.

The efficacy of drama in our society cannot be far-fetched. Since time immemorial, drama has always played a pivotal role in soothing the minds of the audience and the populace at large because of the manner in which it appeals to the being. Barrault submits that the theatre is “useful to the public, since it purifies and revitalizes human beings”...“reassures them against anxiety and against solitude” (25-6).

Having known the importance of drama, we must ask ourselves this question; who is responsible for the entirety of the stage’s dramatic structure? That would be the director of which everyone knows that is a verity. When the audience give their remark towards a just concluded performance by saying ‘Wow!, That was an awesome show’, it was the director’s creativity that actually made it awesome. When the audience also say ‘I was sleeping all through the play was on, it was so boring!’, the director of that performance is also responsible for that tedium. In other words the success and failure of a production primordially rest on the dexterity of the director. It is then sufficient to say that behind every appealing performance there exists a director of profound creativity. Hence before one can be referred to as a creative director, he must understand that in creating a performance for the stage, you must not be tied to the fabrics of the playwright’s vision. Both the director and the playwright operate on a different level of ingenuity. As Clurman posits “The director, I repeat is the “author” of the stage action...theatrical action is virtually a new medium a different language from that which the playwright uses” (275). Playwrights who also consider it inappropriate when their play text is deconstructed should understand that when a text is chosen by a director, the play text undergoes

alteration because the director transposes textual language in real form which operates on a different pedestal beyond the author's words. As opined by Granville-Baker, he states that "... With the dramatist, the words on paper are but seeds of the play" (199).

A director should also understand that deconstructing a play script must be in cognizance with the audience preference. Because a performance was successful in Nigeria does not mean it would be successful in Ghana. The reason for this can be owed to the multiplicity in their social constructs and identity, which invariably influences their theatre percipients and their perception on certain issues. Since stage drama is momentous, and presented in an audio-visual manner it enables the audience relate to the happenings on stage and deduce meanings from it. Therefore if a dramatic piece is projected on stage and does not appeal to their psyche, they become disentangled from the stage business. Sequel to this Clurman instructs that "The theatre is a particular mode of expression through which a community realizes itself" (155). As a result of this a director should understand the heterogeneity of his audience before staging a play, because their response towards the same production might differ. An evidence of this was succinctly furthered by Clurman:

Each tribe had its own identity...it explains why a pleasant little comedy like John van Druten's *The Voice of the Turtle*, played by an excellent company headed by the enchanting Margaret Sullavan, succeeds in New York and fails in London with the same cast and production. The play which had its New York premiere in 1943, dealt with the philanderings of an army officer on leave. The war with its daily devastation was no laughing matter to the English. They were not merely unamused by the play they resented it (156&158).

On this plane, it has been emphasized that a director must consider the plurality of his audience in directing, hence, a director must understand the rudiments of deconstructing a play as a creative piece whereby he changes the original text structure to conform to his vision which invariably suites the spectators viewpoints. It is in this light that this study seeks to justify the position of creative directing as deconstruction with the aid of already existing literatures using Bakare's creative approach to Wale Ogunyemi *Langbodo* as a paradigm.

2.2 Understanding Creative Directing.

Creative directing simply implies inventing new prospects in dramatic structures of an already existing play text. But before a director can successful create new stage dimensions, he must firstly be an ardent reader of the script. He must develop a communal and mutual relationship with the play text, because the script is the initial instrument on which the director derives his inspiration. The script provides the theme(s) in which the director works on, even when he would still invent other ideas. Sequel to this, Okhlopkov opines that, "...Many of us for some reason, do not pause for long or very deeply on the theme itself, but pass quickly to its artistic interpretation. It is of tremendous importance...it is the beginning of beginnings" (260). Despite the textual analysis of play script that creative directing entails, a director must understand that the writer has combined a set of linguistics to project his vision. A vision which a director must comprehend before he creates new prospects to his art. To achieve this, the director should neglect every ambition of him being the alpha of the production and play text as well. He should also make his collaborators understand the play script is first the primary element of the stage performance, in which every other form is built to enhance its interpretation.

On this plane, Hopkins reveals that:

To begin with ...director, scene designer and actor must become completely servants of the play. Each must resist every temptation to score personally. Each must make himself a free, transparent medium through which the whole flows freely and without obstruction. No one at any moment can say, "Ah, this moment is mine! I shall show what can be done with it". There is no part of the play that is done for the benefit of anyone. (207)

When the director acknowledges the script, only then can he feel an artistic connection between himself and the play text. This connection then stimulates the director towards an avalanche of creative prospects as regards the play text. When a cordial connection is established, the director begins to see the textual form of the script materialize in its real essence. As informed by Copeau "He receives a script... After his initial reading, the inanimate pages begin to come to life in his fingers. They are no longer symbols written on paper: he adds a sense of life to the meaning of the words" (216).

Hence, the director's work as a creative artist commences and he utilizes actors and other theatre collaborators who invariably project his artistic ingenuity. Also, a director creates for an audience, in this light, the spectators should be fed with surprising, and amusing spectacles whether or not they have not read the play text. Hopkins agrees with this when he states that "Every moment on stage should mean something. The spectator follows every movement, and no movement has any right to his attention unless it has some significance" (209).

