A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PRETEXT, TEXT AND CONTEXT IN THE STAGE PRODUCTION OF *DEATH AND THE KING'S HORSEMAN*

BY

Olagoke Olorunleke IFATIMEHIN B.A. 2007, M.A. 2011 (ABU)

P13ARTP9015

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND PERFORMING ARTS,

FACULTY OF ARTS,

AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY,

ZARIA

AUGUST, 2017

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PRETEXT, TEXT AND CONTEXT IN THE STAGE PRODUCTION OF *DEATH AND THE KING'S HORSEMAN*

BY

Olagoke Olorunleke IFATIMEHIN B.A. 2007, M.A. 2011 (ABU)

P13ARTP9015

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD) IN THEATRE AND PERFORMING ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND PERFORMING ARTS,

FACULTY OF ARTS,

AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY,

ZARIA

AUGUST, 2017

DECLARATION

I, Ifatimehin, Olagoke Olorunleke hereby declare that this thesis entitled **A Critical Analysis of Pretext, Text and Context in the Stage Production of *Death and the King's Horseman*** is written by me and that it is a record of my own research work. It has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree. All quotations are indicated and all sources of information are duly acknowledged by means of reference.

.....	.....	.....
Olagoke Olorunleke IFATIMEHIN	**Signature**	**Date**

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled "**A Critical Analysis of Pretext, Text and Context in the Stage Production of *Death and the King's Horseman***" by Olagoke Olorunleke IFATIMEHIN**,** P13ARTP9015, meets the regulations governing the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Theatre and Performing Arts of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and it is approved for its contribution to knowledge.

.....	….....	**.....**
Professor M. I. Umar-Buratai.	Signature	Date
Chairman, Supervisory Committee		
……	…….	……...
Professor Oga Steve Abah.	Signature	Date
Member, Supervisory Committee		
.....	**.....**	.....……
Dr. Emmanuel Jegede	Signature	Date
Member, Supervisory Committee		
.....	……	.....
Professor M. I. Umar-Buratai.	Signature	Date
Head of Department		
.....	**.....**	**.....**
Professor Sadiq Zubairu Abubakar	Signature	Date
Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies		

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to God, and to the memory of my mother, Comfort Abiona Ifatimehin. It is also dedicated to my three ‘fathers’, Joseph Bolanle Ifatimehin (who gave birth to me and gave me an education), Dr. Jantiku Apagu Mamza (who gave me mentorship and knowledge) and Iliyasu Ibrahim (who gave me skills and guts).

This work is also dedicated to the memory of late Prof. Dapo Adelugba, my teacher, my trainer, my mentor and academic adviser.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My profound gratitude goes to God Almighty (Proverbs 3:6).

Professor Mohammed Inuwa Umar-Buratai, my gratitude for your mentoring would only slip and spill no matter how eloquently I try to express it. You have taught me so much, among which is that supervision is not merely guidance but coaching. You pushed me beyond the limits of my experiences and led me through the furnace of refinement. It was tough, but absolutely worth it. You were also always buying books related to my work and handing them to me to read. I cannot thank you enough Prof. Professor Oga Steve Abah, for your seasoned guidance and illuminating insights into the incredible potentialities of texts, especially in their transition to performance, I say thank you sir. Dr. Emmanuel Jegede, your astute criticism and detailed recommendations and corrections have enriched this research work tremendously. You displayed an understanding of my research intentions in such baffling proportions that I wondered if I was your only supervisee, seeing the meticulous observations you showcased to the minutest detail. I am completely humbled and indebted to this spectacular team of supervisors for drawing out the scholar in me, thank you sirs.

I also want to appreciate the contributions of all other members of the academic and non academic staff of Theatre and Performing Arts Department, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria for their contributions towards the success of this work, Dr. Mrs. Victoria Lagwampa, Dr. Mrs. Rasheeda Liman, Mal. Mohammed Rabiu Isah, Mr. Steve Daniel, and especially Mr. Sylvanus Dangoji and Mr. Lumumba Dodo for attending the FGD session and Mr. Mike for constructing the sets and props for the production. Dr. Jonah Amodu and Mr. Steve Joseph of the department

of English and Literary studies, I am deeply grateful for your time and insights. I am also grateful to Dr. Gambo Duniya of the Fine Arts department for his insights.

I want to also use this opportunity to appreciate my children, Jason Olagunsoye Ifatimehin and Jonelle Olayinka Ifatimehin for patiently enduring my absence when we should be running all over the place making a mess of the house for mummy to tidy up, as we always do. Sorry mummy, and thank you too.

To the cast and crew of the production for this research, you fully deserve to be acknowledged; Abdulmalik Abubakar, Jibrin Amedu, Seun Odukoya, Kenret Fwangkes, Millicent Ahupa, Tommi Tete Ayuba, Philip Peters, Ameh Farouq Obaje, John Ekpeno, Daniel Mark, Uchenna Mary Okoli, Joy Ogechi Uwadileke, Victoria Omonu, Padonu Rebecca Maulomemite, Adedibu Victoria Oluwafisayo, Mojisola Odofin, Sarah Lams Ehye, Anu Thomas, Aluko Mary Francis, Olanrewaju Adelola, Ayodeji Ibiobamimo, Ogakason Rasheed, David Oyinane Medugu, Angbo Allahai Endurance, Sokoya Ruth Oluwapelumi, Mama Jesse Nonso, Gideon Udeme, Ahmed Abdullahi, Babalola Olushola Hakeem, Angyu Comfort Wando, Yusuf Rimamsometeti Boyi, Ogunfeyimi Emmanuel Olajide, Winnifred Kwasu, Ponzhinanchat King Dashe, Imoh Sunday Obot and Ebenezer Fadunmade Kehinde. You guys are simply the best cast and crew ever assembled for a stage production!!

My appreciation also goes to my erudite PhD peers; Dr. Emmanuel T. Gana (my brother and friend), Mal. Nasir Danladi Bako OON, Sola John, Salisu Hassan, Mamun Jahun, Jamilah Mohammed, Dashen Kaseina, Amadi Aforji, Fidelis Ndigwe, Avese Jennifer Gumh (PadiskiScholastica), Abel Idebe, Ihidero Victor, Alex Attah, Seyi Soremekun, Dennis Mordi and Terngu Gwar.

Prince Nathan Kure and family, I say thank you for being there. Prof. Emmy U. Idegu and family, my gratitude is on its knees before you. Olaniyi Omoraiyewa, Olabanjo Ifatimehin, Olalekan Ifatimehin, Olayemi Ifatimehin, Damilola Adegboro, and Jerry Dock, thank you.

CONTENTS

Abstract

Wole Soyinka has come to symbolise authority in Africa and world drama. His treatises and proclamations have attained such iconic reverence that his drama is often understood 'only' by the wholesome acceptance of his 'esteemed' authorial voice. *Death and the King's Horseman* has been considered a masterpiece; Soyinka's iconic play, and studies of the text have also revealed such heavy dependence on the author's perceptive intentions of his own work in the search for meaning. Seen largely from the author's perspective, the play is largely interpreted as Soyinka's mythopoeic dramatization of African drama. Hence, there exists a lack of sustained reading of the text outside its threnodic essence. This study adopts a new historicist approach to reading the text by exploring the indeterminacy of meaning, the textualisation of history and myth in interpreting pretext, text and context while seeking meaning differently from the author's intention. It also deploys the receptionist paradigm, also known as reader response theory, in the search of meaning by drawing the audience into the process of interpretation and production of meaning. This is made possible by producing the playtext on stage in order to showcase the *leit motif* of clash of cultures as the major causative of conflict in the play while providing room for other meanings to display themselves, and for the audience to view. By also triangulating both qualitative and quantitative methods of research in the process of interpretation, a combination which proves highly rewarding and essential in theatre studies, the study made very insightful discoveries. One of the findings of this research is that drama, like other genres of literature, is a supertext; a pantheon of varied meanings. It also found that the mere reading of a play text limits its own true potentials and relying on the author's intention doubly chokes the already constraining form of the dramatic text in dispensing meaning. Play production is a viable means and process of interpretation and meaning making in theatre because it brings about the physicalization of characters, dialogue, music and other elements of semiotic appeal. As part of its findings, the study also discovers that interpretation is more enriching when it is a collective activity in reception than in conception. The study, however, debunks the allusion that *Death and the King's Horseman* is not about the clash of cultures, because the 'silences' in the text emphasise cultural assertions and differences as a major theme in the dramatic text and in its stage production. It is thus expected that interpretations of texts should not serve as foreclosures of meaning but as emergent voices and opinions subject to contexts of reading and meaning making which are contingent and arbitrary in themselves.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

> Nevertheless it is still true that the vast majority of play productions begin with the text. It is also true that after the performance is over, all that is left is the text (Leach 2008:18).

This study examines the interrelationship between pretext, text and context in the generation of meaning in drama, both in its literariness and in its stage production. This is of particular importance because dramatic writing and staging is largely an interplay of pretexts, texts and contexts. Pretexts and texts usually serve as sources for the drama while contexts implicate processes of interpretation.This intricate relationship points to the fact that drama draws from texts, is a text on its own and leads to a proliferation of other texts. Studying the dynamics of this interplay showcases how meaning is conceived, articulated and perceived in the ever shifting frames of reference abundant in the appreciation of a work of drama.

Whatever presents itself to be read assumes the status of a text. A text is anything that invites itself to be read. This could be a painting, a book, a song or even music. This view certainly tampers with the conventional notion of text as being characteristically written (Schechner 1973), especially in words. A text is not restricted to a written material, it refers to whatever human endeavor that is subject to interpretation, to a reading. Barker (2000:11) notes:

> The concept of text suggests not simply the written word, though this is one of its senses, but all practices which signify. This includes the generation of meaning through images, sounds, objects (such as clothes) and activities (like dance and sport).

The printed play is easily recognised as a text; hence its reference as a 'playtext', 'dramatic text'. But in theatre discourse and performance studies there is also what is regarded as the 'theatrical text' or 'performance text' which refers to the product of production or performance. Wallis and Shepherd (2010:2) state that:

> The notion of the theatrical text is especially useful because it emphasises the fact that the stage is itself 'read' by the audience. Both the page and the stage invite some sort of reading. The dramatic text is read on the page, the theatrical text is read by an audience from the stage".

This indicates that there are two basic kinds of texts in the theatre; the written text (playtext) and the performance text: the playwright's text and the director's or producer's text.

Asides the obvious difference that one is written on a page and the other performed on stage, both texts share a marked relationship in the fact that the playtext serves as the springboard from which the performance text originates and gains momentum. It is the playwright's text that usually conceives (inspires) the performance text.

> The playwright then is perhaps the provider of starting-points. Her initial text is what makes the actor get up and begin work; what the actor does is to create a second text, related to the first, but different in kind (Leach 2008:19-20).

Not all performance texts, however, proceed from a dramatic text. Some of them are improvised; created from an unwritten circumstance, painting, music, poetry, orature or history. These may not be dramatic texts because dramatic texts have the peculiar characteristic of "the use of dialogue, the presence of stage directions (which give information about the appearance and movement of characters) or details of the stage set- that would seem to designate a text as being designed for stage performance" (Balme 2011:119). However, they are texts in their own right because they invite a reading that leads to a performance. Performance texts too are most

times unwritten. They are created in the process of a production of texts, written and unwritten, acquiring the status of text in their own right:

> Although such productions may produce a text, often they are not available for study; the text may only exist metaphorically in the sense that it is written into the corporeal memory of the performers (Balme 2011:119).

Leach (2008) as quoted above capsulizes the totality of the process of the text. Whatever informs a production is a text. A text is what the production showcases. After the production, all that is left is the text. This text then, potentially, becomes an inspiration for other texts to spring. Such is the continuum of text. It is upon this continuum that pretext, text and context become essential parameters in the creation, analysis and interpretation of drama and performance.

1.1 Pretext and Context in Drama

Pretext refers to something that preludes another, a thing that comes before something. In this sense, it could be said that the playtext is the pretext for the performance text. This also implies that the source material a playwright uses for telling his story is his pretext. Schechner (1973:6) simply refers to such materials as 'script'. He says script means "something that pre-exist (sic) any given enactment, which act (sic) as a blueprint for the enactment, and which persist (sic) from enactment to enactment". The term 'pretext', however, is more suitable for our purposes because it indicates a precursor without unnecessarily demanding strict adherence to a 'blueprint'.

Pretexts are readily adaptive to whatever contexts they are made to serve, or that they deem to create. Legends, historical chronicles, myths and, even, classical literature have served as pretexts for a lot of playwrights in creating their plays, for example Ola Rotimi's *Gods are not to Blame,* Femi Osofisan's *The Women of Owu*. These have been altered and modified to adopt

new roles, functions and interpretations. It is important to remark that such sources are usually 'texts' in their own rights, situated within specific contexts.

Context is the clime, milieu or setting in which a thing is situated. It is the interrelated condition in which something exists or occurs. Context implies an emphasis on the history, background, circumstances, cultural and political situations of the text and the processes that necessitated the creation of the text. Such 'processes' could include, but not limited to, the purposes and intentions of the playwright especially in the choice of pretext.

When a playwright decides to use history or legend as pretext for a play, for instance, it is important that the context in which the pretext first existed be comprehended and acknowledged in creative re-making. This is "not a question of slavishly following the original; rather, responding to it in its own *specificity* enriches what we make" (Wallis and Shepherd 2010:2). Although Barthes (2001:146) has mentioned that "writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin", there is residual meaning, or message, in the pretext that first interested the playwright in his selection. Pretext is that 'point of origin' which serves as the causality for text and context.

As has been mentioned earlier, text is essentially read than written (in words), context becomes fluid by the very nature that texts are not confined to specific meanings and definitions. "It is possible, within text, to frame a question or assertion made in the text, by means of elements which are in the text" (Moynihan 1986:156). This possibility raises questions, however rhetorical:

> Shall we merely retell the story and represent the characters on stage in our own way? Or shall we discover and enrich our own way by responding to the playtext in its own

> *specificity*- that is as a text that *itself* points forward to activities on a stage? What we come to make is entirely up to us. But we shall gain much if we are wise to the specificity of our pretext as we create(Wallis and Shepherd 2010: 3).

Eagleton (1985: 64) sums it up, and provides a leeway when he states that:

> The literary text is not the 'expression' of ideology, nor is ideology the 'expression' of social class. The text, rather, is a certain *production* of ideology, for which the analogy of a dramatic production is in some ways appropriate. A dramatic production does not 'express', 'reflect', or 'reproduce' the dramatic text on which it is based; it 'produces' the text, transforming it into a unique and irreducible entity.

This is the process of meaning making. A reading or stage production of a text differs from the text itself because it has shifted in context. These activities of reading and stage production only articulate aspects of meaning which suit the reader/producer and once such activities occur, meaning is no longer dependent on the playwright but becomes a communion between the text and the reader/producer/audience.

1.2 Playwright and Subtext

Anything can be a pretext for drama. The subject of drama can spring from any discipline or matter:

> The source of inspiration for a play cannot be foreseen. It may be a newspaper article, a personal experience, a criminal act for which the motives are unclear, or almost any other source, because the possibilities of drama are ever-present and because almost anything has the potential to stimulate a dramatist's imagination. Each writer has a view of the world or a range of interests that make some subjects more attractive than others (Brockett and Ball 2014:315)

The playwright is that dramatist or writer who writes plays. Since the Greek era, the playwright has been central to dramatic composition and performance where playwrights are known to have staged performances of their own plays. Such performances in Greek theatre were largely transference of what had been written on the page to what was acted on stage. In other words,

plays are staged to demonstrate the skill of the playwright in dramatic composition than in the directorial apprehension of the extrinsic qualities which the playtext could evoke in interpretation and performance. But this phenomenon did not affect the importance of the playwright in Greek theatre. He remained an important factor in theatrical conceptions and festivals.

It was not until the eighteenth century that the 'authority' of the playwright reached its peak, by which time, the playwright had risen to a status of being the custodian of meaning in a play. The intentions of the playwright determined the meaning of the text, and not what the text might suggest. Foucault (2001:186) had stated that "since the eighteenth century, the author has played the role of the regulator of the fictive, a role quite characteristic of our era of industrial and bourgeois society, of individualism and private property". Hence, any method of deducing significations, either apparent or coded, other than that which the playwright had stated as the message of "his" text was tantamount to trespassing.

To enshrine that 'author-function' deeper, play analysis required a study of 'peripheral texts' or what is regarded as peritext. Peritext refers to information which appear before the body of the play to hint at the meaning/intention of the play as determined by the playwright. Peritexts include titles, name of author, subtitles, dedications, epigraphs, introductions, prefaces and author's notes. Interviews and press releases also serve as peritexts. Under the supremacy of the author, peritexts were expected to provide the meaning and/or help guide the reading and staging of the text. The playwright was like a god who had created an unquestionable material, which cannot be interrogated beyond the purpose to which it was created.

But there is hardly only one meaning residual in a text. There resides a "narrative surplus" (Linderman 1985:99) in every narrative. By narrative surplus it is meant that there are

more beyond what the playwright points us to. This 'more' is the subtext. The subtext is all that the playwright does not seem to be saying, but is inadvertently communicating. Noting dialogue and stage directions as the major tools of communication for the playwright in the playtext, Downs, Wright and Ramsey (2013:131) define subtext as "the hidden meaning behind the words, the real reason a character chooses to speak. In other words, dialogue is like an iceberg; only part of the meaning can be seen above the waterline".

Significantly, pretext is often used interchangeably as subtext, because it also implies an ostensible reason or false reason used to justify an action, a code (Soanes and Stevenson 2017). For the purposes of this research, however, pretext is conceptualised to operate as a precursor of texts; not only in the hyphenated sense (pre-text) of what comes before a text but also for the reason that it is a text on its own and possesses meanings which resound in the creation of whatever it inspires. This is why the term is deployed without the hyphen.Barthes (2001:148-149) interrogating the eighteenth century regard for the author submits that:

> The modern scriptor is born simultaneously with text, (he) is in no way equipped with a being preceeding the writing, is not the subject with the book as predicate; there is no other time than that of the enunciation and every text is eternally written here and now... We know that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the message of the Author God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash.

A text therefore, is only an entrance to a world of complex significations which produce meanings beyond the tactile apprehensions of a playwright's limiting intentions. Foucault (2001:186) is also of the view that, if anything:

> The author is the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning. As a result, we must entirely reverse the traditional idea of the author. We are accustomed... to saying that the author is the genial creator of a work in which he deposits, with infinite wealth and generosity, an inexhaustible world of significations. We are used

> to thinking that the author is so different from all other men, and so transcendent with regard to all languages that, as soon as he speaks, meaning begins to proliferate indefinitely.
>
> The truth is quite contrary; the author is not an indefinite source of significations which fill a work; the author does not precede the works, he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction.... The author is therefore the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning.

The playwright is no longer the centre of meaning generation from a text; the text assumes a life of its own and does not require any peritexts to speak for itself. The primacy of the playwright had hitherto inhibited the vast potentials of the text in the proliferation of meaning and the multifariousness of contexts to which a single text could be analysed. With the 'death of the author', the text comes alive with immeasurable subtexts in its wake. Tyson (2006:2) explains:

> "The death of the author" merely refers to the change of attitude toward the role of the author in our interpretation of literary works. In the early decades of the twentieth century, students of literature were taught that the author was our primary concern in reading a literary work: our task was to examine the author's life in order to discover what the author meant to communicate- his or her message, theme, or moral- which is called *authorial intention*. Our focus has changed over the years to the point that... the author is no longer considered a meaningful object of analysis. We focus, instead, on the reader; on the ideological, rhetorical, or aesthetic structure of the text; or on the culture in which the text was produced, usually without reference to the author.

This is precisely what the death of the author signifies; an interrogation of the text irrespective, or even in spite of the author.

1.3 Text in Performance: The Director and his Art

The 'death of the author' and the rise of the text as an independent centre for the proliferation of meaning has significantly redefined the role and function of the theatre director. Although largely influenced by the European experience in the late nineteenth century that

recorded great industrial, political, technological and economic shifts and advances which ultimately changed traditional and social perceptions and behaviours, "in theatre there arose the importance of the theatrical director as a source of interpretative intervention" (Krasner 2008:1).

A child of the 'modern' circumstance, the director has emerged to fill a gaping need that has before now created a void both in the art of theatre and in society. This is not to say that directing has not been taking place in the theatre throughout the ages. On the contrary, there has always existed a superintendence of creativity and artists by (mostly) playwrights, actors and teachers for theatrical productions. It should be noted in fact that after the passing of the author's primacy in the interpretation of texts, the actor reigned supreme. The actor was responsible for the interpretation of roles and texts before the necessary arrival of the director as the centre of interpretation and meaning generation. Booth (2001:329) had indicated that "the nineteenth-century actor was his or her own master. He or she...was responsible for the interpretation" of roles. He also realised that "What was missing was a director working with actors to develop character, the interpretation of a role, and the interpretation of the play itself" (332). So:

> When the director did finally appear toward the end of the nineteenth century, he filled so pressing a need that he quickly pre-empted the hegemony that had rested for centuries with playwrights and actors. Working behind the scenes, the director stamped his individuality on a rich and varied international stage. By blending diverse arts into a single organic image he gave form to the complex modern theatre, just as a poet had given shape to the Elizabethan stage by words and the actor had crystallized the theatrical idea of the eighteenth century by his personal magnetism. The appearance of the director ushered in a new and original theatrical epoch. His experiments, his failures, and his triumphs set and sustained the stage.... By his interpretation a director would weld a harmonious art and a cohesive audience out of the disturbing diversity increasingly apparent in our urban, industrial, mass society. By his multifarious activities the director would restore the artistic and social unity that has always been the central demand of the collective art of theatre (Chinoy 1976: 3-4).

Georg II, Duke of Saxe-Meiningen (1826–1914) is regarded as the first director in the modern sense especially because he:

> exerted complete control over every aspect of production. He designed the scenery, costumes, and properties himself and insisted that they be constructed to his precise specifications both in materials and appearance.... In Saxe-Meningen's productions, the total stage picture was worked out carefully moment by moment, and the superior results were seen as convincing arguments for a strong director who can impose his authority and implement his vision... the need for unified production... soon became a basic tenet of theatrical production (Brockett and Ball 2014:154-155).

Although he was largely celebrated because of his directorial practices than for any concern with a new repertory, experimentation or innovative design, Georg II had instituted an important role for the director in theatre practice even as the period spurred a rise in experimentation, questioning and intense creativity. Krasner (2008:2) captures the phenomena thus:

> A cursory glance at the late nineteenth-century period reveals an elaborate picture of many aims and at times contradictory themes. Theorists had disdain for the ambitions of those preceding them, rejecting eighteenth-century Enlightenment rationalism as well as early nineteenth-century Romantic inwardness. The designation of modernism- a fluid term ranging from one late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century playwright or theatrical event to another- stems from the condition in which tradition was perceived as stifling creativity and the task of making sense of ourselves and the world lacked certainty and authority. Political, social and economic changes, scientific developments, and artistic inventiveness encouraged the questioning of tradition and validating the "new". For modernists past models had collapsed, convention had inhibited creativity, and formulas were perceived to have thwarted innovation. Modernism... inclined towards the marginal and unorthodox..., intimacy, ambiguity, and fragmentation came into vogue.

Inadvertently, "the emergence of the director as an independent theatre artist during the twentieth century made it clear that the staging itself was a complex artwork *sui generis*" (Balme 2011:78). The phenomenon of the director overhauled the old system that provided a cottage approach to play production and a simplistic notion of the meaning of texts. Booth (2001:332) notes that:

> The old system had to change under the impact of changing conceptions of character and dramatic writing and new ideas of psychology, where motivation was hidden or obscure,

> where abnormal psychology and inner struggle were significant determinants of personality, and where text was complex and enigmatic.

Carlson (1996:82) also avers that:

> Not until the rise of modern interest in performance was there much thought that a play might be presented in a different contextualization, not as a cousin of such literary forms as the poem or the novel, but of such performance forms as the circus, the sideshow, the parade, or even the wrestling match or the political convention.

The liberty the period provided transformed the art of directing from a mere transfer of a playwright's revered and 'self-complete' text unto the stage to a more dynamic interrogation of, and interaction with subtexts which faltered the notion of 'authorship' as a repressive principle of interpretation and staging. This new status provides the director with a creative freedom of analysing and re-contextualizing playwrights' texts. Added to the traditional role of harmonising all other elements of performance into a unified production, the creation and articulation of new meaning situated in written texts also became the central purpose of directing.

The director's art hence, is an engagement with text in order to investigate its pretext and determine, in theatrical production, the possibility of generating other and deeper meanings when and wherever the text is exposed to different contexts. This approach gives the director the power to translate the concerns of a playwright's text into indicators of other or greater and wider societal concerns. He interrogates a text and produces new texts in the process. By so doing, the director becomes an auteur. Brockett and Ball (2014:340) state that:

> A director who treats the script as raw material to be reshaped for his or her own purposes is sometimes called an *auteur* (French for "author") because the director is considered the principal creative force. Taken to its most extreme expression, this approach to directing virtually eliminates the playwright (or at least the distinctions between writer and director).

In engaging Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* for production in this study, the director did not attempt to follow the 'extreme' route of auteurism but he initiated the text into yielding meanings that have been hitherto either deemed non-existent or have been confined to the margins by authorial insistence and imposition. The authorial imposition in this study's case is the denial that the text is about 'a clash of cultures'. The task of the director here is to free the text into dispensing its own significations even as it is placed in contexts that suit his purposes, which specifically is the notion that the text is fundamentally about 'a clash of cultures'. This is essentially possible because:

> /Director/ has become that sign we use to inscribe that connotational consistency and interpretational purpose we propose to glimpse within and behind a "weaving together" of the strands of the dramatic with those of the performance text (Rouse 1999:146).

Hence, the director's interpretation of the text does not in any way seek to 'define' the text as all about the clash of cultures in a manner Mane (2010:89) considers to be the ultimate task of interpreting a text, which is "always the explanation of what the play "means". Barthes (1974:5) had stated that "to interpret a text is not to give it a meaning, but on the contrary to appreciate what *plural* constitutes it". This interpretation therefore intends to demonstrate the dispersing centrality ('plurality') of clash of cultures as the *leit motif* of the text. This demonstration is quintessential because, even according to Barthes (1977:157) a text is "experienced only in an activity of production".

It is however significant that an interrogation of the background of the text is done in order to put into proper perspective this study's context of articulating meaning within a justifiable paradigm. Such an interrogation also provides the nexus as to why this study is

relevant in the purview of its chosen interpretation and the need for a stage production in the expression and reception of intended meaning.

1.4. Background to the Study

In the Humanities, as in social life, the search for meaning usually necessitates an interrogation of pretexts, texts and contexts. Interpretations and the apprehension of phenomena, in order to gain greater clarity, require an investigation of what precedes a happening, an analysis of the happening and the situation upon which such a happening is premised for investigation. It is on the basis of this notion that the myth making propensities of the Yoruba serves as the pivotal background to this study. It is from it also that the pretext to the text under study is derived. Nearly all aspects of Yoruba existence possess a mythical valuation. Myths are stories created to function as explanations to the worldview of a people. Such stories garner credibility, no matter their incongruity, among a people to a point that they are generally accepted as history, as truth. Soyinka (1990:xii) has admitted that "Man exists... in a comprehensive world of myth, history and mores". Finding himself in a 'world' where there are no readily available explanations for such 'super'-natural occurences as rain, thunder, lightning, creation (birth and death) and creativity, fire and wind, man created, and believed that there are, elemental forces which exist in a cosmic, supernatural realm, responsible for such awe and wonder. He also believed that these elemental forces interfere in his daily attempt at 'making a life' for himself. The belief is that man (humanity) exists:

> within a cosmic totality, did possess a consciousness in which his own earth being, his gravity-bound apprehension of self was inseparable from the entire cosmic phenomenon. (For let it always be recalled that myths arise from man's attempt to externalise and communicate his inner intuitions" (Soyinka 1990:3).

To apprehend and explain phenomena beyond his logic, man created gods responsible for specific needs and attached logical validation to his fantastic creations, and creativity. The gods, of necessity, possess human and super-human characteristics, in order not to appear ordinary while maintaining plausibility and commonality with what is essentially human to mankind. They are orchestrated in a manner to inspire belief and an aura that transcend ordinary understanding, thus inspiring mysticism. In other words, "the desire to develop the gods as full people must conflict with the desire for neatness and simplicity of explanation" (Ogunbiyi 1981:89).

The Yoruba believe in three worlds that are tied within a cyclical cosmic interdependence. It is this worldview that gives specific substance to the belief in, and proliferation of, myths. The three worlds include the worlds of the living, the (un)dead (to capture the notion that though dead, the dead are still alive as mediating spiritual forces) and the unborn:

> The Yoruba world-view is multi-dimensional. It is not restrained to the physical, tangible plane of existence. Besides the earth which is the measure of the present, and the locus of mortals and where you and I, in the form of existence, dramatize our distinctive destinies, there are the realms of ancestors (the past), gods (the eternal) and the unborn (the future) (Ibitokun 1995:21-22).

It is within this matrix of being and existence that the Yoruba defines his conditions, social and otherwise, and life:

> Life within Yoruba cosmology is viewed from the world of the living, the dead and the unborn. The Yoruba share with other African ethnic nationalities the fundamental belief in the continuity of life after death. They acknowledge the contribution of the dead to the life of the living and the future generations... for the Yoruba, the gods are the final measure of eternity. Forces that are beyond man's power controls (sic) man. Thus... man maintains a close contact with nature and consequently, his life is guarded by codes of

> conduct that must be observed. It is only through constant communion with the supernatural forces that harmony can be guaranteed (Gbilekaa 2013:125).

This tripartite perception of life shapes mankind's actions and relationships, both with their visible counterparts and their invisible benefactors. In fact, the very:

> life cycle of an individual constitutes only a segment in a larger ontological journey- a continuous, unending movement of the human spirit from the world to the otherworld and back again, to be reincarnated in the bodies of descendants (Drewal 1992:26).

This back and forth journey is a round and round passage which necessitates a transition that sojourns through the three worlds. Soyinka in an interview with Appiah (2015:781) explains the Yoruba world-view thus:

> We believe that there are various areas of existence, all of which interact, interlock in a pattern of continuity: the world of the ancestor, the world of the living, and the world of the unborn. The process of transition among these various worlds is a continuing one and one which is totally ameliorated. For instance, the function of ritual, of sacrifice- whether it's a ram or a chicken- the function of seasonal ceremonies, is in fact allied to the ease of transition among these various worlds.

Inhabitants of each of the three worlds have an interconnected responsibility that is largely beneficial to the living. The living are expected to give supplications to the dead (ancestors) who in turn would bless their existence and ensure that the unborn are released to the living in a manner that guarantees the "continuation of the species". In the land of the living, the collective, that is, the community has primacy over the individual and every member of the community knows this:

> Every living human individual is important to all the communities in the world, but in the Yoruba society, the community gets the primacy. It gives importance to the dead ancestors and unborn lives. The dead ancestors are worshipped as guides and companions. The Yoruba people believe that their blessings will save them from all evils. Moreover, they believe that life is a continuum. In fact, it is their fundamental belief. The transition from the physical world to the eternal world is a very important moment in the Yoruba idea of life cycle (Kumar 2015:378).

To sum it up, this is how the world works for the Yoruba:

> In Yoruba thought, the otherworldly domain (*orun*) coexists with the phenomenal world of people, animals, plants, and things (*aye*). *Orun* includes a pantheon of uncountable deities (*Orisa*), the ancestors (*osi, egun*), and the spirits both helpful and harmful. The world and the underworld are always in close proximity, and both human and other spirits travel back and forth between the two. The Yoruba adage "the world is a market, the otherworld is home" (*aye l'oja, orun n'ile*) conveys the idea of the journey between the two and the permanency of existence in the latter in contrast to the former, where people and spirits merely visit (Drewal 1992:26).

Such a worldview provides for Soyinka a fertile ground, a pretext to cultivate texts rich in drama and meaning.For one who "sees the stage as a constant battleground for forces larger than the petty infractions of habitual communal norms or patterns of human relationships and expectations, beyond the actual twists and incidents of action and their resolutions" (Soyinka 1990:43), ritual and myth would not be surprising pretexts for drama:

> Soyinka seizes on myth and ritual as the perfect paradigms for the artistic exploration of that which in human experience and natural phenomena is perennial, recurrent, unchanging, timeless, ineffable, imponderable and ultimately resistant to domination and control by man (Soyinka1990:xvii).

Myth, ritual and history are important elements for drama, both in its form and content. They have not only informed its birth, but have been primordial pretexts for drama since its inception. Several other playwrights, other than Soyinka, have deployed these in projecting their visions through drama. John Pepper Clark uses myth and ritual in *Song of a Goat* (1961), *Ozidi* (1966). Femi Osofisan has also predicated his drama *Morountodun* (1982) on such materials. Emmy Idegu *The Legendary Inikpi* (1994), *Omodoko* (1998), *Ata Igala the Great (2008*), Ola Rotimi *Ovonranwem Nogbaisi* (1971) Ahmed Yerima *Ameh Oboni the Great (2006*), Sanamo Lagwampa *Makwada* (2015). Their preoccupation with history, ritual and myth is not a mere 'remembering' of early rural life and their people's tales (Ukala 2001:30) but a (re)definition of

purpose, identity and "translation of culture" (Okpewho 2004:55). Idegu (2007:99) also mentions that "myth, legends and history and the like come handy in man's attempt to comprehend his immediate and remote environments".

The interplay of pretext, text and context in Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* provides the spur for this research to further interrogate the text; for the text is a culmination of pretext and context, especially in order to reveal further contexts which would in turn make the text a pretext. It is a cyclical continuum like the Yoruba cosmology.

It becomes quite confusing that a text based on such a rich background of intrinsic culture and pristine belief system would therefore not consider the presence of alien factors, in this case represented by colonial presence, as both incursive and contaminating. An African playwright's engagement with his culture and belief system goes beyond the aesthetics of dramaturgy. Idegu (2007:99) notes that:

> There is probably no single subject which ethnographers, anthropologists and theatre scholars, concern themselves more than attempts to understand and interpret the belief systems of peoples of Africa and how these are reflected in their lives, (both here and hereafter) and in their works.

Soyinka's text can, therefore, be seen to be concerned with the totality of the world it creates and the world that informs its creation. Beyond the dramatisation of the Yoruba world view lies the contestation of the effects of colonial contact embedded in the text; a culmination of which reveals Soyinka's "accounting for his cultural situation" (Appiah 1992:79). Soyinka had however denied and discouraged a pursuit of meaning from the perspective of clash of cultures in the authorial note to *Death and the King's Horseman*. Such authorial insistence limits the potential broad spectrum of viewing life thereby inhibiting the richness and variety that various

perspectives can bring to the apprehension and interpretation of texts and life in general. Sadly, so many researchers and directors have inclined to accept the playwright's opinion as 'textual truth' and treated the text from a literal approach:

> The literal approach stems from the belief that a play is a finished and self-disclosing artefact and that the director serves the playwright by transferring the play as literally as possible from page to stage. Directors who accept this notion of their function usually retain the time and place specified in the text and closely (though not necessarily slavishly) follow the playwright's prescriptions about staging (Brockett and Ball 2014:337).

It is against this context that this research intends to interrogate the text with the hope of unearthing cultural significations which bespeak 'clash of cultures' as a major theme in*Death and the King's Horseman*, both in the dramatic text, and in the form of a performance text. This is so as to portray that life is not unilineal in scope and that meaning is fluid, flexible and varied.

1.5 Statement of the Research Problem

Studies of Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* have been disposed to predominantly view the play as a mythopoeic rendition of history and Yoruba tragedy (cosmology). The 'iconic' play is not deeply analysed outside the parameters of myth hence the lack of sustained argument away from the threnodic essence of the text. This tendency, perhaps, stems from the playwright's disclaimer that his play has no deliberate inclination to dramatise a 'clash of cultures'. This study suggests that both the authorial pronouncement and the mythopoeic thrust deny the richness of the cultural fissures in both the text and the performance of *Death and the King's Horseman.* Herein lies the problematic of this study.While it is true that mythopoeism is not only abundantly pervasive in *Death and the King's Horseman,* but also constitutes the most dominant analytic concern among scholars of the text,the analytical readings

and interpretations, which such a uniaxial treatment has ignored, is the wider interpretive meanings domiciled within the text.

This authorial disclaimer is both inhibitive and limiting to the potentials of meaning and textual power embedded within the play. In fact, *Death and the King's Horseman*captures aspects of the colonial experience in Nigeria and the superimpositions of the Western culture on indigenous belief systems of the colonised people.Therefore, set within this context, the text is bound to yield more textual relevance and provide a polysemy of interpretations, and fresh insights. Questions therefore arise as to the extent authorial intentions could continue to determine the production of meaning in texts; how long could the theme of clash of cultures be ignored or dismissed to the margins of meaning making and interpretation in the analysis of *Death and the King's Horseman*? This study, therefore, sets out to explore *Death and the King's Horseman*, both as a text and in performance (drawing the audience into the search for meaning), from a perspective of clash of cultures.