A creative director must know what he wants to achieve from the play text and deliver these vision to the actors effectively. He must not be hesitant in directing the blockings, because he alone paddles the boat of the dramatic structure. Hopkins further opines that:

Uncertainty in direction must inevitably result in uncertainty in performance. When actors discovers that a director cannot make up his mind just how a scene should be played and when they see him experimenting with them they instantly become conscious of something lacking, either in the play or the director (208).

All other collaborators look up to the director which makes the director the most important personnel in the theatre, because it is his vision they follow. A creative director must first conceive the entire play in his mind perfectly, so he does not wander about the stage looking confused on how to block a scene. He is expected to be the leader, the generalissimo of the stage action. On this note quoting from Hopkins again when he establishes that:

The director is the guide. The play is the unknown region through which he leads the actor. He must know the part so well that he never hesitates. For once he falters, wondering if he is headed right, the actor begins go look for his own way out (208).

Directing itself is creative, one would rarely find directors who are interpretative. In other words, directors who follow the exact lines, stage directions of the playwright, because the stage itself is a different realm of its own. It has even been observed that some directors, who are also dramatist, are not tied to the indications of their play script. Belasco submits that, "...I seldom follow the stage directions on the printed page, either of my own plays or those of other dramatists. I prefer to plan the scenes myself with reference to stage values"(125).

Despite the verity that the director is the leader of the creative team, he should also be liberal enough to observe and listen to other creative opinions of his team. Only then can he achieve a common synergy towards a production.

2.2:1 The Creative Director: a Creator or a Destroyer.

Dramatist often insist that their plays are to be followed by the director as inferred in their text, because they feel additional ideas towards the play would make a ridicule of their work. Hence they perceive directors as destroyers of their play text. A vivid example of such playwright is George Bernard Shaw as explained by Clurman that "Bernard Shaw never permitted his scripts to be cut. Having watched many productions of his plays (I myself have directed three), I venture to believe him to have been mistaken" (43). The truth remains that an un-cut play reduces and stymies the director's creativity. A play is expected to be edited and re-structured, because in the words of the playwright, there are uncertainties and less emphasized linguistics that a director is supposed to deliver on stage. An example is Soyinka's *Jero's Metamorphosis*, the stage direction goes thus; "A vase flowers, the usual assortment of professional paraphernalia- bible, prayer-book, chasuble, **etc. etc.**" (47). When a director intends on directing this piece and notices the '**etc. etc.**' in the script, it is left for the director to manifest such uncertainty in concrete forms. A creative director is a creator, a creator who invents life, flesh, blood and bones (actors) to the dead script of the playwright. Playwrights should understand that directors operate beyond the words expressed on their text, because they endeavor to extend the meanings of the play text on stage. Clurman furthered this when he explains that:

The dramatist expresses himself mainly through words, the director through action which involves people amid the paraphernalia of the stage' and ' The director must be a master of theatrical action, as the dramatist is master of the written concept of his play (273&275).

A director only becomes a destroyer when he ignores the totality of the play script and decides to neglect the entirety of the textual structure, thereby inventing his own themes against the precept of the already existing text. Then such a director can be regarded as a destroyer of the play text.

A director should understand that his job is to create a stage drama that would pretend the textual

theme inherent in the script in conformity with his own vision. But he must not nullify the existence of the play script. Belasco in this light phrases that "...one must treat the play as a human being" (126) and Clurman examines that "...the playwright's script is the core and basis of the theatrical event... the script once chosen, is to be respected..." (42). No matter the amount of creative interplay, the text remains the most profound verity of the stage action. It is the script that provides the inspiration with which the director would build upon. Couple of times, not all creativity is approached the right way, therefore meanings in the play text get lost and become meager. There are instances whereby in creating a play text, it becomes an out of context venture, as expressed again by Clurman:

When Arthur Miller's *Death of a salesman* was being readied for rehearsal, its director, Elia Kazan, made several suggestions to clarify the play's plot. Miller complied. When the revised script was read, doubt was expressed as to the efficacy of the changes... Walter Fried, the play's co-producer, ventured, "The play is clearer now but less interesting." The script was put into rehearsal as originally written (45).

A creative director should avoid excessive additions and deductions in the play script to avoid an anomaly of the text precept. A director becomes a creator when he observes an equilibrium between his vision and the playwright's vision. But he converts to a destroyer when he negates the totality of the play text.

2.2:2 Moral Justification of a Creative Director.

The question of moral justification stems from moral epistemology, which asks whether and how anyone can know or be justified in believing that something is morally right or wrong. But this axiom as always been labeled within the hypothetical pedestal, which is why Armstrong establishes that "... the issue of moral justification is not just theoretical. It also has practical

importance”(3). Against this backdrop, this study seeks to reveal the practical side of moral justification from the creative director’s perspective.

Drama has gone beyond the borders of art for art sake, it has become a mechanism in portraying matters that permeate the society. Dramatists habitually present matters of morality in their works, with the objective of commenting and correcting certain social anomaly and aberrance. Despite the relevant issues presented in these works, the textual frames of these ideas are frail when it comes to imparting and affecting its reader.

The rationale behind this is because writing appeals to the imagination but in abstract terms while an artistic representation of the text on stage would soothe the psyche of the audience in its real essence. As affirmed by Saunders that “... our memories of experiences are usually in the form of mind pictures, because we understand things we see more easily than abstract ideas presented just in words” (15). Because of the audio-visual influence drama has on its audience it is able to affect them in a medium that is psychosomatic.

On this note, the moral justification of a creative director implies the societal moral benefit of his creativity and the level in which he is able to present it before the theatre percipient. A director does not create just for art sake. He becomes a morally justified director when having read a script he observes a moral irregularity that the writer has violated in his dramaturgy, therefore changes the language or aspect(s) from his (the director’s) perspective.

Creativity in directing permits the director to express his artistic prowess on stage, hence this provides him the chance to modify certain textual structures in the original play text that he feels the playwright has disregarded. The essence of morality in drama is to re-orientate the society about moral values since humans are the architect of their own problems, they are expected to provide a solution out of it. As supported by Enekwe ‘... that human beings generate

the crisis in society and also create the means for their elimination' (1). Hence, drama emanates has a medium through which moral ideas can be communicated to the audience.

2.3 Creative Directing as Textual Deconstruction.

Typically, writers view creative directing as a display of artistic pomp which they perceive as an inventive discordance or creative theft as regards their text. In the words of Roland Barthes he expresses that "... the author is never anything more than the man who writes, just as I is no more than the man who says I" (3). This explicates the pivotal essence of textual deconstruction, because the words of the dramatist are limited, which invariably means that the director shoulders the responsibility of extending the textual frames of the playwright's word on stage. As aforementioned, textual-deconstruction unveils several meanings in the author's text, both the inferred, semi-inferred and the un-inferred. Logically, the work of a director proceeds beyond the mere words on play text. The dramatist himself has an indistinct idea of what he has written, as opined by Guthrie:

...the last person who, in my opinion, should be consulted, even if he is alive or around, is the author. If the author is a wise man, he will admit straight away that he does not know what it is about, unless it is a very perfunctory work indeed. If it is just a little piece of journalism on the minor problems of psychoanalysis, then he probably will know all too well what it is about. But if it has potentials of being an important work of art, I am perfectly convinced he will not have the faintest idea of what he has really written. He will probably know what he thinks he has written, but that will be the least important part of it (246).

During the manifestations of his work on stage, the dramatist is bound to be petrified at the textual transformation of his script, because words on the text are like symbols. A connection

of signifiers that can be signified as meaning a different concept entirely if interpreted as implying something else. According to Peirce, "Signs take the form of words, images, sounds... but such things have no intrinsic meaning and become signs only when we invest them with meaning. Nothing is a sign unless it is interpreted as a sign" (2&172).

This implies that the written words on the script can be translated and interpreted by the creative director to suggest a distinct set of dramatic schemes. When a director digests a play text, he is expected to widen the horizon of the text and interpret it on stage in a different language from its original template.

2.3:1 The Creative Director and his Sociological Approach to the Spectator.

Just as the dramatist writes for the reader, the creative director also creates an ensemble of spectacle for the spectators. Drama does not exist in a vacuum its main purpose is for the theatre percipient. On this note, it is important for the director to understand that since he creates for an audience, he is expected to modify his dramatic structure with relevance to the sociological predilection of the audience. The pertinence of drama cannot be over-emphasized, it has a manner in which it appeals to the audience. No matter how artistically distant (e.g. expressionism, surrealism etc.) a work of art might be, the spectators relate its event to their immediate existence and reality. Pavice supports this stand by expressing that:

... in case of the performance, the spectator test the indices that make reference to her own world, that create allusions to the surrounding reality. In this way, the spectator explores initial hypotheses for reading an overall mise-en-scene and dramaturgy of the performance. Is the world represented in performance a possible world, a totally imaginary one? Or does it in fact borrow from our reality, and if so, what exactly is borrowed (255).

As affirmed by Esslin that "... drama is an instrument of thought, a cognitive process, a form of philosophizing in concrete terms" (21). This explicates the importance of drama, an audio visual medium. And it has proven to be an empirical fact that effective visuals power up communication and boost engagement. Just like the maxim that a picture is worth a thousand words. When it comes to capturing the audience's attention, one must take full advantage of every visual chance to communicate to the audience. When the dramatic visuals captivate the audience, they automatically get involved in the dramatic world. A creative director must also be a skillful observer of human behavior, he must have an understanding of dramatic themes that positively and negatively enhances the spectator. According to More Tom he explains that Research has proved that the human brain process visuals 60,000 times faster than text, and they retain and transmit much more information when it is delivered visually. The spectators in the theatrical parlance are often referred to as clients. And one of the rules about clients is to please and satisfy them. This stand is also applicable in the theatre, the audience is to be satisfied at all cost, because they also believe to be in a 'possible world' against this stand, every aspects of the theatre should be harnessed to benefit the audience.