This study operates on the claims that:

i. *Death and the King's Horseman*provides a more enriching space for interpretation when 'read' from a perspective of clash of cultures than from a concern with its depiction of myth and threnody.

ii. In theatre, meaning is not limited to pretext, text and/or context but also incorporates the audience (reader) by giving him the liberty to 'create' his own meaning.

iii. Stage production encourages the playtext to reveal its plethora of meaning than the mere reading of the words on the page.

1.6 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research is to critically analyse Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* from the *leit motif* of 'clash of cultures'in order to depict the polysemous nature of the text. In pursuance of the claim that the theme of clash of cultures could serve as a major source of textual power, the study preoccupies itself with the objectives to;

1. Explore how *Death and the King's Horseman* is readily disposed to various contexts through different readings.

2. Produce *Death and the King's Horseman* on stage with the view to unearthing different layers of meaning especially between script and stage.

3. Examine the cultural values embedded in the text in order to reveal the effects of clash of cultures on the dramatic (tragic) construct of the play.

1.7 Research Questions

1. How does a text produce meaning differently from the intentions of its author?

2. How does the interface between script and stage produce various layers of meanings?

3. What cultural values exist in the world of the play and how do they trigger a clash of cultures?

1.8 Justification for the Study

Soyinka's works have been widely researched; his *Death and the King's Horseman* even more so (Jeyifo 2004, Gibbs 1980, Katrak 1986). What appears missing, which this study provides, is the cultural richness and discourse which lends itself in the text. His blend of myth

and history is rarely apprehended from the dynamics of cultural perspectives. Jeyifo (2004:121) notes that:

> Of all Soyinka's plays, *Death and the King's Horseman* is perhaps the most event-specific in its derivation; it dramatizes the famous incident in 1946 when the British colonial authorities prevented the carrying out of a customary ritual suicide by an important chief, a ritual suicide intended to officially conclude the funerary ceremonies for one of the most important indigenous rulers in colonial Nigeria, the Alafin of Oyo. In Soyinka's dramatization of this event, the tragic and unanticipated reversals which result from this intervention are presented in the form of ritual festivity of great poetic elegance and performative sublimity which, nonetheless, undermine both the moral authority of the colonizers and the spiritual security of the colonized.

Yet, hardly is there a research that interrogates the "clash of cultures" as a theme in Soyinka's play. This is largely because Soyinka himself had denied such an occurrence in his intentions, but the text, which is treated in this study as an entity independent of its maker (the playwright) in communicating meaning, begs to differ. Hence, this research justifies itself as a study that considers that theme as the essential *leit motif* of the text. It would also enrich relevant literatures on the subject of Soyinka, text and context, *Death and the King's Horseman* and the significance of audience (reception) in meaning making.

Of fundamental import is the disposition of this study to implicate, via performance production, the views of the audience in interpretation and the search for meaning. Most theatre research and studies concern themselves with aspects of drama and theatre as literature rather than as a combination of page and stage activities. Or as Beckerman (1979:13) notes:

> Unfortunately, dramatic theory has not sufficiently addressed itself to a close analysis of theatrical activity, primarily because it has seen theatre as a composition of words rather than of activities.... This seems to be a serious error, because in failing to concern itself fully with activity before examining the concept of action, dramatic criticism and theory are ignoring the foundation of theatrical art.

Though Beckerman's submission might hint at eurocentricism, since African theatre has been characteristically more inclined towards activities and action than on writing, the point that recent concerns with dramatic theory and criticism, as he notes, rarely considers the art from its mimetic roots and inclinations. This study, hence, becomes quite relevant as it takes into account the necessity of the nature of theatre as interplay of texts in the search and articulation of meaning; the dramatic text and the performance text.

1.9 The Scope of the Study

The focus of this study is to critically interrogate the intertextuality of meaning and intentions by subjecting Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* to an interpretation that depicts the play as about a clash of cultures. Soyinka's text is peculiarly significant not only because it covers the framework of myth, ritual and history as sources for drama, but essentially because it is hardly analysed as a play that significantly thrives on the theme and conflict of culture. A deconstructionist reading of the text encourages the text to yield its cultural elements in order to further project the aim of the study.

The gap between page (playtext) and stage (performance text) is also explored by producing the play on stage with the hope of going beyond literary analyses to a concrete demonstration of the interpretation the text is given in this study. The intention to stage is not unconnected to the fact that, "Drama interprets with greater immediacy than other genres and is accessible in performance to those who cannot or do not read" (Ukala 2001:29). The Ahmadu Bello University Studio Theatre (Drama Village) is venue for production because it is the stage for play production provided by the department where this study was carried out. Although primarily concerned with *Death and the King's Horseman*, the study is not limited to its primary

text, as it cross-examines and references other material sources relevant to its own case, and to the subject in question.

Considering the fact that the pretext of *Death and the King's Horseman* is situated in 1946 while the text was first published in 1975, this study also explores the temporal relevance of the play in contemporary times. This exploration aids the objective of drawing a premise of timelessness in texts, expecially those enriched with deconstructive reading. It provides a basis for analysing the text against current trends in society, especially those that have to do with morality and the identity question.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

A lot has been written on and about Wole Soyinka and his works (Gibbs 1980; Katrak 1986; Maduakor 1991; Quayson 2001; Jeyifo 2004). The library on his works is so vast that any attempt at writing on him now could readily be adjudged as a repetition of already existing literature, having nothing new to add. It would seem like all that can be said about his works has been said already. But a closer review of literature on the subject of Soyinka and his art would reveal misconceptions, misinterpretations, misrepresentations and a whole intricate interplay of contexts, texts and meanings that keep shifting. These complex interfusions create more questions than answers. "Questions about Wole Soyinka will persist even after volumes have been written about the man, his life, his times, his works, and so on" (Adeniran 1994:i). But the major crisis seems to have been captured by Quayson (2001:202) when he observes that:

> Several critics have sought to uncover the cultural meanings of Soyinka's plays. His work has often been explored in terms of mythological motifs and cultural rituals evident in the plays. This emphasis has been necessary because of the need to engage with the culture-specific elements of his writings, but it has also had the effect of limiting the scope of critical questions asked of his work. Added to this aspect is the tendency to set the reading of his plays against his critical pronouncements on the nature of tragedy.

This observation is apt and helps this study to avoid, at least at the point of intent, the trappings of limiting the meaning of *Death and the King's Horseman* in definite terms. This chapter interrogates and cross examines notions, postulations and interpretations on the pretextual proclivities and textual and contextual vicissitudes in the reading of *Death and the King's Horseman*.

2.1 Towards an African Dramaturgy; the Soyinka Archetype

In his own attempt to synergise a context and theory for the existence and nature of African drama, Soyinka provides a thesis in *Myth, Literature and the African World*. Elaborating on the phenomena of the nature and function of African drama, as against European speculation of the art, Soyinka (1990:38) admits that:

> the difference we are seeking to define between European and African drama as one of man's formal representation of experience is not simply a difference of style or form, nor is it confined to drama alone. It is representative of the essential differences between two worldviews, a difference between one culture whose very artifacts are evidence of a cohesive understanding of irreducible truths and another, whose creative impulses are directed by period dialectics. So, to begin with, we must jettison that fashionable distinction which tends to encapsulate Western drama as a form of esoteric enterprise spied upon by fee-paying strangers, as contrasted with a communal evolution of the dramatic mode of expression, this latter being the African. Of far greater importance is the fact that Western dramatic criticism habitually reflects the abandonment of a belief in culture as defined within man's knowledge of fundamental, unchanging relationships between himself and society and within the larger context of the observable universe.

This admission brings to play an essential characteristic of drama as being a portrayal of worldviews and culture; it is these inherently human activities that define man and his theatre.

In his treatise on the origin of Yoruba tragedy, "*The Fourth Stage*", Soyinka (1990:142-143) lavishly predicates the emergence of drama on the myth and ritual of Ogun, one of the several 'gods' in the Yoruba pantheon. He states:

> Yoruba tragedy plunges straight into the 'chthonic realm', the seething cauldron of the dark world will and psyche, the transitional yet inchoate matrix of death and becoming. Into this universal womb once plunged and emerged Ogun, the first actor, disintegrating within the abyss. His spiritual re-assemblage does not require a 'copying of actuality' in the ritual re-enactment of his devotees, any more than Obatala does in plastic representation, in the art of Obatala.... From this alone steps forward the eternal actor of the tragic rites, first as the unresisting mouthpiece of the god, uttering visions symbolic of

> the transitional gulf, interpreting the dread power within whose essence he is immersed as agent of the choric will. Only later, in the evenness of release from the tragic climax, does the serene self-awareness of Obatala reassert its creative control.

From the mythical prowess and ritual of Ogun, Soyinka crafted what has come to be regarded as Yoruba tragedy or tragic drama which is modelled after the experiences of the god's exploits.

> This structure, which is envisaged in Ogun myths, becomes a model for tragic drama. Ogun's leading the gods to earth resulted in his suffering and disintegration through the "chthonic realm." His disintegration was followed by his rejuvenation during which he reassembled himself through an act of will (Katrak 1986:32).

The god, Ogun wields a lot of fascination to the Yoruba, but more especially to Soyinka who sees the deity as both the source of dramatic composition and performance and as a worthy godhead. Gibbs (1986:18-19), notes that:

> Over the years, Soyinka has returned again and again to the figure of Yoruba cosmology, the patron deity of hunters and soldiers, of all who work with metal, a just god, an inventive pioneering spirit, an artist and creator who is capable of ferocious acts and destructive violence. Many stories are told about him, and Soyinka, who responds deeply to myths, has found some of them particularly meaningful. One which he has studied in search of an insight into the Yoruba attitude to creativity and innovation tells how Ogun visited earth before the other gods and discovered the secret of smelting iron. When the gods descended as a group at Ile-Ife, they found themselves separated from mankind by a 'chtonic realm' or 'primordial marsh', to use terms employed by Soyinka. Bold Ogun, armed with an iron axe, launched himself into 'the abyss' on a mission of reconciliation and made a 'road' in order to unite gods with human beings.

This summarily asserts that:

> The first drama was a ritual enactment. This was a drama of primordial deities who are represented by the passage-rites of hero gods, projections of man's conflict with forces that challenge his efforts to harmonise with his environment (Maduakor 1991:275).

Drama emanated from ritual. The importance of this for Soyinka is enormous:

> For Soyinka ritual is a very compelling medium through which a writer can elicit a strong response from his audience. This is because both ritual and theatre share the dynamic attribute of being essentially communal performances. As a social intercourse ritual is inseparable from theatre. Ritual has a revolutionary potential which can be integrated to

> the revolutionary essence of theatre. So, ritual is not just a vehicle of communication, but it is what is communicated (Obafemi 1996:123).

Katrak (1986:32) also implies that:

> Ritual itself is the bridge between myth and tragedy. Ogun's rituals, in particular, provide for Soyinka a transition from a mythic to a tragic universe. The dramatist finds material for tragedy specifically in those myths of Ogun which demonstrate his creative/destructive nature. The protagonist modelled on Ogun combines these two tendencies which are equally necessary according to the Yoruba moral order.

It is from the viewpoint of ritual that a thorough understanding of Soyinka's creative work begins to manifest itself. Soyinka revisits a historical event, which threatened the balance of the Yoruba cosmic world and the all important task embarked by Ogun in constructing a bridge over the gulf that once separated men and gods, to create a dramatic piece which arguably is his most important play till date. Obafemi (1996:127) considers *Death and the King's Horseman* as "the most potent dramatic statement Soyinka has made on transition- the rite of passage". Katrak (1986:39) submits that:

> The intermingling of the mythic and historic is something after Soyinka's own heart as envisaged in his complex rendering and reinterpretation of Ogun's mythic/historical role for a tragic/dramatic construct.

The event was premised on the Yoruba custom which stipulates that following the death of the Alaafin, the chief of his stables is expected to commit ritual suicide in order to accompany him to the ancestral world where the inhabitants of that realm await to welcome the Alaafin into their fold. This way, the cycle of Yoruba life is not distorted. In 1946 the chief of the king's stables failed to play his role with the passing of the king, and by implication puts the Yoruba at the brink of extinction, so to speak. Adeniran (1994:68-69) reports the historical event thus:

> History confirms that the real event occurred during the reign of Ladigbolu I, after being on the throne for some 33 years. His horseman, Elesin-Oba (Jinadu) had all along been given some preferential treatment because of the belief that such favours were necessary

> as a pay-off for the personal sacrifice to be made by the horseman who would be expected to follow the king on his death through suicide.
>
> On the death of King Ladigbolu the horse-man made some visit here and there, dressed in white and began dancing through the streets towards the house of Bashorun Ladokun. All those who saw the event knew that he was preparing to commit suicide. Rather than be allowed to complete the process of dancing to the Bashorun's house and eventually poisoning himself, the British Colonial Officer at Oyo ordered his apprehension and he was detained. As soon as the towns people got to know about the arrest, the horseman's youngest son (Murana) killed himself because he could not stand the stigma of being the son of a coward, a betrayer of tradition and botcher. This is the story that sourced **Death and the King's Horseman**.

This historical incident is also reported in Gibbs (1986). The event had 'pretexted' a play by Duro Ladipo titled *Oba Waja (The king is dead).* Ladipo's play, cited in Beier (1964:74) attempted to chronicle a piece of history as he notified that his play is "based on a true incident that happened in Oyo in 1946". The play, written in five acts, narrates the story of Olori Elesin who is expected to commit suicide following the death of the king. While in the market, on his way to commit suicide, Olori Elesin is arrested by the colonial District Officer, John who but for the prompting of his wife, Jane would have allowed tradition to take its course, stopped him from committing suicide. In far away Ghana, Olori Elesin's son, Dawudu is having a nice time in a 'Highlife Bar' when he reads from a newspaper that the king of Oyo is dead. He immediately sets to return to Nigeria to bury his father. When asked if the king who died is his father, he responds "No! But my father too, must die today. He is the commander of the king's horse, who must follow the king to his grave" (Beire 1964:83). Dawudu returns home and meets his father, who happily blames the 'whiteman' for this condition, being alive. He is so shaken that he blurts, "Why are you alive, is the Alafin not dead?" (85). Dawudu is so ashamed that he stabs himself and dies. Elesin finally realises the shame that has come upon him and he also kills himself.

Ladipo's concern with this pretext was its historical relevance. His text does not dwell on the mytho-ritualistic implications of the incident. If anything, the play retains the context of the historical event just as any one witnessing it would have recounted. But this is not so with Soyinka. Soyinka apprehends the pretext, not only from its historical perspective, but also, perhaps more importantly, from its mythopoeic textuality.

Aristotle (1971), the first to theorise on drama, had favoured myth over the actuality of history as material for dramatic composition. But Soyinka does not ignore the fertility of history in nurturing myth and ritual. In fact, while situating his text within the trajectory of its historical context, Soyinka also texturises the mythic and religious innuendoes of his pretext, of history. Unlike Ladipo who employed the new historicist view of history as a 'co-text'; history as of equal value as the creative text it inspires (Barry 2002:172), Soyinka regards history only as a context for other texts to spring from. This therefore provides a basis for his synthesis of history with myth and ritual.

While Ladipo was adapting 'a true historical incident', Soyinka (2012:i-ii) says of his version:

> The play is based on events which took place in Oyo, ancient Yoruba city of Nigeria, in 1946.... The confrontation in the play is largely metaphysical, contained in the human vehicle which is Elesin and the universe of the Yoruba mind- the world of the living, the dead and the unborn, and the numinous passage which links all: transition. *Death and the King's Horseman* can be fully realised only through an evocation of music from the abyss of transition.

He transposes the readily visible history unto the very nerve of Yoruba belief system. "For the Yoruba, the balance of human life, the very sense of human existence, consists in the dynamic correlation of individual responsibility and the pressure of external events and forces" (Gibbs

1980:52). It is on this account that Soyinka tells the story of Elesin Oba who, with the passing of the Alafin, is expected to bridge the abyss of transition by committing suicide to accompany the spirit of the dead king thus ensuring the 'continuation of the species'. The consequence of his inability to commit suicide portends grave danger to the society, both seen and unseen. Elesin is arrested in the market square on the order of the District Officer, Simon Pilkings, to avoid the 'barbarism' of ritual suicide. The arrest is made possible because Elesin lingers to frolick with the market women and takes a new bride. His son, Olunde who is on a scholarship in England returns to bury his father but meets him in chains and behind bars. His father being alive is an ominous sacrilege. He commits suicide to cover his, and his family's, shame. His father learning of this also commits suicide, except that the suicide is both late and out of context. Society is placed on a precarious precipice with hope clinging on the slippery circumstance of the unborn.

Although spiralling from a historical event, Soyinka has transformed the story to suit his mythopoeic interests. He historicises the 1946 event into a dramatic inchoate mass of ritual and myth. "Soyinka's 'mythopoeic' attitude to history, his constant penchant for transforming experience into metaphysical, trans-historical, mythic dimensions" (Jeyifo 1985:27) provides for him the nexus for his dramaturgy. Obafemi (1996:124) has noted that:

> Two principal elements in Yoruba metaphysics form the background to Soyinka's social vision. These elements are the belief in the continuity of existence through a link between the past, the present and the future, and the mutual struggle of man and the divinities to understand and thus remove the barrier between each other.

George (1999:67) also aptly states thus:

> Returning to his native Yoruba cosmology and the rituals that derive from it, Soyinka elicits from ritual a drama of archetypes, developing in the process a vision of history, society, and tragic drama. A range of critical work has shown this vision to be based on a socio-cultural passion, even as the playwright's oeuvre constitutes an attempt to work

> through the passion by means of art. This understanding of Soyinka gives a sociological accent to his mythopoeic vision and aesthetic; that is, his refashioning of the Yoruba worldview emerges as, on the one hand, a theory of historical being and the often brutal adventure of the social and, on the other, of art as witness to both.

It is in the context of this background that Soyinka considerably engages in "dramaturgical departures from his historical material" (Jeyifo 1985:27) to project, not only the threnodic substance of the subject of his drama but, the visceral essence of myth and ritual (culture) to drama and tragedy. History allows the playwright to operate within its context, but should not confine him. The dramatist is not a historian in terms of chronicling past events in accurate systemic narratives. He only employs history to fashion his drama because, as Yerima (2009:46) puts it:

> History allows drama to keep its eye on life through its ability to use history as a didactical material in which the audience learn from the mistakes of history. And secondly, history allows man to continue to learn from life as an idea of the pedagogics.... the greatest quality of history is its ability to portray and capture the true nature of human life from one culture to another, and from one generation to another.

Unlike the anthropologists and historians, a dramatist's interest with history is such that allows him to shift its pristine context to fit newer needs. After all, his trade is not to document past events as they happenened but to delight and educate:

> It is, therefore, betraying very narrow ideas of tragic art, or rather poetry in general, to drag the tragic poet before the tribunal of history, and to require restriction from a man who by his very title is only bound to move and charm you (Dukore 1997:456).

It would therefore appear confusing, if not misleading, that Soyinka who has hinted that drama is essentially a representation of cultures, would then write a play as culturally sensitive as *Death and the King's Horseman* and submit in the authorial note that:

> The bane of themes of this genre is that they are no sooner employed creatively than they acquire the facile tag of 'clash of cultures', a prejudicial label which, quite apart from its frequent misapplication, presupposes a potential equality *in every given*

> *situation* of the alien culture and the indigenous, on the actual soil of the latter…. The colonial factor is an incident, a catalytic incident merely" (Soyinka 2012:i-ii).

Could this be a deliberate act to hide his true intentions or merely a crisis that either determines or undermines the true function of an African writer? Gibbs (1986:117) had documented, following Ulli Beier's suggestion around the pretext that inspired the play, that Soyinka had "recognized that the story commented on the qualities required of leaders and on the way the British tended to regard other peoples and other cultures". For Gibbs (1986:124), the authorial note simply "reflected the feeling that the arrogant and myopic vision of Pilkings was not a summation of British or European culture but a distortion of it". Soyinka (1993:38) admits:

> If I do not exercise great caution, I know that I may end up with no persuasive defense against some kind of declaration by a nettled European critic or artist that, "in the early seventies, a certain notorious African playwright underwent a crisis of racism". Certainly, I am aware that my pronouncements on Euramerican society and culture have become more abrasive, less compromising, while recourse to the contrast provided by mine has tended, even by the very fact of comparison, to magnify its virtues. I hope I may yet withdraw from the brink- close to which I of course deny ever being. Culture is, however, a rather assertive environment in which one exists, willy-nilly, at all times and in all places. If there were any escape from it, it could be ignored.

But Jain (1986:252) had already been (mis)led into accepting that culture, or the clash of it, is hardly a matter in *Death and the King's Horseman*. He says:

> What kind of a play is Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*? The obvious answers- that it is a play about the colonial situation, or about cultural clash- are not only discounted by the author, but do not in any way offer an understanding of the play…. The dominant strategy of the play is irony, and the reversal at the end happens to be a tragic reversal.

His position is such that locks the text with the key of the playwright. The obvious, for him, are not the matter of the text. Yet, he says Soyinka strategises with irony of tragic reversals. Abrams (1999:135) is of the view that irony is the use of words in a context different or opposite to their literal meaning. On this note, when Soyinka said it is not about cultural clash, it could indeed be

that he is saying that it is about cultural clash. Barnaby (2014:125) had referred to Soyinka's claim of the colonial factor, and the clash of cultures, as of no substance to the drama, as an "assertion (that) appears to be at odds with the central movement of the play, almost to the point of missing a truth that simply cannot be missed". The tragic reversal here would be that Jain (1986) has been caught in a web of contradiction, ironically.

The apparent contradiction here also provoked a lot of assessments and counter assessments of what could be regarded as Soyinka's dramatic archetype. Gibbs (1986:86-87) states that:

> Despite similarities with that of others, his (Soyinka's) theatre is distinctive both in its conventions and its intentions. Its distinctiveness is partly to be found in the specifically Yoruba attitudes and conventions which it employs and for this reason it may be described as 'African'.

Moore (1978:157), however, is of the opinion that Soyinka's theatre is "distilled from alembics which can be found far outside Yorubaland; what is lamented is a heartwound struck at more than one African culture". Although the pretextual occupation of Soyinka's theatre may emanate from his roots, the Yoruba, his text resonates beyond the context of its origins and culture is central to it.

It is further contradistinctive to note that the "critical troika'- Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike- indict Soyinka for what they describe as a betrayal of his Yoruba inheritance and for borrowing unjudiciously from 'inept European impulses and conventions'" (Obafemi 1996:122). They reported that Soyinka "is much concerned with man's inhumanity to man, but shows practically no interest in Europe's historical and systematic inhumanity to Africans. When such issues interest him, he exhibits a deep commitment to the imperialist European view of Africa

(Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike 1980:237). They argue that if Soyinka was making a case for an authentic African theatre, it should have no bearings whatsoever with its European 'opposite'. Their submission would suggest that African theatre be insulated in a manner that an exposure to European influences would not truncate its true character and identity. Chinweizu et al (1980:237) submit that:

> we must point out the absolute irrelevance of European opinion to a liberated African consciousness… and we would like to pray to all our ancestors to help him (Soyinka) get rid of his neo-Tarzanist inferiority complexes, his craving for European acclaim, and his terror of European blame.

Jeyifo (1985:26) had also argued that:

> the African theory of tragic art which demands, as a matter of ideological necessity and authentic aesthetic practice, an irreducible 'Africanness'… cannot preclude a resumption… of the Western inquiry.

But Jeyifo (2002:x) later attempts to provide a balance when he points out that:

> African drama and theatre as it has evolved in the last hundred and fifty years or so is a function both of African self-encounter and of the continent's encounter with the outside world.

Although African theatre is a dis(-)play of the African worldview and culture, it also reflects the interplay of realities especially as they affect such a worldview and culture, either from within or from without:

> The point, however, is that Soyinka does not close his eyes to the artistic experiences of the rest of the world around him in order to attain the fossilized African aesthetic that the troika recommend (Obafemi 1996:122).

In any case:

> The essential direction of modern African writing, of the work of the truly significant writers, is towards the definition, in and through literature, of a distinctive mode of thought and feeling, towards an imaginative apprehension and embodiment of an African spirit. And the main motive power in this movement, proceeds from the endeavour of the

> African writers to work out a new spiritual coherence out of the historical disconnection between their African heritage and their modern experience (Irele 1980:45).

It is on this plane that Soyinka projects both an African expression which commands universality while maintaining touch with his Yoruba roots. In fact, Irele (1980:45-46) gives more credence to this when he admits:

> In no other area of Africa is the current along which this elaboration in literature of a continuous stream of the collective consciousness from the traditional to the modern so clearly evident, and so well marked out, as in Yorubaland. For while it is true to say that, in other parts of Africa, the writer has been aware of the compelling reality and importance of the essential structure of traditional patterns of life for his artistic expression, and has sought either a thematic or formal integration of his work to the specific mode of literary expression which has been associated with these traditional patterns of life, it is only among Yoruba writers that, to my knowledge, the various levels of this transition from the traditional to the modern can be illustrated to bring out its full implications.

The peculiarity of the Yoruba in this regard may not necessarily be absolute. Arguing over this could simply be seen as a dilettant speculation. But what is, however of greater import is the conscious effort to provide a radical divide in artistic expression and Soyinka seems to dispense this. Iji (2014:121) captures it thus, "Soyinka weaves his tales from lodestones of metaphysics, frames of references, philosophical interfaces, religious syncretism, vis-à-vis interlaces of sociopolitical sensibilities, closely structured, plotwise, to deepen his themes, sub-themes for instance".

Jeyifo (2004:44) states:

> Certainly, the sense of a radical divide in the Nigerian author's critical thought collapses in the face of a careful reading of the totality of Soyinka's critical prose. In place of a decisive rupture, what is revealed by such a careful interpretive act is a body of postcolonial critical discourse which neither avoids nor reifies the dichotomies of local and metropolitan, African and Western, old and new precisely because it is remarkably attentive to the changes acting on these dichotomous categories and reconfiguring them in the course a tumultuous historical period.

Soyinka's drama hence is of necessity a cultural phenomenon but should not be gauged from the perspective of difference from Western drama in postcolonial context, especially in form. Soyinka (1990:37) himself had admitted that:

> The serious divergences between a traditional African approach to drama and the European will not be found in lines of opposition between creative individualism and communal creativity, nor in the level of noise from the auditorium…at any given performance. They would be found more accurately in what is a recognizable Western cast of mind, a compartmentalizing habit of thought which periodically selects aspects of human emotion, phenomenal observations, metaphysical intuitions and even scientific deductions and turns them into separatist myths (or 'truths') sustained by a proliferating superstructure of presentation idioms, analogies and analytical modes.

The context of his drama derives its textuality from the primacy of worldviews, especially the African worldview or Yoruba worldview. From his submission drama could be defined as an artistic composition of worldviews depicting tensions, apprehensions and their implications within such a cosmos of thought. It is on this platform that Soyinka presents his theatre. For him theatre "is one arena, one of the earliest that we know of, in which man has attempted to come to terms with the spatial phenomenon of his being" (Soyinka 1990:40). The Yoruba being is characterized by his perception of his worldview, the living, the dead and the unborn, and the necessary balance that sustains his ecosystem and secures his future.

It becomes quintessentially significant when this worldview serves both as pretext, text and context of Soyinka's concern in *Death and the King's Horseman*. The sacred, all important balance of the community is in limbo following the death of the Alaafin (king). This precarious stasis is entirely dependent on the king's horseman for harmony to be restored. The continuity of life depends on his death, his ritual suicide. His essence lay squarely on his ability to carry this out and that he will die to save the community is not the tragedy. The tragedy is if he fails to

bridge the gulf of existence with his death, or life. Death is not the tragedy, it is the inability to die at the right time that becomes the stimulator of pity and fear.

According to Gbilekaa (2013:125), "To Soyinka, death is not a terminal point", it is in fact the restoration of life, of dignity and buoyancy. More aptly put, "for the Yoruba, death is not the annihilation of being. It is simply a rite of passage, a transition from human to divine essence" (Ibitokun 1995:21). Moore (1978:47) had noted that:

> All Soyinka's tragic plots centre upon a death, and attempt through their action to evaluate that death for those who survive. Thus Soyinka restores to the word 'tragic' its proper weight of meaning- for the tragic death is not that which is casual, incidental or out of season, but that which is invested with significance for the community who witness it".

The hero of Soyinka's tragic drama therefore, is one who embraces the spirit of life and confronts death when he is needed to. Hegel (1977:18-19) had stated that:

> The life of the spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself.

This statement reveals that catastrophe (tragedy) to a tragic hero is dependent on his purpose and the manner in which he responds to it. In the same manner death is not tragic if the essence of the hero lies in dying. If death activates the honor of the hero, then the hero who embraces it would not be considered to have perished but is celebrated to have 'come alive' in death. Death becomes his terminal purpose, his *passage* to honor and glory. This Hegelian assertion highlights how death and dying in the context that serves community culminates into the ultimate triumph of tragedy.

2.2 Praxis and Interpretation on *Death and the King's Horseman*

Iji (2014:121) postulates that:

> Wole Soyinka's dramas and performance aesthetics, thereof, are so cerebral, that interpretatively, the levels of meanings, for perceptive readers and directors, are rather inexhaustible and elastic; sometimes repudiating clear-cut analysis like the postmodernist embodiment. An impatient reader and lazy student or scholar can hardly get the best out of Soyinkaesque creative endeavours. This is among the reasons why too many careless readers can hardly decode Soyinka's lodestones of ideas, and find him unnecessarily esoteric, impenetrably turgid and confounding.

But no matter how 'unattractive' a dramatic text might seem, either due to laziness or carelessness, a thorough (deconstructive) reading of the text would always reveal and communicate meaning.

The very praxis that defines Soyinka's tragedy is the severance of self from essence. Elesin's essence, and honour, in life is his death. And as Elesin, he is expected to die with the passing of the king. That is what defines him as an individual, as a self in the Yoruba cosmic makeup. Elesin's inability to die as when required, hence, is the tragic node which demonstrates this perception. It would therefore be a misapprehension when Ibitokun (1995:25) states thus:

> Tragedy strikes, the Yoruba 'cosmic totality' sways when the soul refuses to go on in its ultimate journey. This is the weird occurrence which, but for the quick intervention through ritual suicide of Olunde in Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*, Elesin would have brought to bear on his community.

It is the contention of this research that Olunde's death has no place in the scheme of things, especially those concerning the circumstance of the 'cosmic totality'. In the play, it is made clear that what makes Olunde special within the structure of the Yoruba worldview is only the fact that he is Elesin's son and heir. In a conversation, it is revealed:

JANE: This boy, he was his eldest son wasn't he?

PILKINGS: I'm not sure. Who could tell with that old ram?

JANE: Do you know, Joseph?

JOSEPH: Oh yes madam. He was the eldest son. That's why Elesin cursed master good and proper. The eldest son is not supposed to travel away from the land.

….

JANE: If he was his eldest, it means that he would be the Elesin to the next king. It's a family thing isn't it Joseph?

JOSEPH: Yes madam. And if this Elesin had died before the king, his eldest son must take his place (Soyinka 2012:28-9)

This exchange reveals that the only moment Olunde could acquire his essence is only if his father, the Elesin dies before him. It is the death of the father that makes the son significant. Fortunately Olunde knows this. What with his dispassionate expression when he returns to bury his father.

OLUNDE: I was sent a cable.

JANE: A cable? Who did? Simon? The business of your father didn't begin till tonight.

OLUNDE: A relation sent it weeks ago, and it said nothing about my father. All it said was, Our King is dead. But I knew I had to return home at once so as to bury my father. I understood that.

JANE: Well, thank God you don't have to go through that agony. Simon is going to stop it.

OLUNDE: That's why I want to see him. He's wasting his time. And since he has been so helpful to me I don't want him to incur the enmity of our people. Especially over nothing. (Soyinka 2012:52).

The paradox here is that the death is actually everything, and nothing. Everything, because society, indeed life depends on his death; nothing because it is expected, therefore it is simply an ordinary thing for him to die. Olunde's death in his place is actually what can be seen as less

than nothing. That is why it would be misleading to attach any cosmic importance to his suicide. It is part of the misapprehension when Gibbs (1986:125) also declares that:

> Olunde has triumphed in death, through embracing death he has salvaged some honour for his family and his death is a cause for rejoicing. His achievement is all the greater because he died despite the opportunity of escape provided by Pilkings: he was also…making a voluntary sacrifice.

If anything, Olunde's death merely severed him from his essence. He is not yet Elesin. Although the suicide requires that it be voluntarily given out of a deep sense of responsibility to community, lineage and self, his willingness alone would not replace the spititual essence of one who is Elesin. This is why Iyaloja after spreading the dead Olunde before his father, utters:

> There lies the honour of your household and of our race. Because he could not bear to let honour fly out of doors, he stopped it with his life. The son has proven the father Elesin, and there is nothing left in your mouth to gnash but infant gums (Soyinka 2012:75).

The son's act is important for Iyaloja only because he did not hesitate to commit suicide when his father still lingers among the living, not because the son could embody in death, the importance of Elesin's ritual suicide:

> The raison d' etre of Yoruba tragedy is the courage and will to dare the abyss of self-disintegration. This is what is expected of the King's Horseman. In the event of this sacrifice, the willing hero injects his community with a renewed vigour, plenitude, harmony, and the continuity of their race. The sacrifice is to ensure that the world that the protagonist knew is smothered on empty boulders. It is the duty of every member of the community to preserve this world, to leave it as he found it by comporting himself without violating the pattern of life as left by his forbears (Gbilekaa 2013:126-127).

Unfortunately, Elesin is not the 'willing hero'. As a result the three worlds are thrown in disarray; the harmony of the cosmos depended on his passing (death). Responding to Pilkings' justification of Elesin's arrest and detention, Iyaloja exclaims:

> This is the man whose weakened understanding holds us in bondage to you. But ask him if you wish. He knows the meaning of a king's passage; he was not born yesterday. He

> knows the peril to the race when our dead father, who goes as intermediary, waits and waits and knows he is betrayed. He knows when the narrow gate was opened and he knows it will not stay for laggards who drag their feet in dung and vomit, whose lips are reeking of the left-overs of lesser men. He knows he has condemned our king to wander in the void of evil with beings who are enemies of life (Soyinka 2012:71).

Just as Olunde's essence depended on his father dying first, Elesin's pride is in the knowledge of his son being alive. This is why he fought Pilkings when the latter sent his son to England for studies. He is aware that his deed must be honorable if he is to represent his priviledged position and life. He says:

> Life has an end. A life that will outlive
> Fame and friendship begs another name.
> What elder takes his tongue to his plate,
> Licks it clean of every crumb? He will encounter
> Silence when he calls on children to fulfil
> The smallest errand! Life is honour.
> It ends when honour ends (Soyinka 2012:15).

But for the metaphorical cheekiness laden within his '*Not I*' lyrical expunctions, which shall be analysed later, the above words would have presented Elesin as a determined, purposeful chief propelled by an unrelenting, 'Ogunian' will to voluntarily enter into his death. That would have been the honourable heritage he would leave for his son to emulate. It is, tragically, only at the discovery of his son's death that Elesin finally commits suicide, when there is no one for him to call after having 'eaten the leftovers clean'. The all important death, however becomes a mere 'catalytic incident'. But the incident is not voluntary, neither is it in the context that would have bridged the widening chasm of the three worlds. It had shifted from a purposeful ethereal ritual undertaking, drained of its substance, to a secular, worldly, abominable act of no communal significance. "Elesin Oba's death in *Death and (sic) King's Horseman* is belated within the

context of the play as it has no ritual significance. His death therefore is a mere face saving device" (Gbilekaa 2013:125). The play would not have been a tragedy, at atleast in the Yoruba tragic context, if Olunde's death had sufficed in removing the Yoruba world from the brink of extinction.

Father and son die to preserve honor, albeit belatedly. The son would not want to be attached to the dishonor his father's refusal to die would bring upon their estate, their lineage, so he commits suicide. The father seeing that his heir has died in order to salvage the already lost honor swiftly kills himself, an act which becomes a testament only to the lost honor. Yet, each must have felt it was the 'honorable' thing to do; die when honor is lost. This can be termed as 'face saving' indeed.

Interpreting Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* requires an indepth understanding of the cultural matrix which harbors meanings. This cultural matrix is largely situated in pretext and text; a background (prologue) to the situations and circumstances of the drama. Roles and relationships are examined within the sociocultural and traditional sphere of the world of the play, both fictional and real, in order to apprehend the consequent implications of plot and meaning (messages). Balewa (1983:105) indicates that:

> Soyinka consciously evolves a deeper and fundamental relationship to his traditional culture…. Soyinka's political, and spiritual evaluation of his contemporary reality is manifest through his reformulation of these cultural elements and indices. Therefore, any fundamental examination of these plays must begin with the understanding of the foundations of his mythopoeic thought.

This is precisely why apprehending the play from the viewpoint of clash of cultures becomes imperative. Not necessarily because Soyinka had mentioned it, but, more importantly, because the text yields disclosures through the functionality of culture in the dramatic presentation.

2.3 Historicity, Creativity and the Cultural *leit motif* in *Death and the King's Horseman*

It would be noted that in the historical context of the text that informs this play, and in Ladipo's *Oba Waja,* Olunde was historically situated in Ghana at the time of the death of the King. But for purposes which unveil Soyinka's shroud of 'bane of themes… of clash of cultures', *Death and the King's Horseman* was "set back two or three years to while the war was still on, for minor reasons of dramaturgy" (Soyinka 2012:i) with Olunde studying in England, one of the major allied forces in the war. Ghana being a west African nation would not represent Western culture as England would.

Moore (1978:159) had thought that:

> what really weakens the conviction of the play is one of the changes made by Soyinka to the original historical episode on which it is based (the other changes are fair dramatic licence). The son who died in place of his father in 1946 was a trader working in Ghana, not an English-educated student, blue-eyed boy of Pilkings, already on his way to stardom in a new Nigeria. The assumption of the role of sacrifice to his father's lost honour, perfectly consistent in his historical prototype, is so out-of-character with the man Soyinka has made of him that it needs much more careful preparation than it gets in the text.

But this is not necessarily a 'weakness', on the contrary it has the potential of being the very strength of Soyinka's dramatic alteration. These 'minor reasons' could actually be the major text of the play. The war, for instance provides Soyinka with a factual historical event which permits him, at least logically, to artistically play up two different worldviews, the African (Yoruba) worldview and the European worldview. Inadvertently, these cultures clash and the fluency with which Olunde, who according to Jeyifo (1985:28) "is pressed into dramatic service by the playwright as the mouthpiece for anathemas against the arrogance and the chauvinism of European civilization", addresses the vicissitudinous idiosyncracy of European perceptions of

other cultures is, at best, endemic. There is also the matter of Olunde's perception of the Yoruba cosmology and norms; his apprehension of African tradition after his brief sojourn in England.

In his conversation with Jane Pilkings, Olunde equates the impending ritual suicide of his father to the bravery of the white captain who blew himself up in a ship in order to save more lives. Although Jane feels that "Life should never be thrown deliberately away" (Soyinka 2012:51), Olunde reminds her of how it is important for one to die in the stead of the majority. It is, in fact the crux of the matter for the African mind, that life be so deliberately thrown away, for the common good of community, "it is an affirmative commentary on life" (Soyinka 2012:51); selfless sacrifice. Jane's European mind could not construe the importance and depth of the African worldview and Olunde is not surprised. "You forget that I have now spent four years among your people. I discovered that you have no respect for what you do not understand" (Soyinka 2012:50). Olunde who only has contempt for the whiteman, at least in his debates on the 'difference' of views their worlds proffer, sums up Soyinka's position on the issues of clash of cultures in the text, and the advantage the war setting provides, thus:

> OLUNDE: …. By all logical and natural laws this war should end with all the white races wiping out one another, wiping out their so-called civilization for all time and reverting to a state of primitivism the like of which has so far only existed in your imagination when you thought of us. I thought all that at the beginning. Then I slowly realised that your greatest art is the art of survival. But at least have the humility to let others survive in their own way.
>
> JANE: Through ritual suicide?
>
> OLUNDE: Is that worse than mass suicide? Mrs Pilkings, what do you call what those young men are sent to do by their generals in this war? Of course you have also mastered the art of calling things by names which don't remotely describe them.
>
> JANE: You talk! You people with your long-winded, roundabout way of making conversation.

> OLUNDE: Mrs Pilkings, whatever we do, we never suggest that a thing is the opposite of what it really is….
>
> ….
>
> JANE (after a moment's pause): Perhaps I can understand you now. The time we picked for you was not really one for seeing us at our best.
>
> OLUNDE: Don't think it was just the war. Before that even started I had plenty of time to study your people. I saw nothing, finally, that gave you the right to pass judgement on other peoples and their ways. Nothing at all (Soyinka 2012:53-4).

This outpour of vituperations is so in tandem with European cultural chauvinism than should be simply waved away as a dramatic inadvertence. Soyinka attacks European culture with a bite that could be regarded as racist. His interest in mythopoeic material is not only for the celebration of the Yoruba or Ogun, but it becomes the dialectic he employs to subtextualise other 'burning' issues, and cultural preponderance seems clearly at the heart of it. Thus, the European intervention in the ritual of Elesin and his people is a historical event with cultural implications:

> In Soyinka's dramatization of this event, the tragic and unanticipated reversals which result from this intervention are presented in the form of ritual festivity of great poetic elegance and performative sublimity which, nonetheless, undermine both the moral authority of the colonizers and the spiritual security of the colonized (Jeyifo 121).

This research is of the view that the cultural subtext of the play is worthy of further study because Soyinka did not use an African myth in contrast to the Greek or European, as motif, only for threnody. And a culturalist interrogation of *Death and the King's Horseman* is in no way a reductionist interpretation. Illah (2001:112) posits that:

> At its most banal and superficial level, this type of criticism isolates aspects of the play, giving them a singular treatment that does not elicit the playwright's dramaturgical intentions. Moreover, this isolation of aspects of culture does not attempt to bring about a serious synthesis but sharpens a fake dichotomy between 'new' ways and 'traditional' methods.

This research, however, does not propose such a 'treatment' neither does it also place the intention of the playwright above the voice of the text. It however attempts to situate the pretext

to the play upon the context of cultural pragmatics embedded therein. The wider theme and subject matter of *Death and the King's Horseman* is cultural. Hence, it is from that paradigm that the central conflict would best be appreciated. Either from the perspective of Elesin's responsibility to his community, or of Pilkings' responsibility to 'His Majesty's' government and civilisation, or even to Olunde's disoriented intervention in the foray for honour and essence, culture remains central in Soyinka's emplotment. But it goes beyond the mere "clash of cultures into discovering the cultural politics that informs the play. It is fundamental to mention that the play continues in the tradition of cultural nationalism, which recognized that cultural liberation is an essential condition for political liberation" (wa Thiongo 1972:11). Soyinka (1976:x) declares:

> We black Africans have been blindly invited to submit ourselves to a second epoch of colonization - this time by a universal – humanoid abstraction defined and conducted by individuals whose theories and prescriptions are derived from the apprehension of their world and their history, their social neuroses and their value systems. It is time, clearly, to respond to his new threat.

This declaration is interpreted in this research as a valuable pointer to 'clash of cultures' as an inevitable theme in *Death and the King's Horseman*. The play is therefore a 'response' to the threat the colonial presence depicts.

But of greater concern is the evisceration of the African tradition in the face of European interaction, or domination. It should not be mistaken for the Negritudinal concerns of French writers, especially in post colonial/independence writing which called for the celebration of black roots. That would appear to be more reductionist than the "wider African failure to stick to indigenous values, even when not actually forced to abandon them" (Moore 1978:159). Although this could be listed as Eurocentric, especially as Africans never really invited colonialism on themselves and their cultures, it however lays claim on Aficans' desire to be

perceived as 'modern'. This is largely seen in contemporary society's attachment to 'modernity' and foreign religion, which is hardly 'forced' nowadays. A classic example of the effect of this 'cultural tragedy' follows the recent death of the Ooni of Ife, Oba Okunade Sijuwade.

Although a lot of speculations trail the exact date of his death, especially because tradition dictates that only the Ife traditional council could declare a king dead, it was reported that the Oba died on July 20th, 2015 in faraway London at the age of 85 (saharareporters.com/2015/07/28). The Oba, as modernity would have it, was flown to London for better medical care. To seek foreign medical care would suggest that the Oba did not want to die. When modern medicine failed to keep him alive, his body was flown back to Ife, for the traditional burial rites and the Abobaku (literally translated to mean, the one who dies with the king) disappears. The Abobaku is expected to be buried alive with the king. He alledgedly went missing because he, also, did not want to die. There was a lot of clamor over the 'barbarism' of such a culture and the need for re-evaluation of such customs (thenet.ng/2015/08/abobaku). Many were of the opinion that the man should not accept to die for someone especially in this modern age.

Adebayo Williams (1993:67) notes:

> that within the context of post-colonial cultural politics, the entire concept of ritual has become a casualty of linguistic imperialism- a Eurocentric, unilinear notion of historical development which negates the other by a forcible evacuation of its space. Thus, in the industrial and scientific age, ritual has acquired the pejorative connotation of a meaningless exercise, a mundane routine.

Such is the state of ritual in contemporary society. Its original essence has been eroded by modernity and all it represents. The aforementioned true story of Oba Sijuwade's death reveals the 'unforced' dispositions of Africans to their culture in the face of modernity. But it also calls

for an interrogation of the superficiality of Olunde's defence of African tradition in *Death and the King's Horseman.* Moore (1985:159) had realized the irony in Olunde's claims:

> Olunde is an articulate defender of what the Elesin should be dying for, but his very articulacy is of the wrong sort; it is an intellectual defence of tradition, like Soyinka's own. The literates of 1946 were, historically, in the forefront of those denouncing and abandoning their traditions: that is precisely the problem to which Soyinka is addressing his play. But the falsification of Olunde's character, for ideological motives, is an evasion of historical reality rather than a true reflection of it; an arrangement of the event as Soyinka would have liked it to be.

But Moore, probably blinded by Eurocentric sentiments, fails to realize that Soyinka is an artist and not a historian. The artist's job is not to capture history *in situ*, but can historicise past events to suit his artistic purposes. However, it would be expected that Olunde would take the place of his father when the father eventually commits the ritual suicide. For someone who seems so well versed in tradition, it is of tragic consequence to admit that Olunde was not planning to take over his father's post:

> Jane: Olunde, please,..promise me something. Whatever you do, don't throw away what you have started to do. You want to be a doctor. My husband and I believe you will make an excellent one, sympathetic and competent. Don't let anything make you throw away your training.
>
> Olunde (genuinely surprised): Of course not. What a strange idea. I intend to return and complete my training. Once the burial of my father is over. (Soyinka 2012:54-55)

Olunde is more willing to run back to study medicine in a foreign land than remain in the 'primitiveness' of his people in the same vein as the Ooni sought for medical attention in London than resorting to traditional medicine. Death, a major cornerstone in the Yoruba worldview, becomes an abhorable thing; unless it is happening to someone else. This is the tragedy and it resounds even in contemporary society. This notion takes us back to Elesin's unwillingness and the parable of the 'Not I bird'.

2.4 Yoruba Tragedy: the Metaphor of Will and Desire

Was Elesin ever willing to choose the path of honour and death? Jeyifo (1985:29) proclaims:

> Elesin Oba is more than prepared for his destiny; he embraces it in a harmonious reconciliation of personal volition and cultural and metaphysical sanctions. The system which demands his ritual suicide constitutes the organic social, moral and metaphysical rationalization of his life. Death is no negation, especially the kind of death which he will die: it is a crossing over to the world of the ancestors, one phase of the unbroken link between the world of the dead, the living and the yet to be born. As a consummation of this unbroken chain of being(s) Elesin takes a young wife on this night of his death: the product of their union- the old, ancestor to be and the young-will attest to that consummation.

This submission suggests that Elesin is more than willing. In fact his taking a bride on an all important night as the one of his death is, according to Jeyifo (1985), a metaphoric high-point which brings the three worlds together. He goes further to blame the intervention of Pilkings as the reason for the tragedy. Although this appeals to the argument of this research, it does not reflect the 'truth' regarding the intentions of the Elesin.

Jain (1986:252) also believes that Elesin was willing to die but he, along the sequence of the play "is distracted from his purpose of "committing" death, first by his own desires and later by external interference". Consequently, his desires are aroused by the women who adorned him with the best of the best on this final and important sacrifice he embarks on, on behalf of his community. 'External interference' here would refer to the colonial, European, Pilkings', arrest of a 'man of unrivaled commitment'. The blame therefore goes to the women and the colonial factor.

Death and the King's Horseman is embellished with a heightened sense of poetry and passages which "draw from Soyinka some of the richest and deepest dramatic language he has

ever written; a language of metaphorical bareness and muscle which never loses vital contact with Yoruba oracular tradition" (Moore 1978:158). This poetic hyperbole is not merely for aesthetic ostentation alone. It is also the very feature of poetic drama which serves as the vehicle for the articulation and conveyance of meaning situated within the framework of the text. Soyinka (1990:43) says:

> Poetic drama especially may be regarded as a repository of this essential aspect of theatre; being largely metaphorical, it expands the immediate meaning and action of the protagonists into a world of nature forces and metaphorical conceptions.

This means that expressions in the text are used to refer to ideas that do not literally denote what is said. The dialogue therefore is a sign system. It is with this in mind, that a closer study of the innuendoes of the 'Not I bird', depicted in Elesin's responses to his praise-singer, is necessary in order to reveal his inner intentions from the very beginning. Gbilekaa (2013:129) had studied the "Not I" passage and is of the view that:

> Elesin's recapitulation of the conduct of the 'Not-I-Bird' is full of condemnation, contempt and derision of the ignoble and dishonourable activities of the so-called men of wisdom who recoil and falter with indecision for fear of death. Elesin would not like to be conceived as that individual whose relevance could willingly mar the process of harmony or restoration. He speaks of his willingness to accompany his great forbears.

Though he grasps the metaphor embedded within, Gbilekaa (2013) fails to take it to the end. This is probably the bane of most critics who analyse Soyinka's work. Quayson (2001:227) also falls into this misconception when he relates Elesin's rendition of the song of the Not-I bird:

> In a partly humorous way showing ordinary people's attitudes to Death, the song is important because it signals Elesin's unbounded confidence in the face of the coming ritual. Unlike the other characters depicted in the song of the Not-I bird, Elesin 'unrolled his mat of welcome' for the Not-I bird to see.

They limit his dramaturgy only to his own apprehension of his work, its form and surface meanings without a deeper interrogation of the subtexts that lie hidden in his content. Gbilekaa (2013) and Quayson (2001) hardly paid attention to the Praise-singer's words:

> PRAISE-SINGER: (smiling): Elesin's riddles are not merely the nut in the kernel that breaks human teeth; he also buries the kernel in hot embers and dares a man's fingers to draw it out (Soyinka 2012:11).

This statement, just before the Elesin taunts the Praise-singer with the allusion of the 'Not-I-Bird' and begins its story, is the text's manner of giving a head start into the outpour of metaphorical maze which is Elesin's true intentions. This research answers to the challenge of the Praise-Singer and dares to put its fingers into the 'hot embers' of Soyinka's concealments to draw out the kernels of meaning he buried deep. Elesin metaphorically enthuses over the manner everyone runs away from death yet he is expected to stand and face Death, when even those who are deemed 'immortal' are scared of it. Although it is his fate as Elesin to die when the moment comes, Elesin poetically, defies that by suggesting that he is master of his own fate. This would then mean that Elesin is neither willing nor ready to die. He is expected to be servant to his fate.

Elesin has stepped out of his house, on the journey towards his ritual death. It would be expected therefore, that he is wearing a cloth of death. When the incessant prodding by Iyaloja and his Praise-singer, who by now are doubting his commitment to his purpose, over his willingness got to him, Elesin feigns anger and demands to be robed with the best of attires in the market. He suddenly transforms from a man on his way to death to a man fully clothed, hence full of life and vivacity. To fully capture this new aura of life which surrounds him, Elesin demands for a bride. All these acts add up to stall his death. One who is willing to die would not frolic among the living. The signs are clear. Even when he is being arrested Elesin could have

resisted, the world was ready to bow to his feet, Olunde had warned that Pilkings' interference could lead him to instigating the wrath of their people because they would do anything to protect the Elesin. Pilkings goes ahead and arrests Elesin. If the people had violently revolted, the colonial military force would have been meted upon them. But Elesin accepts to be taken away largely because he never intended to die in the first instance:

> Right from the opening, the play is replete with ironic twists and premonitions that cast doubt on the sincerity of purpose of the Elesin Oba. While this may be a deliberate act by Soyinka to draw the attention of his audience to the impending disaster in the play, it may also inform the careful reader of the internal crisis that Elesin Oba is undergoing (Gbilekaa 2013:132).

Elesin later blames Iyaloja for his inability to commit suicide by allowing him take the bride thus:

> ELESIN: I need neither your pity nor the pity of the world. I need understanding. Even I need to understand. You were present at my defeat. You were part of the beginnings. You brought about the renewal of my tie to earth, you helped in the binding of the cord (Soyinka 2012:69).

When this does not work out well, Elesin himself admits to his desire to linger a little more with the living, blaming the 'colonial' factor' for his demise:

> ELESIN: What were warnings beside the moist contact of living earth between my fingers? What were warnings beside the renewal of famished embers lodged eternally in the heart of man. But even that, even if it overwhelmed one with a thousandfold temptations to linger a little while, a man could overcome it. **It is when the alien hand pollutes the source of will, when a stranger force of violence shatters the mind's calm resolution, this is when a man is made to commit the awful treachery of relief, commit in his thought the unspeakable blasphemy of seeing the hand of the gods in this alien rupture of his world**.... My will was squelched in the spittle of an alien race, and all because I had committed this blasphemy of thought- that there might be a hand of the gods in a stranger's intervention (Soyinka 2012:69). Emphasis mine.

This confession not only shows Elesin's unwillingness to die, it also resounds the foundational theme of the play; "clash of cultures".

The implication of Elesin's failure is enormous. But fundamentally, "Elesin is rejected by the world of the play because he allows himself to be diverted by selfish individualism from the sacrificial death that his Yoruba religion describes" (Booth 1988:529). But here again is a Eurocentric submission, Booth would rather blame Elesin for his own failure rather than squarely chastise the 'alien hand' which ruptures the sanity and sanctity of an African's task in carrying out the duty of his belief system. Such a submission reverberates the implications of 'clash of cultures'.

2.5 Culture and Women in *Death and the King's Horseman*

Women are usually perceived as oppressed especially in African cultural discourse. As a consequence, the role of women in *Death and the King's Horseman* is often not appropriately treated. Women are either seen as 'a distraction' to the essence of the events in the play, or interpreted as objects created for the delights of men. Since culture takes centre stage in our discourse, it would be considered that the imaging of traditional African women has always been motivated by what Waugh (2006:328) had regarded as "phallocentricism". By this she referred to the male-dominated representation and treatment of women, both literally and literarily. It is interpreted that cultures, especially African, have always favoured men, placing women beneath and in deplorable gender roles. This has only added to what has come to represent the immense contestation by women and those who support their 'causes'; that is, feminism. In African writing on women, for instance, subjugated and oppressed women are largely situated within traditional milieux while city women are presented as those who have realised their 'worth' and would not take male chauvinism, either in an illusory world or in reality. This is evident in many works which have either been deemed by authorial proclamations, or interpreted, as feminist

works because of their inherent inclinations to 'fight' for womanhood. In the "numerous philosophical shades of feminism, militant, radical or moderate, the two main thrusts of the movement were an attempt to reverse the misnomer of women being treated as the weaker sex and of being oppressed for cultural reasons" (Kolawole 2013:18).

It is within the context of cultural confinement and subjugation that Kolawole (2013:15) had attempted to capture the circumstance of women thus:

> There is no doubt that the conception of the woman in the traditional setting leaves more to be desired. A woman's primary duty as from puberty was to wait for a suitor in marriage and produce a male heir for her husband. She was also expected to address her biological peculiarities such as menstruation, painful child labor, nurturing infants, and bearing menopause. Some of the features above even trigger a higher degree of discrimination or repression against her because a process of menstruation or after birth forces her to stay away from certain events that require 'purity'. Even when certain high profile rituals are to be carried out in the remote past by the community, the woman of the virgin status becomes the object of sacrifice. The obstacles the woman faces are legion; such varying degrees of subjugation were believed to be her destiny, this probably being the reason that the anomaly of gender discrimination was not attended to for a long time because it had become part of most cultures.

As a consequence, as also noted by Methusellah (2010), male writers on women are often distrusted and condemned outrightly, more because of their gender than for the manner and objectivity of purpose in which they carve the portraits of the situations of women. Evwierhoma (2013:39) had insisted that, "the woman character, perhaps to the man, is an unfamiliar entity, negative as well as dependent on the man, whose character may be more powerful and dominant than that of the woman". She makes it bold to further her stance by concluding that:

> The female character created by the female writer could therefore be regarded as the appropriate 'self' that represents women. In effect, the female dramatist wields much influence as regards female characterization. Through her drama she can define herself using the text while creating the individuals within the text from 'representations of herself and her ideals" (40).

This distrust of men writers on female subjects, not necessarily as objects, by female writers is informed mostly by a blinding effect that feminism implosively creates. Insisting that only women should write on women is quite an extremity, and:

> Extremities demonstrates that 'women's subject matter' does not necessarily make a feminist play, and that unless challenges to form and content converge, conventional dramaturgy can perpetuate and replicate the ideology of domination even when the playwright's personal view of sexual violence is abhorable (Davis 1996:138).

Eagleton (2008:182) asserts:

> The feminist critic is not studying representations of gender simply because she believes that this will further her political ends. She also believes that gender and sexuality are central themes in literature and other sorts of discourse, and that any critical account that suppresses them is seriously defective.

Perhaps this explains the reason for the varied plethora of notions within the feminist train, "the shades of feminism are almost countless as they reflect equally diverse shades of emotion and are a conscious attempt to capture every iota of gender discrimination against women" (Kolawole 2013:19). Wherever a female character exists, there is a tendency by feminists to seek out gender disparity claims. Blamires (1991:375) is of the view that "the stereotyping of female roles in male-produced literature has a negative influence on women readers in imposing traditional roles upon them", therefore instead of capturing female realities, women writers often project ideals and ideal situations of, and for, women.

Although Evwierhoma (2013:41) had accused Soyinka of projecting women as "docile" in *Death and the King's Horseman*, this research attempts an apprehension of women, not from the limiting and blurry view of feminist lenses, but from a textual apprehension of women situated within a context of tradition and culture, as amazons of culture and harbingers of

balance in society. It would by so doing, refute Ogunyemi's (1988:60-61) bitter claims on male writers' treatment of female characters that:

> It would seem that Soyinka and Bros Ltd- Amos Tutuola, Cyprian Ekwensi, Chinua Achebe, Christopher Okigbo, J. P. Clark, John Munonye, Elechi Amadi- did not have sisters. Or if they had, perhaps they were illiterates, their performances oral and transient, since they were not thought to be worthy of being sent to school, they were too coward to write.

This is both needless and unfair. But it does capture the tendency of feminists and feminism as being both irrational and highly emotional, hence combative (Obi 2015:74). A study of women in the text and context provided in *Death and the King's Horseman*, as captured within its cultural framework would reveal such non-necessity. Umar-Buratai (2002:36) had warned that:

> If the rise of feminism as a concept and movement is best appreciated within the context of the general enlightenment project in the Western society, this development does not, in any way, preclude the role of cultural history, including those aspects of it which have to do with tradition, customs and practices.

It is on the aspects of tradition, customs and practices that we shall look at three categories of female characters in *Death and the King's Horseman*; Iyaloja, Jane Pilkings and the girls and The Bride.

2.5.1 Iyaloja

Although Evwierhoma (2013:16) had argued that culture and male dramatic writing has made "the lot of the African woman one of social invisibility", Iyaloja in *Death and the King's Horseman* would appear to be an exception to such a sweeping rule. Culturally, "Iyaloja is the matriarchal authority both on the ritual and the economic levels- she is elected because of her material wealth as well as her spiritual powers" (Jeyifo 127). In the Yoruba context, as in the text, she is a very powerful woman with enormous influence. Literally, Iyaloja means "mother of

market" or "owner-of-the-market". She is the leader of market women. Asides the fact that the market represents an approximate metaphoric microcosm of the Yoruba world, it is significant to note that it is women who control it, with Iyaloja as head. By import, therefore, it could be said that women have a dominant power both in text and context in Soyinka's play. Drewal (1992:189-190) had captured the significance of women and trade thus:

> A woman's status therefore derives largely from her own reputation as a trader, or a craftsperson, and from her wealth rather than from her husband's social importance…. If a woman is a successful trader, which gives her autonomy, her status within her husband's compound grows stronger in relation. A woman also acquires status in the patrilocal compound by the number of children she brings into the world. If Yoruba women are subordinated within the context of the patrilocal compound during their childbearing years, in the public sphere they are economically independent, dominate the marketing system, and hold important chieftaincy titles…. while women dominate Yoruba markets, their roles as businesswomen are seldom represented except in the context of Gelede spectacle, which explicitly celebrates female power.

The Yoruba woman, a category Iyaloja hails from, is a powerful entity in her own right. Soyinka presents her within the sphere of her significance. Nwaozuzu (2015:303) aptly puts it thus:

> It would appear that the playwright, in recreating the natural environment and persons who populate the market, use women as metaphors to comment on social duty and responsibility in a male-dominated contemporary society. This is quite at variance with the views of some critics, who argue that Soyinka sublimates the female gender to the supremacy of the phallocentric philosophy in his plays.

Such is the stereotype of the African market woman, a stereotype found in Iyaloja. This addresses the antagonistic clamor, mostly by feminists, of stereotyping as a negative occurrence instead of a portrayal of reality. For them women have long been 'thingified' and silenced. Kolawole (2013:33) had erroneously alluded this characteristic to Iyaloja. To him the "case of Iyaloja in *Death and the King's Horseman* is that of silence that kills". But Iyaloja is, not only one of the major characters in the play, she is arguably the most vocal. Her character in the play

is not an idealization of the womanfolk; it is what she is in reality as depicted in the Yoruba context. The Iyaloja is traditionally a powerful and vibrant woman wielding enormous powers, both over women and men.

When Elesin begins to falter in his will to proceed with the all-important ritual suicide, it was Iyaloja who ensured that she kept his sights on the communal goal. Even when he sought the hand of a girl already betrothed to her own son, Iyaloja concedes to his desires. This act 0f concession could be read as a conscious attempt by Soyinka to present women as only objects in the service of men. But that would be a terrible misapprehension. Iyaloja fully understands the intrigues and delicateness of Elesin at the moment of transition, and she sees beyond him as male. Her action is not in the service of man, but of community, and this is precisely the essence of communal will; that one would sacrifice for the good of the whole community. When the women, probably representing all women who read male acts from gender superiority/inferioty perspectives approached her, the following ensues:

> WOMAN: But she is betrothed to your own son. Tell him
>
> IYALOJA: My son's wish is mine. I did the asking for him, the loss can be remedied. But who will remedy the blight of closed hands on the day when all should be openness and light? Tell him, you say! You wish that I burden him with knowledge that will sour his wish and lay regrets on the last moments of his mind. You pray to him who is your intercessor to the other world- don't set this world adrift in your own time; would you rather it was my hand whose sacrilege wrenched it loose?
>
> WOMAN: Not many men will brave the curse of a dispossessed husband.
>
> IYALOJA: Only the curses of the departed are to be feared. The claims of one whose foot is on the threshold of their abode surpasses even the claims of blood. It is impiety even to place hindrances in their ways (Soyinka 2012:21).

Iyaloja demonstrates a thorough understanding of what is at stake, and if only Elesin had replicated her selflessness and love for community, tragedy would have been averted. It is

important to note that an "Iyaloja title is only a modern synonym for Iyalode, a female high chief who normally possesses psychic lenses" (Kolawole 2013:33). Iyaloja is actually a priest descendant of Agemo; "The title "Owner-of-the-Market," Oloja, held by all the priests, suggests the link with trade" (Drewal 1992:129). Even with all her powers, Iyaloja ensures that she does not stand in the way of Elesin's transition.

Elesin's failure is felt more deeply on Iyaloja than on any character, not even on Olunde who commits suicide as a result feels the disappointment Iyaloja has. When all is lost due to Elesin's inadequacy, Iyaloja laments:

> The bush-rat fled his rightful cause, reached the market and set up a lamentation. 'Please save me!'- are these fitting words to hear from an ancestral mask? 'There's a wild beast at my heels' is not becoming language from a hunter (Soyinka 2012:69).

Even when the world seems to have reached an end, it is Iyaloja who points towards hope for a new life for the community. But she would not allow the shameless Elesin to be disrespected nor his remains desecrated. Pilkings who all along has represented the European culture is not allowed to touch the Elesin's remains. It is his alien culture that led to the intervention which further spurs Elesin's meaningless death. Iyaloja would not let Elesin's death be the end of their culture. Elesin is an embodiment of an important element in the Yoruba belief system and this belief system is the crux of their cultural lives. Iyaloja would not allow a non-yoruba tamper with this:

> (She screams at him suddenly, seeing that PILKINGS is about to close ELESIN's starring eyes.) Let him alone! However sunk he was in debt he is no pauper's carrion abandoned on the road. Since when have strangers donned clothes of indigo before the bereaved cries out his loss?

The sign-system depicted here suggests that Pilkings is about to mark the death of African culture but for the stance of a woman, Iyaloja. She plays a pivotal role in pointing ahead for the continuos sustenance of an embattled culture when she turns to the bride and says:

> Now forget the dead, forget even the living. Turn your mind only to the unborn. (Soyinka 2012:76)

Iyaloja becomes the very soul of the community in *Death and the King's Horseman*. Her role is neither demeaning of women nor unnecessarily a contrasting ideology to man and all he 'represents. In fact (Kolawole 2013:33) also agrees that:

> Some critics may not have seen the wood for the trees in Elesin's act by accusing Soyinka of not promoting the cause of women here. Iyaloja's stance, her sarcasms on Elesin's moves and the disgrace Elesin suffers in the end certainly convince one that the dramatist has only borne the cause of women rather than promote patriarchy.

Jeyifo (2004:97-98) needs to revisit the role of Iyaloja in *Death and the King's Horseman* when he states that:

> No single female character in the Nigerian dramatist's plays is moulded in the image, or comes in putative line of the primal energy… a strong, self-divided promethean protagonist…. Thus even where there are two or three strong female presence in Soyinka's play, they are usually in the margins of the drama proper which unfurls as an *agon* between male protagonists and antagonists.

This is incorrect in the context of *Death and the King's Horseman*. Iyaloja has demonstrated the Ogunian will for her community. Nwaozuzu (2015:304-305) addresses the misconception thus:

> Those who see in Iyaloja a mere token of embellishment need to examine critically the denouement of Soyinka's play, where she is given high visibility. Iyaloja, the leader of the market traders, perhaps more than any other character in *Death and the King's Horseman*, gives us an abiding insight into the psychic torture of the main character, the implications of Elesin's abdication of duty, and the futility of the efforts of the Western powers to thwart the indigenous tradition.

Iyaloja is not only the 'primal energy' in this play, she actually has the last say:

> Her words evoke the image of an individual, who wields much influence beyond the market environs, which the playwright employed to give her content and substance at the

> beginning. It portrays her as a representative of the conscience of the society, a metaphor for which women in most traditional African societies are associated with (Nwaozuzu 2015:305).

Her role carries so much import and galvanizes both the tempo of the play and the essentiality of woman as purveyor of hope and continuity and the autochtonous entity of life and sustenance. She exudes a will that celebrates the African woman in boundless proportions, as a woman, daughter, wife, mother, sister, trader, located *in situ* of her culture.

2.5.2 Jane Pilkings

Wife to the Colonial District Officer, Jane Pilkings is presented in *Death and the King's Horseman* as a woman of immense conviction. She encourages her husband to defend their 'civilisation' in a barbaric world. The idea of self sacrifice and ritual does not really make any sense to her. She believes that life is sacred and death is abhorable, especially when self-inflicted. She supports her husband in the act of preventing Elesin's suicide.

When Olunde returns from England to bury his father, she is aghast. She expects that his sojourn would have made him 'cultured', civilized. Afterall it is with her husband's consent that she ripped the child from his traditional role and sent him to England for studies. Apparently the young man has not been 'transformed' by the English. She, however remains vocal in her defence of her civilization and would not give up on Olunde returning to complete his studies.

Although having no spiritual powers, Jane is projected as a defender of English culture. It is for the very fact that she is a woman that makes Soyinka to deploy her in the defence of the English incursion and civilization. For purposes of plausibility and genuineness of emotion, Jane is depicted as a thorough-bred English lady assisting her husband in harnessing the protectorate and maintaining law and order.

Jane Pilkings is non-African, her cultural superiority complex notwithstanding, she is neither presented under sexist disapprobation nor is she ridiculed or made less human on the premise of her being a woman. On the contrary, she represents the logic of European thought as well as a cultural nationalist on behalf of His Majesty's government.

2.5.3 The Girls and the Bride

Approximated within the age grade of teenagers, the girls in the play archive the cultural denotations of 'play' in the text and to the Yoruba. Drewal (1992:15) mentions that:

> What yoruba mean by play, *ere* (noun) or *sere* (verb), is much difficult to communicate because of the cultural baggage the capitalistic notion of play carries, which often sets it in opposition to work…. What play is *not* for Yoruba is unserious, frivolous, and impotent. Yoruba have a different term for what we might call frivolous play-*yeye*-usually translated into English by Yoruba-speakers simply as "nonsense." Yeye is useless or gratuitous play, a trifle.

To play, among the Yoruba is usually to taunt and engage in riddles. And when girls are involved in this act it becomes frivolous play, *yeye*. But it is not without its social functions. *Yeye* is actually a weapon in the hands of teenage girls which they wield upon anyone who does not deserve, or has fallen from, their graces. It is a combination of mockery and mimicry deployed mostly by that age grade to humiliate, ridicule and make a fool of their culprits. Hence, when Amusa comes to the market to arrest Elesin, it was this age grade that relieved their mothers and made a complete fool out of Amusa that he had to retreat (Soyinka 2012:39). The situation is always one to provide so much hilarity, and the girls deployed it in great deal.

This role of the girls is in no way demeaning of women. It is a cultural game and weapon, and it succeeded on Amusa. Girls here are presented as defenders of their mothers and ultimately, of culture. Amusa failed to arrest Elesin at this instant because the girls created a

barricade that made it impossible for the 'weaponless' sergeant. This ensured the successful consummation of Elesin's rather hasty wedding and marriage.

Critics who have suggested that Soyinka could indeed be unfair to women in his characterization of females in his plays could score a point if they take the following excerpt literally:

> (Elesin stands resplendent in rich clothes, cap, shawl, etc. His sash is of a bright red *alari* cloth. The women dance round him. Suddenly, his attention is caught by an object off-stage) (Soyinka 2012:17).

The 'object' here is actually in reference to a maiden who has been betrothed to the son of Iyaloja. Soyinka is referring to a woman as an object, an abhorrent to all feminists. As if it is not enough, he then refers to the object as a distraction:

> (The earlier distraction, a beautiful young girl, comes along the passage through which ELESIN first made his entry.) (Soyinka 2012:18).

This would indeed explain the vehemence of Ogunyemi (1988) et al on Soyinka. However, from a point of signification, to which this research finds recourse, the text is not necessarily referring to the maiden as an object personified. It is simply, on the contrary, referring to Elesin's premonitions. The maiden's entrance merely provided him with an object to further stall his own death. He had feigned anger to the women who have in turn made him resplendent, thus having no cause to complain but proceed with his ritual journey. When she passes at that moment, she becomes a welcome subject for his next act of prevarication.

Iyaloja is taken aback at such a request, that the Elesin should marry her son's betrothed. Nevertheless she succumbs to his demands so that he does not make her the 'next object' that stops him from following his fate to the end. Kolawole (2013:32-33) states:

> Iyaloja and the bride-to-be of her son are in the eye of the storm…. That Iyaloja watches helplessly when Elesin takes over her son's bride-to-be does not imply approval; whereas she submits to tradition by letting go, she patiently waits for Elesin's greed to bring him to the point of self-humiliation knowing as she does that a man of his age who cannot control his libido but would render asunder the new home being awaited by her son and daughter-in-law to be, would also not want to take the plunge when the time dawns.

With Iyaloja's blessing, and the role women have played so far that demonstrates their full comprehension of their roles within the cosmos, it would suggest that the young girl accepts her own role as part of the much needed self-denial for community enhancement and sustenance. Feminists would want to ask why it is that only women seem "committed" to their roles in the play in ensuring the continuity of life. The answer is not far from the fact that they are mothers and that is what mothers do. Besides, it is not only women who have showcased the ability to deny self for community, Olunde committed suicide, Amusa in all his naivety refused to speak to his master while he adorned the *eyo* mask. These acts were done in their understanding of the roles they need to play within the structures of their culture. Although such understanding might not necessarily have been effective, the effort is commendable. Commendable because it demonstrates their will to serve the ultimate purpose of community.

The role of females in *Death and the King's Horseman* would remain under the scrutiny of many critics and researchers, especially because this research does not intend to provide a bench mark on the subject. If anything, it has only attempted to interprete the matter in a manner which locates women as an essential vehicle of balance and continuity in the text, and in society; and as important sign systems codifying elements of culture and cultural values. There is no character in *Death and the King's Horseman* that is as powerful as women both in the literary text and the performance text created for this study. It is also important that the women are

situated in the market, a location that equips them with so much power (economic, religious and political) and serves as Elesin's first point of call on his ritual journey. This only:

> goes to show that markets are often situated along important crossroads that form the spine of human movement and interaction in every community. It is the location that fosters economic activities and commercial growth. Hence, important activities or incidents are often linked with the market square in the traditional society. By filling the market with female characters, Soyinka evidences our thesis that women in the traditional society are not far removed from the template of socio-economic and political empowerment…. They are traders, purveyors of information and ideas, as well as agents of social interaction. These attributes leave us with the image of a group of individuals, who are economically and socially empowered in the true sense of the word. They have a sense of their own importance in the setting and exude a high degree of worth and ability to achieve their socio-economic goals. Thus, the attempt by some scholars to interpret indigenous culture as one that traduces the feminine effort is quite contestable (Nwaozuzu 2015:304).