2.4 Deconstruction: An Overview.

French philosopher Jacques Derrida pioneered the method of literary criticism known as deconstruction. Under deconstruction, texts are subjected to new methods of analysis that reveal hidden layers of meaning. Deconstruction argues that texts never just mean what we think it implies at first hand. Other meanings are always attached to the textual frames. The closer we examine the writing, the more we find about the deeper implications of the text. The analysis

examines the intent of the author, as well as how the concepts, language, and images of the text have been previously used. Deconstruction was understood as a response to structuralism; it is therefore sometimes referred to as a post structuralist approach. To corroborate this, Norris states that "Deconstruction is avowedly "post-structuralist" in its refusal to accept the idea of structure as in any sense given or objectively "there" in a text" (3). Post structuralism argued that individual thought was shaped by linguistic structures. Deconstruction attacked the assumption that these structures of meaning were stable, universal, or ahistorical. Zima submits that deconstruction "tends to see the artistic sign as an ensemble of polysemic and interpretable signifiers that evoke ideas, yet cannot be tied to precise concepts"(8). Deconstructive analyses look for what is de-emphasized, overlooked, or suppressed in a particular set of legal doctrines. Sometimes they explore how suppressed or marginalized principles return in new guises. Deconstruction insists upon the disjointed nature of texts, their fissures of meaning and their incongruities, interruptions, and breaks. Deconstruction does not show that all texts are meaningless, but rather that they are overflowing with multiple and often conflicting meanings. Similarly, deconstruction does not claim that concepts have no boundaries, but that their boundaries can be parsed in many different ways as they are inserted into new contexts of judgment. Sequel to this, Balkin explains that "deconstructive arguments do not necessarily destroy conceptual oppositions or conceptual distinctions. Rather, they tend to show that conceptual oppositions can be reinterpreted as a form of nested opposition" (3).

This implies that textual interpretations do not essentially imply it to be inept, but rather an analysis with different clarification and interpretation, which is invariably connected with the original text.

2.4:1 Deconstruction: As Theoretical Framework

This study seeks to place creative directing as a method of dramatic deconstruction. Hence, it views the director as a deconstructor who scrutinizes an author's play text and perceives it in a different regard further than the author's words. Balkin expresses that:

The deconstructor looks for unexpected relationships between different parts of a text, or loose threads that at first glance appear peripheral yet often turn out to undermine or confuse the argument. A deconstructor may consider the multiple meanings of key words in a text, etymological relationships between words, and even puns to show how the text speaks with different (and often conflicting) voices. (Balkin 1990b; Balkin 1989).

The deconstructive measures and process of textual analysis requires an immense level of concentration and commitment towards the play script and only a director can offer such deconstructive treatment because he creates for the stage and for an audience, by changing the original version of the text to his own dramatic description. It is then sufficient to say that when a work is creatively approached, authors are not expected to negate this creative process, but rather understand that words are symbols which can mean and be interpreted in diverse ways.

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CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction.

This chapter endeavors to present the data, method and every other tools and instrument employed during the course of this research. As a result of the performative research analysis of this study, from the creative director's perspective, pictures of this creative process, bibliographical tools, weblibliographies and the interview's organized will be submitted.

3.2 Research Design.

This research study is constructed towards the performance analysis of *Langbodo* as textual transformation of a deconstructivist approach from the perspective of a creative director. It seeks to explain and justify the rationale behind the stage interpretation of a creative director. The director invents new stage prospects with an existing author's script, which means there are two creative works, the author's play text, and the directorial interpretation to the play text. Hence this stand will be explored and validated using a performance of Wale Ogunyemi's *Langbodo* as creatively approached by Bakare Ojo Rasaki.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments.

The performance text of *Langbodo* was experienced by this researcher at first hand, as it was performed six times by the Theatre and Media arts students of the Federal University Oye-Ekiti 2014. For three consecutive days, the production was displayed in the school auditorium. The first production was dedicated to the first lady of Ekiti State as a command performance on the 5th of March 2014. While the other three productions were performed on tour once in Ekiti State University and twice in Obafemi Awolowo University. And throughout these performances, this researcher played the role of the Lead Sharo dancer, Towns people of Oyo- Kingdom, and was

also involved in the Chorus. From the rehearsal process it was noted that the Bakare's performance text was different from the original script, especially the part of the Calabar Chief and the concluding part of the play text. In an interview, Bakare was asked in an interview why he changed those parts, and he validated himself saying:

As a director when you pick a script to direct, part of the un-written agreement which you are making is that all the things that are wrong in that script, you correct them because, what is finally seen on stage is the work of the director. The work of the playwright ends on the paper.

The un-written agreement of corrective measures that was carried out in Bakare's approach to *Langbodo* was to rectify the playwright's conception about the people of Calabar, and to change the concluding part of the play text in order to give the society hope. These sort of textual reformation was aided with the textual analysis theory of deconstruction obtained from text books, portable documents formats (p.d.f), online and library sources.