Women are essential factors to the framework of culture and cultural discourse in any society. They are even more so in the Yoruba context and in *Death and the King's Horseman*. Although feminist studies are oft more inclined to seek aspects of dehumanization, and cry foul at any instance on the representation, of women and gender roles, the place of women in African indigenous cultures is not bereft of significance and value.

2.6 Performance Text Reviews of *Death and the King's Horseman*

It would be useful to also interrogate some of the reviews of the stage productions of *Death and the King's Horseman* in order to grasp the interpretations rendered and how such interpretations operate against the backdrop of culture and the clash of cultures. Plays are generally written to be staged. Most times a performance text reveals meanings hitherto undiscovered from the mere reading of the dramatic text.

Performance texts demonstrate meaning in action and dialogue. They present a graphic telling, or retelling of dramatic texts. Elements of performance such as acting, costume,

backdrops, music, properties (props) join in the creation and communication of ideas and meanings, which are also sign systems. Hence, a careful understanding (interpretation) of the dramatic text is important before it is rendered on stage because what the stage communicates in pictures largely denote, than connote. Rouse (1999:148) puts it thus:

> It is one thing to sustain in theory a space for the spectator between the dramatic and performance texts, but directorial practice regularly invades this space, from which it author-itatively recloses the text, performance and performed, into the directorial work".

Irrespective of the intentions of the dramatic text, the performance text reveals, in interpretation, the effects of the dramatic text, especially within the context the director wishes for it to be apprehended.

The researcher finds it pertinent to start with the reviews of the premier production in 1976 in Chicago and the 1987 Lincoln Centre, New York production. Both productions were directed by Soyinka with a cast of largely African-American actors. For a play which abundantly engages Yoruba myth and ritual in its dramaturgy, staging it in a context alien to its pretextual cosmology and threnody is bound to create misapprehensions and ironies. Soyinka, speaking of the cast, is reported in Grumbel (2009) , to have said:

> "I told them they were just as ignorant of African culture, African politics, African rhythms as everyone else," he says. "When I told them they couldn't dance, that shocked them. They took it as the greatest insult." He and his choreographer, he says, had to "break their bodies into little pieces and then put them back together" before they learned how to move like Yoruba Nigerians.

The insistence on getting the cast to understand African culture and get them to behave like 'Yoruba Nigerians' goes beyond the intent for verisimilitude in performance. It is more for the reason that the performance text applies itself to the dichotomy of culture; unfortunately in this context, both in 'fiction' and reality.

Rich (1987) writing for *The New York Times*, while reviewing the 1987 Lincoln Center Theater production, reports from an audience/critic perspective thus:

> In his program note, the playwright argues that it would be "facile", "prejudicial" and "reductionist" to say this work is about a "clash of cultures". Yet that's the way the drama comes across here. Much of the evening is lavished on detailed illustration and explanation of Yoruban cultural traditions- which stand in stark contrast to the behavior of the English twits, who are seen preparing for a decadent costume ball even as they decry the Africans' "barbaric", "savage" and "feudalistic" ways. In a similar vein, the chief's honorable ritual suicide is set in didactic opposition to the white Man's "mass suicide" of World War II – this in spite of Mr. Soyinka's claim…

He goes further:

> Because of the poor acting, the virtues of the play's political arguments, metaphysical ambitions and rich language alike are rendered moot. The lead actors… do Yoruban culture no favor by mangling their poetic speeches with odd phrasings, absurdly clipped final consonants and unintentional lapses into broad American accents. The bright Judy Dearing costumes aside, the singing, dancing and chanting inhabitants of the Oyo marketplace seem equally unconvincing.

Perhaps the context of production, American actors and audience, might have projected *Death and the King's Horseman* in a light that requires the centrality of culture in interpretation and performance. It might also have been due to the non-African milieu of reception that rendered the play as about a clash of cultures. These possibilities would inevitably demand that the researcher also consider reviews of productions staged in Africa, Nigeria to be precise. But there appears a paucity of reviews on Nigerian productions of the play. This paucity becomes a limitation for the review of literature (performances) to this research. However, on the 19th and 20th of November 2016, the play was staged at the National Theatre, Iganmu, Lagos by the "National Troupe of Nigeria (NTN), as part of activities organized by the Committee For Relevant Art (CORA) to mark 40 years of the docudrama and the 30 years of Professor Soyinka

winning the Nobel Prize for Literature" (www.paxnigerian.com/death-and-the-kings-horsemanevokes-cultural-consciousness-selflessness-arts-nigeria.com).

The performance review reported that:

> Directed by Mike Anyanwu, the play explores themes, which include communal responsiveness and responsibility, arrogance, self sacrifice, self-preservation, selfishness and sacrilege…. One cannot fail to see the antithesis of culture – acculturation or imposition of a belief. Here, Mr. Pilkins (sic), a personification of British government and culture tried to use the machinery of colonial powers to truncate a practice that has unified the people for generations, made them what they are and allowed for peace and tranquility in the community (www.paxnigerian.com/death-and-the-kings-horsemanevokes-cultural-consciousness-selflessness-arts-nigeria.com).

This hints at the clash of cultures as the major theme and conflict in the performance. Scholars who have insisted on the play as not being about a clash of cultures might not have been exposed to the dramatic text in a performance context. The review of the 2016 National Troupe Production of *Death and the King's Horseman* did not insist that a clash of cultures is the only preoccupation of the performance. In fact, it stated that:

> The overall lesson is not only embedded in the human sacrifice, as shown by Olunde, because across the globe there are people still killing themselves, either through suicide bombing or other means to draw attention to a cause or to effect a particular change in the society. Rather, it should be generalized to include the way people view life and death, knowing that every mortal must surely die and as such need to lead a good life, die for a good cause that would outlive one (www.paxnigerian.com/death-and-the-kings-horsemanevokes-cultural-consciousness-selflessness-arts-nigeria.com).

All said, the debate of culture and the clash of cultures is at the heart of the text and a study of that as the major source of textual power therein is neither inhibitive nor banal.

It is also significant to note that although the playwright had insisted that his dramatic text is not about the clash of cultures, the non African audience that received his performance text, which he directed, attributes its central theme to the very matter Soyinka denies thus

demonstrating how texts and their meanings are readily disposed to contexts.In 2006 the Washington Shakespeare Theatre staged 'Death and the King's Horseman' under the direction of John Vreeke. Blanchard (2006) of *The Washington Times* titled his review of the production, "Horseman's Culture Clash" (www.johnvreeke.com/deathandthekingshorseman). Appreciating the performance for illuminating Soyinka's "dreamy allegory and heady visual dialogue with a sprawling production rife with symbolism, ritual movement, music, chanting and drumbeats… (which) evokes the clash between colonial and Nigerian cultures", he goes ahead to conclude that with "the Washington Shakespeare Company's ardent staging, Mr. Soyinka's work shows that when one society suppresses another, both are diminished, damned to a shadowland ruled by fear and misunderstanding". Vreekes interpretation of the play for Blanchard is perceived as one that reveals the play as about the clash of cultures.

See (2006) writing for *A CurtainUp DC Review* has a slightly different view of the same production. Although the story tells of a Horseman who is interrupted in his ritual responsibility of 'self-death' by a colonial District Officer who finds it appalling and barbaric, his summation of the performance goes thus:

> With our world looking at how far respect should go in allowing various cultural and religious groups to practice their beliefs, *Death and the King's Horseman* is a cautionary tale. Washington Shakespeare Company presents an interesting production that not so subtly asks us all to examine our own preconceived ideas about life, death, strength, duty and tolerance.

For See, the performance showcases an interrogation of individual and collective perceptions of life and death, and the need to tolerate the differences within the structures of worldviews. Ultimately, he sees the play as a call to universal brotherhood.

Hathaway (2006) gives an exegesis of the performance text of the Washington Shakespeare Theatre as a demonstration of the contemptuous proclivity of the western world in interfering with the indigenous culture of natives (Africans) without regard to the consequences of such actions. He submits:

> Soyinka's play is an exploration of the violence colonial powers do to the values of the native peoples whenever they attempt to impose their own standards on those they control. In his script, and in Vreeke's staging, there is precious little doubt as to which side will win the ideological argument. Clearly Soyinka sees Yoruba values as much more civilized than those of the occupying British and he gives voice to the argument in many ways. What saves the evening from being a didactic bore is the bright language that Soyinka gives to both sides of the argument and the honesty which Vreeke has the cast display for each statement of values. Yes, the Yoruban position gets the better of the argument, but the British characters aren't simply straw-men in a classic debate technique.

These reviews highlight that a dramatic text comes alive in its transformative life cycle into a performance text and that the meaning it really harbors and dispenses, is dependent on the context it finds itself. Hence Soyinka's playtext might be disposed to its pretextual metaphysics and the threnodic threshold of the Yoruba people, but its meaning rises beyond such pretexts when contextualized within various of performance texts.

A dramatic text is a beehive for interrogations and interpretations. Such interpretations demonstrated in performance are themselves subject to further interrogations and interpretations. After all, a text can have a range of varied meanings; a text is continually in production therefore can never be subjected to closures or conclusive interpretations. Hence, an interpretation of *Death and the King's Horseman* as a play that finds its conflictory in the clash of cultures as this research pursues, does not in anyway suggest that that is what the play is only and all about. On the contrary, this study is aware, and accepts that a dramatic text is a fertile ground for cultivating all sorts of meaning, dependent of course on the contextual seeds sown on the

richness of its textuality. Derrida (1988:136) had stated that "no meaning can be determined out of context, but no context permits saturation". This suggests that it is context that guides interpretation and it is context that determines the meaning of texts. It is on this premise that this study intends to engage pretext, text and context in drama and performance, with Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* as paradigm.

Other researchers have studied and interpreted Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* in different contexts. This research does not, therefore, pretend to be the only research done on the subject. Gargati (2015) has given the text a study which suggests Soyinka's prejudicial representation of the western world thus serving as a testament to Soyinka's 'hatred' for the West. Adopting a postcolonial approach, his research posits that in Soyinka's attempt to argue for African drama, he supplements Western binary thinking by presenting Africans as superior (to Europeans). Although this argument could offer cultural interpretations, it merely ponders on the topic of identity representations in the imaging of 'the Other'. Stereotypical notions of superiority and inferiority are reversed as each side attempts to wield dominance. His work does not however, appreciate clash of cultures as a dramatic *leit motif* in the engendering of dramatic conflict, from which other issues spring. This limitation is one of the gaps this study aspires to fill.

Moyo (2010) has also researched on the mythopoeic preoccupation of *Death and the King's Horseman* as allegory. She posits that the play is a representation of Soyinka's vision of leadership in Africa and is entirely a symbolical narrative:

> As an allegory of Soyinka himself, this play shows what he stands for and above all, it shows what has been expected of him by society and how he has handled it. The play has also shown that there is need for leaders to have a listening ear to the people they lead. It

> has been shown that Soyinka has little faith in their ability to lead to the development of the continent. For this reason, he is calling upon the young and all those not involved directly in politics to come in if they are really interested in the development of the continent (Moyo 2010:137).

Just like Gargati (2015), Moyo (2010) ties the relevance of the text to the playwright's vision and his role in society. This praxis inhibits the text's urge to be freed from the domineering bearing of the playwright in order to articulate itself through its own internal mechanism of meaning generation. This study is markedly different as it unassumingly places the text above any authorial proclivities.

Although both studies adopt a comparative approach in drawing their thesis; Moyo (2010) compares Soyinka's works with those of Ben Johnson while Gargati (2015) draws his analogy using two works of Soyinka; *The Road* and *Death and the King's Horseman,* they both are limited in their search for meaning by not exploring the transitory gap between page and stage, which defines the very nature of drama. This study therefore presents a new paradigm with its objective to determine the gap of the dramatic text and performance in the search for meaning. It also goes beyond the misconception of textual analysis as an analysis of written content to an analysis of anything that can be read (text), which includes stage production.

2.7 Conclusion

The literatures herein reviewed reveal the contestations that exist in interpreting Soyinka's works, especially *Death and the King's Horseman*. The argument deduced is that a text harbours a plethora of meanings depending on the context of interpretation, irrespective of the playwright. Hence, *Death and the King's Horseman* is examined in this study as a play based on culture and its fundamental conflict is annexed upon the clash of cultures. In an interview

with Andrew Gumbel in 2009 (www.theguardian.com) Soyinka attributes the "triggering mechanism" for writing the play to a bust of Winston Churchill, "that old bulldog of British colonialism", which he sees daily along the staircase. It would therefore not be farfetched to interprete the text as a response to colonial incursion and culture as this study has done.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 Introduction

TheHumanities, as a field of study, is one of the most dynamic of human endeavoursbecause of its abundant inclination to theory. This inclination empowers it to produce new perspectives to age-long human phenomena. These perpectives not only indicate methods and approaches guiding the apprehension of such social phenomena but also help to advance the frontiers of knowledge and society. In *Myth, Literature and the African World*, "Soyinka elevates his mythopoeic vision to the status of a theory of being as well as the organizing principle of his craft" (George 1999:67).This quintessential 'theory of being' is also useful in apprehending the deployment of Yoruba ritual in drama because, as Ododo (2015:24) remarks:

> A critical study of Soyinka's major plays reveals that ritualism is the canvas on which he paints his theatre instructions in striking colours to affect humanity using the Yoruba metaphysics. His quest to discover a meaning for life provides the general framework upon which Soyinka envisions his aesthetic theory of morality and ritual archetype. He connects these to the existence of three worlds of the dead, the living and the unborn as one continuum.

Bello (2014:24) also points out that, indeed:

> The profitable take-off point for a study of Soyinka's aesthetic vision is his distillation of the Yoruba cosmology into a vibrant literary theory from which emerges the theory of ritual drama and the sundry components that constitute the ritual dramaturgy. The thesis of this literary theory is his view centring on the continued location of the quest for communal harmony within the premise of African traditional legacies, the source components of this legacy being the past, to be reached through history, myth and ritual.

The idea of 'theory' is therefore relevant both in the promulgation of notions and conceptions and in the effort to understand such notions in order to seek their meaning. Eagleton (2008:vii) notes that:

> Theory at its best poses questions…. Rather than simply providing new methods for the study of literary works, it asks about the nature and function of literature and the literary institution themselves. Rather than simply supplying us with yet more sophisticated ways of tackling canonical texts, it inquires into the very concept of canonicity. **Its aim is not just to help us to see what literary works mean, or how valuable they are; instead, it queries our common-sense notions of what it is to 'mean' in the first place, and poses questions about the criteria by which we evaluate literary art** (emphasis mine).

What then is theory? Aristotle is usually quoted as the father of theorizing, especially because he not only responded to Plato's stand on art but went ahead to suggest ways in which to go about realizing it. Krasner (2008:8) points that:

> In his *Poetics* Aristotle describes theatrical theory somewhat like an auto mechanic might describe an automobile. He considers how its parts ought to be made to function, how certain tools and devices make a play run efficiently, and how the unity of the parts can achieve the desired results- catharsis- most effectively.

This suggests that theory describes, prescribes functionality and articulates expectations when such prescriptions are adhered to. To this end, Plato was considered a critic, while Aristotle a theorist. One fundamental function of theory is criticism. So it could be safe to admit that while theory is criticism, criticism is not necessarily theory, but both work together to advance the understanding of literature and social life. Atkins (1961:71), while drawing on the relationship between theory and criticism admitted that Plato suggested *a priori* theories presented indirectly, but:

> Aristotle's aim, on the other hand, was to reorganise human knowledge: he was a scientist, an experimentalist, one who arrived at his principles by observation and analysis, and who normally set forth his theories in direct dogmatic fashion, but without any of the charm of Plato's works. Yet while there are clear differences, there is also between the two critics a close connexion as well. Aristotle throughout his work is covertly criticizing Plato; his mind is filled with Platonic ideas; and everywhere in his discussions he draws upon Plato's doctrines and terminology, reinterpreting or confuting, while engaged in developing new doctrines of his own.

In other words Eagleton (2008:x) presents the matter thus:

> Critics may wrangle over whether Oscar Wilde is a major or minor writer, but theorists prefer to investigate the (often unconscious) norms and criteria by which we make such judgements in the first place. All reading involves interpretation; but hermeneutics inquires into what goes on when we interpret. A critic might speak of a literary character's unconscious; a theorist is more likely to ask what a 'character' is in the first place, and whether the text can have an unconscious too.

Theory therefore is an accepted general proposition or an abstract concept which serves as a parameter or framework for explaining phenomena. In other words, theory provides the yardstick for engagement with phenomena or a method for determining how an idea or happening is to be apprehended and analysed. It also predicts what becomes of a phenomenon when subjected to a certain method of treatment.

The question then is of the necessity of applying theory to the understanding of literature. Or as Tyson (2006:1) asks:

> Why should we bother to learn about critical theories? Is it really worth the trouble? Won't all those abstract concepts (if I can even understand any of them) interfere with my natural, personal interpretations of literature?

Theory would neither be an interference to personal appreciation of a phenomenon nor a hindrance to individual appreciation of a work of art if we "think of… theory as a new pair of eyeglasses through which certain elements of our world are brought into focus while others, of course fade into the background" (Tyson 2006:3). Theory is necessary as well as relevant because it serves as an illuminant to our perception of things and also rivets our concerns on the particularity of our interest in a certain phenomenon.

A study of pretext, text and context requires the guidance of a theory, or theories, in order to highlight methods of approach, ways of generating meaning and powers (formularisations) that allow such to be possible. The sociological perspective of the study which necessitated interactions with audiences also required a theoretical framework. It is for this reason that two

theories; New Historicism and Reader Response, are invoked in this research in order to provide a method for its argument, a basis for such an argument, and how such an argument is made possible. This is as a result of the multidisciplinarity of the study which necessitated an analysis of the play text and the performance text (audience response) in the generation of meaning. The two theories are also adopted because of the common deconctructive poetics they share which is that the generation of meaning is an activity in writing (production), reading (textual analysis) and interpretation (audience response) thus providing a wider and more elaborate analysis for the study.

3.1 New Historicism

New Historicism is an interpretive paradigm which views pretexts and contexts as texts. It seeks to pursue the cultural and social contexts of meaning in texts. New historicists claim that history and literature are "subjectively known and set down, colored by the cultural context of the recorder" (Dobie 2012:178). It would be preposterous to seek meaning from a text without considering its cultural implications (context).

Foucault (2001:175) had stated that:

> It is a very familiar thesis that the task of criticism is not to bring out the work's relationships with the author, nor to reconstruct through the text a thought or experience, but rather, to analyse the work through its structure, its architecture, its intrinsic form, and the play of its internal relationships.

This notion gives the impression that there are masterpieces, a particular way to write and read texts. Dobie (2012:185) noted that Foucault was merely clamouring for discourse, "in an effort to find the **episteme**, or rules and constraints outside which individuals cannot think or speak without running the risk of being excluded or silenced". Greenblatt (1990:34) cautioned that Foucault's submission gives "a misleading impression of fixity and little sense of the historical

transactions through which the great texts we study have been fashioned". Hence he championed the new historicist reading of texts which seeks meaning from a contextual paradigm rather than from a text's 'intrinsic form'. For new historicism:

> the questions for readers are not "Were the characters based on real people?" or "Do the events recounted in the text recreate experiences from the author's life?" or "Does the text capture the spirit of the times accurately?" Rather, the question is "How does the text reveal and comment on the disparate discourses of the culture it depicts?" With that new question, history moves from behind a literary work, and an era's various discourses, one of them being literature, become coparticipants in a complex interaction that is the subject of study. Just as the historian contextualizes historical texts in the many discourses of a culture, so the critic interprets literary texts by viewing them as part of the same interchange. A work of literature is no longer read as an autonomous entity (Dobie 2012:181).

This theory is significant for this research because it provides the basis, or framework, which validates the approach to consider text as a multifarious entity, discarding the author in the exercise of significations. It also reveals the ambiguous nature of text, as one adaptive to various and differing contexts. This theory shares a lot with deconstruction because they are both poststructualist modes of interpretation which undermine authorial centrality by privileging the indeterminacy of meaning as text is seen as a "polysemic space where the paths of several possible meanings intersect" (Barthes 1981:37). Norris (1993:xi-xii) states that:

> Deconstruction is the active synthesis of everything that criticism ought to be if one accepts its traditional values and concepts. Beneath all the age-old conflicts of critical method there has always existed a tacit agreement about certain conventions, or rules of debate, without which (supposedly) no serious thinking about literature could be carried on. That literary texts possessed meaning and that literary criticism sought a knowledge of that meaning- a knowledge with its own proper claims to validity- were principles implicit across the widest divergences of thought…. For the deconstructionist, criticism (like philosophy) is always an activity of *writing*, and nowhere more rigorous- to paraphrase de Man- than where it knows and allows for its own 'literary' vagaries.

The term deconstruction was first used by Jacques Derrida to describe a philosophy that promotes the 'decentering' of notions in a manner that suggests no guarantees of facts, no centre

of meaning, only interpretations, which are in themselves subject only to interpretations, having no stamp of author-ity. This philosophy transformed into a system of critical reading of texts interested in 'teasing out' elements of significations within a text only without recourse to pretext or peritexts as "there is nothing outside the text" (Derrida 1988:163). Norris (1993:31) admits that, "Deconstruction is therefore an activity of reading which remains closely tied to the texts it interrogates, and which can never set up independently as a self-enclosed system of operative concepts".

For the deconstructionist, the text is a self-producing entity of significations, dependent on its relationship with itself and its reader. The meaning of the text is against the meaning of the text. This is especially so because, as Davis and Schleifer (1991:167) note, a text is characteristically "turned against itself in the temporal folds of error and irony". In other words, the text is what the text is not saying, that voice it tries to shut up. Eagleton (1985:89) is of the view that:

> The literary text, far from constituting some unified plenitude of meaning, bears inscribed within it the marks of certain determinate absences which twist its various significations into conflict and contradiction. These absences- the '*not-said*' of the work- are precisely what bind it to its ideological problematic: ideology is present in the text in the form of its eloquent silences. The task of criticism, then, is not to situate itself within the same space as the text, allowing it to speak or completing what it necessarily leaves unsaid. On the contrary, its function is to install itself in the very incompleteness of the work in order to *theorise* it- to explain the ideological necessity of those '*not-saids*' which constitute the principle of its identity.

Barry (2002:70-71) describes a deconstructionist reading as applied post-structuralism:

> It is often referred to as 'reading against the grain' or 'reading the text as it cannot know itself'…. A way of describing this would be to say that deconstructive reading uncovers the unconscious rather than the conscious dimension of the text, all the things which its overt textuality glosses over or fails to recognize.

However, deconstruction is neither a freedom from all restraint nor a reckless destruction of a text. According to Johnson (1985:5):

> Deconstruction is not synonymous with 'destruction', however. It is in fact more closer to the original meaning of the word 'analysis' itself, which etymologically means 'to undo'...a virtual synonym for 'to de-construct'.... if anything is destroyed in a deconstructive reading, it is not the text, but the claim to unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying over another. A deconstructive reading is a reading which analyses the specificity of a text's critical difference from itself."

As a methodology, it concerns itself with a systematic identification and analysis of sources of meaning within textual constructs located in a text. Barry (2002:72) notes that:

> the deconstructionist practices what has been called textual harassment or oppositional reading, reading with the aim of unmasking internal contradictions or inconsistencies in the text, aiming to show the disunity which underlies its apparent unity…. In pursuance of its aims, the deconstructive process will often fix on a detail of the text which looks incidental- the presence of a particular metaphor, for instance- and then use it as the key to the whole text, so that everything is read through it.

Oppositional reading is possible because of the very nature of texts. Eagleton (1983:134) points out that texts "get into trouble, come unstuck, offer to contradict themselves". A deconstructive reading situates texts and their meanings within contextual capsules, and each capsule generates its own meaning, its own context. In other words deconstruction always happens within a context.

Essentially, deconstruction provides the basis for new historicist interpretation. It is, as Derrida (1988:148) terms it, an "interpretive experience". It opens up texts in a manner that allows them to yield their overt, covert and implicit meanings. Miller (1972:13) submits that:

> Deconstruction as a mode of interpretation works by a careful and circumspect entering of each labyrinth…. The deconstructive critic seeks to find, by this process of retracing, the element in the system studied which is alogical, the thread in the text in question which will unravel it all, or the loose stone which will pull down the whole building… deconstruction, rather, annihilates the ground on which the building stands by showing

> that the text has already annihilated the ground, knowingly or unknowingly. Deconstruction is not a dismantling of the structure of the text but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself.

A deconstructive reading interpretes a text against itself. It also transforms contexts into texts by perceiving them as unfinished products thereby subject to a reading, a contestation. New historicism is "what happens in the process of interpretation and within a context. This means that every text, every interpretation would have its own 'deconstruction'" (Bello-Kano 2016:19). There is no centre in the meaning of texts neither are there definitions in interpretations. There is no 'truth'. A reading of a text can hardly be encapsulated within a nutshell for deconstruction characteristically unveils a continous proliferation of texts and contexts.

Culture and the clash of cultures have been identified by this research as a major source of textual power in *Death and the King's Horseman*. Hence, this presupposes that the interpretation in this research tilts towards the interrogation of cultural representations. Consequently, cultural studies provides an ideological framework. Postcolonialism and new historicism are strands of cultural studies in that, "Although each has its own distinct focus… (they) are concerned with social and cultural forces that create a community or that threaten it" (Dobie 2012:175). Drawing largely from the works of Frantz Fanon and Edward Said, postcolonialism is a philosophy and theory of cultural studies that draws attention to issues of cultural difference in literary texts while encouraging, and celebrating cultural resistance, especially against a stronger power. It is a strong postcolonialist belief that European intervention and incursion on other cultures has done more harm than good, hence any literature that counters white supremacy or reveals white inhumanity is a postcolonial artifact. Barry (2002:192) submits that "if the first step towards a postcolonial perspective is to reclaim one's

own past, then the second is to begin to erode the colonialist ideology by which that past had been devalued".

This research, however, does not intend to subject the text under study to arguments of culture from a perspective of inferior or superior cultural representations. Contrary to this, it attempts to draw the cultural significations in *Death and the King's Horseman* and, to borrow from Barthes (2001:151), reveal "how the text explodes and disperses" from that context.

The idea of explosion and dispersal adequately indicate that a text is simply a point of entry, a trigger because it leads to various interpretations, exciting varied meanings. It is a malleable entity, adaptive to varying contexts. Its meanings are expansive and far-reaching, covering scopes of immense proportions. Hence it is possible to subject a text to a feminist reading and also draw elements of anti-feminist notions from the same text. The sense of this possibility allows this research, for instance, to attempt a study that seeks meaning in *differance* to what the playwright thinks he is saying. It is particularly this interest that makes new historicism (and/or cultural materialism) a valid theory for this research.

It is indeed a paradox that new historicism, a theory that does not privilege a literary text over its historical pretext, nor accept the 'subordination' of history as a context for a literary text but rather as a 'co-text', having equal value, also provides a reading of history only as a written text, having no command nor control on 'truth'. Barry (2002:175) submits:

> New historicism accepts Derrida's view that there is nothing outside the text, in the special sense that everything about the past is only available to us in textualised form: it is 'thrice-processed', first through the ideology, or outlook, or discursive practices of its own time, then through those of ours, and finally through the distorting web of language itself. Whatever is represented in a text is thereby remade. New historicist essays always themselves constitute another remaking, another permutation of the past… so that a new

> entity is formed. In this sense the objection that the documents selected may not really be 'relevant' to the play is disarmed, for the aim is not to represent the past as it really was, but to present a new reality by re-situating it.

The 'textuality of history, the historicity of texts' does not concern us here as much as the meaning(s) that can be derived from history (text) which would be relevant to contemporary times.

Eagleton (1985:74-75) is of the view that history "operates upon the text by an ideological determination which within the text provides ideology as a dominant structure determining its own imaginary or 'pseudo' history". In other words, the depiction or representation of history is often inspired by ideological and thematic concerns. Dollimore and Sinfield (1985:3) are credited for first using the term 'cultural materialism' to suggest the timelessness of texts and their ability to transcend historical and contextual circumstances that motivated their creation. They posit that subtexts are derived from texts, irrespective of their period of conception, to expose and reflect "enclosures and the oppression of the rural poor, state power and resistance to it" among other burning issues of contemporary life. This connotes that texts are adaptive to contexts, especially those that are duly political and committed to causes.

The "New Historicist paradigm suggests a continous interaction between canonical texts by "great writers" and the everyday cultural experience" (Reinelt and Roach 1999:11). By implication, New Historicism encourages a deconstructive reading of texts in the context of social realities. Characteristically, "the new historicist situates the literary text in the political situation of its own day, while the cultural materialist situates it within that of ours" (Barry 2002:186). New historicism is considered as "an umbrella term that is often taken to embrace different localized variants, such as the (mainly) British movement that has come to be known as

cultural materialism" (Knellwolf and Norris 2008:1), but the terms are often used interchangeably.

3.3 Reader-Response Theory

The researcher realized that the study's context of interpretation, 'clash of cultures', can serve as a context for further search for deeper meaning especially when the text under study is subjected to stage production. Consequently, there was the need to invite the audience unto the search for meaning as receptors of that which is created**.** Reader-Response theory, or reception theory, declares the primacy of the reader as the central subject of, and for meaning making. According to Abrams (1999:256), "Reader-response critics turn from the traditional conception of a work as an achieved structure of meanings to the ongoing mental operations and responses of readers". The meaning of a text is not inherent to the text but depends on the experiences, values, desires of the reader which serve indetermining each reader's context of interpretation. Dobie (2012:131), captured it thus, "Interpretation of meaning is assumed to be an act of reading, thereby making the ultimate authority not the writer or the text but the reader. A literary work thus becomes an evolving creation, as it is possible for there to be many interpretations of the same text by different readers or several interpretations by a single reader at different times". By implication, the theory also accepts the polysemy of meaning in texts. Iser (1974:280) noted that;

> One text is potentially capable of several different realizations, and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential, for each individual reader will fill the gaps in his own way, thereby excluding the various other possibilities; as he reads, he will make his own decision as to how the gap is to be filled. In this very act, the dynamics of reading are revealed. By making this decision, he implicitly acknowledges the inexhaustibility of the text.

There are as many meanings in a text as the number of readers which read it. Iser (1978) actually alludes meaning to an experience once sealed in the reader which reading a text only reveals.

Largely influenced by the works of I. A. Richards and Louise Rosenblatt, reader-response expected that the reader and audience would "shake off its deference to the authority of the text (or to the published critic's or classroom teacher's explanation of the text) and become an active participant in the creation of meaning" (Dobie 2012:129). For Fish (1980), the reader/audience is a member of an "interpretive community" whose activity of reading/reception actually produces the meaning of the text. Consequently, in theatre the audience is central to stage production, and to the production of meaning. In fact, Counsell and Wolf (2001:177) have highligted that:

> meaning does not exist in the material world, it is a human product, a product of *culture*, and the interpretation of plays and paintings, novels and films requires a reader who is culturally competent…. To understand the material artwork in given ways, then, is to position it perceptually within culturally specific orders of meaning. Second, the spectator must be active in the process of decoding…; to decode the text in ways which are ultimately determined by it. **The relationship between viewer and viewed is thus a symbiotic one, the viewer performing interpretative acts predicted by the viewed, while the viewed itself – the object as it is perceived – is in turn constructed, endowed with meaning, in the gaze of the viewer** (emphasis mine).

The performance text therefore becomes a field of semiotic interactions where the audience, the interpretive community, deciphers "how the codes, signs, signals, and rules work together to produce meaning" (Dobie 2012:132) and how its (audience's) cultural interpretations of meaning are garnered from the intentions of the director, filling in gaps for itself while constructing orderliness as responses to what has been viewed, as meaning to what has been created. Basically, reader response allows the reader to bring his meaning unto the text in a way that suggests no fixity to what a text means. Afterall, Abrams (1999:257) has noted that, reader-response agrees that "the meanings of a text are the "production" or "creation" of the individual

reader, hence that there is no one "correct" meaning for all readers either of the linguistic parts or of the artistic whole of a text".

3.4 Conclusion

Theories provide the framework and justification for apprehending phenomena in the manner that they are considered. New Historicism and Reader-Response aid the researcher in locating a synthesis for pretext, text and context in Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* in the search for meaning. Widdowson (1999:11) avers that:

> Literary texts are in a sense,'re-written' in every act of reading by every reader – not just by the processes of professional analysis: that literature is reconstituted in the endlessly unstable dialectics of the author/text/reader nexus in history. Just as the author's control and authority over their text is written and published, so the reading-positions from which readers read it are different both throughout history and through their cultural location at any given moment- and 'the text' becomes the *product* of those differences.

New historisicm and reader-response combine to support this study's claim of indeterminacy of meaning, the cultural context dynamics of *Death and the King's Horseman* and the essence of reception in apprehending a text's production of meaning in stage performance. The choice of the two theories also helps to highlight how Soyinka deploys myth and ritual to codify the theme of clash of cultures in his dramatic construct. The mythopoecy and cosmology of the Yoruba is given a new historicist treatment, thus left within the pristine pretext inundated by Soyinka, not as an authoritative 'truthful' testament of the Yoruba worldview, but as a text, a subjective view of the playwright. For instance, reader-response supports in contextualizing the polysemy of interpretations of the text and teasing out its contemporary relevance especially as the performance leads the audience into viewing it from contrasting depictions of historical and cultural perspectives.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter sets out to explain the methodological approach that was adopted in carrying out this research. It reveals the study engaged in a planned, methodical approach and delineated procedures necessary for attaining the aim and objectives of the study.

4.1 Research Design

This research is largely qualitative in approach, with some of its aspects requiring quantitative treatment. As a result, it is designed to reflect the methods of research adopted, the instruments deployed and the sampling process.

Cheek (2008:761) notes that research design "refers to and encompasses decisions about how the research itself is conceptualized, the subsequent conduct of a specific research project, and ultimately the type of contribution the research is intended to make to the development of knowledge in a particular area". Hence, the nature of this study is such that required an interrogation of literary texts in the search for meaning. The literary texts studied further led to a stage production (play performance) in order to demonstrate the acquired meaning as suited for this research, thus creating the performance text. The performance elicits a deeper level of meaning making by inviting the audience into the process of interpretation. In other words, the audience is important in factoring meaning, especially from the performance text, because meaning goes beyond the intentions of the writer/director. Ultimately, the research is designed in a manner that suits the nature of this study and its intention to contribute to the search for meaning in dramatic and performance texts.

Qualitative research methodology, which is a subjective approach that explores the interpretation and meaning of texts (literal and experiential) is suitable for this study. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state that qualitative research attempts to study phenomena in their 'natural' contexts in order to interpret them from perspectives of meaning that people bring to them. This research is primarily concerned with the interpretation of text, and qualitative research methodology provides the nexus for the interrogation of texts from the subjective opinion of the researcher. Butler-Kisber (2008) submits that qualitative research method brings out the human dimension of social phenomena under study. Bukar (2014:59-60) notes, qualitative research methodology "allows the researcher to find issues that are often missed (such as subtleties and complexities) by the scientific, more positivistic enquiries. Qualitative descriptions can play the important role of suggesting possible relationships, causes, effects and dynamic processes".

Rudestam and Newton (2001:36) state that "*Qualitative* implies that the data are in the form of words as opposed to numbers". Therefore qualitative research becomes justifiable as an approach for this study because it provides a platform for engaging *Death and the King's Horseman,* a written material, in the search for meaning (data) while serving to enunciate interpretations drawn from within its literary texture.

This research does not preoccupy itself with an analysis of the dramatic text under study alone. It also engaged the audience in the task of meaning making by producing the dramatic text on stage. Although certain qualitative tools are used to achieve this, there is also the use of quantitative methods in order to ascertain and complement the validity of the findings in this research. The deployment of mixed methods consequentially triggers a triangulation of research instruments. In research, triangulation refers to the combination or mixing of two or more methodologies in a single study in order to gain diverse viewpoints on a single phenomenon or

topic and establish certainty or credibility of result findings. While qualitative methods provide depth of views and reviews, quantitative methods equip the researcher with numeric judgment of data. According to Anderson and Taylor (2006:31):

> Quantitative data are numerical and can be analyzed using statistical techniques. Although not numerical in nature, qualitative data can be logically interpreted, classified, and analyzed…. Quantifying the responses to questionnaires or interviews, for example, helps categorize the data, makes it possible to analyze qualitative responses statistically, and removes an element of subjectivity from the interpretation of research results.

Quantitative methodology therefore, served to compliment the qualitative nature of this study and provided a balance to the overtly subjective interpretation rendered by the researcher. Its significance is not merely numerical to this study but serves in providing a range of responses from the broad survey it provided

Consequently, the research adopts an interpretive style. The interpretive view in research, "while sharing the rigour of the natural sciences and the same concern of traditional social science to describe and explain human behavior, emphasizes how people differ from inanimate natural phenomena and, indeed, from each other" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000:5). This implies that the understanding of a phenomenon is largely dependent on individual rather than universal comprehension. Meaning is therefore determined from each distinct reader's response than from a universal outlook. *Death and the King's Horseman,* for instance, may present a universal ideology, but its sense making is based on the subjective opinion of each reader/spectator than on the intention of the playwright/director. This approach is relevant because it empowers the researcher to interpret the text from a subjective viewpoint and permits the audience to do same.

For its textual concerns, or what Lee (2000) refers to as 'text-commentary relation', the study takes on the typology of content analysis. According to Anderson and Taylor (2006:40):

> Content analysis is a way of using cultural artifacts to measure what people write, say, see, and hear. The researcher studies not people but the communications or documents they produce as a way of creating a picture of the society…. Content analysis is frequently used to measure cultural change and to study different aspects of culture such as manners, morals, slang, customs and so on.

Content analysis goes beyond the interrogation of written words to include the 'reading' of other elements of signification found in performance. In other words, it allows for an analysis of the dramatic text through its characteristics (dialogue, stage directions, characters), and a study of the elements of performance (music, action, scenery, costume, makeup) in the collection of data. This process becomes relevant to this study because content analysis of literature transits onto stage production. As a result, the study is analytical, descriptive and interpretive. Bhattacherjee (2012:115) had indicated that, "Content analysis is the systematic analysis of the content of a text"; a text being anything that can be read, both on stage and on page. Hence, the dramatic text is analyzed and interpreted within the context of the aim of the study. Such analysis and interpretation led to the creation of the performance text. The elements of performance deployed to capture the interpretation and message(s) on stage are described in detail. The audience, which forms a core in the reception of the performance as interpreted, were invited into an interactive session to relate their individual perceptions of the performance, thereby serving as respondents. It is in the light of the above that this study found it necessary to stage the dramatic text. After all, "drama is a narrative dialogic text written to be performed" (Schechner 1988:223). The literary context of a dramatic text might not yield meaning as much as its performance would; besides every dramatic text is merely a pretext for performance. Beckerman (1979:3) notes that "A play… is a mere skeleton; performance fleshes out the bones". The process towards 'fleshing out the bones' necessitates an interaction with directorial approaches.

Directorial approaches provide methods of staging dramatic texts. This research concerns itself with two major approaches to directing; Constantin Stanislavsky's method which postulates on a representation of "truth" (Stanislavsky 1967) and Jerzy Grotowski's production design which makes audiences an integral part of the performance (Grotowski 2002).

The first method helped the researcher (director) to situate the pretextual context of the text in a manner that projects verisimilitude. This was evident in costume and makeup, settings, songs (music), dialogue and acting. This method revealed elements of performance via inherent cultural significations in the text and helped examine cultural values within the world of the play as captured *in situ*. The interpretive outlook of this research demands that:

> Social phenomena must be studied within their natural setting. Because interpretive research assumes that social phenomena are situated within and cannot be isolated from their social context. This implies that contextual variables should be observed and considered in seeking explanations of a phenomenon of interest, even though context sensitivity may limit the generalizability of inferences (Bhattacherjee 2012:105-106).

The text, *Death and the King's Horseman*, serves as the pretext for stage production, hence the 'world' of the dramatic text shall be 'truthfully' replicated on stage in order to depict the cultural flora and fauna with the view to enhance the appreciation of culture and the clash of cultures as deduced in interpretation. The Yoruba community is apprehended within its unique cultural traits, as the European, in order to clearly project the altercations in belief systems and the dichotomies of cultural values when the two 'communities' meet.

The Grotowskian design helped integrate the action on stage with the audience. By directly involving the audience, they would have been invited to participate in the 'fictional universe' being demonstrated right before them. Some actions of the play occurred in a manner that transformed the entire theatre arena into a stage to further establish the participatory atmosphere that made the audience active instead of creating a 'distancing' that isolates them,

both physically and emotionally. By attempting to erase the line between actors (stage) and audiences (auditorium), Grotowski's method also provides the piquancy to make the audience aware that they are respondents. Relating to Grotowski's production approach, Beckerman (1979:9) remarks that, "the auditor becomes acutely aware not only of the performers but of himself, thereby sensing that he has been cast in the role of a particular kind of spectator".

The combination of these two approaches provided the necessary performance temper required to showcase the cultural argument of this study and also excited the audience into responding to the research questions. The performance text was created as a platform for the audience to join, as respondents, in interrogating meaning specifically on the paradigm of clash of cultures, with a view to assess the success or otherwise of that interpretation as rendered on stage.

4.2 Study Population

As earlier captured in the scope of the study, the Ahmadu Bello University Studio Theatre Zaria (Drama Village) served as venue for the stage production. As the venue for performances in Ahmadu Bello University, the Drama Village enjoys a stable patronage from the University community and its environs. Zaria metropolis, and the university community, boasts of a heterogeneous population, accommodating people from different regions, ethnic nationalities, cultures, religions and walks of life (Appendix G). This set up provided vast responses to the performance, even though the existing culture of watching performances in drama village by this population is basically for entertainment, that is, people simply go to the theatre to be entertained. However, drama fundamentally thrives on meaning generation and communication via entertainment. The production of *Death and the King's Horseman* was done to generate data through the staging process and from responses of audiences in articulating the

subject under research. Its interest is not dependent on comments of aesthetics and performance conventions. On the contrary it concerned itself with issues for discussion and analysis relevant to the study and in line with its set objectives. This population, which served as audience, responded to advertisements (posters) and came on their own volition, as a mark of interest in stage performances. They were served copies of questionnaires in order to derive from them meanings they attributed to the performance.

Another category is a select audience drawn largely from lecturers and students of the Departments of English and Literary Studies (Appendix E) and Theatre and Performing Arts (Appendix F), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The choice of this study population is connected to its scholarly dispositions in relation to the study. Those from the Department of English and Literary Studies assisted in the apprehension of the performance from its literary pretextuality and theory alongside those from Theatre and Performing Arts while the latter moved the discourse on play production analysis, especially from the semiotic perspective of interpretation, further. This study population formed a focus group for post performance enquiry. The composition took "into account both the needs of the researcher and the interests of the participants" (Morgan 2008:353). They belong to an aspect of humanities which thrives on textual analysis and interpretation and "by bringing together people who share a similar background, focus groups create the opportunity for participants to engage in meaningful conversations about the topics that researchers wish to understand" (Morgan 2008:352).

The general public and members of the two Departments served as the study population for this research. The former group was expected to provide a more unalloyed analysis of the

subject matter than the latter because they were not influenecd by a history of academic critical analysis like the other group. Beckerman (1979:3) notes:

> Each time a reader takes up a copy of a play, he also puts on a pair of spectacles. The frame of these spectacles is not plastic or horn but history. The lenses are not optical glass but accumulated dramatic practice and theory. Fashioned by generations of creative and critical theatre artists, these glasses are compacted by preconceptions about what constitutes drama and how it produces its effects. Each scene and each act is filtered through these invisible panes before reaching the imagination.

A blend of the groups enriched responses and provided varied impressions (interpretations) which further justified the claim that meaning is a subjective apprehension of phenomena than a universal set definition; the very basis upon which a post production enquiry is required in this study. This blend also provided an avenue for qualitative and quantitative methods to converse towards attaining a common goal while ensuring validation and deepening understanding.

4.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Kothari (2004:152) defines sampling "as the selection of some part of an aggregate or totality on the basis of which a judgement or inference about the aggregate or totality is made. In other words, it is the process of obtaining information about an entire population by examining only a part of it". A researcher, according to Ukala (2006:30):

> must adopt a tested sampling technique in order to systematize his/her processes of data collection and reduce his/her prospective respondents to a manageable number, which should, nonetheless, be reasonably representative of the research population as a whole.

It is based on this that this research adopted the simple random technique to attain its sample size using the formulation put forward by Krejie and Morgan (1970) thus:

$$S = x^2NP(1-P) \div d2(N-1) + x2\,P(1-P).$$

S = required sample size.

x^2 = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841).

N = the population size.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be 0.50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05).

Thus $s = x^2NP\ (1-P) \div d^2\ (N-1) + x^2\ P\ (1-P)$.

The ABU Studio Theatre (Drama Village) has a flexible seating arrangement so as in its architectural uniqueness, various kinds of stages (Appendix J). The production of *Death and the King's Horseman* adopted the thrust staging style and a total of 250 seats (persons) were placed for the performance. This number served as the population size (N). The required sample size (S) is therefore:

Thus $s = x^2NP\ (1-P) \div d^2\ (N-1) + x^2\ P\ (1-P)$.

= 3.841x250x0.50 (1-0.50) /0.05x0.05 (250-1) +3.841x.50 (1-0.50)

= 240.0625/0.6225+0.96025

= 240.0625/1.58275

= 151.67

=152

The sample size for this research, derived from the above equation, is 152. Simple random technique requires that the questionnaires be served to any, rather than selected, 152 persons in the audience. The import of this size is not merely in its numeric value but also in the

range of responses it provides, cutting across people of various fields and inclinations with a collective interest in watching stage performances.

4.4 Research Instruments

This study engaged the following processes as its instruments of research;

4.4.1 Documentary Observation Method

This refers to the consultation and referencing of written materials like books, texts, journals, magazines as tools to assist in obtaining information relevant to the study. It is also considered as the content exploration of literary resources. This is important because the phenomenon under investigation is situated in documented material and the views and opinions of other scholars are also expressed largely in that form. Schensul (2008:232) states that "a document is a text-based file that may include primary data (collected by the researcher) or secondary data (collected and archived or published by others) as well as photographs, charts, and other visual materials. Documents constitute the basis for most qualitative research". Hence, as a qualitative research instrument, documentary observation allows for the interpretation of documents by the researcher to give voice and meaning around the topic under study. The content of *Death and the King's Horseman* was analysed with a view to drawing out aspects of clash of cultures and textual indications which explicate it as a significant leit motif in the play text.

4.4.2 Stage Production Process Instrumentation

The instrumentality of bridging the gap between page and stage served as a tool for research. This is essentially true because the process of converting written words into concrete images would yield information hitherto concealed. The process of production, therefore, served as a fundamental data collection instrument. This is so because the researcher's "personal

insights, knowledge, and experiences of the social context is critical to accurately interpreting the phenomenon of interest" (Bhattacherjee 2012:106). His role as both researcher and play production director made him an instrument of inquiry. Play production thereby became a process for research as it unveiled meaning hidden within the literal context of the playwright's construct and displayed same upon the physical node of performance. This is suitable because the director is a researcher seeking meaning and play production suffices as a method for achieving same.

Staging the play required collaboration with actors and other designers (lighting, costume, props, sets) for the production to be achieved. They were involved in the process and the researcher got them to understand the nature and purpose of the production in order to create an ensemble. This is essential because each step in the process of production is expected to yield varied levels of meaning making. At the stage of reading rehearsals and staging (blocking), their observations and comments helped in articulating meaning thus enriching the interpretation given to the literary text in performance.

Reading rehearsals provided a forum for analysis, both for actors and other designers. Analysis in this context provided them the opportunity to further deepen their understanding and depiction of the world of the play thus helping in instrumentation (how data is gathered). Stanislavski (2009:8) notes:

> The creative purposes of an analysis are:
> 1. The study of the playwright's work.
> 2. The search for spiritual or other material for use in creative work, whatever the play and one's own part in it contain.
> 3. The search for the same kind of material in the actor himself (self-analysis). The material considered here consists of living, personal memories related to the five senses, which have been stored up in an actor's emotion memory, or acquired through study and preserved in his intellectual memory, and which are analogous to feelings in his role.

4. The preparation in an actor's soul for the conception of creative emotions- both conscious and especially unconscious feelings.
5. The search for creative stimuli that will provide ever new impulses of excitement, ever new bits of live material for the spirit of a role in the places that did not immediately come to life in the first acquaintance with the play.

Through the means of analysis, the instruments became familiar with the whole play by studying its parts. Actors became familiar with their roles and designers developed insights to creating sets, costumes and properties as appropriately required in production. In this manner, they also provided a broader spectrum of understanding for the researcher by being an important part of analysis of the text in the process of production. Gillette (2000:20) notes that:

> Analysis in theatrical production is primarily a search for information and an objective evaluation of the data you discover. Prime sources of this information are the script and other members of the production design team- the producer, the director, and fellow designers.

The nuances observed in order to showcase pretextual contexts were largely depicted through actors and other designers on stage. They therefore became instruments used by the researcher/director to communicate his intentions (interpretation) through dramatic representations. After all, Lincoln and Guba (1985) have argued that context is heavily implicated in meaning and that humans are the research instruments.

4.4.3 Post Production Enquiry Method

The stage performance served as a platform for eliciting information (interpretations) from the audience. It is envisaged as an instrument which transformed the audience into respondents and discussants especially as the primary purpose of staging the play is to display the interpretation of the dramatic text in concrete terms for the respondents to comment on. The performance was not for mere entertainment but a quintessential instrument for collecting data. It was for this purpose that the research questions were presented in order to facilitate a post performance interaction with the respondents through focus group discussions and questionnaire.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Morgan (2008:352) declares that "focus groups are a form of qualitative interviewing that uses a researcher led group discussion to generate data". This exercise helps respondents to describe their experiences and share their views with a group of participants as well as the researcher (Wimmer and Domminick 2000:119). By and large:

> The defining element of focus groups is the use of the participants' discussion as a form of data collection. In particular, there is no requirement to reach consensus or produce a decision; instead, it is the participants' conversation about the research topic that is of interest (Morgan 2008:352).

Post-performance enquiry through focus group therefore guided the content of discussion towards the interests of the researcher, gave the researcher a large role in determining how the interactions would proceed, provided access to a greater number of participants and helped to achieve the goal of hearing from a wide range of perspectives (Morgan 2008:352-353).

The research questions are as follows;

1. How does a text produce meaning differently from the intentions of its author?

2. How does the interface between script and stage produce various layers of meaning?

3. What cultural values exist in the world of the play and how do they trigger a clash of cultures?

Hence, in a semi-structured manner, the respondents were asked around the following questions which served as discussion guide;

1. Have you read Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* as a dramatic text? If yes;

1. In what way(s) does it correlate with this performance?

b. Are there elements you have noticed in the performance of this play that you have hitherto missed in your reading of the play text?

2. What would you consider as the major theme within the performance?

3. Which characters drive the conflict in the performance?

4. What cultural values are displayed in the performance and in what forms are they presented?

5. What is the function of cultural elements in this performance?

6. Do you see clash of cultures in the performance? If yes, how is this demonstrated?

7. What would you say is the role of women in portraying cultural values in this performance?

8. Do you think this performance is relevant to contemporary society? If yes, how?

Two groups with a medium composition of eight (8) participants comprised the FGD respondents.

Questionnaire

Questionnaire is a quantitative tool for gathering numerical data to determine rate or frequency of a phenomenon under study. Asika (2009:75) submits:

> A questionnaire consists of a set of questions designed to gather information/data for analysis, the results of which are used to answer the research questions or used for the test of hypothesis…. The questionnaire is an instrument for gathering data beyond the easy physical reach of the researcher.

In this study, close-ended statements are designed to guide the respondent into making decisions from a range of options drawn in the Likert-type summated scale format. According to Kothari (2004:84) Likert-type scale:

> consist of a number of statements which express either a favourable or unfavourable attitude towards the given object to which the respondent is asked to react. The respondent indicates his agreement or disagreement with each statement in the instrument. Each response is given a numerical score, indicating its favourableness or unfavourableness, and the scores are totaled to measure the respondent's attitude. In other words, the overall score represents the respondent's position on the continuum of favourable-unfavourableness towards an issue.

Respondents, reacting to specific statements, are made to specify their level of agreement/disagreement on a scale of four; 4. Strongly Agreed 3.Agreed 2. Disagree 1. Strongly Disagree. This range helped in verifying the levels of agreement and disagreement to the interpretation of the text as treated on stage. A hundred and fifty two copies of the questionnaire were randomly distributed to the audience on the night of the production.

4.5 Sources of Data

The primary source of data in this research is the literary text, *Death and the King's Horseman*, which provided the spur for the research. In this research all meanings sprung from the text and its treatment (interpretation) was presented to an audience, who served as respondents to the performance, in order to invite them to a further interrogation of the text's interpretation by the researcher.

Secondary sources largely included the library and the internet. These assisted in cross-referencing, interrogating, expunging erstwhile positions and interpretations while justifying the relevance and nature of the present interpretation.

4.6 Method of Analysis

It is imperative to analyze items of information collected in order to interpret and explore their implications to the phenomenon under study. This study triangulates both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis in interpreting and exploring the implications of data collected. Content analysis provided the framework for getting data through a new historicist (deconstructive) reading while statistical analysis is conducted for data gathered via the instrumentality of questionnaire.

Content Analysis

This study largely adopted new histioricism in its content analysis. As a form of content analysis, new historicism is deconstructive in approach. One of its fundamental criteria is that there are no masterpieces. This suggests that there is no pre-stipulated transcendental meaning in texts or a 'most dignifying way' to seek the meaning of texts. Like deconstruction, new historicism is a method of reading which dismantles the notion of structure or centre of meaning in a text by implying the existence of multiple meanings in texts. It thrives on the interpretation of texts as essentially sign systems rather than conclusive clusters of unilateral definitions. This is why semiotics is a quintessential parameter in such reading, especially in performance.

According to Balme (2008:118), Semiotics "looks at phenomena (including theatrical performances) in terms of the signs and codes used and the way they generate meaning". In other words, semiotics is the study of signs and how they articulate meaning. Deconstruction, in this light, is the application of semiotics in order to demonstrate the existence of deeper levels of meaning beyond superficial expressions in texts. Derrida (1984:316) had stated:

> To write is to produce a mark that will constitute a kind of machine that is in turn productive, that my (an author's) future disappearance in principle will not prevent from functioning and from yielding itself to reading and rewriting…. The situation of the

> scribe and the subscriber, as concerns the written, is fundamentally the same as that of the reader.

This denotes that every text is a sign, and each sign could mean a different thing to different readers (spectators). Semiotics developed out of linguistics, largely from the notions of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Pierce that the structure of language goes a long way in determining the structure of sign systems and their meaning. Before this notion, "language had been viewed as a transparent medium through which reality could be set down accurately and shaped into an aesthetic form" (Dobie 2012:151). However, for semiotics:

> Languages make meaning only differentially; that is, within a given language, words only derive meaning by reference or contrast to other words. The particular system makes meanings possible through rules, conventions, distinctions. Saussure theorized an important difference between *la langue* (the overall language system) and *la parole* (the particular speech act or utterance). *La parole* only means something because of the enabling system of *la langue*. Since not only languages but also human behaviors and customs are signs that operate within the organizing patterns of social systems, Saussure called for a 'science of semiology' (Reinelt and Roach 1999:110).

Although this position accentuates that meaning can only be derived within the superstructure that creates it, it also hints at the arbitrariness of meaning in language. Of more significance, especially for this study, is the explanation of language system as an engagement with signs. Dramatic and performance texts are a combination of encoded signs which the reader/spectator is expected to decode, untie or unfix. Aston and Savona (1999:15) relate the study of textual material as a "consideration of its unfixing in the plurality of signifying processes generated through the activity of reading/spectating".

Saussure had mentioned that signs are usually bifurcated, embodying the signifier and the signified. The signifier is what is seen or heard while the signified is the concept or meaning the signifier generates (Dobie 2012:153), (Reinelt and Roach 1999:110). Unlike Saussure's position that sign would refer to a definite term or concept, deconstruction "went a step further, stating

that any given signifier may point to several different signifieds…. In short, a signifier has no single signified, or mental concept, as the structuralists assume but instead leads to a chain of other signifiers" (Dobie 2012:159). Derrida had mentioned that there is no 'transcendental signified' in any text.

The role and function of new historicist analysis is not to locate the meaning of a text, as there is no singular, central meaning to a text but a plethora of possible meanings (interpretations) which are in themselves only provisional. Viewing the reading of a text in this manner ultimately suggests that meaning is fluid and contextual. For Soyinka and other scholars to limit *Death and the King's Horseman* to a depiction of mythopoecy and warn against a study that seeks to understand the nature and implications of clash of cultures as a theme, is therefore heinous on scholarship. For if this researcher had towed their line of thought, this study might never have been attempted, at least by him. An essential paradigm of new historicist analysis is the priviledging of cultural contexts in determining meaning and interpretation of things.

One way deconstructive analysis works is through oppositional reading. This kind of reading aims at showing that what a text pretends to be saying is different from what it is really saying. It deliberately opposes a text's claim at having a centre, a coherence and unity of meaning by seeking significations that work against such very claim. Norris (1988:7) had stated that "to 'deconstruct' a text is to draw out conflicting logics of sense and implication, with the object of showing that the text never exactly means what it says or says what it means". Binary oppositions are often located within the framework of a text thus revealing which of the pairs are privileged, or made superior, over the other. Binary oppositions could include boy against girl, man/woman, white/black, Western/African, right/wrong and so forth. An undoing or reversal of the opposites a text priviledges would reveal subtextual possibilities against the pretextual

intentions speculated therein. It is such possibilities that made Dobie (2012:161) to reiterate deconstruction as an important form of content analysis: "Whenever a group seeks to reverse traditional hierarchies or destabilize priviledged binaries, deconstruction becomes a valuable tool".

Another way deconstructive analysis operates is via a rewriting (rereading) of a text. It seeks to find gaps, silences and blind spots in order to fill them with meanings they potentially suggest. Cuddon (1999:877) notes:

> A reader tends to construct a sub-text for herself or himself, imagining or interpreting what is *not* said or *not* done (and *how* it is not said or done), what may be implied, suggested or hinted, what is ambiguous, marginal, ambivalent, evasive, emphasized or not emphasized- and so on. In doing all this, the reader exercises insight into the 'unconscious' elements in the work itself and thus elicits additional meanings.

This kind of reading supplements the centre with the margins. Silences are given voice while the voice is silenced. What is not said becomes the subject of reading and interpretation over what is actually said. There is also a contradictory reading, which Derrida refers to as 'double reading' which permits the reader to read a text in order to eke out determinate meanings in the first instance while allowing him, on the second reading, to unveil or go against the established or identified meaning by emphasizing, thus revealing, the inconsistencies, contradictions which undermine the 'determinate meanings' found in the first reading thus leading the text to deconstruct itself. This kind of reading encourages the text to undermine itself thus illuminating its inner complications and incompatibilities. Dobie (2012:163-164) posits:

> When incompatible meanings are brought to light, the text deconstructs itself. These incompatible meanings undermine the grounds on which the text is based, and meaning becomes indeterminate. The text is not unitary and unified in the manner that logocentrism promises. Recognizing that a text has multiple interpretations, the reader expects to interpret it over and over again. No single reading is irrevocable; it can always be displaced by a subsequent one. Thus interpretation becomes a creative act as important as the text undergoing interpretation. The pleasure lies in the discovery of new ways of

> seeing the work. Of course, the reader must express those discoveries in logocentric language, the interpretation will deconstruct itself as well.

New Historicism as a tool of analysis becomes relevant because it indicates the possibility of deriving meanings which could be different from what might have been intended. Also it is apt to this study because it sees everything as a text (sign) hence providing a basis for the reading of texts on the page (words as sign systems), and texts on stage (audio visual codes). In other words, New Historicism allows for both dramatic (literary) and performance texts analysis.

In a dramatic text, stage directions, characterization, dialogue become sign systems and essential yardsticks for analyzing meaning. For performance texts:

> semiotics provided a vocabulary and approach that seemed to work for performance analysis. In particular, the aspects of staging- the contribution of director, designer and actor to interpreting a work- could be described relatively accurately in the language of signs. The color of a costume, even the shape of furniture or the hint of a gesture- all these things were signs on stage generating meaning for the spectators. It became the task of performance analysis to read and interprete these signs (Balme 2008:118-119).

What this entails is that meaning is always only significant at the point of reception. It is the reader (spectator) who ultimately decides the meaning of a text for himself/herself. This is a characteristic consequence of deconstruction (semiotics). It is therefore possible for the same dramatic or performance text to mean differently to different people. This is so because:

> texts, as forms of representation, are polysemic. That is, they contain the possibility of a number of different meanings which have to be realized by actual readers who give life to words and images. Though we can examine the ways in which texts work, we cannot simply 'read off' audiences' meaning production from textual analysis. At the very least, meaning is produced in the interplay between text and reader so that the moment of consumption is also a moment of meaningful production (Barker 2000:11).

Therefore, while the researcher is equipped by New Historicism to go against authorial intentions in the reading and staging of *Death and the King's Horseman*, this study does not desire to insist on its interpretation of the text as 'the' meaning of the text upon the audience.

This is because often "the role of the director as the producer of meaning in production has been caught up in issues of authority and forced interpretation instead of being recognized as coproducer of meaning with the audience and the dramatic text" (Reinelt and Roach 1999:114). Hence, the researcher/director invites the audience to a fresh reading of his performance text wherein he seeks to gather their analysis as an essential aspect of the meaning and potentialities of the performance. Elam (1980:32) notes:

> Theatrical signification is not reducible to a set of one-to-one relationships between single sign-vehicles and their individual meanings. If it were possible to break down the performance text into atomic units of meaning, the task of analyzing theatrical semiosis would be elementary, but by the same token the performance itself would be scarcely more than a parade of items to which the audience has merely to assign fixed values. The production of meaning on stage is too rich and fluid to be accounted for in terms of discrete objects and their representational roles.

It is in this light that audience involvement in analysis becomes imperative. While the researcher unpacks the codes of the dramatic text to create the performance text, the spectators are inadvertently also at liberty to determine the meaning communicated to them. Deconstruction, as a tool of analysis asserts the multifarious nature of texts in meaning making and searches out for codes (places in the text) which reveal slippages of intention and spillages of meaning. Slippages here refer to a loss of control of language by an author in the text assigned to communicate his intentions but ends up communicating something else while spillages refer to the connotative implications of messages, which could spill beyond intended meanings. Deconstructive reading (analysis) of *Death and the King's Horseman* is expected to reveal the binary oppositions of meaning in the text, dismantle the idea of the text as about myth rather than a clash of cultures, reveal possibilities of deeper and newer meanings and demonstrate the undecidedness of determinate, or transcendental, meaning of a text.

Content analysis through new historicist/deconstructive reading aided the analytical reading of this research while a semiotic investigation of performance codes projected its descriptive bearing. Both established the study as an interpretive investigation. The qualitative methodology adopted for this study enriched this research in drawing out deeper levels of meaning and interpretation to texts, especially as it explores the transitory scape of written texts into performance texts.

In analyzing audience responses, statistical analysis is also adopted. Ukala (2006:40) notes that:

> Statistical analysis of data is not a common feature of research in Theatre and related disciplines because of their literariness. They entail mainly descriptions, narration, textual interpretations, application of theories and principles, for example, of dramaturgy and performance, and criticism. The written word is the chief tool for these and it is more often illustrated by plates (photographs), figures (for example, designs of costume and set) and video cassettes or compact discs than by statistical tables. Hence one encounters many books, dissertations and theses in Theatre Arts without statistical tables.
> Yet, some researches in the discipline involve the design and administration of questionnaires. With these, numerical or countable data are collected. And, once they are collected, nothing else can be done than to analyze them.

This study, which borrows from quantitative methods to enrich its qualitative outlook, required statistics to serve in "analyzing its data and drawing conclusions therefrom" (Kothari 2004:131). The univariate method of data analysis is adopted to read responses generated from questionnaires. This method is useful in establishing frequency distribution, that is, number of times a certain answer was given to a particular question after which the percentage of the research population which answered a particular question in a peculiar way is calculated in order to make inferences and draw conclusions therefrom (Ukala 2006:42). This helped the researcher to simplify the presentation and interpretation of data in easily comprehensible form.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the ‘how’ of this research. It captured the structure and process that the research was carried out. It also depicted how literary text analysis, stage production, audience response analysis combined to help in generating data for this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

PLAY AND PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

5.0 Introduction

> In each case the written dramatic text emerges as a site of negotiation between constructed orderliness and forces which would challenge it (Sheperd and Wallis 2004:21).

A dramatic text, which is often the starting point for analysis and meaning making, is characteristically set against itself. A deconstructive reading (interpretation) of a text reveals a text's internal oppositions and contradictions between its intention and its (potential) meanings. It is therefore imperative to note that an interpretation of *Death and the King's Horseman* as a play on the clash of cultures already sets the tone for oppositions and oppositional reading for analysis in this study. This is because it goes against the dominant logic of interpreting the text set largely by the author and invokes the text to speak for itself. The interpretation of the text in this study is set on the mural of textual (dramatic and performance) analysis for the receptive appreciation of readers (both on the page and on stage), as meaning is intended at the point of conception but comes alive in reception. This does not however disregard the meaning generated in the process of play production, but that all the effort is subject to audience perceptions of the material presented. Deconstruction and semiotics are deployed to aid in this appreciation (analysis) because, as Reinelt and Roach (1999:113) indicate, "Semiotics provides a means of articulating the production of meaning-in-performance, while deconstruction provides purpose or motive (the dismantling of usually operative logics of interpretation)".

This chapter therefore concerns itself with the analysis of the dramatic text (in the context of this study's interpretation), the performance text and an analysis of responses from

respondents (audience). In analyzing responses, quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (FGD) data are triangulated to support and/or refute findings from each other. The respondents are largely drawn from the intellectual community; the FGDs are composed of intellectuals from the Creative arts and Literary studies while 100% of respondents to the questionnaire are educated, from various fields of study (Arts and Humanities 79 (49.3), Social Sciences 17 (11.3), Sciences 19 (12.7), Law 6 (4.0), Engineering 14 (9.3), Others 19 (12.7) (Researcher's Field Survey, 2016). Although the FGD respondents mostly have prior exposure to *Death and the King's Horseman* as a literary text, 113 (75.3) of the 150 questionnaire respondents did not have such an exposure, with only 32 (21.3%) having read the text. However, this does not infer that the audience is ignorant of play texts. In fact when asked if they had read any play texts, other than the primary text under study, 130 respondents said Yes (81 Strongly Agree, 49 Agree) while 20 respondents said No (12 Strongly Disagree, 8 Disagree) (Research Student's Survey, 2016). This composition and mix provided a robust and wide spectrum of perception and reception of meaning especially to the stage production to which they served as audience. Their responses are relevant only to the extent of them having watched the performance for this study.

Data gathered through the instrumentation of documentary observation, production process and performance analysis, questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) are presented in this chapter. Each instrument is deployed to address aspects of the objectives in this study, which are interwoven, as they combine to help achieve the aim of this research. The study, which is qualitative, analyses the quantitative data qualitatively. The information are gathered, presented and analyzed in line with the study's objectives and are interpreted to capture the aim of the research.

5.1 Dramatic Text Analysis: Contrapuntal Significations in *Death and the King's Horseman*

The term, contrapuntal, was coined by Edward Said (1993:59) to describe how texts of English Literature should be read in order to reveal their deep implication in imperialism and colonialisation while providing a counterpoint, or counterpoints, to the meaning of the text hitherto hidden therein. Of contrapuntality, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2007:49) state that:

> By thus stressing the affiliations of the text, its origin in social and cultural reality rather than its filiative connections with English literature and canonical criteria, the critic can uncover cultural and political implications that may seem only 'fleetingly addressed in the text itself'.

Contrapuntal significations therefore refer to notions hidden in the text which reveal the innumerable possibilities of meaning around the 'peripherality' of clash of cultures in the unfolding of events in *Death and the King's Horseman*. Signification attests "to a whole tissue of signifiers, potentially endless, through which meaning moves and slips in an elusive play of signification" (Reinelt and Roach 1999:111). It therefore attests to deconstructive reading.

Clash of cultures does not serve as the meaning of the text but only as a mark or hint at possible meaning; as leitmotif, hence the attempt to give it centrality in this study's interpretation. This is against the pervasive tendency of seeing the play as anything but about clash of cultures. Pilkings, for instance is seen as 'a mere catalytic incident'. Elesin is either seen as unwilling or as a victim of the 'objectification' of women. Olunde is normally perceived as a lover of his culture who gave his life to restore balance to his race and dignity to his family line. By challenging these 'canonical criteria', this study engages contrapuntality in drawing out significations that indicate the play as about clash of cultures while further pointing towards other possible interpretations.

The play text presents us with a world laid on the foundations of myth, roles (honour) and responsibilities (duty) communally shared and, thus, upheld. As such, some scholars have stayed

within the periphery of this world which on its own terms never triggered a tragic concern in the play. Elesin never outrightly refused to commit suicide, he was stopped; Olunde was never required to commit suicide, he chose it. But such is the world the play presents, a world rife with meaning in search of interpretations. Within the matrix of that world, are contestations deriving largely from the presence and interference of an alien world which spark up discontinuity and tamper with the orderliness of its host's existent cosmos. The opening scene of the play reveals a people who are purposeful and festive in their endeavours. The stage directions reveal:

> ELESIN OBA enters along a passage before the market, pursued by his drummers and praise-singers. He is a man of enormous vitality, speaks, dances and sings with that infectious enjoyment of life which accompanies all his actions (Soyinka 2012:9).

There is a buoyant celebration which projects an atmosphere of joy and contentment often alluded to the African way of life. This explains why the market is the setting. It is a trade place for cultural pride and aesthetics. The people are seen to be carrying out their tasks with relish and delight. Yet there is a hanging premonition of doom in such a festive ambience. The stage directions have earlier portended thus:

> A passage through a market in its closing stages. The stalls are being emptied, mats folded. A few women pass through on their way home, loaded with baskets. On a cloth-stand, bolts of cloths are taken down, display pieces folded and piled on a tray (Soyinka 2012:9).

This is a sign of the arrival of twilight, not only for the market which is a symbolic microcosm of the world for the Yoruba, but of a civilization, of a culture, of a people; *aye l'oja orun ni'le* (the world is a market, the other world is home). The women who pass through the market on their way home, loaded with baskets connote that once the *market* (world) is over, each would go *home* (orun) with one's *loaded baskets* (deeds). Elesin's market is about to close. An end approaches, which for the purposes of this study is not blamed on Elesin's cunctatious exhibitions but on Pilkings' intervention in stopping the course of the ritual suicide by arresting

the subject. The wedding only lasts for a moment, after which, but for the arrest, Elesin proceeded with the ritual.

By honing the tone of hope and failure (despair), of boom and doom, of life and death (binaries) in the marketplace, the text draws significant value when it makes the marketplace the battleground for the contestations of actions and cultural wills. Quayson (2001:225) acknowledges thus:

> That this stage of the action is at the marketplace in the twilight of evening adds even further suggestiveness to the unfolding events, for Yoruba culture holds the marketplace itself to be a special location. Its significance lies even deeper in an inclusive idea of sacred space which also extends to *orita* (crossroads), the favoured locale for ritual sacrifice; it is a luminal arena where the spirit world and the real world meet. A proverb in the language affirms that 'the world is a market and heaven is home' showing how important the marketplace is in the culture's conception of cosmos.

By striking the natural flow of life of the Yorubas at the marketplace, Pilkings attacks the very essence of a people and the entirety of their cultural universe. Pilkings' interference with everything has led to catastrophic desistances. There is an underlying attack on the colonial affair upon African subjects who serve under it directly. Amusa, for instance, noted as a good and reliable police officer (Soyinka 2012:26), although a 'moslem', has deep respect for his native tradition, at least the regalia that represent them. Joseph, on the other hand, who is the houseboy of the Pilkingses has been totally eroded of his tradition by Christianity, the whiteman's religion:

> PILKINGS (wearily): Oh, come in Joseph! I don't know where you pick up all these elephantine notions of tact. Come over here.
> JOSEPH: Sir?
> PILKINGS: Joseph, are you a Christian or not?
> JOSEPH: Yessir.
> PILKINGS: Does seeing me in this outfit bother you?
> JOSEPH: No sir, it has no power.
> PILKINGS: Thank God for some sanity at last. Now Joseph, answer me on the honour of a Christian… (Soyinka 2012:27).

The implication here is that Christianity which came via colonialism makes one more subservient and devoid of native identity. Pilkings is even amazed at Joseph for trying to be more English than the English. Joseph appears as a robot while Amusa, whose name could actually stand for the corruption of the English word 'amuser', with all the amusing (pun intended) embarrassments he suffered in the hands of the women in the market, still cuts the figure of a man doing his duty; but not without the emasculating blight his connection to Pilkings invokes:

> AMUSA: I am tell you women for last time to commot my road. I am here on official business.
> WOMAN: Official business you white man's eunuch? Official business is taking place where you want to go and it's a business you wouldn't understand.
> WOMAN (makes a quick tug at the constable's baton): That doesn't fool anyone you know. It's the one you carry under your government knickers that counts. (She bends low as if to peep under the baggy shorts. The embarrassed constable quickly puts his knees together. The women roar.)
> ….
> WOMAN: Go back and tell the white man who sent you to come himself.
> AMUSA: If I go I will come back with reinforcement. And we will all return carrying weapons.
> WOMAN:Oh, now I understand. Before they can put on those knickers the white man first cuts off their weapons.
> WOMAN: What a cheek! You mean you come here to show power to women and you don't even have a weapon (Soyinka 2012:34-35).

Although highly humorous, this scene reveals the deep disaffection seated in the hearts of the natives for Pilkings, what he represents and all that represents him. This is especially so because, Pilkings contrasts their worldview and belief system. When he is told by his wife, Jane, that 'bastard' is not a word to be traded at will in 'these parts' because the natives find it quite insulting, he rubbishes her off calling her a "social anthropologist" while attacking the extended family practice of the natives (Soyinka 2012:30).