3.4 Method of Data Presentation and Analysis.

This segment seeks to explicate the deconstructivist approach in *Langbodo* performance which was held on the 5th of March 2014 as a command performance went thus; A scene opens where the people of a certain community converges at the palace to complain to the King about the distress, sickness and all other sorts of ailments plaguing their existence. The King then calls for the help of the Younger Akaara-Ogun who decides to yield to the plea of the King and the entire community. He then requests the King for a favor, which was to engage other hunters to go with him on the mission to Mount Langbodo. As he expresses:

Akaara-Ogun: I want you to send a town crier round the entire land to summon all such seasoned hunters as I and send us together on this quest that my head goes not forth alone to combat death... (7)

The aforementioned statement explains the fact that in achieving a common goal which deals with the issue of the development of the Nation at large, a collaborative effort is needed, which explains the rationale behind the six hunter's arrival in assisting Akaara-Ogun on this quest. The deconstructivist approach evident here was the use of hunters caps which represented the six geo-political zones. On this journey to Mount Langbodo, they were faced with devilish creatures and all manner of challenges in six different regions, but the hunters overcame all with their collaborative efforts. But problem arose when the individual frailties of the hunters began to manifest. Upon their entry into the Calabar Kingdom, Akaara-Ogun warned the hunters to stay off the women of the land, but Kako refused to yield to this advice and made sexual advances to the Calabar Chief's wife. This was another aspect of a deconstructivist approach to the play text. In the original play text, it was the chief who decided to offer his wife for the sexual entertainment of hunters. As evident in the scene where the hunters were dancing with the women including the favorite wife of the Calabar Chief. As the hunters made for the women, they seductively resist them and with excitement the hunters (except Akaara-Ogun) pursues the women as they run of the dance floor. This infuriates Akaara-Ogun, he tries to caution the hunters, but the Calabar Chief said:

Chief: My people love your people, you see. Leave them.

Akaara-Ogun: But we are on an urgent mission...

Chief: To Mount Langbodo, I know. Shall we talk about that later, over food and drinks?

Akaara-Ogun: But what about them?

Chief: They will be alright, don't worry. Come (56)

But this textuality was negated by the director, thereby he built new concepts to support his own vision, projecting to the theatre percipient that the Calabar's are not morally degraded.

Upon the arrival of the three surviving hunters, Akaara-Ogun, Olohun Iyo and Imodoye at their final destination, the Oba of gave them the object of unity their King demanded them to retrieve in Mount Langbodo. The first medium then appears and seizes it from Akaara-Ogun after murdering the other two hunters. This was inferred in the text. But in the dramatic deconstruction of the performance text, Akaara-Ogun summoned courage with the help of the populace in snatching the object of peace and harmony from the first medium.

The following are the images from the first performance of *Langbodo* on the 5th of March 2014.

Fig. 1 (Calabar Chief and his wives)



Fig1.1 (Kako carrying the chief's wife)



These pictures depict an aversion from the original script where the Calabar Chief gave his wives to the hunters as sexual puppets. Ojo Bakare negated this, and made Kako fall for the Queen on the left hand of the picture. As it can be seen that she is maintaining eye

contact with someone which turns out to be Kako. While Fig 1.1 shows Kako as he carries the chief's wife to his chamber for his sexual satisfaction.

Fig. 2 (The hunters and their symbolic caps)



(Fig 2.1)



(Fig 2.2)



(Fig 2.3)



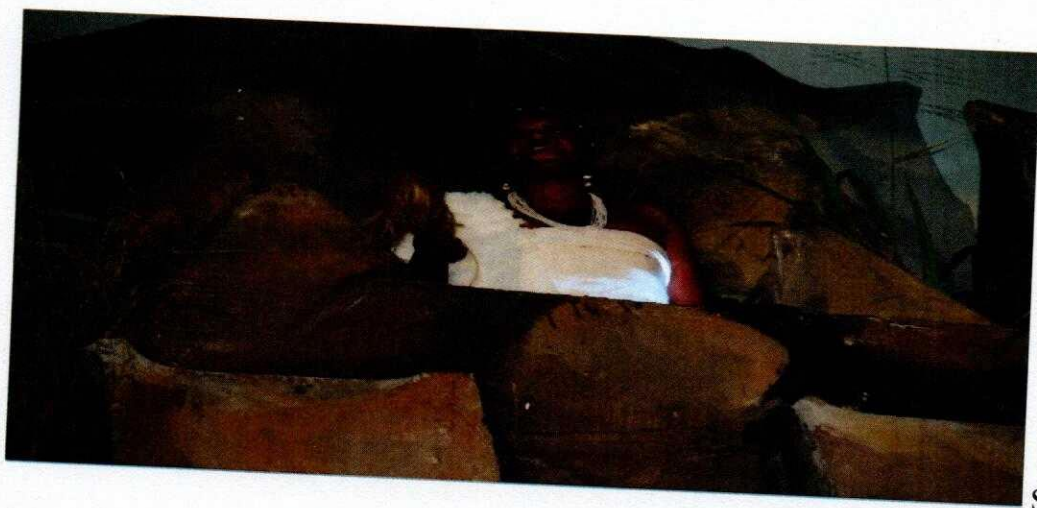
As established earlier that caps were used to represent the geo-political zones in Nigeria worn by the six hunters.