The cancerous effect of Pilkings' interference with the natives' way of life takes an even deeper root when set in oppositional contexts. A reversal of binary oppositions, modernity versus tradition, while priviledging the former reveals such repercursions. Within the culture of the

Yoruba, in the text, is the concept of betrothal. A parent might pick a spouse for her child if she wishes. Iyaloja has picked a girl for her son and has made necessary arrangements towards a wedding. The commonplace knowledge that the girl is betrothed to Iyaloja's son hints at a silence which infers that the son has no say in the matter. As the mother wills, so the son must do. Iyaloja has insisted, "My son's wish is mine" (Soyinka 2012:21). This is the native order of things, same as the expected ritual suicide of Elesin Oba.

Olunde, who is expected to take over as Elesin, when his father passes, is made to distort that arrangement when Pilkings decided to ship him to England for studies. This act makes Elesin bitter but Pilkings never cared. It is this very act that leads Elesin into seeking a bride at the peak of his journey to ritual suicide. His first son had been taken away by the white man, naturally he needs a heir. Even when the son returns to bury his father, he is still bent on returning to complete his studies rather than staying back to become the new Elesin. Such is the debilitating effect of Pilking's interference in the cosmos and psyche of the natives.

Beyond Pilkings' acts, the text's body language hints at a priviledging of African culture over the European opposite. The musical vivacity which introduces us to the Yoruba characters and setting at the beginning of the play sharply contrasts the sounds that welcome the "European" scenes. Ebron (2002:34) had noted that, "African music is said to create a communal experience". Music, therefore, is deployed in this text, on the one hand, to depict the communal and festive nature of the natives. There is, on the other hand, a marked drabness in the musical cues of the European scenes. "A tango is playing from an old hand-cranked gramophone" (Soyinka 2012:23), "A masque…. The band plays 'Rule Brittania' badly…. The orchestra's waltz rendition is not of the highest musical standard" (Soyinka 2012:45-46). This is a deliberate effort to discountenance the Europeans and deny them of their musicality; 'Tango', 'waltz', and

'masque' are European in demeanour, yet they are not adequately performed in the text: further evidence that the text is mainly concerned with the portrayal of culture from the context of difference, of clashes. It counterpoints the basic notion that "African music was generally thought of as noise in the West" (Ebron 2002:35). Pilkings actually says to his wife, on the persistent drumming of the natives that, "They (the natives) always find an excuse for making a noise…." (Soyinka 2012:27). The text presents a disharmonious rendering of discordant tunes which clearly depict European music as cacophonous thus leading to a reversal of notions, a privileging of African music, a deconstruction.

The portrayal of difference further implicates the notion of 'Othering', or the 'Other', a postcolonial term for the depiction of cultures in terms of European superiority over the 'other', Africans and Asians, with the latter group attempting to reverse such canonical ordering in a "politics of survival" (During 2001:13). As this study is not consciously interested in postcolonial discourse, difference is not analysed in the frame of otherness but in Mikhail Bakhtin's more amenable content analysis concept of alterity. Ashcroft *et al* (2007:9) indicate that:

> The term 'alterity' shifts the focus of analysis away from these philosophic concerns with otherness – the 'epistemic other', the other that is only important to the extent to which it can be known – to the more concrete 'moral other' – the other who is actually located in a political, cultural, linguistic or religious context….

Culture is, hence, not apprehended from 'Otherness' but from its apartness, from its distinctiveness:

> The novelist must understand his or her character from within, as it were, but must also perceive it as other, as apart from its creator in its distinct alterity. Importantly, dialogue is only possible with an 'other', so alterity, in Bakhtin's formulation, is not simply 'exclusion', but an apartness that stands as a precondition of dialogue, where dialogue implies a transference across and between differences of culture, gender, class and other social categories (Aschroft *et al* 2007:9).

It is on this ground that cultural values embedded in the text are analysed in their pretextual rights. Playwrights who create texts that have intercultural encounter, as *Death and the King's Horseman* does, are often obliged in alterity to understand the cultural parlance of characters they create in context 'apart' from the creator's person and intentions. The characters' cultural distinctiveness becomes a precondition for dialogue so as to express the alterity of conflicting values. This provides a platform for a contrapuntal interrogation of cultural values by projecting African (Yoruban) values side by side European perceptions of modernity. This is important because, as Quayson (2001:223) notes, "The events in the play are… placed within the context of colonial realities in which Yoruba culture is under the domination of a clumsy British administration". Aschroft *et al* (2007:10) state that, "The self-identity of the colonizing subject, indeed the identity of imperial culture, is inextricable from the alterity of colonized others, an alterity determined, according to Spivak, by a process of **Othering**".

Alterity that presents a potential of clash of cultures taps from contrapuntal potentialities of viewing dialogue between racial and cultural 'others' as an important platform for engaging aspects of *Death and the King's Horseman*'s pretext, text and context. Contrapuntality as an argument in this chapter, helps us to see cultures in the light of "a dialectic category to be apprehended as a field of contending forces: a milieu of exchange, encounter, confrontation and possibly conflict" (Bel, Brouwer, Das, Parthasarathi, Poitevin 2010:xvi).

Cultural values are, generally, commonly held beliefs and standards of what is right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable, permissible or unpermissible, relevant or irrelevant, workable or unworkable within the unique 'apartness' of specific communities (cultures). Hence by drawing two different cultures into a common text, a common ground for interaction, there is certainly bound to be exchanges that instigate conflict via either the intolerability of difference or

the imposition of one uniqueness upon an 'other', or both. This apparently provides nexuses for clash of cultures. Such a tendency, of having two distinct cultures in the same text, is a bountifully fertile ground which nourishes the seeds of conflict planted in *Death and the King's Horseman* and harvested in its production as performance text.

At the heart of the portrayal of culture and the clash of cultures is the place of mores and morality on society. Mores are traditional ways and beliefs of utmost significance accepted without questions and depicting the essential moral codes of a people. Morality relates to the conformity with such moral codes identified as right conduct. A fundamental base and primacy in the cultural ordering of social life is community. Life is organized around the essence of communities. This is why culture is often defined from community angles; of collectives, groups, a 'people's' way of life, not individual idiosyncrasies. The Africans are aware of this and that is why all roles and actions are intricately connected to yield benefits for the community.

But so do the Europeans; Pilkings is in the midst of the natives for king and country. Left to his personal whim and caprices, he bets he would have been "sleeping peacefully at home" (Soyinka 2012:47). Home, being England, of course. So, respect for community is an essential cultural value. The value of the Africans lie, in the text under study, in the act of a man to commit suicide in order for the community to survive. It is an accepted norm, at least among the natives. The Europeans also accept that a man can give up his life in order to save others from harm, but that has to be circumstantially necessary especially when there are no visible options at sight. These notions appear subliminally appropriate in their apartness until a dialogue occurs between them. The European value system discredits the willful act of taking one's life as criminal while the Africans consider it necessary for existence and is a primordial form of renewing life and society. The textual analogy of the Captain who blows himself up to save the

harbor to Elesin's task of committing willful suicide to save his race did not stop the conflict that emanates from a clash of cultures (Soyinka 2012:51).

One of the most vocal characters in *Death and the King's Horseman* is Jane Pilkings. The immediate relevance of her characterization and status in the text is no other than the fact that she is the wife of the District Colonial Officer, Simon Pilkings. Yet, she engages in cultural debates and is quite loquacious wherever and whenever she gets the chance to freely express herself. This trait could suggest that European wives are free to express themselves as they deem fit. In contemporary society, most women clamor for such a free-spirit; such 'right' and freedom. That, for them is modernity. The Bride is the only other character highlighted, although in contradistinction, 'under' the spotlight of her husband, as a wife. Swapped from her bethroted role to one man to the wife of another in a matter of minutes, the nameless African character does not utter a single word from the beginning of the dramatic text to the end. This would connote that African wives are indeed subservient, hence having no place in that 'modernness' which carries a European 'civilised' appeal, especially to the contemporary woman. Jane could order her husband to command his subjects into obedience (Soyinka 2012:60) but the Bride remains muted to subjection, voiceless. Yet, she is the one, in her seemingly murky meekness, who carries the albeit fading and precarious but all important hope of the race.

The spine of the cultural values that lie with the Yoruba community is perhaps the notion of destiny. Communal roles and responsibilities are tied to the belief in predetermination. An Elesin's blood, for instance, already defines for him the responsibility to commit ritual suicide whenever a King dies, and once he is dead his first son is required to become Elesin after him, thus maintaining both cosmic and terrestrial balance. This is hardly reversible and the community accepts it as an important value system; destiny is sacrosanct and none can escape it.

In fact, the ability of an Elesin to go ahead with the suicide provides a space of endearment and reverence among the members of the community for him. Failure to achieve this can be as degrading as being referred to as "an eater of left-overs", a man of no consequence. This is the cultural normalcy of the Yorubas in *Death and the King's Horseman*.

For the colonial master, destiny is not a foreclosure of what one must be in life. For them, destiny is a result of man's independent choices and actions; hence no one should be mandated by any native custom to take any action detrimental to one's own freewill and life. It is this belief system that leads Pilkings into abducting Olunde and sending him to England for studies, even at the expense of the Yoruba belief system that the first son of the Elesin must replace his father when the father is dead. It is also that European worldview that could not comprehend the eager expectation of an entire community on an individual to kill himself willingly on their behalf. For Pilkings' English mindset, that is at best barbaric and must be stamped out. That is the nature of his colonial mandate. On the ritual suicide, this ensues between him and his wife after reading Amusa's report on the impending action of the ritual suicide:

> JANE: Did I hear you say commit death?
> PILKINGS: Obviously he means murder.
> JANE: You mean a ritual murder?
> PLIKINGS: Must be. You think you've stamped it all out but it's always lurking under the surface somewhere (Soyinka 2012:26).

In order to establish the 'supremacy' of his belief system he breaks the flow of the process of ritual suicide thus unleashing a string of clashes emanating from a difference in cultural perceptions and values.

With all the intensity of tensions generated by the clash of cultures, the text presents an inadequate dialogue between two cultural frontiers which seem both insoluble and unadaptive. Both cultures are rigidly preconditioned, conceptually insulated and axiomatically fixated

beyond negotiations for acculturation and enculturation to mutual influences and potential interactive benefits. This strain leads the conflict of cultures in *Death and the King's Horseman* unto deeper consequences. Quayson (2001:209-210) aver that:

> Like the *babalawo*, he (Soyinka) engages with the myths of the gods (culture) to extract contemporary significance, but, unlike them, **his prescription for coping with the stress of cultural transition is not propitiatory rites but an assertion of will to the utmost**…. The notion of the frontier is significant for Soyinka as he meditates on the relationships between his culture's conceptual system and its place in the world (emphasis mine).

Cultures in contemporary life are open to influences. A key characteristic of culture is its fluidity, its ability to evolve rather than being a static cosmic viscosity. Although the stubbornness of cultural wills between the two cultures propels the tragic consequences of the text in uncompromising proportions, the world today requires diplomacy and integration even as identity remains central in both the uniqueness and differences of cultures, both local and global.

Pilkings expects the natives to adopt the European way of life but makes no effort to adopt African values for himself. His conversation with Elesin Oba reveals this imbalance in his enculturation crusade:

> ELESIN:….**You stole from me my firstborn, sent him to your country so you could turn him into something in your own image. Did you plan it all beforehand? There are moments when it seems part of a larger plan. He who must follow my footsteps is taken from me, sent across the ocean. Then, in my turn, I am stopped from fulfilling my destiny. Did you think it all out before, this plan to push our world from its course and sever the cord that links us to the great origin?**
> PILKINGS: You don't really believe that. Anyway, if that was my intention with your son, I appear to have failed.
> ELESIN: You did not fail in the main thing ghostly one. We know the roof covers the rafters, the cloth covers blemishes; **who would have known that the white skin covered our future**, preventing us from seeing the death our enemies had prepared for us. The world is set adrift and its inhabitants are lost. Around them, there is nothing but emptiness.
> ….
> PILKINGS: **I have lived among you long enough to learn a saying or two**…. (Soyinka 2012:62-64).

While Pilkings desires to make the natives into something of his image, he simply picks an idiom here and there without affecting his European image. Cultural contact between Europe and Africa erodes more of African value systems than European etiquettes. Such practices reverberate in global cultural discourses and identity imaging debates. We hear of African Americans, Hispanics but hardly does one come across American Africans or German Asians. This is a contemporary implication of colonial incursion on local belief systems. Those whose identity is neither African nor American, neither Latino nor American are faced with identity crisis which was largely spurred through slavery and colonialism.

Dramatic text analysis addressed issues of meaning and meaning generation in *Death and the King's Horseman*, an interrogation of cultural values and how they spur contrapuntal readings (cultural clash) while implicating contemporary trends and the relevance of the text to today's society and social life. The next section concerns itself with an assessment of meaning as it transits from script to stage with the aim of depicting a clash of cultures.

5.2 Rite of Passage: From Script to Stage

The pretextual nuances of *Death and the King's Horseman* articulate a dramatization of the Ogunian rite of passage as an important source for tragedy. Beyond the dramatic replication of "Ogun's journey through the abyss of transition…as a parallel for the actor and his relationship with the community (where)… the actor's entry into and re-emergence from the area of transition, the whole community is re-energized and enriched with new strength" (Quayson 2001:207). Rite of passage here signifies the dramatic text's entry into the passage of production (transition) and how it is expected that this process would 're-energize and enrich' meaning in the text's outcome as a performance text.

Like in the 'chtonic realm', the text is induced into liminality, where meaning, or "culture is in a 'subjunctive mood', a state of 'as if', 'maybe' and 'perhaps" (Turner 1982:82-84), in order to make it emit meanings which answer to an interpretation based on the clash of cultures. Rouse (1999:146) had noted that "The relationship between text and performance is... a question both of the possible and the allowable". Liminality therefore, provides a mode or platform for a subjective reading because in this state the text shows obedience and humility in following the reader's intentions (perceptions). In stage production, the dramatic text is subdued to yield to interpretation as the researcher/director deems. The dramatic text is seen in this study as a potential, as a tea bag which substance (meanings) can best be apprehended only when dipped in the hot water of performance/production. The process of that transition is expected to elicit deeper levels of meaning stitched unto the gamut of clash of cultures. Elam (1980:209) rightly states that:

> the written text/performance text relationship is not one of simple priority but a complex of reciprocal constraints constituting a powerful *intertextuality*. Each text bears the other's traces, the performance assimilating those aspects of the written play which the performers choose to transcodify, and the dramatic text being 'spoken' at every point by the model performance – or the *n* possible performances – that motivate it.

The role of the director in a play production that is inspired by a dramatic text requires an understanding of that text, the analysis of the said text, then its interpretation as he so desires. Johnson and Akpan (2013:1) note that:

> *Understanding* the script, *analyzing* the script, and *interpreting* the script, are quintessential to any meaningful directing work on stage…. By interpretation, it implies that a director not only has full grasps of the script; not only can lay the script bare as per its chemistry, constituents or preoccupations; not only sees and appreciates the playwright's point of view; but with all of this have mapped out his line of presentation, or construction, or production – to give the play his desired flavor or point. The word interpretation goes beyond the mere stagination of the play using human approximations from the playwright's paginations using imaginary personages. Interpretation dramatizes the meaning(s) of the script from the director's perspective, taking cognizance of every

> conceivable nuance and incorporating same into the scheme to allow for the play's meaning to come alive.

A thorough study of the text also motivates the placement of actors and objects on stage and movement. This exercise is called blocking and, in the process of production, it provides the director with the means to 'construct' his interpretation of the text in physical forms. But this usually occurs after auditioning and casting.

Auditioning and casting are often done outside immediate textual parameters largely because the director is simply in search of media or agencies that can embody his visions of the play penciled for production. These media are to a great extent found in the form of human bodies; actors and designers. The first step in the production process that necessarily inspires an interaction with the dramatic text is the reading rehearsals. Here, casts read the text together for the first time to create a general impression of the world the text carries. The element of performance that becomes readily instrumental in drawing out meaning at this stage is the voice. Berry (1992:14) avers that "every actor wants to know that his voice is carrying what is in his mind and imagination directly across to the audience. He wants it to be accurate to his intention and to sound unforced. He wants to know that he is carrying the listener with him for, in the end, it is the voice which sets up the main bond between him and his audience". Dobie (2012:159) rightly notes that:

> Tone of voice can also be meaningful. It can, by exaggeration, indicate irony. It may also indicate a specially intended meaning behind a statement. By changing the vocal emphasis to different words, you change the meaning…. And so precise meaning slips away, suggesting many meanings, rather than a single, fixed, clearly identifiable one….

The vehicle of spoken language becomes essential in generating and conveying meaning, at least at the level of intention. So when the actor opens the reading of the play with this statement:

> PRASE-SINGER: Elesin O! ELESIN Oba! Howu! What tryst is this that the cockerel goes to keep with such great haste that he must leave his tail behind? (Soyinka 2012:9),

The researcher/director immediately realized that the actor needs to understand the context in which the character speaks because of the way he read the lines. This is not unconnected to Wright's (2000:154-155) observation that:

> Language does not make meaning, nor can it be interpreted in isolation. Any poststructuralist analysis of language must take account of the social and cultural contexts in which texts are constructed. It must also consider the ways in which language use is constituted in the context of particular discursive relations which predict certain power relations…. Such relations are not monolithic but are pervasive and negotiated and, through their subtle operations, work to form subjectivities.

This leads to an explanation of the context and purpose for staging the play; an adumbration of the poststructural (deconstructive) approach to staging and the leit motif of clash of cultures as goal. Berry (1992:15) also notes that:

> Just as, in everyday life, how a person uses language (or does not use language) is part of the essence of that person, so the actor has to be ready for the dialogue to take us into the world of the character – he has to be able to pick up the resonances of the character through the words given in the script. He must touch the character through the language. Yet also allow that language to bear on our own experience so that it is real for us, and this asks for a continual blending of our own truth with the truth of the character…; and each piece of writing asks for a different connection between the actor and his audience, a different style of speaking perhaps.

Hence, mode of speaking becomes an essential trait for distinct characterization for actors. Natives and Europeans, as demonstrated by the actors, convey meaning via different styles of speaking. The Praise-Singer's lines cited above required of the actor to render them with an interweaving of praise chant, taunt and wooing as becoming of praise singers from the context of the performance.

The role of intonation and language rendition in performance also made the director to encourage the adoption of accents by actors playing European characters in order to sharpen

their characterization but that proved highly stage managed and unrealistic, at least at the first instance. This tampers with the attempt at verisimilitude. In order for the acting not to seem false, actors are made to speak in tones expected of each atmosphere per situation while other elements of performance are employed to communicate their cultural differences.

While the dramatic text presents us with a market as setting where Elesin and his Praise Singer approach, the performance text, although maintaining the market, sets the tone of interpretation by creating action and dialogue that intensifies the atmosphere of impending conflicts. This is achieved via blocking. Iyaloja, the market women and the girls are seen engaged in activities befitting of a market while they anticipate Elesin's ritual suicide in high spirits. There is also the need to showcase the communal disposition of the natives as we see children genuflecting before elders as a mark of respect while the mothers also ensure that their daughters have greeted Iyaloja, the mother of the market. The mothers are also shown to portray the motherly (communal) responsibility of raising children to respect culture and traditions, even when such children are not their biological offspring. This is in line with the notion that the community comes first. So when we later see Elesin falling at the feet of his son, we quickly realize that there is a reversal of cultural values. It is an abomination for the son to set eyes on his father alive; the white man causes this to happen (Soyinka 2012:56).

There is also the subtle allusion to the negative influence of western education on the natives' customs. Iyaloja's son to whom The Bride is betrothed is also mentioned in the dramatic text. In the performance the role takes more significance to showcase, beyond aesthetics, the influence of western culture on native custom. He follows the lady all over town to the market. The women correct him in love by explaining to him that their tradition does not allow for such public display of affection since love between a man and his wife is a private affair. This is

especially the reason why Joseph, despite his deep 'christianization' runs back to knock when he enters to see the Pilkingses in an embrace (Soyinka 2012:27); he runs back to give the man and his wife some privacy; a testament to his, howbeit remote, connection to his native values.

Perhaps of greater significance, on the scene that introduces Iyaloja's son in the performance text, is the depth of his love for his betrothed, the community's approval of it and Elesin's desire that she be given to him. As tragic as this portends, Iyaloja leads the community into making a sacrifice by handing the girl over to him. Although their sense of propriety dents their high spirits, Iyaloja explains why it behoves on them to yield to Elesin's final, although heavy, desire. By yielding to his demands, the women (community) demonstrate their penchant for defending communal values over personal desires. This also impacts on the audience the pain of young love wrenched from its natural course, such tragedy.

In order to capture the essence and significance of Elesin to the Yoruba community in the performance, the market is frozen when Elesin makes his first appearance. This is done to signify that the world, which is symbolized by the market, stands still for the man whom the fate of their race depends upon. He renders the 'Not I' poetic phrasings among the still images of market women who only animate after he boastfully wonders why those who are considered immortal should fear death. They ask if he fears death too. There, he displays his readiness to die for them all. Dance and music is introduced to show the community's reverence and trust for Elesin. In between he seeks for a bride and is granted.

The action is fluid and communal during the native scenes. Actors are made to interact with the audience. They even move into the auditorium to fully relate with the audience in order to involve the audience in the action of the stage. At the same instance, the stage is both thrust and arena like. A raised platform is constructed along the path that leads into the acting area and

actors stand atop it and converse with one another and with the audience, creating the Grotowskian oneness between performer and spectators.

The home of the Pilkingses is set deep into the stage and a wooden verandah is constructed and set straight across the stage to create an impression of proscenium staging. This setting cuts off the audience. Blocking the scene in this manner is done to invoke theories of Western/African performance and conventions of staging in the presentation of clash of cultures. The European scenes are set aloof the audience, who are treated as if they were not present in sharp contradistinction to the African scenes which even acknowledge the presence of the audience.

5.3 Performance, Semiotics and Meaning

Performance elements are usually the parameters for performance analysis. For a semiotic analysis of performance such elements readily assume cultural significance on stage. Therefore, cultural elements are deployed in performance as sign systems to help with the communication of meaning in the articulation of clash of cultures. The Union Jack, which is the symbolic flag of British identity and presence is hoisted as a dominant leit motif through out the performance to denote that the entire world of the performance occurred under Colonial occupation. This signifies the presence of an alien culture on the lives of the natives. The flag helps to depict periodization and the general situation the actions set underneath it. By having the flag fly above the scenes and actions in the performance, the intention is to suggest that the lives of the natives are subjugated under colonial dominance. It is merely an intention because Wallis and Shepherd (2010:159) state that, "A set that stands on stage has a direct representational meaning; but meaning is not purely denotative". Hence, the flag could mean different things to different viewers.

Costumes are also deployed as cultural elements to portray cultural difference. The natives wear *iro* and *buba* to signify their African identity. When Elesin enters the market he is dressed in a plain red attire, Ogun's colour of passion, sacrifice and regeneration, hence suggestive of a man on his way to commit ritual suicide. But when he seeks to be honoured, the women robe him in a resplendent *aso oke* which literally refers to a cloth of the upper class. Olunde, Amusa and Joseph who are Africans with European leanings wear costumes to suggest same. Olunde is clad in suit, Amusa wears the local police uniform while Joseph is seen in shirt and shorts. Ekweariri and Nwosu (2015:57) have stated that, "costumes play an essential role in the creation and transformation of meaning. A costume is both a signifier (by means of its materiality) and a signified (functioning as a semiotic element within a sign system; thus... costumes cannot be dissociated from the semiotic".

This plays out significantly when the whites, who have a tradition of organizing balls where they use attires, other than everyday dresses, as costumes for their dance. The Pilkingses wear the *egungun* mask and practice their dance steps for the ball in anticipation of winning first position. The *egungun* mask to the natives is a sacred attire. Masks represent gods and ancestors for the natives, they signify spiritual power and reverence. But for the Europeans, it is just another 'fancy dress'. Thus Amusa's cultural shock when he goes to report the incidence of impending ritual suicide to his colonial District Officer appeared quite out of place for the Pilkingses. But it is no mere party dress for him. He simply refuses to talk to the man in what he tags, "uniform of death" (Soyinka 2012:25).

In Scene Four of the performance, the whites are gathered, clad in various African attires and masks at the ball, commotion ensues offstage which shows masks and masquerades scampering away from men in uniform. When Jane Pilkings makes to check what is happening

offstage, wearing her *egungun* fancy dress, Olunde appears from behind her and she is shocked because she is not expecting anyone to be around. The sight also captures a funny picture of a timid masquerade before a man. In the African society men run from masquerades when they appear from their sacred groves not masquerades quivering at the sight of men, mere mortals. There is therefore a tampering of the accepted norm and order of things. This leads the director into creating lines, alongside the goal of depicting clash of cultures, which makes Olunde utter, "A strangest sight I saw tonight, that masquerades should run away from men. Indeed our order has been reversed". The dramatic text is also incredulous of the naïve secularity to which the Europeans "desecrate an ancestral mask" (Soyinka 2012:50).

Music is yet another cultural element deployed to convey semiotic appraisal. Besides being an important element of performance, music serves as a cultural value which highlights the nature and temperance of peoples (Ebron 2002:24). Hence, the native scenes in the performance showcase music communally rendered; actors are seen singing together as groups. This impresses a signification of the primacy of community on the audience as each voice blends into the rhythmic symphony of communal harmony and unity to create an orchestra of a people bound together in a collective musicality that is their concordant destiny. To deepen such communal ethos, all their songs are rendered in Yoruba to capture and convey the pretextual spirit of the performance. But, as Ebron (2002:24) has noted, "In contrast to African music, Western Art music is more often than not represented as socially detached, aesthetically transcendent, and performatively individuated. In this contrast, we can see how *difference* is made". Accordingly, the music that introduces us to the house of the Pilkingses and the Residency are electronically mediated. The sound comes from a soundbox, placed deep on the stage, thus readily disclosing a distancing effect, a separation between stage and auditorium in

sharp contrast to the rich 'live' music that emanates from the redolent cultural tonalities of the natives. Bowskill (1979:314) rightly affirms:

> Music is a major weapon in the theatre and can be put to powerful use. It can blatantly and dramatically arrest the attention of the audience. It can also work with such skilful subtlety that the audience can be unaware not only of the music but also of the effect it is having upon them.

Music is quite central to the manifestations in *Death and the King's Horseman*. There is a high blend of threnody and festive enjoyment in the contextual framework of the text derived from its pretextual roots. In other words, songs and music derived from the Yoruba culture are a parallel plot serving in clarifying and harnessing the story, atmosphere and impulse of the play (Appendix K). Hence, the director deploys a heavy dose of music, drumming and chants in depicting the tensions, anxieties and values embedded in the text for the purposes of performance aesthetics and articulation of meaning. Scenes that have to do with native youths, who are exposed to western education, have them singing songs that have lyrics with a combination of Yoruba and English languages to depict aspects of enculturation. But the elders present always interfere in such songs bringing them to abrupt stops. This is a cultural intervention because the acts that accompany the songs do not appeal to their culture and one of the mothers, in performance, had insisted that, "Our culture must remain the same from generation to generation", providing no room for intercultural, intertextual dialogue.

Musical instruments also take a high semiotic significance in the performance. *Bembe, a* Yoruba traditional drum is placed in the market to depict the musical vivacity of the Yoruba people. As a cultural element, the drums are situated within the pretextual cosmogony of the Yorubas symbolizing celebrations, both festive and ritual. Hence, placing the drums in the market connotes a musical totem of the festive and ritual essence of the natives and hints at impending aspirations and actions in the drama.

Proxemics and kinesics are essential analytical parameters for a semiotic reading of performance; both refer to the technicalities involved in the use of the theatre and the stage. While proxemics is concerned with the deployment and signification of space use in the theatre, kinesics has to do with the study of movement within that space. Hence, proxemics and kinesics combine to provide an interrogation of space and action, the most fundamental basis for audience perception and interaction in the theatre. Aston and Savona (1999:114) attest that, "Not only do spatial codes set out to define, shape and construct the meaning of the spectating and playing spaces, they also govern relations between performers on the stage, and performer-spectator interactions".

Hall (1966:1), alluded to have initiated proxemics in performance analysis, defines it as "the interrelated observations and theories of man's use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture". The ABU Studio Theatre (Drama Village) is architecturally designed to accommodate the three basic kinds of space (theatre); arena, thrust and proscenium (Appendix J). For the purposes of this production, the thrust theatre is generally utilized essentially because the audience are required to participate in the performance in order to ultimately serve as respondents. The action on stage spills into the audience at intervals so as to draw them into meaning production while achieving the special effect of audience interaction within the fictional universe of performance. The use of set to demarcate the thrust and create the proscenium in the European scene also exemplifies the use of space to set the auditorium away from the action on stage. This is important because understanding meaning in a dramatic text and interpreting (translating) it on stage requires a thorough comprehension of how the text is designed to work on stage (Wallis and Shepherd 2010:145). In other words, how space is used is an integral part of a play's production of meaning. Aston and Savona (1999:115) admit that, "Variations in the

proxemic relation between the actor and the spectator can radically alter the spectator's perceptions and reception of a production". Placing the drummers, as set, in the auditorium, among the audience also signifies the desire to blur, no matter how faintly, the fictional lines of theatrical activity and reality, drawing the audience into the mise en scene.

Ahupa (2015:84) has posited that, "theatre happens in space and the use of space in theatrical performance does affect the audience in as much as it invites them in or shut them out of the performance". What happens in space is largely movement, kinesis. Aston and Savona (1999:116) aver that:

> Whilst configurations of actors wthin a space constitute a codified method of generating meaning, so too do the movements of actors within the space. Studies of the human body as a means of communication, i.e. *kinesics*, have also been used by theatre semioticians to analyse and codify gesture in performance.

When Amusa, in the performance, opens the gate of the verandah set (that removes the action from the audience and creates a proscenium effect) into the Pilkings' home, he is confronted by African masquerades dancing a European dance to a European music. This effigy of his culturally revered images shocks him in total that he refuses to relate his reason for being there (at least by speech) and when he is leaving the scene, jumps over the fence and runs into the audience from the side (of the auditorium). As hilarious as the movement proves, based on audience reaction, the movement in space is no mere aesthetic display of comicality. The kinesis connotes a total rejection of the trappings of European spaces, both physical, cultural and educational, and a reunion with his own native values, although partially, hence the reason for joining the audience by the sides. The next scene actually shows him in the market, with his folks, although, there to perform, sadly, European duties.

Use of space and movement combine formidably to create theatre. In fact, Beckerman (1979:10) defines theatre as an occurrence by humans in space (and time) before an audience.

So, the fundamentality of use of space and movement reaches its crux when tempered by an audience. The audience is quite vital to theatre and performance, and even more so to this study. This is essentially why the next section covers the audience and its role in theatre experience and the search for meaning. However, contrapuntality, alterity and the production process and performance analysis help in the apprehension and communication of meaning in the light of the aim of this research, at least at the point of conception and conceptualization. Audience response reveals the perceptions of the efforts of the researcher in production performance by the viewers.

5.4 Viewer-Response Analysis, Discussion and Implications of Findings

There exists an approach to literary criticism known as reader-response criticism. Its basic principles affirm that:

> Interpretation of meaning is assumed to be an act of reading, thereby making the ultimate authority not the writer nor the text but the reader. A literary work thus becomes an evolving creation, as it is possible for there to be many interpretations of the same text by different readers or several interpretations by a single reader at different times (Dobie 2012:131).

Wallis and Shepherd (2010:195), while discrediting New Criticism for assuming that there exists a particular 'right' way of reading, and it is only when such a 'way' is competently applied on a text that it would yield up its meaning, submit thus:

> Instead of assuming a community of readers who all had the same literary 'competence', so-called reader-response criticism notes the variety of readers and audiences, who all have their own competences, derived from their own cultural and social positioning. Readers and audiences thus bring with them values and ideas when they approach a text. They bring expectations based on their previous experience and their familiarity with texts' genres and signals. Hence they have a role in contributing to the meaning of, or 'completing', the piece.

It is this particular notion, which sees the audience as an integral part of meaning making that informs the staging of the performance so that the audience could play an active part in interpretation. Beckerman (1979:131), citing Marshall McLuhan, posits that, "A work of art has

no existence or function apart from its *effects* on human observers". Theatrical experience is not complete without audience response to whatever is presented because they are a fundamental part of communicating and appreciating meaning. Aston and Savona (1999:120) posit that:

> Given the premise that theatre operates as a sign system, as a system which sends out signs or messages, the receiver of the signs also merits consideration within the theatre frame…. (This is because) theatre is attended by the 'non-innocent' spectator whose world view, cultural understanding or placement, class or gender condition and shape her/his response.

Beckerman (1979:132) advised that, "We must also be prepared to direct our attention not at quantitative factors of audience response, but to utilize our sensibilities, kinesthetically as well as intellectually, to investigate the qualitative factors of the theatrical experience".

This study, however, combines both quantitative and qualitative factors by adopting two methods for analyzing responses from 'interpretive communities' of audiences; Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Questionnaire. Although questionnaire and FGD have been deployed in this research, the rationale in this deployment is to further validate the perspective/insight of meaning across the broad strata of community rather than numerical quantity itself. As earlier stated in the study, the respondents for FGD are largely drawn from the departments of English and Literary Studies and Theatre and Performing Arts, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria while the public audience responded to questionnaires.

The quantitative data gathered from questionnaire are analysed to complement data from the FGDs. Interpretations are drawn using the Likert scale to assess and validate the level of agreement of respondents to questions based on simple majority criterion. A total number of one hundred and fifty two (152) copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents comprising male and female, after the performance. One hundred and fifty (150) copies of the questionnaire were filled and returned.

The data from the questionnaire were analysed using the SPSS programme to present numeric information while descriptive analysis was deployed to provide a summary of the responses and their implications. The numeric data are presented in the form of percentages, to cover the five sections of the questionnaire, and responses from respondents were analysed to deduce and make inferences based on the objectives of the study which culminated into the study's findings. The five sections included;

1. Socio-demographic data
2. Knowledge of meaning making based on intention versus interpretation
3. Level of agreement on the medium that communicates meaning better (dramatic text or performance text)
4. Level of agreement that cultural values create the conflict in the performance
5. Rate of agreement on the contemporary relevance of *Death and the King's Horseman.*

The quintessential reason for audience response in the search for meaning is squarely tied to the second objective of this study which is to determine the gap between the dramatic text and the performance text in the search for meaning. As audience, the respondents served as receivers (readers) of meaning from the performance text, hence the need to get their views of the production as it relates to the communication and interpretation of meaning (in context). This elicited the need to measure their level of agreement on the medium that communicates meaning better between the play text and the performance text.

While 2 respondents (1.3%) to the questionnaire administered did not provide any response to whether watching a play on stage provides more meaning than reading the dramatic text, 3 (2.0%) strongly disagreed, 12 (8.0%) disagreed, 28 (18.7%) agreed, and 105 (70.0%) strongly agreed (Researcher's Field Survey, 2016). From this, it can be deduced that majority of

the respondents ascertain that meaning generation and articulation in play reading is certainly not the same nor as enriching as the medium of performance. This corroborates the information gathered from participants of the FGD conducted both with members of English and Literary studies and those of Theatre and Performing Arts that a stage production of a play text provides better and enhanced understanding for audiences than the cold text to a reader. One group, which is constituted by respondents who had read *Death and the King's Horseman* and have now watched it as staged for this study, aver to this impression; "so many lines had no meaning to me, especially the riddle of the 'Not-I-Bird'. But for me when I read it I called it the 'noti' bird. From the performance I actually got a lot of understanding" (FGD Group 2 Response).

However, there appeared a wide disparity as to the depiction of meaning between the medium of the play text and the performance text in terms of similarity and difference. In the quantitative survey, 2 respondents (1.3%) did not answer whether the play text and the performance text present same kinds of meaning, 10 (6.7%) strongly disagreed, 49 (32.7%) disagreed, 35 (23.3%) agreed while 54 (36.0%) strongly agreed (Researcher's Field Survey, 2016). This connotes that majority of the respondents said they strongly agree that a play text presents the same kind of meaning that a performance text showcases. But in the FGDs, the discussants clearly suggest that the performance text is different from the play text in terms of presentation of meaning. The group's general impression is articulated thus:

> the stage realisation of any play text requires some artistic interference of the concept from which the director visualises the play and tries to put it into life. And then definitely the crew, the cast and crew do their production meetings and agree on certain things, so we are seeing the text through the eyes of the producers. So the performance is different from the text in the sense that you see it the way the producers want you to see it, so that's a major difference (FGD Group 2 Response).

Another participant captures the group feeling thus:

> Yes, I think of course there are some points of difference when you read the play you find out that there is this deep presence of the use... especially in terms of the use of language. Today the performance has shown some great amount of the use of the Yoruba language, the use of traditional language which of course you don't see playing out in the play text FGD Group 2 Response).