(Fig 2.4)



The seventh, Akaara-Ogun wearing the green white Green cap distincting himself from others as an archetypal characterization of the ideal Nigerian.

Fig 3. (Second Medium)



She represents the voice of the Nigerian people seeking for a peaceful co-existence and harmony within the

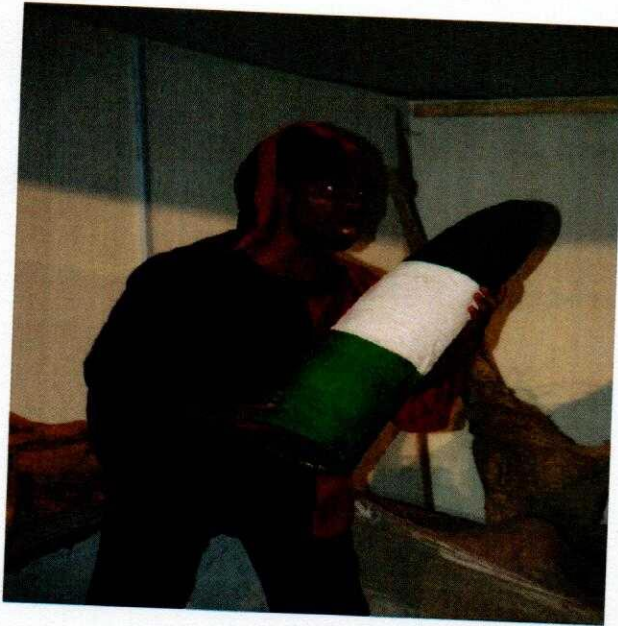
populace. This picture explains the part where she stood against the first medium's clamour of doom as regards the hunters expedition.

Fig 4. (First Medium)



The first medium represents a combination of the evil force in the Nigerian society that thwarts national growth and always wishes doom for the nation. He symbolizes the political leaders and god-fathers who are against the peace and prosperity of Nigeria just to benefit their ego and selfish interest.

Fig.5 (The first medium with the object of peace and harmony)



This picture shows the first medium after snatching the gift of harmony from Akaara-Ogun. But a deconstructivist approach was introduced into this dramatic scene, therefore ensuring that Akaraa-Ogun overpowered the first medium with the help of the community as opposed in the play text as the picture in fig 5.1 displays.

Fig 5.1 (The retrieved object of peace in the custody of the people)



3.5 Conclusion

In evidence that this study examines textual transformations in performance text, this chapter as therefore submitted empirical verification of the deconstructive approach Ojo Bakare utilized in his creative directing of Wale Ogunyemi's *Langbodo*. As such, pictures have been submitted and other tools such as library and interview sources have been presented.

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An interview with Ojo Rasaki Bakare, on the 27th of June 2015.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Bakare's Creative Approach in Directing *Langbodo*.

As established in the preceding chapters that creative directing implies finding new meanings to a play text, yonder the linguistics of the author. In achieving this feat, the textual construct of the play script is liable to be modified, changed and erased, with regard to the director's vision vis-à-vis the spectators preference. Hence this study seeks to establish Bakare's creative approach in directing *Langbodo*.

Ojo Rasaki Bakare, being an aesthetician expresses his artistry through the use of diverse spectacles. He approached Wale Ogunyemi's *Langbodo* as a performance text with his artistic routine. The prototyped text projected the diversified nature of Nigeria, by portraying seven hunters that represented the multiplicity in Nigeria. But this was just a textual information, how will this be delivered on stage before an audience in ethnic diversity?. Bakare creatively constructed caps that belonged to the hunters as regards their geo-political zones represented in the script. Bakare stipulates in an interview that "...to align properly with what is going on in Nigeria of the present, I made sure that each of the hunters represent a Geo-political Zone in Nigeria, I did that using caps." By this invention the audience could easily identify is ethnicity. Akaara-Ogun, the leader wore a cap with the Nigerian flag color as an epitome of the veritable Nigeria. As Bakare asserts "... the seventh one, their leader which is Akaara-Ogun represents the true Nigeria, the ideal Nigeria".

Another creative approach was infused in the scene that projected the Calabar people as lecherous. This was refuted in the performance text, because that textual construct did not suite his directorial vision. As asserted by Bakare in an interview with *The Sun: Voice of the Nation*

that, "The most essential thing about directing is to concretize the gaseous thoughts of the playwright..." To corroborate this axiom, Guthrie expresses a similar opinion when he explained that the playwright James Birdie would never discuss his plays with anyone because he believes that "...I am the last person you should ask. I am only the author. I have written an armature, inside which possibly are the deepest ideas which have never quite formulated themselves in my consciousness" (247). Bakare understood that play directing itself is a creative process which seeks for a different interpretation and treatment than the written script.

A strand of creativity was also incorporated at the concluding part of the performance text when Bakare observed Poetic Justice on the first medium (an archetype of the forces of evil) by Akaara-Ogun and the collective efforts of the people. This invariably changed the ending of the play which originally ended on a sad note.

4.1:2 Moral justification of Bakare's Directorial Approach of *Langbodo*.

The dramatist functions spans beyond entertainment purposes, he strives to correct certain societal anomalies. Boh submits that:

Over the years, dramatists have used their dramatic ingenuity to comment on the social political, economic and moral issues going on in their societies. They do this with the intent to correct the society and point the way forward for harmonious and equitable living (148).

Any work of art that is devoid of moral implications has not asserted itself in the sense of true artistry. It is in this light that this study endeavors to explicate Bakare's creative directorial approach of *Langbodo* vis-à-vis the moral justification of his deconstructive measures. The original script was designed to preach unity in diversity, but there was a major fault in the play text. Despite the harmonious theme the script tends to project, there was a defamation of ethnicity in the play text. This was seen when the Calabar Chief gave his wives for the sexual

entertainment of the hunters. This belittled the reflection of the Calabar people. In the play text, the Calabar delegates reckoned with the Chiefs' proposal. This is to exhibit the pervasive nature of the Calabar people, which is an offensive thematic construct on the image of the Calabar's. According to Bakare he explains that this notion is derogatory on the integrity of the Calabar people. He opines that:

The Yoruba's believe that the Calabar people are that useless. If you hear the way they talk about Calabar people, you will think that if you go to Calabar, women will just be naked on the street, begging you to sleep with them. I spent eight of my formative years in Calabar, and there is nothing like that. So why Ogunyemi smuggled that into the script is because that is the mind of a typical Yoruba man about Calabar people. It misrepresents the people. They say that if you visit a Calabar man he will give you his wife to sleep with. It is a lie, and I had to change it.

Bakare changed that textual construct by typifying Kako as a man with sexual weakness for women. So when he saw the wife of the Calabar Chief he made advances to her. Upon the notice of the Chief and the people, Kako was in pursuit and was killed. This invention was an archetype of our leaders who are supposed to represent us at the national level, but resort to please their own sexual libidos at the expense of the citizens.

The theatrical realm is devised in such a standard that examines humanity in its real sense. Despite artistic representations that seem beyond ordinary like surrealism etc., humans find a way to connect the dramatic variables to their existent. Due to the structure of the stage drama, falsehood cannot be displayed, especially to the detriment of a set of people. And a fragile nation like Nigeria must avoid issues of this nature, because of its multiplicity. Yeaths states that "...art must remain at all times the final reality, the most profound verity" (David ker6). The rationale behind this stems down to the spectators view, who are the pivotal reason for any dramatic presentation. It is then sufficient to say that such textual construct could not be

portrayed on stage. And as a director, Bakare observed an anomaly in the play script, and due to the liberty a creative director possesses, he modified this textual structure because of the moral message he intended on dispersing to his audience. He achieved this by erasing the textual part that misinterpreted the Calabar populace as expressed in the author's play text.

Drama has always been a pivotal force in the society and goes beyond the concept of entertainment, it frowns at social vices and seeks to admonish virtue. In the words of Mbachaga he submits that:

The stage, and indeed theatre, has always been a moral force. This is because the stage teaches morality by capturing and portraying venality, corruption and biased Judgment. Theatre does this by daring to pronounce judgment on social vices (45).

This justifies the true efficacy of the theatre, which Bakare observed in his creative version of *Langbodo*. In the original text, despite the drudgery of the last three surviving hunters, Akaara-ogun, Imodoye and Olohun Iyo, the first medium, (a representation of the forces of evil), snatched the tusk of unity (giving to Akaara-Ogun by the Edo king as a gift for him to return home with) from Akara ogun and annihilated the other two hunters. This scene ended the play text on a pessimistic note. But in Bakare's stage interpretation, he made Akaara-Ogun survive because of the moral implications this deconstructive approach would deliver to the audience. He explains the rationale behind this modification in an interview:

I deconstructed Langbodo because I virtually re-wrote the conclusion. The original Langbodo ends on a pessimistic note. All the hunters got destroyed. It means the power of evil succeeds over the power of good. And I don't support that. And so I had to make sure that one of them survives it and comes back home with that gift. In the original Langbodo the gift that is giving to them by the Edo King, did not get home. The first medium which is the force of evil snatches it away and all the three surviving hunters are destroyed, that is what you see in the original Langbodo. But in the ones I directed, I deconstructed that because I believe that one of

the reasons why the artiste exist is to give the society a hope, if the artiste is preaching hopelessness why will the society find succor...at the end of the play I made sure that Akaara Ogun returns with the gift from Edo and the play then ends on a happy note.