The other FGD group also remarked, when someone said the performance reveals a meaning of the text as about clash of cultures, "To the playwright it wasn't. But in the production we can even read the clash of cultures because the two worldviews are presented" (FGD Group 1 Response). This shows that, for them, the performance text is different in meaning from the playwright's claim. This discrepancy is not far removed from the composition of the respondent groups. Majority of the population responding to this issue via the questionnaire had not read the play text so they simply assumed that it is the content of the dramatic text that was poured before them. On the contrary plane, the FGD discussants had read the text and could easily notice the differences in meaning between the playwright's text and the director's text. Essentially, the difference in perception reveals that meaning is dependent on the experiences of the recipient, hence demonstrating the polysemous inclination of texts. It also implicates the notion of interpretation as a reader's meaning could be different from an author's intention. An FGD participant had remarked that:

> a play text is different from a performance text, so what we have seen tonight is essentially just the candidate's own perspective and interpretation of that text, that is what he had already set out to tell us, that he is disregarding what Soyinka had said, what Soyinka is trying to coerce us into, don't look at it from that perspective, look at it from this other perspective, he is saying no I'm throwing away that your perspective that you are asking us to look at it from and this is my perspective and there are a lot of examples from within the text itself that shows that I can do it this way, I can present it this way. (FGD Group 2 Response).

A text has multifarious voices beyond the intention of the playwright. Even after having staged the play, a director's interpretation is neither final nor binding on spectators as the meaning of the text because others could still interpret the same text in yet different contexts.

The question then arises as to whether the performance of a text limits meaning(s) inherent in the play text. This question is important because a director's interpretation usually captures aspects of the play text to suit his contexts, hardly does it pursue all potential meanings or interpretations. From the questionnaire, 1 respondent (.7%) did not respond to the question, 37 (24.7%) strongly disagreed, 40 (26.7%) disagreed, 36 (24.0%) agreed while 36 (24.0%) strongly agreed (Researcher's Field Survey, 2016). This means that majority of the respondents said they disagreed that the performance limited the meaning inherent in a play text. Hence, performances, rather than limiting meaning, showcased perspectives and new vistas situated within a text which could have been missed or ignored through the mere reading of the play text. This compliments the general view of the FGDs that a performance is a reflection of meaning derived from the source text.

As both groups of respondents had earlier averred that the performance text has more advantages in communicating meaning than the dramatic text, there was the need to seek reasons why. When asked if elements of performance such as costume, make up, movement, music, set help in enhancing meaning making on stage, 1 respondent from the questionnaire (.7%) did not respond to the question; 7 (4.7%) strongly disagreed; 5 (3.3%) disagreed; 34 (22.7%) agree; while 103 (68.7%) strongly agreed (Researcher's Field Survey, 2016). This means that majority of the respondents strongly agreed, 103 (68.7%), that elements of performance provide more avenues for meaning making in stage production than just reading a play text. The FGDs are of the view that the performance elements significantly served as cultural elements which further helped in the articulation of meaning.

> **RESPONDENTS CHORUS:** Yoruba dance, Yoruba songs, acting, mannerisms, the drumming, the language itself.

RESPONDENT 4: We can see cultural elements from their dressings, locations, from other paraphernalia found in performance.

RESPONDENT 5: Even the religions, the rites, their rites bind the Yoruba together in their view of life, making them more compatible (FGD Group 1 Response).

Performance elements assumed the status of cultural elements in their perception of meaning. This demonstrated that elements of performance are veritable tools in the communication of meaning on stage.

In its goal to interpret *Death and the King's Horseman* as a play about clash of cultures, this study had set out, as an objective, to examine the cultural values embedded in the text as likely sources of conflict and tragedy in the play. The leit motif of the stage production is wrung around cultural values in order to reveal points of conflicts emanating from a misconception of, and intrusion on, cultural values in the stage production. Consequently, it became imperative to seek the level of agreement that cultural values are the reasons for conflict in the performance from the audience. 2 respondents (1.3%) of the questionnaire administered after the performance did not respond to the question; 4 (2.7%) strongly disagreed; 15 (10.0%) disagreed; 42 (28.0%) agreed; while 87 (58.0%) strongly agreed (Researcher's Field Survey, 2016). This shows that majority of the respondents strongly agree that a clash in cultural values is the major conflict in the performance of *Death and the King's Horseman*.

Respondents from the FGDs variously alluded several meanings to the play text, especially from their initial readings (Appendix C and Appendix D), but were largely of the view that the performance showcased a display of the clash of cultures. One response from an FGD participant actually corroborates contrapuntal analogies and alterity perceptions earlier rendered in this study on the dramatic analysis when he states that:

> in the production we can even read the clash of cultures because the two worldviews are presented. So from that there is already a clash because we have two opposing worldviews; the worldview of the Europeans is quite different from the worldviews of the Africans and once you have a difference there must be conflict (FGD Group 1 Response).

This attested to the fact that contrapuntal significations had spilled, or slipped, into the performance text revealing the notion of difference situated within the same fictional world as a parameter for engaging on an appraisal of conflict from the perspective of clashes. The other FGD group also submitted thus:

> Wole Soyinka being a theatre practitioner, who has also studied the theories of theatre and all of that, has only appropriated that as an instrument for him to deliver his message, and that message is very simple, that no culture is better than the others. The intellectualism and the grounding in the Yoruba cosmology and vis-a-vis the British system, has been played out clearly to show that for the Yoruba, they have an answer and they have their own culture that answers to whatever situation while you have your own, and it is not by error that he keeps pairing characters in the play, they could see that Pilkings has come to Africa and has learnt some aspects of the Yoruba culture but it didn't stop him from being the British person that he is. So he is conscious about who he is. It is the same thing that Olunde has gone to England, he has understood their ways of life, it didn't change... infact Pilkings expected that Olunde would have become British while he has refused to become African (FGD Response Group 2).

Therefore, cultural difference is:

> the major theme of the play in performance. And it exists between the whites and the blacks due to the fact that the whites did not understand the culture of the blacks and they were trying to let them see but due to his being adamant to what he believes in, that is the worldview of the whites, saying that what they are doing is barbaric and they see it as the trend that needs to be followed (FGD Response Group 2).

It became evident that cultural values are the source of conflict in the performance because two worldviews are directly in disharmony, each refusing to accept the values of 'the other'. Some of thevalues identified from the play text and depicted in the performance text include the notion of ritual suicide as essential to the Yorubas, self sacrifice for the good of community, apprenticeship and role inheritance, destiny and predestination. The audience (respondents) were invited further into an examination of these cultural values.

When asked if it is important for Elesin Oba to undergo ritual suicide for the good of his people, in the Yoruba context as showcased in performance, 3 respondents (2.0%) to the questionnaire did not respond; 20 (13.3%) strongly disagreed; 26(17.3%) disagreed; 49 (32.7%) agreed; while 52 (34.7%) strongly agreed. This implies that majority of the respondents both agreed 49 (32.7%) and strongly agreed 52 (34.7%) (Researcher's Field Survey, 2016). This explicates an understanding of ritual suicide as a fundamental need and cultural value among the Yorubas by the audience. In the FGD, the knowledge existed that, "this tradition of burying somebody with king, it has been in Yoruba cosmology for long, it is not something that just come out of the blues, it has been for long for we saw the reflex in Ife recently, the king died and the Abobaku ran away" (FGD Group 2 Response). In fact the group alluded that the theme of the performance is tied to this practice:

> I think, for me the clash of cultures remains the characterization of Elesin Oba and Pilkings and their dispositions in terms of their ideas and how they see life, how they see humanity, this one is saying that no we should have something to die for, this one is saying death is something that I was born to, to die to save my people, so they cannot agree, so while this one is saying his own, this one is saying his own, so they cannot move forward, so what that resulted to is a total collapse (FGD Group 2 Response).

But while the responses agreed that it is important for the Elesin to commit suicide, the questionnaire respondents strongly agree, with Pilkings, that it is barbaric for one to take one's own life; 1 respondent (.7%) did not respond to the statement that it is barbaric for one to take one's own life in the name of tradition; 18 (12.0%) strongly disagreed; 15 (10.0%) disagreed; 34 (22.7%) agreed; while 82 (54.7%) strongly agreed (Researcher's Field Survey, 2016). This implies that majority of the respondents strongly agree to the fact that it is barbaric for someone to take his own life for whatever reason. Perhaps, this is a demonstrationof the 'modern' inclination of the audience towards discarding cultural values which require death as an essential factor for survival and ritual as a means of propitiation in today's technologically advanced

society. The contradiction here is that while the audience accepts the 'fictional' pretext and text of the performance, they would rather not have such practices spill unto contemporary 'real' society.

They also disagreed that one should inherit the profession of one's ancestors, as is bound on Olunde: 1 respondent (.7%) did not respond; 33 (22.0%) strongly disagreed; 48 (32.0%); disagreed; 29 (19.3%) agreed; while 39 (26.0%) agreed; while 39 (26.0%) strongly agreed (Researcher's Field Survey, 2016). This connotes that majority of the respondents said they disagree that a son should take after his father's profession. It articulates the European worldview of free-will which the whites in the performance stand for. The audience also agrees that one should be allowed to make choices, to chart new courses than abiding by stipulated traditions.

While displaying 'modern' sentiments of freewill, majority of the questionnaire respondents supported the statement that destiny determined what one became in life; 1 respondent (.7%) did not respond; 11 (7.3%) strongly agreed; 14 (9.3%) disagreed; 45 (30.0%) agreed; while 79 (52.7%) strongly agreed. This implied that majority of the respondents said they strongly agree to the fact that destiny determines what one becomes in life. While accepting freewill previously, which suggests their western inclinations, the audience demonstrate their Africanness by strongly agreeing that destiny is the ultimate decider of one's fate, hence corroborating the worldview of the Africans in the performance.

The FGD sessions also apprehended the depiction of cultural values in the performance and how it engenders a clash of cultures. One group's view is captured thus:

> One demonstration for me is the reverence or irreverence with which African artefacts are treated. For Pilkings and his wife to use masquerade costumes to dance their Halloween party just shows the level to which their thinking... in fact by calling them costume...

> costume is a western word anyway, in Africa we don't call it costume, masquerade is the dress of the spirits, the attire of the gods (FGD Group 2 Response).

The group also noted that, "this tradition of burying somebody with king, it has been in Yoruba cosmology for long, it is not something that just come out (sic) of the blues, it has been for long for we saw the reflex in Ife recently" (FGD Group 2 Response), therefore Pilkings was merely disrespectful of the African worldview. This implies that the very ritual suicide which the Europeans intercepted thereby triggering a string of tragic altercations in the performance is a cultural value held in high esteem by the Yorubas in reality, beyond dramatic cadences, till date.

Studying Soyinka's text after over forty years since its first publication required an estimation of the timelessness and contemporary relevance of *Death and the King's Horseman*in contemporary society. To help achieve this, respondents were required to respond to statements with regards to the text's timelessness (in performance) and its contemporary relevance. Majority of the respondents to the questionnaire disagree with the statement that the performance text is best suited for old people with interest in history and culture. 1 respondent (.7%) did not respond; 32 (21.3%) strongly disagreed; 51 (34.0%) disagreed; 39 (26.0%) agreed; while 27 (18.0%) strongly agreed (Researcher's Field Survey, 2016). This means that majority of the respondents disagree.

This response issignificant because the largest population is between the ages of 21-26 and they apprehend that meaning in the performance is not for old people alone. The questionnaire respondents'age range is thus; 44 respondents (29.3%) are within the age range of 15-20 years; 61 (40.7%) are within the age range of 21-26 years; 26 (17.3%) are within the age of 27-34 years; while 19 (12.7%) are within the age of 35 years and above (Researcher's Field Survey, 2016). The composition finds relevance in the fact that, although the play was first published in 1975, and the highest age range of the audience which viewed the performance is

21-26 years, clearly not having been born at the time, the performance done in 2016, it can be asserted, finds adequate audience in determining the relevance of the text today.

On whether the performance lacked value to youths in today's society, 3 respondents (2.0%) did not respond; 41 (27.3%) strongly disagreed; 49 (32.7%) disagreed; 38 (25.3%) agreed; while 19 (12.7%) strongly agreed. This implies that majority of the respondents disagreed. The youth populated audience connects with the meaning in performance and disagree that it has no importance to them.

The performance was highly assessed as duly important and timely today based on this statistics from the questionnaire respondents; 3 respondents (2.0%) did not respond to the question; 4 (2.7%) strongly disagreed; 17 (11.3%) disagreed; 55 (36.7%) agreed; 71 (47.3%) strongly agree. This denotes that majority of the respondents said they strongly agreed the performance finds relevance in contemporary society and future generations. The FGDs also corroborate this assertion. One group agreed to the relevance of the performance thus:

> Yes, in Nigeria for example, it (the performance) is very very vital for us in Nigeria. Let me relate it also to certain programmes that the Federal Government had long ago and are still existing. Like, in order to forge ahead in unity, like the NYSC (National Youth Service Corp) project, you will, openly hear corpers when they are posted to places that are not their own (locale), openly criticise instead of coming to appreciate the culture, the beliefs, the ways, they believe their own is better. They clearly criticise others and that is against the object (sic) of establishing the NYSC programme. So I think that this play here has opened our eyes, I think it has shown us on the need to study and appreciate each other's cultures in Nigeria in order to forge the unity we are talking about. It has an impact on Nigeria (FGD Group 1 Response).

The impression of the significance of the performance is also noted thus:

> what I saw is relevant to our Nigerian contemporary society is lack of understanding from our part is the source of all conflict as we see it here in the play. That is why literature is powerful. It's even more powerful than history because history does not readdress the very events that have happened but here you can extend it to unity, so I

> think it is very relevant in terms of... because most of the conflict, most of the crises we have, if we look at it, the root of it is lack of understanding, we jump into conclusions before we actually study the situation. So in this context it is very relevant (FGD Group 1 Response).

The other FGD group believed that the character of Elesin Oba symbolises the essential relevance of the performance:

> I'm still trying to reconcile myself on (sic) why the... Wole Soyinka would completely obliterate the political perspective and try to focus on culture. But I think he deliberately did it to hide the fact that he is talking to the African leaders, if you like, because they are represented in the character of the Elesin Oba, that is the way I saw it. His pretence, despite all the things his people have given him, his pretence to want to die but refusing to die and asking for more and hanging on, is that not what we've been experiencing? Is that not what our leaders have been doing? (FGD Group 2 Response)

There is however, no obliteration of meaning about the politics depicted in the play, and Soyinka is not to be questioned, but the director. Deconstruction privileges to heighten certain voices while silencing others within a text, depending on the context of interpretation. The director was simply reflecting on aspects of meaning as can be perceived by various readers in different contexts while springing from a cultural view as its scope. The political perspective is indeed a text on its own which invites a 'reading', an analysis of its postcolonial undertones. This performance did not privilege postcolonial debates, but meaning is fluid and dependent on the reader. The responses, however, attested to the fact that the text is upheld as relevant to contemporary society as it presents burning issues in real life today. This also attested to its timelessness.

The role of women in contemporary society and cultural discourse has generated a lot of debates and redefinitions on the subject of sexuality and gender roles in art and literature. Hence, it becomes necessary to appraise the role of women in the defence and dissemination of culture within the context of this study in the stage production. 2 (1.3%) did not respond to the

question; 2 (1.3%) strongly disagreed; 6 (4.0%) disagreed; 61 (40.7%) agreed; while 79 (52.7%) said they strongly agreed (Researcher's Field Survey, 2016). This implies that majority of the respondents said they strongly agreed that women were significant in the cultural crusade. The FGD also avers to the essentiality of women as cultural crusaders. One group member noted that, "Iyaloja and the women, in spite of everything, we can still see that the Yoruba culture came out strong; it didn't die in the process. So we can say that those people hold in high esteem their culture and they are ready to do whatever it is to make sure it continues, or survives" (FGD Group 2 Response). The group's general perception is that:

> in African culture, everybody has a role, so women themselves have a role to play in the cultural setting, don't look at it from the perspective of the western feminist position, women have a special role that they play in the society and we see it displayed here tonight. The women, in the person of Iyaloja was the carrier of culture, in my place we have a society that is supposed to be for men but even within the society there are some few women that are allowed into such societies and they assume certain powers because without them the rites of that particular society would not be complete. So I see Iyaloja as performing her right as a purveyor of culture, as a guardian of culture, she played her role well and she did it well, she represented the culture (FGD Group 2 Response).

The other FGD group also aver that, "the women they play... I can see that they play a way of solidarity to protect their culture. Like when they came to arrest the Elesin Oba, but because of the women, they didn't come (sic) to arrest him" (FGD Group 1 Response). This view significantly attested to the value placed on women with the cultural, and perhaps pretextual, circumference of the performance text. It is interesting to note that out of 150 respondents to the questionnaire administered, 78 (52.0%) were male while 72 (48.0%) are female (Researcher's Field Survey, 2016). Yet, they corroborate the FGD responses, noting that the cultural role of women in the performance is both honouring and benefitting of women.

Lastly, to adjudge the possibility of the performance text having meaning beyond its African origins, respondents were asked if the performance is likely to make meaning to non-

African audiences. 2 respondents (1.3%) to the questionnairedid not respond to the question; 7(4.7%) strongly disagreed; 14 (9.3%) disagreed; 42 (28.0%) agreed; while 85 (56.7%) strongly agreed (Researcher's Field Survey, 2016). This shows that majority of the respondents strongly agree that *Death and the King's Horseman* is still relevant today beyond its pretextual roots.

Besides the triangulation of information generated from the questionnaire and the FGDs, were insights which the focus group sessions uniquely generated. Discussants with prior knowledge of the dramatic text before watching the performance had their own premeditated interpretations based on their individual readings. A few mentioned that the play text, for them, was about the clash of cultures while others posited various interpretations. One participant stated that the play "as just a redefinition of the concept of tragedy. Wole Soyinka is trying to define the concept of tragedy in the context of Africa" (FGD Group 1 Response). Another discussant agreed thus:

> it goes to a very large extent to exemplify his concept of African tragedy. If you remember in his treatise on African tragedy in his *Fourth Stage*, he talked about that ethos that the community has and that it's placed on the tragic character and the failure of the tragic character to carry that communal ethos to its logical conclusion, to carry the action that will help in building the cosmos of the people, to make it stabilise. You notice that in the play itself, Elesin Oba who is supposed to have carried all the problems of the people to follow his Oba and lead him correctly through the abyss of transition so that his Oba will take his rightful place in the pantheon of the ancestors. Having failed, we see that the society, the whole society and the worldview of the Yoruba people now in a situation that is not properly, to use Iyaloja's words, 'at a precipice', even if it could make (sic) tip off. It is a powerful attempt to probably put his theory, the theory of the 'fourth stage' now in paper and on stage in the later end (FGD Group 2 Response).

This shows that for them, the play is about creating and defining a concept for, and of, African tragedy. But another respondent who was of that same view quickly referred to such a view as a pervading misconception after watching the performance because the performance

revealed to him that Soyinka simply hid under the shroud of African characters and themes to replicate the Western/Aristotelian concept of tragedy. He exclaimed:

> Based on my interpretation from my reading of the play text, I used to see it as a form of African tragedy and an attempt by Wole Soyinka to divert from the European form of tragedy, tragic hero should be from a noble family and so on. But at the end I discovered that Wole Soyinka has something hidden in that play but I didn't understand until tonight's performance. First of all, Aristotle says that the tragic hero must be from the noble family, Elesin Oba is from the nobility; it must have a tragic flaw that will lead to his downfall, Elesin Oba had a tragic flaw which is he wants to enjoy himself before leaving which led to his downfall, the downfall of the tragic hero according to the Aristotelian concept must affect all other characters in the play, the society was in chaos, so all the European criteria and steps for trace of the tragic hero is still displayed in the play (FGD Group 2 Response).

The reason for such initial interpretation is not unconnected to formal exposure to the text. Such an exposure usually demonstrates a higher reverence to the playwright and his intentions than to the voices emanating from the text. A respondent shares his view thus:

> I was introduced to a course, Dramatic Theory, and along with the text I also read Soyinka's *Myth, Literature and the African World*, and there is a correlation between *Myth, Literature and the African World* and *Death and the King's Horseman.* Actually, *Death and the King's Horseman*is like a dramatic exposition of Soyinka's theory of tragedy that was found in *Myth, Literature and the African World.* For Soyinka, the essence is on life, continuity. Life is not just physical. There's a life that is more superior, the metaphysical life. So life as we see is what, continuity. So when we read *Death and the King's Horseman*, what comes to your mind is the Yoruba worldview of existence. What constitutes existence? Is existence through just this physical realm or does it have a wider significant portion in the metaphysical realm? Because in the play, even in the preface of the text, Soyinka was complaining that the text though based on certain historical events, is not a historical play, his major concern is with what that play means to the life of the Yorubas at that point in time. That is, the continuity of their race. So the meaning of the play has to do with the essence of life to the Yorubas, how do you continue living? What constitutes life? What constitutes existence? (FGD Group 1 Response).

Others cited meaning of the play from varied perspectives ranging from; "whatever has been destined to happen would happen" (FGD Group 1 Response) to; "It is a clear statement about the European or American lack of appreciation of other people's perspectives on what life should be, this concept of superiority, my ways are the only ways, and he is questioning the logic in that and that is why he has brought those duality you have seen" (FGD Group 2 Response). The FGD

responses showcase the polysemic nature of texts and the depiction of meaning from a reader's context.

Meaning, from the viewing of the performance which the director deliberately intended to showcase a performance on clash of cultures, also inspired varied interpretations from the respondents: "what I get from the reading of the play text is the fact that there is a misunderstanding of interest in the play text, but in the performance we can actually see the clash of cultures" (FGD Group 2 Response), other respondents still held different views from the intention of the director. A group appreciated the meaning of the performance thus:

> What it (the performance) projects is a problem of knowledge and ignorance. Is it right to argue against something that you don't know? I think it is not. You have to know something before you can criticize it or contain it. So, in the drama what I saw is a culture trying to condemn another culture without knowledge. So there's a clash between ignorance and knowledge, which is very glaring and it has led to consequences that are not desirable (FGD Group 1 Response).

The other group sees the performance from the perspective of the character of The Bride:

> Did you hear what she said? 'Where does she come in in this matter?' Where do we come in in Nigeria's situation now? Where does she come in? Nobody is asking her opinion, nobody wants to know whether she wants, even if there's a baby, because we have not been told that there's a baby. He must have shot blank anyways. You understand, but nobody wants to ask her. She is not even... they are not even interested in knowing anything about her and that is the situation we are in, negotiations are going on, things are being done, nobody is asking us. (FGD Group 2 Response).

For this latter group, the cultural clash in the performance is simply marginal, the major theme is the encoded message which reveals the voicelessness of citizens in the affairs of state. They did not value the play from the director's intention to display a clash of cultures but, rather, from its essence in giving voice to the masses. But such should be the nature of interaction between intention and interpretation, a text cannot lay claim to a singular transcendental meaning. Yet, the prevalent notion about the performance from both groups is "Clash of cultures. Soyinka cannot run away from it. He cannot write a text and say that don't look at it from this angle, look at it from this angle, no, we are the receivers, we are his audience, we are the people watching it,

don't tell us" (FGD Group 2 Response). These general responses corroborate the aim of this study. They also broaden the notion of 'text' as an embodiment of texts (meanings). Text is meaning derived from pretextual materials read and viewed in context, hence having a plethora of meanings.

On the issue of cultural values, the FGD respondents recognised that cultural elements like proverbs, songs, dance, mannerisms, and mode of dressing, beliefs and belief systems are depicted in the light of generating duality and clash of cultures. One of the respondents noted that:

> ...from the text you can see that when the young man and the young lady were doing something very modern, the woman had to say no, in our worldview we don't do this, this is how it is done, so he had to come back, the lady had to kneel down, beg and everything was settled. Then, you see the other young lady coming to do her thing, praise singing, going from stage to stage to greet the elders, that again. Then Pilkings also, in his own worldview, also carries that western values to say that no... the whole idea of ball room, for example, is a cultural thing for them which is different from the way we see those people celebrating, so you can see the African idea of celebration and the western idea of celebration, in terms of their dance (FGD Group 2 Response).

Other respondents variously attest that cultural elements exist in several forms:

> **RESPONDENTS CHORUS:** Yoruba dance, Yoruba songs, acting, mannerisms, the drumming, the language itself.
>
> **RESPONDENT 4:** We can see cultural elements from their dressings, locations, from other paraphernalia found in performance.
>
> **RESPONDENT 5:** Even the religions, the rites, their rites bind the Yoruba together in their view of life, making them more compatible (FGD Group 1 Response).

These elements combine to showcase cultural values and the effects they create in generating a clash, hence the tragedy in the text.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that dramatic analysis, performance production and analysis, and audience response analysis combine to reveal meaning in *Death and the King's*

Horseman, from the perspective of clash of cultures. But they also show that such a perspective is only a lane, a view in the matrix of significations wishing to be pursued and apprehended from within the rich and vibrant textuality of the play. Interpretation, which is a contextual assimilation of texts, would always be subject to the appreciation of meaning in drama; meaning beyond authorial intentions and proclamations.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.0 Summary

There is no truth, only opinions! As absolutist as the statement would seem, it is in itself but only an opinion. Every representation is a subjective testatment. Irrespective of pretext, text and context, meaning is susceptible to several and varied interpretations. What informs a play does not necessarily determine the outcome of its performance or meaning production. It does, however, influence its form of expression. This is where pretext remains significant in the interpretation of texts in contexts; it serves as the basis for play writing and performance.The relationship that exists between the dramatic text and the performance text would always be dependent on aspects of pretext, text and context as interpreted by the reader/director.

This research has challenged *Death and the King's Horseman* into yielding meanings from a perspective of clash of cultures. Drawing its pretext from the rites of Ogun and history, the play demonstrates a subtextual ordination of cultural conflict, away from the oft tread path of myth as the major source of textual power in the text. This new context of interpretation is further depicted via stage production for audiences to apprehend and interprete from their perspectives. Rendering a dramatic text in performance demonstrates the limits of reading as opposed to viewing. Elements of performance not only embellish story telling but also engage as semiotic significations always pregnant with meaning, always inspiring varied interpretations.

By adopting both quantitative and qualitative methods in gathering data, interpretation and meaning making has been demonstrated in this study to be largely dependent on reception than conception. Audiences are an important part of textual interpretation and have proven to be more than just mere recipients of meaning. In stage production, elements of performance

coalesce to create a total experience of engagement between the director, the cast and crew and the audience in the ever fulfilling task of seeking meaning. And meaning would always remain subjest to pretext, text and context for they are the parameters upon which interpretation unltimately plays out.

Summarily, Chapter One of this research captures the introduction and background to the study while justifying the need for this research. It also clearly stipulates the aim and objectives of the research, the research questions as well as the scope of the study. Chapter Two interrogates literature on the subject of African drama, Soyinka's art and its meaning, views on interpreting Soyinka and *Death and the King's Horseman*, African cultural values and the depiction of women in Soyinka's drama. It also presented reviews of performances of *Death and the King's Horseman* and their interpretations.

Chapter Three articulates the theoretical framework undergirding the study. It highlights the basic tenets of deconstruction, cultural materialism and New Historicism and Reader-Response as viable basis for engaging in a critical analysis of pretext, text and context in this research. Chapter Four presents the methodology adopted in this research. It justifies the methods, procedures and approaches as they combine to suit the nature of the study. A triangulation of qualitative and quantitative instruments of research proved quite enriching to the research. The chapter also captures the population of the study and the sampling technique adopted at reaching the sample size population.

Chapter Five is the play and production analysis chapter of the work. It highlights the presentation of data and their analysis. It also analyses and discusses data obtained from the sampled population via questionnaire and FGD. These data are interpreted and implicated around the objectives of this study which led to the findings of this research. It is the symbiotic

interconnectivity and interdependence of these chapters which culminate in the sixth chapter that informs the summary and conclusion of this thesis.

6.1 Key Findings

The process of this research has led to the following findings;

1. From documentary observation and play production, *Death and the King's Horseman*, both as a play text and as a performance text, can be seen as a play about a clash of cultures. This is possible because of the textual silences (subtexts) and audience perceptions which betray culture as a quintessential leit motif in interpreting the text.
2. Audience responses connote that Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* is, like every other drama, a super-text or sup.text. Text is basically individual meanings resident in the sup.text. What encodes them together is the sup.text. Hence, 'play texts' are carriers of texts, which could mean differently to different readers. Texts are created at the point of meaning making (reading/reception) rather than publication (writing/production). A publication simply provides a fertile ground for texts to germinate.
3. A stage production is a process, rather than a product, of deconstructive reading. Meaning is not a fixated entity but continuos interplay of pretext, text and context in the articulation of intentions and interpretations.
4. The performance of a play text on stage is more enriching than its mere reading. This is especially because elements of performance combine to disperse meaning for the interpretation of the viewer. Drama is, hence, not written to be read alone. That is simply a first instance. Drama is for performance, for viewership.

5. Audience response in generating meaning is an essential element of interpretation in the theatre.
6. Textual analysis is more rewarding and incisive when what is said becomes the focus rather than who is speaking. A text has more to reveal than whatever its writer would explain on its behalf.
7. A multifarious perception of phenomena is more encompassing and revealing than the insistence on unilateral approaches in the apprehension of phenomena. This is demonstrated in the authorial intention versus community interpretation of *Death and the King's Horseman*, especially in stage production.

6.2 Contibutions to Knowledge

This study established that:

1. Each reader brings his/her meaning to a text independent of the author's intentions thus demonstrating the polysemous nature of *Death and the King's Horseman*.
2. Going beyond the mere appraisal of dramatic literature or analysis of literary dramatic texts in the quest for meaning by indulging the dramatic text in theatre production stirs deeper meanings lying underneath through the media of performance production elements.
3. Audience and audience response is imperative in the search for meaning in theatre by articulating the role and function of audience in interpretation of texts and the production of meaning rather than merely appraising their levels of aesthetic appreciation of performances as seems to be the prevalent norm. From this study, audiences are seen as partners in the conception, articulation and expression of meaning in the theatre.

4. Mixed method techniques in research enrich the process of meaning making in theatre studies. Subjective interpretations, FGDs and questionnaire provide multimodal approaches to the search for meaning in theatre.

6.3 Conclusion

This study submits that a critical analysis of drama, or any work of art, readily suggests that meaning is arbitrary and dependent on the reader. Engaging aspects of pretext, text and context in interpreting *Death and the King's Horseman*, helped to avoid what Quayson (2015:203) tags, as a bane in studying Soyinka's works, as "a 'tyranny of paraphrase' not only in the sense that critics have to unravel the primary meanings of his writing, but also because they are constrained to reSproduce his processes of thinking". This study situated itself in the light of 'producing' markers of meaning, beyond an analysis and depiction of clash of cultures, in *Death and the King's Horseman* which could instigate further and deeper interrogation of texts high above the low bars set by playwrights and their authorial intentions.

This study, by determining the gap between the script and the stage, has doused suspicions of theatre semiotics' mode of enquiry "as reductive, scientific, or somehow inappropriate to the nature of theatre" (Aston and Savona 1999:121), by creating space for the inclusion of 'audience passion' and including the spectator into the mainframe of theatre studies "as an engaged, active receiver" and producer of meaning.

In theatre studies today, especially in Nigeria, there is hardly any study which analyses, or at least attempts to investigate, the intextuality of pretext, text and context in conceptualizing the art and practice of the theatre, or which embarks on a semiotic apprehension of the significant elements of theatre; text, proxemics and kinesics, and audience response, in interpretation and the search for meaning. By treading on this 'unbeaten' path, this study

philosophises that interpretation in theatre is an outcome of the harmonious coalescence of several factors capable of yielding and communicating meaning within the same framework of production and reception. The very sense of total theatre goes beyond the frontiers of engaging all elements of production in performance to include the harnessing of aspects of pretext, text and context in the search for meaning in the theatre (which includes audience) and its effects on global theatre practice. In the long run, each culture establishes her own theatre; and her own processes of meaning making.

References

Books

Abrams, M.H (1999). *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Massachusetts: Heinle and Heinle. 7th Edition.

Adeniran, T. (1994). *The Politics of Wole Soyinka*. Ibadan: Fountain Publications.

Anderson, M.L and H.E. Taylor (2006). *Sociology: Understanding a Diverse Society.* Belmont: Thomson Wardsworth Inc.

Appiah, K. A. (1992). *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Aristotle. (1971). "Poetics". *Critical Theory since Plato*.Ed.Hazard Adams. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc. 48-66

Ashcroft, B., G. Griffiths and H. Tiffin (2007). *Post-Colonial Studies: Key Concepts.* London: Routledge-Taylor and Francis.

Asika, N. (2009). *Research Methodology in the Behavioural Sciences*. Lagos: Longman.

Aston, E. and G. Savona (1999). *Theatre as Sign-System: A Semiotics of Text and Performance.* London: Routledge.

Atkins, J. W. H. (1961). *Literary Criticism in Antiquity: A Sketch of its Development.* , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Balme, C. B. (2011). *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Balme, C.B. (2008). *Introduction to Theatre Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Barker, C. (2000). *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. London: Sage Publications.

Barry, P. (2002). *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Barthes, R. (1974). *S/Z*. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang.

Barthes, R. (1977) "From Work to Text". *Image-Music-Text*.Trans. Stephen Heath. London: Fontana. 156-157

Barthes, R. (1981). "Theory of the Text". *Untying the Text: a Poststructuralist Reader*. Ed. R. Young. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 31-47

Barthes, R. (2001). "The Death of the Author".*Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Lodge D. And N. Wood. London: Macmillan Publishers. 145-151

Beckerman, B. (1979). *Dynamics of Drama: Theory and Method of Analysis*. New York: Drama Book Specialists (Publishers).

Bel, B., J. Brouwer, B. Das, V. Parthasarathi and G. Poitevin (eds). (2010). *Communication, Culture and Confrontation*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Bello, H. (2014). *The Interpreters: Ritual, Violence and Social Regeneration in the Writing of Wole Soyinka.* Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd.

Berry, C. (1992). *The Actor and the Text*. New York: Applause Theatre Books.

Bhattacherjee, A. (2012). *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices*. Florida: University of South Florida.

Blamires, H. (1991). *A History of Literary Criticism*. London: Macmillan.

Booth, M. R. (2001). "Nineteenth-Century Theatre". *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Theatre*.Ed. John Russell Brown. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 299-340

Bowskill, D. (1979). *Acting and Stagecraft Made Simple*. London: W.H Allen.

Brockett, O. and R. J. Ball. (2014). *The Essential Theatre*. Boston: Cengage Learning Inc.

Butler-Kisber, L. (2008). "Representational Forms of Dimension". *The Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods.* Ed. L. M. Given. London: Sage Publications. Vols. 1 and 2

Carlson, M. (1996). *Performance: A Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Cheek, J. (2008)."Research Design". *The Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods.* Ed. L. M. Given. London: Sage Publications. Vols. 1 and 2

Chinoy, H. K. (1976). "The Emergence of the Director". *Directors on Directing: A Source Book of the Modern Theatre*. Ed. T. Cole and H. K. Chinoy. Indianapolis : Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing.

Chinweizu, O. Jemie and I. Madubuike (1980). *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature: African Fiction and Poetry and their Critics.* Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers. Vol. 1.

Cohen, L., Manion L. and K. Morrison (2000). *Research Methods in Education*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer

Counsel, C. and L. Wolf (2001). *Performance Analysis: an Introductory Coursebook*. London: Routledge.

Cuddon, J. A. (1999). *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. London: Penguin Books.

Davis, R C. and R. Schleifer. (1991). *Criticism and Culture: The Role of Critique in Modern Literary Theory*. London: Longman.

Davis, T. C. (1996). "*Extremeties* and *Masterpieces*: A Feminist Paradigm of Art and Politics". *Feminist Theatre and Theory*. Ed. Helene Keyssar. London: Macmillan Press Ltd. 137-154

Denzin, N. and Y. Lincoln (eds) (2000). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications Inc.

Derrida, J. (1976). *Of Grammatology*. Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Derrida, J. (1984). *Margins of Philosophy*. Trans. A. Bass. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Derrida, J. (1988). *Limited Inc*. Chicago: Northwestern University Press.

Dobie, A. B. (ed) (2012). *Theory into Practice: An Introduction to Literary Criticism*. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Dollimore, J. and A. Sinfield (ed). (1994). *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Downs, W. M., L. A. Wright and E. Ramsey. (2013). *The Art of Theatre Then and Now*. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Drewal, M. T. (1992). *Yoruba Ritual: Performers, Play, Agency*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Dukore, B. F. (1974). *Dramatic Theory and Criticism: From Greeks to Grotowski*. New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston.

During, S. (ed) (2001). *The Cultural Studies Reader.* London: Routledge Taylor and Francis.

Eagleton, T. (1983). *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Eagleton, T. (1985). *Criticism and Ideology*. London: Verso.

Ebron, P. A. (2002). *Performing Africa*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Elam, K. (1984). *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. London: Metheun and Co. Ltd.

Evwierhoma, M. (2013). *Female Empowerment and Dramatic Creativity in Nigeria.* Lagos: Concept Publications Ltd.

Fish, S. (1980). *Is There a Text in this Class?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Foucault, M. (2001). "What is an Author". *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Lodge, D.andN. Wood. London: Macmillan Publishers. 174-187

Gbilekaa, S. (2013). *Another Voice: Meta-Critical Essays in Drama, Theatre and Politics*. Zaria: ABU Press.

Gibbs, J. (1986). *Modern Dramatists: Wole Soyinka*. London: Macmillan Press.