In the performance text, Akaara-Ogun survived and overcame the first medium with the synergy of the community. This typifies Nigeria as a nation who cannot survive without the collaborative efforts of her citizens. And with combined efforts, National growth can be accomplished regardless of all sorts of encumbrances. This creative approach was designed to give the people hope, instead of the pessimistic theme that the original script inferred. Hence, it can be said that the deconstructive measures of the last scene was to give society a hope that evil does not avail over good. Therefore, it can be said that Bakare employed Poetic Justice in advocating for societal values of morality and hope in Wale Ogunyemi's *Langbodo*.

4.3 Theoretical Analysis of the Performance *Langbodo*.

The Oba of Oyo summoned Akara ogun to his palace to embark on the heroic mission. Akaraogun then demanded the support of other hunters from the Oba, who did not hesitate. After offering sacrifices, seven brave hunters-Akaraogun, Kako, Olohun Iyo, Elegbede Ode, Efoye, Imodoye and Aramonda Okunrin set out on the journey with a mission to bring an object from Mountain Langbodo. This Object was said to bring peace and harmony to the land. At the outset, the seven hunters saw the mission not only as a heroic one but also as a rare opportunity to serve the people and their community. As they were setting out for the journey, Kako's newly wedded wife, Pami Nku, tried to stop him from joining his colleagues, but a more determined and courageous Kako shunned his wife, offering to place national assignment above his personal comfort.

The First Medium predicted doom for the seven hunters, blaming them for accepting such a dangerous and risky venture, while the Second Medium did otherwise praying for the warriors and wishing them success and safe return. The journey took the hunters to many locations where they encountered different creatures such as birds, demons, Were Orun (lunatic of heaven), which they had to fight to move on. In most of their difficult situations, the hunters were either rescued by providence or the Mother earth, who was always ready to give them succour. Along the line five of the hunters did not survive, and all the remaining three hunters who survived the journey were received at the palace by the king and the entire people of Langbodo. Instead offering them the object of peace, the king admonished them, and reminded them about their experiences during the expedition. The latter, according to the king, should teach them how to live and how to excel in whatever situation they find themselves. He, however, presented them a symbol of peace, an object, which is painted in Nigeria's colours of Green and White. The message of peace was however threatened when the first medium hijacked the symbol from Akaraogun, leader of the hunters. Having lost four of their colleagues, and now the symbol, the hunters became frustrated, but with the support of the people, Akaraogun summoned courage and eventually snatched the symbol from the first medium with the combined help of the people.

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CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Summary.

It is sufficient to say that this study as verified creative directing as a form of textual transformation which operates within the parameters of the Derrida's deconstruction. Since texts are written in words, they can mean, infer and be interpreted in numerous dimensions, especially when it deals with theatrical performances. Succinctly, it can be said that creative directing is not a way of damaging the author's work, but rather a medium in which a play text is projected in a different prospect both in words, action and an ensemble of the whole stage happenings. When the director acknowledges the play script and understands the author's vision, only then can he find inspiration towards his own directorial vision. Dramatist should understand that when they drop the pen of their text, it marks the death of the author and the birth of the reader emerges which is the director who scrutinizes a play script before its stage interpretation.

5.2 Conclusion.

Having established the pertinence of drama in the society, it can therefore be said that a creative director is expected to understand the sociological preference of his audience before staging any performance. Also dramatist should understand that not all text appeals didactic themes to their readers, evident in *Langbodo*, therefore it is the place of the director to amend those textual frailties before the theatre percipient who invariably are the reason behind any theatrical piece. Owing to the performance text of Ojo Bakare's *Langbodo* which was a dramatic deconstruction, it was obvious that he amended the textual construct of the original script to exemplify the fact that Nigerians cannot survive as different entities but with the collaborative efforts of every citizens

viewing themselves as one regardless of their differences. This was the main message the creative work of Bakare's version of *Langbodo* dispersed because in the Nigerian society, it has become a norm in Nigeria to first identify ourselves as belonging to a particular ethnic group rather than having a sense of commitment towards the country by identifying ourselves as Nigerian before tribal differences. As submitted by Mbachaga that "The issue of citizenship, indigenous and tribalism has crushed our collective identity-brand as Nigerians such that whenever there is need to identify ourselves we first of all ask which tribe one belongs to before we extend our courtesies" (3). It is then sufficient to say that when we begin to identify ourselves as a unified state, only then will national growth be established.

5.3 Recommendations.

On account of this study, it can therefore be said that directors should adopt the theoretical stance of Derrida's deconstruction, as it helps trigger the imagination and psyche of a director towards a creative dramatic performance. Reading a play text is not sufficient, it has to be given uttermost level of commitment, only then can the director find textual anomalies which he has the liberty to rectify during the creation of the performance text. While a superficial reading breeds a slavish approach to directing and this handicap's the creative dexterity of the director. Also, dramatists are expected to understand that the final destination of a text is the reader, and before a director projects a performance, there must be an existing text. In order words, the director reads a play text before its creative interpretation of which the director presents before his own intended destination which is the audience. Visuals appeal more to the psyche of humans, than

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textual works. Hence it is imperative to examine the textual construct of any play text in depths before it appears before the theatre percipients.

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