Gibbs, J. (ed). (1980). *Critical Perspectives on Wole Soyinka*. Washington: Three Continents Press Inc.

Gillette, J. M. (2000). *Theatrical Design and Production: An Introduction to Scene Design and Construction, Lighting, Sound, Costume, and Makeup*. New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Grotowski, J. (2002). *Towards a Poor Theatre*. New York: Routledge.

Hall, E. T. (1966). *The Hidden Dimension*. New York: Doubleday.

Hegel, G. W. F. (1977). *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A. V. Miller. Oxford Clarendon Press.

Ibitokun, B. M. (1995). *African Drama and the Yoruba World-View*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

Iji, E. (2014). *The Powers of Ideas and Ideals: Iconic Dramatists, Themes, Values in Theatre, Media Arts*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd.

Illah, E. (2001). "Rotimi and the Drama of Culturalist Assertion: The Development of Cultural Elements in *Kurunmi* and Other Plays". *Cross-Currents in African Theatre*. Ed. Austin Asagba. Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd.

Irele, A. (1980). "Tradition and the Yoruba Writer: D. O.Fagunwa, Amos Tutuola and Wole Soyinka". *Critical Perspectives on Wole Soyinka*. Ed James Gibbs. New York: Three Continents Press, Inc.

Iser, W. (1974). *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckette*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Iser, W. (1978). *The Act of Reading: a Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Jeyifo, B. (1985). *The Truthful Lie: Essays in a Sociology of African Drama*. London: New Beacon Books Ltd.

Jeyifo, B. (2002). *Modern African Drama*. Manhattan: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.

Jeyifo, B. (2004). *Wole Soyinka: Politics, Poetics and Postcolonialism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Johnson, B. (1981). *The Critical Difference*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Johnson, E. and M. Akpan (2013). "Directing: Script Understanding, Analysis and Interpretation". In Effiong Johnson (ed). *Script: Understanding. Analysis. Interpretation for Performance*. Cape Coast: University of Cape Coast Press. 1-33

Katrak, K. H. (1986). *Wole Soyinka and Modern Tragedy: A Study of Dramatic Theory and Practice*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Knellwolf, C. and C. Norris (ed.) (2008). *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Kolawole, G. (2013) "Wole Soyinka's Women: Amazons and Courtesans with Rudders". *Writing the Female Image in African Fiction*. Ed. Sophia Obiajulu Ogwude.Ibadan Ibadan University Press. 14-36

Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. New Delhi: New Age Publishers.

Krasner, D. (ed.) (2008). *Theatre in Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Ladipo, D. (1964). *Three Yoruba Plays: Oba Koso, Oba Moro, Oba Waja*. Trans. Ulli Beire. Ibadan: Mbari Publications.

Leach, R. (2008). *Theatre Studies: The Basics*. New York: Routledge.

Lee, A. (2000). "Discourse Analysis and Cultural (Re) Writing". *Culture and Text: Discourse and Methodology in Social Research and Cultural Studies*. Eds. Lee, A. and C. Poynton. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 188-202

Lincoln, Y.S. and E. G. Guba (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Maduakor, O. (1991). *Wole Soyinka*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Mane, P. (2010). *Interpreting Drama*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.

Moore, G. (1978). *Wole Soyinka*. Ibadan: Evans Brothers Ltd.

Morgan, D. L. (2008). "Focus Group".*The Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods.*Ed. L. M. Given. London: Sage Publications. Vols. 1 and 2

Moynihan, R. (1986). *Recent Imagining: Interviews with Harold Bloom, Geoffrey Hartman, Paul Deman, J. Hikis Miller*. New York: Shoe String Press.

Norris, C. (1988). "Deconstruction, Post-Modernism and the Visual Arts".Eds. C. Norris and A. Benjamin. London: St. Martins Press.

Norris, C. (1993). *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice*. London: Rouledge.

Nwaozuzu, U-C. (2015). "The Market Metaphor and Women Empowerment in Contemporary Nigerian Drama: A Study of Three Plays". *Gender Discourse in AfricanTheatre, Literature and Visual Arts.*Eds.Tracie Chima Utoh-Ezeajugh and BarclaysFoubiri Ayakoroma. Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd. 300-313

Obafemi, O. (1996). *Contemporary Nigerian Theatre: Cultural Heritage and Social Vision.* Bayreuth: Bayreuth African Studies.

Obi, N. P. (2015). "Female Critics, Gender War and Identity: The Contributions of Mabel Evwierhoma". *Gender Discourse in African Theatre, Literature and Visual Arts*. Eds. Tracie Chima Utoh-Ezeajugh and Barclays Foubiri Ayakoroma. Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd. 69-93

Ododo, S. E. (2015). *Facekuerade Theatre: A Performance Model from Ebira-Ekuechi*. Maiduguri: SONTA Publications.

Ogunbiyi, Y. (1981). *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: a Critical Source Book*. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine.

Ogunyemi, O. C. (1988). "Women and Nigerian Literature". *Perspectives on Nigerian Literature 1700 to Present.* Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. Lagos: Guardian Books Ltd.

Okpewho, I. (2004). "Soyinka, Euripides and the Anxiety of Empire". *African Drama and Performance*. Eds. John Conteh-Morgan and Tejumola Olaniyan. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 55-77

Quayson, A. (2001). "The Space of Transformations: Theory, Myth, and Ritual in the Work of Wole Soyinka". In Biodun Jeyifo (ed). *Perspectives on Wole Soyinka: Freedom and Complexity*. Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi. 201-236

Reinelt, J. G. and J. R. Roach (ed). (1999). *Critical Theory and Performance*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.

Rouse, J. (1999). "Textuality and Authority in Theater and Drama: Some Contemporary Possibilities". *Critical Theory and Performance*. Eds.Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press. 146-157

Rudestam, K. E. and R. R. Newton (2001). *Surviving Your Dissertation: A Comprehensive Guide to Content and Process.* London: Sage Publications.

Said, E. (1993). *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Chatto and Windus.

Schechner, R. (1988). *Performance Theory*. New York: Routledge.

Schensul, J. J. (2008). "Documents". *The Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods.* Ed. L. M. Given. London: Sage Publications.

Shepherd, S. and M. Wallis (2004). *Drama/Theatre/Performance: the New Critical Idiom*. Routledge: New York.

Soanes, C. and A. Stevenson (eds.) (2017). *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 11th Edition.

Soyinka, W. (1990). *Myth, Literature and the African World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Soyinka, W. (1993). *Art, Dialogue and Outrage: Essays on Literature and Culture*. London: Metheun.

Soyinka, W. (2012). *Death and the King's Horseman*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

Stanislavky, C. (1967). *An Actor Prepares*. Trans. E. R. Hapgood. London: Lowe and Brydone (Printers) Ltd.

Stanislavski, C. (2009). *Creating A Role*. Trans. E. R. Hapgood. New Delhi: Research Press.

Tyson, L. (2006). *Critical Theory - A User-Friendly Guide*. New York: Routledge.

Ukala, S. (2001). "Politics of Aesthetics".*African Theatre: Playwrights and Politics.* Eds. Martin Banham et. al. Oxford: James Currey Ltd. 29-41

Ukala, S. (2006). *Manual of Research and of Thesis Writing in Theatre Arts*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd.

Umar-Buratai, M.I. (2002). "Female Liberation or Male Domestication: Reflections on Gender, Culture and the Development of Nigerian Drama". *Theatre, Politics and Social Consciousness in Nigeria*.Ed. Egwugwu Illah. Jos: Leadership Production Press. 31-45

wa Thiongo, N. (1972). *Homecoming*. London Heinemann.

Wallis, M. and S. Shepherd (2010). *Studying Plays*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Waugh, P. (2006). *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wimmer, R. D. and J. R. Domminick (2000). *Mass Media Research: An Introduction*. Belmour: Wadsworth.

Wright, J. (2000). "Disciplining the Body: Power, Knowledge and Subjectivity in a Physical Education Lesson". In Alison Lee and Cate Poynton (eds). *Culture and Text: Discourse and Methodology in Social Research and Cultural Studies*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 152-169

Yerima, A. (2009). *Discourse on Tragedy*. Minna: Gurara Publishing.

Journals and Unpublished Articles, Dissertations and Theses

Adesewo, J. (2016). "*Death and the King's Horseman*: A Matter of Honour". In *Daily Trust Newspapers.*Vol.11, No. 31. 41

Ahupa, M. (2015). "An Evaluation of the Impact of Bertolt Brecht's Alienation Technique on the Role of Audience in Ahmadu Bello University Theatre Practice". An M.A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, ABU Zaria. Unpublished.

Balewa, S. A. T. (1983). "Culture, Tradition and Politics in the Drama of Ola Rotimi and Wole Soyinka". Being an MA Thesis submitted to the Department of English and Drama, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Barnaby, A. (2014). "The Purest Mode of Looking: (Post) Colonial Trauma in Wole Soyinka's Death and the King's Horseman". *Research in African Literatures*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 125-149

Bello-Kano, I. (2016). "Eros, Thanatos, Silence: Poetic Form and the Play of the Unspeakable in Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" and Emily Dickinson's "Because I could Not Stop for Death". A Paper Presented at the Department of English and Literary Studies, Bayero University Kano on 25th February. Unpublished.

Booth, J. (1988). "Self-Sacrifice and Human Sacrifice in Soyinka's *Death and The King's Horseman". Research in African Literatures.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 529-550

Bukar, M. U. (2014). "Conflict-Sensitive Reporting in Northern Nigeria: A Study of Select Newspaper Reportage". Being an MA Thesis submitted to the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. Unpublished.

Ekweariri, C. S. and S. Nwosu (2015). "Costumes as Semiotic Element in Traditional African Performances: A Study of Iri Ji Umuezeala".In *Scene Dock: Journal of Theatre Design and Technology*. Nigeria: SONTA Publications. 55-78

Gargati, M. U. (2015). "A Deconstructive Reading of Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* and *The Road*". Being an MA Thesis submitted to the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Unpublished.

George, O. (1999). "Cultural Criticism in Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*". *Representations*. California: University of California Press. 67-91

Greenblatt, S. (1990). "Resonance and Wonder". *Bulletin of the American Academy of the Arts and Sciences*. Vol. 43, 11-34

Idegu, E. U. (2007). "Beyond the Yoruba Cosmology: a Contestation of the Africanness of Wole Soyinka's Submission in *Myth, Literature and the African World*". *African Performance Review*. London: Adonis and Abbey Publishers Ltd. 99-113

Jain, J (1986). "The Unfolding of a Text: Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*". *Research in African Literatures*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 252-260

Jegede, E. (2010). "The Heart of Change: Communication and Communication Use in PATHS 2 and UNICEF in Nigeria". Being a PHD Thesis submitted to the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Unpublished.

Linderman, D. (1985). "Narrative Surplus: 'Blow-Up' as Metarepresentation and Ideology". *American Journal of Semiotics*. USA: Philosophy Documentation Center. 99-118.

Methusellah, J.S.S. (2010). "Women Playwrights and Female Imaging in Nigerian Literary Drama: an Overview". *Journal of the Nigerian English Studies Association (JNESA)* 13 (2). 151-164

Miller, J. H. (1972). "Tradition and Difference". *Diacritics* 2.

Moyo, M. (2010). "Mythology and Allegory in Drama: A Comparative Study of Ben Jonson and Wole Soyinka". A Master of Arts in Literature Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia, Lusaka. Unpublished.

Schechner, R. (1973). "Drama, Script, Theatre, and Performance". *The Drama Review: TDR, Theatre and The Social Sciences*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Turner, V. (1982). *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications.

Williams, A. (1993). "Ritual and the Political Unconscious: The Case of *Death and the King's Horseman*". *Research in African Literatures*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 67-79

Webliography

Appiah, A. (2015). "An Evening with Wole Soyinka". Black American Literature Forum. 777-785. JSTOR.Web. Retrieved Tues 01 September 2015

Blanchard, J. "Horseman's Culture Clash". *The Washington Times*. 2006/02/17 www.johnvreeke.com/deathandthekingshorseman. Retrieved 24, February 2016

Gumbel, A. "Wole Soyinka on How He Came to Write Death and the King's Horseman" 2009/04/08 www.theguardian.com. Retrieved 20, February 2016

Hathaway, B. "Yoruba Culture Valued in Revival: Vreeke Stages Soyinka's Drama at Clark Street Playhouse". *The Connection Newspapers*. 2006/03/03 www.johnvreeke.com/deathandthekingshorseman. Retrieved 24, February 2016

Krejie, R. V. and D. W. Morgan (1970). *Determining Sample Size for Research Activities: Educational and Psychological Measurement*.http://www.kenpro.org/sample-size-deteremination-using-Krijie-and-Morgan-table/kenya/project. Retrieved 23, August 2016

Kumar, N. K. (2015). "Indigenous Tradition in Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*". *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*.375-388. JSTOR.Web. Retrieved Tuesday 01 September 2015

Rich, F. "Stage: Soyinka's 'Death and the King's Horseman'". 1987/03/02 www.nytimes.com. Retrieved 21, February 2016

See, R. "Death and the King's Horseman". *CurtainUP DC*. www.johnvreeke.com/deathandthekingshorseman. Retrieved 24, February 2016

www.paxnigerian.com/death-and-the-kings-horsemanevokes-cultural-consciousness-selflessness-arts-nigeria.com. Retrieved 24, January 2017

www.saharareporters.com/2015/07/28. Retrieved 12, September 2015

www.thenet.ng/2015/08/abobaku. Retrieved 12, September 2015

APPENDIX A:

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to assist in generating data for a Ph.D study in Theatre and Performing Arts with the title *Interpreting Aspects of Pretext, Text and Context in the Stage Production of Death and the King's Horseman.*

NOTE: The information you give is treated in absolute confidence and shall be strictly for the purposes of this research.

SECTION A: Demographic Data of Respondents

1. Gender: a. Male [ ] b. Female [ ]
2. Age: a 15 - 20 [ ] b. 21 - 26 [ ] c. 27 – 34 [ ] d. 35 and above [ ]
3. Marital Status: a. Single [ ] b. Married [ ] c. Other [ ]
4. Profession: a Student [ ] b Staff [ ] c Other [ ]
5. Area of Specialisation: a. Art and Humanities [ ] b. Social Sciences [ ] c. Sciences [ ] d. Law [ ] e. Engineering [ ] f. Others [ ]
6. Education: a. Primary [ ] b. Secondary [ ] c. Tertiary [ ] d. Other [ ]
7. Have you watched a performance of *Death and the King's Horseman* before now? a. Yes [ ] b. No [ ]

Section B:

On the scale of 1-4 indicate your knowledge if a text can have meaning other than what a playwright intends.

Key to Respondents:

SA: Strongly Agree = 4

A: Agree = 3

D: Disagree = 2

SD: Strongly Disagree = 1

NOTE: A play text is a book written in dialogue and stage directions. *Death and the King's Horseman* is an example of a play text.

S/No.	Statement	Level of Agreement			
		SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
5.	I have read at least one play text.				
6.	From my reading I realised that a text only communicates that which the playwright intended.				
7.	From my reading I discovered that a text can have several meanings.				
8.	Each reader or spectator can have a different understanding of a play or performance.				

Section C:

On the Scale of 1-4, indicate your level of agreement on the medium that communicates meaning better between the play text and its performance.

Key to Respondents:

SA: Strongly Agree = 4

A: Agree = 3

D: Disagree = 2

SD: Strongly Disagree = 1

S/No.	Statement	Level of Agreement			
		SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
09.	Reading a play is enough to reveal what a play is all about.				
10.	Watching a play on stage gives it more meaning than reading it on page.				
11.	Reading a play and watching its performance present same kind of meaning.				
12.	Elements of performance like costume, movement, make-up, set give more advantage to performance than reading a play text in the communication of meaning.				
13.	The performance of a text limits the meaning of the play text.				

Section D:

On the scale of 1-4, indicate your level of agreement that cultural values are the reasons for conflict in the performance

Keys to Respondents:

SA: Strongly Agree = 4

A: Agree = 3

D: Disagree = 2

SD: Strongly Disagree = 1

S/No.	Statement	Level of Agreement			
		SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
14.	Difference in cultural values is the major reason for the conflict in this performance.				
15.	Elesin's ritual suicide is important for the Yorubas to survive as a people.				
16.	It is barbaric for someone to take his own life for whatever reason.				
17.	It is important that a son takes after his father's profession when the father dies.				
18.	Destiny determines what one becomes in life.				

Section E:

On the scale of 1-4, rate your level of agreement for the relevance of *Death and the King's Horseman* in contemporary society

Keys to Respondents:

SA: Strongly Agree = 4

A: Agree = 3

D: Disagree = 2

SD: Strongly Disagree = 1

S/No.	Statement	Level of Agreement			
		SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1
19.	Meaning in *Death and the King's Horseman* is for old people in society today who have interest in history and culture.				
20.	The performance does not have much relevance to Youths today.				
21.	The performance is important to today's society and future generations.				
22.	Iyaloja and Jane Pilkings represent those who stand in the defence of their culture no matter what.				
23.	The performance would still be of value when staged in non-African societies.				

APPENDIX B:

Focus Group Discussion Guide

The questions asked are semi structured in order to elicit in the audience a discussion into the various levels of meaning and interpretation the performance hopes to generate. The questions are tailored along the lines of the research's set aim and objectives. They include:

1. Have you read Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* as a dramatic text? If yes;

a. What is your general view/interpretation of the play text?

b. In what way(s) does it correlate with this performance?

c. What difference(s) have you noted between your perception of meaning from the reading of the play text and this performance?

2. What would you consider as the major theme/conflict within the performance?

3. Which characters drive the conflict in the performance?

4. Are there any cultural values displayed in the performance? If yes, in what forms are they presented?

5. What is the function of cultural elements in this performance?

6. Do you see clash of cultures in the performance? If yes, how is this demonstrated?

7. How do women serve in inculcating cultural values in this performance?

8. Do you think this performance is relevant to contemporary society? If yes, how?

APPENDIX C:

Focus Group Discussion Group 1 (English and Literary Studies)

RESEARCHER: Thank you so much for coming to watch this performance. My name is Ola Ifatimehin. I am doing a Ph.D study with the title, *Interpreting Aspects of Pretext, Text and Context in the Stage Production of Death and the King's Horseman.* This little meeting here is just for us to discuss and respond to certain questions as regards to what we have watched tonight. So, you are welcome. Whatever information we share will be used strictly for the research purposes only. The first question I have is a general question just to establish if we have read the play text before. I want to know the number of people here who have read the play text.

(Respondents indicate by raising their hands).

RESEARCHER: So we have four (4) people in our midst who have read *Death and the King's Horseman* as a play text. So, I will start with you sir. What was/is your own perception of meaning in the play text when you read it?

RESPONDENT 1: Meaning in terms of the interpretation of the play. I see the play as a clash of cultures. The white man's culture and the, I won't say African, may be Yoruba culture; culture and belief. What the white man, what the Yoruba tradition believes in against what the white man believes, that is what he preaches. I see a clash, and one is trying to dominate the other, and in the course of doing that we have tragedy.

RESPONDENT 2: I just look at that play as just a redefinition of the concept of tragedy. Wole Soyinka is trying to define the concept of tragedy in the context of Africa. That is all I see.

RESPONDENT 3: Let me just add to what he said before I make my own position. This issue of tragedy, you know the Yoruba concept of tragedy is not the same with the European or Aristotelian concept of tragedy. Theirs is individual, for the Yorubas it is communal. Wole Soyinka is concerned with the severance of self from essence. That is the whole nature of the drama. Elesin Oba didn't do what he was supposed to do. And by not doing that, there's a consequence not on him as a person but on the collective spirit of the Yorubas. That is just in

addition to what he (Respondent 2) had said. But the first time I read the text, I was introduced to a course, Dramatic Theory, and along with the text I also read Soyinka's *Myth, Literature and the African World*, and there is a correlation between *Myth, Literature and the African World* and *Death and the King's Horseman.* Actually, *Death and the King's Horseman*is like a dramatic exposition of Soyinka's theory of tragedy that was found in *Myth, Literature and the African World.* For Soyinka, the essence is on life, continuity. Life is not just physical. There's a life that is more superior, the metaphysical life. So life as we see is what, continuity. So when we read *Death and the King's Horseman*, what comes to your mind is the Yoruba worldview of existence. What constitutes existence? Is existence through just this physical realm or does it have a wider significant portion in the metaphysical realm? Because in the play, even in the preface of the text, Soyinka was complaining that the text though based on certain historical events, is not a historical play his major concern is with what that play means to the life of the Yorubas at that point in time. That is, the continuity of their race. So the meaning of the play has to do with the essence of life to the Yorubas, how do you continue living? What constitutes life? What constitutes existence?

RESEARCHER: Thank you so much, so if i get what you are saying is that what Wole Soyinka was doing, from your reading is a dramatization of a worldview.

RESPONDENT 3: Yes, the Yoruba Worldview.

RESPONDENT 4: To continue from where he stopped, because he has given a very good professional thought to it, I will use the words of Soyinka himself, he said "The white man does not appreciate what he does not understand". Glaringly, they don't understand the African culture and they try as much as possible to see the African culture, or they give it a barbaric perspective not minding the fact that whatever has been destined to happen would happen. Thank you.

RESEARCHER: So, for you too, it is about destiny. That's what your reading of the text...

RESPONDENT 4: Exactly.

RESEARCHER: Ok sir. So, in what ways do these meanings you derived from your readings correlate with what you have seen tonight? That's for those who have read the text.

RESPONDENT 1: Well to me, what I read with what I have seen this evening, there's a correlation. If you see what happened between Elesin Oba and Simon, he, just like Dr. Jonah said that the white man does not appreciate what he does not understand. Now, that he, Simon doesn't understand his own culture, his own tradition, his own belief, that is why he had to send his own son among his people to go and learn his own, you know, believing that his son would buy the idea or the culture of the white man when he comes not knowing that even the boy himself, having known the culture of the land and the aftermath of not dying with the king, has to pay the price so there is correlation.

RESEARCHER: So, if you are told that this is Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* you will agree.

RESPONDENTS CHORUS: Yes, to a large extent, to a promising extent.

RESPONDENT 5: Though I have not read the text, I heard some little things about the text. But the way I started watching the drama I understand that it is really *Death and the King's Horseman*. So without even finishing the drama I understand that this is really Wole Soyinka's drama.

RESPONDENT 2: To an extent there is correlation because even though we say anywhere a play is being performed physically certain things won't be might not be. But nevertheless there's this correlation. Though I have not watched this play more than twice. I could remember when I started watching this play, the first time I could not recall what play you people were trying to adapt but towards the end of the play I was able to recall. I was inwardly telling myself this has to be *Death and the King's Horseman*.

RESPONDENT 3: Yes, for me there's a correlation especially in the character of Olunde, Elesin Oba, Iyaloja because my reading of the text is basically from the perspective I earlier mentioned about apprehending a work within its own culture because that is what Soyinka's argument. Even in his last book that he wrote in 2013 *of Africa*, his basic argument is that you can only understand a people based on an understanding of their own way of life. You should not impose your own way of life upon their own way of life. And that's why, Soyinka had a quarrel with Achebe when Achebe were clamouring for 'cultural assertion', Soyinka came up with this

concept of 'indifferent self acceptance'; you are what you are. You don't have to be somebody else. And that also inspires his criticism about negritude. About a tiger not boasting about its tigritude. So in the play you can see a correlation between the text and what we saw on stage. The character of Elesin Oba, Iyaloja and Olunde trying to insist about that continuity of a race because if Olunde didn't commit that suicide that means the Yoruba race could flounder, the people would just scatter, there would be a wrenching of their world. So there's need for it to be anchored and it is only in the death that would give that hope.

RESPONDENT 4: Yes, let me be very precise, I can see a correlation in the area of the Yoruba cosmology. The performance was able to capture that vividly. But there are areas where we need more efforts. For instance, Pilkings' Boss was not making efforts to sound like a white man and that's how it's to be in comparison to Pilkings himself. Certain...

RESPONDENT 3: That wasn't the question.

RESEARCHER: The question is if there's any correlation between what you have read and what you have seen tonight.

RESPONDENT 4: Yes, with particular reference to language use, in the text you can see, I mean, the adjunct that the white man Pilkings. You can just perceive the white man speaking. What we rather saw is a rather traditional African man that refused to change. In the area of Pilkings, it was clear. He did it outrightly. When his Boss came in, who's supposed to be a white man, I didn't see that effort.

RESPONDENT 6: In the play was it American or British? Pilkings tends to be American.

RESPONDENT 4: In terms of diction now, but in pronunciation you find it very apt.

RESEARCHER: So, what are the clear differences you see in this performance to the play text? Are there any differences you have noticed?

RESPONDENT 4: Some excerpts were not captured from the text. The characters were very wonderful especially Iyaloja, Pilkings, in fact he captured vividly that aspect in the text that tried to convince Pilkings' wife about traditional African culture and their inability to comprehend what African culture should look like. In the text, I can't remember imagining, for instance,

watching vividly, you know, seeing the son of Elesin Oba dead. I didn't also see or read that he was covered...

RESPONDENT 3: He was. It was in the text. What I have noticed is that, in the text, the songs were not there. The songs that we have in the production...

RESPONDENT 4: There are songs actually...

RESPONDENT 3: But not these songs.

RESEARCHER: Ok, how about the first scene, is it in the play text you have read?

RESPONDENT 3: Yes, I was discussing with Mallam Dodo because I wasn't so sure. Because I read that text in 1980 what? But I think it was there, because the opening of the play was in the market. Maybe some modifications but it was there. It was there.

RESEARCHER: Now we can all talk. What do you consider to be the major conflict in this play? What is the major theme in this play, as staged?

RESPONDENT 6: The major conflict is cultural difference. Because we know the tragedy is centred between the characters of Pilkings and the Elesin himself. So it is the way he views life. He is saying that it is not right for Elesin to die by reason of the king's funeral rites. So, the conflict is in the worldview.

RESPONDENT 7: Yes, just like he said, the main theme there is the conflict of the white man's culture and (African) tradition. And I think the only area I consider there is the two cultures, that's the tradition and the white man's culture, they need to educate themselves. Because if they had come together may be it wouldn't have led to Elesin's death, Pilkings and the other characters. So I think the two cultures need to appreciate themselves.

RESPONDENT 8: Like it has been said, the cultural difference, that's the major theme of the play in performance. And it exists between the whites and the blacks due to the fact that the whites did not understand the culture of the blacks and they were trying to let them see but due to his being adamant to what he believes in, that is the worldview of the whites, saying that what they are doing is barbaric and they see it as the trend that needs to be followed.

RESEARCHER: So for you it is also the clash of cultures.

RESPONDENT 8: Exactly.

RESPONDENT 1: You ask me a million times, it is clash of cultures.

RESPONDENT 2: The major conflict is the death of the son (Olunde), his suicide, because that wasn't the intention, that wasn't what has been planned, so the intrusion of the death. Based on my reading...

RESEARCHER: No, based on the performance you've seen tonight...

RESPONDENT 2: It's the same. The death would not solve the problem. It is just an ordinary suicide.

RESPONDENT 5: To me the major conflict although it is clash of culture, but there is also what I noticed from the performance, that in every culture there is something that is hidden. For somebody who is a foreigner to come and intervene, intrude in that culture, then there would be a tragedy because there are some unknown reason behind every culture. So for the white man to intervene into the culture of the Yorubas which would be the death of only one person, that's the king's horseman, but the intervention of the white man unto the death of the king's horseman led to the death of, number one his child, and the death of the king's horseman again. So you can see the tragedy. It has become...

RESPONDENT 6: I would like to say that there is a... what it projects is a problem of knowledge and ignorance. Is it right to argue against something that you don't know? I think it is not. You have to know something before you can criticize it or contain it. So, in the drama what I saw is a culture trying to condemn another culture without knowledge. So there's a clash between ignorance and knowledge, which is very glaring and it has led to consequences that are not desirable. That's what I think.

RESPONDENT 4: Beyond the central thematic preoccupation of cultural conflict, I see this theme of deception. Why should a white man that preaches holy water call the same holy water 'holy nonsense'? Why should the same white man that preaches Jesus that died on the cross find

it difficult to appreciate the fact that one can die for his culture and society? I also see that when a people are determined such determinations cannot be crushed. When they are determined...

RESPONDENT 3: Sorry sir, but you are assuming that all white men are Christians. For Pilkings to be anti-christianity in his utterances, what makes you think he is a Christian?

RESPONDENT 4: No no no...

RESPONDENT 3: No, excuse me, if you read *Poor Christ of Bompa* by Mungo Beti, there's always a conflict between the missionaries and the representatives of colonial state. Often than not those representatives of the colonial state are not strictly speaking that Christian. And that is what we see in the character of Pilkings, if you remember the wife was telling him that if the missionary had heard this he is going to write a report, which means he is not there for missionary work.

RESPONDENT 4: You see, the missionaries used education as a tool to achieve what they want. And in any case, Pilkings shouldn't be in Africa if not for the missionaries.

RESPONDENT 3: No no no, Pilkings was not a representative of the missionary; he was a representative of the colonial state, of the queen.

RESPONDENT 4: Exactly, but what instrument did they use?

RESPONDENT 3: He was using force.

RESPONDENT 4: Who?

RESPONDENT 3: Pilkings. He was basically using force. He wa not a pacifier. His was force. But let's come back to the text.

RESPONDENT 4: We can even see that in the objection of the wife. You can also see it in the servant, the way he responded. He was finding it very difficult to comprehend why Pilkings should speak the way he did.

RESPONDENT 3: Because he is a white man. He is assuming that a white man should be a Christian. And this is one white man who is being blasphemous.

RESEARCHER: I like the way your responses are being attached to characters in the performance, so that leads us to the next one. Which characters in the performance would you say are the ones pushing the conflict forward?

RESPONDENT 8: Iyaloja. Due to the fact that Iyaloja is being determined, she wants the culture of the land to stand and if she wasn't the one that is mobilizing the ladies of the community ordinarily they would have been overwhelmed by the force the white man use over them but (even) with that, Iyaloja still believed that there's nothing, they cannot come and be dictating what is supposed to be done in their society, in their community, and that it was she kept pushing, at least by bringing the corpse to the white man's house for the father to see him that he committed suicide because of what he was supposed to do that the white man is trying to deprive him of doing.

RESEARCHER: He feels Iyaloja is the major character that is driving the conflict in the performance.

RESPONDENT 1: For me, I think it is Pilkings. One, he doesn't understand the culture of the land, so he believes his own perspective to, you know, his own belief, his own culture should come to play, why should somebody die for nothing? Why should someone commit suicide? So that is what he is trying to question. And in the course of doing that, so many things happened.

RESPONDENT 4: Ordinarily it should be assumed that the new generation should understand the precepts of the white man. But in the play, we can see that resistance. You know, they were very forceful. Why didn't they see it in the way of the white men, that look we need to stop this despite the acquisition of the knowledge of the white men and the language of the white men? That aspect actually impressed me. Sergeant Amusa has been used consistently to hide his own brother and he delights to do it well. The girls, despite their education, religion, they still ridicule the white man.

RESPONDENT 7: Yes, because of Pilkings' resolute stand on death, his stubbornness led to so many atrocities in the play. For instance, he not giving way for Elesin to be released from prison, I think that led to alot of conflict in the play.

RESPONDENT 5: I think that man Elesin Oba caused all the problem because he obstructed the course of the fulfilment of that cultural rite by taking onus in saying that he must do this, before he goes there, he must do this, he must do that and that one led to the white man Pilkings coming in, trying to even know more about it, trying to even stop it and then Iyaloja also trying staunchly to support the course of culture simply because he started obstructing the rites.

RESEARCHER: Ok. But are there are any cultural values depicted in this performance?

RESPONDENTS CHORUS: Haba, several... very many.

RESEARCHER: Ok. What are they and in what forms are they captured?

RESPONDENT 4: One, by way of dressing. We can see their profuse use of proverbs. We can see them trying as much as possible to derive moral lessons from proverbs. Of course even the culture of giving to Elesin Oba that which he desires before the disconnect between him and the world.

RESPONDENT 8: Respect for elders.

RESPONDENT 5: Honouring covenants. The problem we had, he did not honour covenant, that's why it led to the death of his son.

RESEARCHER: So his ability to do his responsibility is a cultural value?

RESPONDENT 5: Yes

RESPONDENT 4: Which the Yoruba cosmology strongly cherishes seriously.

RESPONDENT 8: The first scene that the young lady and the guy coming into public place to display their love, the elders frowned at it.

RESPONDENT 3: That was in the play, but I can't remember if it is in the text. That scenario does not exist in the dramatic text. But it is in the performance and it is a cultural value.

RESPONDENT 4: The synergy she (**RESPONDENT 7**) recommended. The way you (director) are able to integrate that without creating a disconnect with the dramatic text is commendable.

RESPONDENT 2: The young ladies we see in the play supporting their mothers.

RESEARCHER: Ok. So, it's a cultural value when the younger ones are supporting what the mothers stand for?

RESPONDENTS CHORUS: Yes.

RESPONDENT 3: Sorry sir, on that cultural value, can we give it another meaning? By and large, Iyaloja and the women, in spite of everything, we can still see that the Yoruba culture came out strong; it didn't die in the process. So we can say that those people hold in high esteem their culture and they are ready to do whatever it is to make sure it continues, or survives.

RESPONDENT 1: Another one, when Amusa and his men came to arrest Elesin Oba, the women stood by and created a... shield them not to see Elesin Oba and his wife. That's a cultural value, you don't bump into people's privacy.

RESEARCHER: Ok, so how about cultural elements. Are there any cultural elements seen in the performance?

RESPONDENTS CHORUS: Yoruba dance, Yoruba songs, acting, mannerisms, the drumming, the language itself.

RESPONDENT 4: We can see cultural elements from their dressings, locations, from other paraphernalia found in performance.

RESPONDENT 5: Even the religions, the rites, their rites bind the Yoruba together in their view of life, making them more compatible.

RESEARCHER: Ok. This is where I get to ask you if you saw any form of clash of cultures in the performance. Did you see any attempt to make the play appear as if it is about clash of cultures?

RESPONDENT 5: To me it is all about clash of cultures.

RESPONDENT 3: To the playwright it wasn't. But in the production we can even read the clash of cultures because the two worldviews are presented. So from that there is already a clash

because we have two opposing worldviews; the worldview of the Europeans is quite different from the worldviews of the Africans and once you have a difference there must be conflict. So the conflict emanated out of an understanding of the African world and then an attempt to impose the European worldview on the African because the European always thinks that he is superior and more intelligent than the African. So, underneath it there is also the issue of cultural imperialism in the text.

RESPONDENT 5: But can we also see a kind of comparison between two cultures? This is what has happened here, this is what the other group are thinking. A kind of comparison, and then it is left for the observer to decide which side to take.

RESEARCHER: In the performance, what would you say is the role of women?

RESPONDENTS CHORUS: They are a very strong force.... Very significant.

RESPONDENT 7: In fact, the women they play... I can see that they play a way of solidarity to protect their culture. Like when they came to arrest the Elesin Oba, but because of the women, they didn't come to arrest him.

RESPONDENT 2: They play a very positive role and the economy. They own the economy, the market, trading, buying and selling.

RESPONDENT 5: The market means a lot. Even when i£ grew up in my village, Ogbomoso women, they move from market to market, Ijesha women, those marks. I'm happy to tell you that the son of one of those women was a mini past commissioner past commissioner of works in my state. They are all indigenes there.

RESPONDENT 8: They are the ones that played the vital roles in the performance.

RESPONDENT 3: Yes, indeed. Iyaloja, the women, even outside the text, if you want to take it outside the text, the role of women in Soyinka's life generally. The role of his mother in his life, she was a 'wild christian', considering her background and relationship with the Kutis. So as a child he knew that women have always been there at the forefront of fighting for their rights. And there was this situation is it in Abeokuta where the women went naked to protest taxation. You can see the way the women were taunting the men.

RESEARCHER: Ok, thank you so much. One final thing; Do you think what you have seen tonight has any relevance to society today? Is there any contemporary relevance in this performance? Is there anything that would spill unto the wider general society?

RESPONDENT 5: Yes, in Nigeria for example, it (the performance) is very very vital for us in Nigeria. Let me relate it also to certain programess that the Federal Government had long ago and are still existing. Like, in order to forge ahead in unity, like the NYSC (National Youth Service Corp) project, you will, openly hear corpers when they are posted to places that are not their own (locale), openly criticise instead of coming to appreciate the culture, the beliefs, the ways, they believe their own is better. They clearly criticise others and that is against the object of establishing the NYSC programme. So I think that this play here has opened our eyes, i think it has shown us on the need to study and appreciate each other's cultures in Nigeria in order to forge the unity we are talking about. It has an impact on Nigeria.

RESPONDENT 4: This concept of good or bad is most of the time in the eye of the beholder. If you don't understand a culture, it may be bad to you but if you understand it and the more you appreciate such culture the more peace. That would take us to the area of peace linguistics. Then this area of gender, gender related issue, we must learn to appreciate and tap the resources that are in our women, the more we appreciate them, the more we give them opportunities, we get the best out of them suffice that they can do whatever they are determined to do.

RESPONDENT 5: And I think that it is also useful for us to understand that if we look at our women, let's say we allow our women more freedom to take part in our lives as men it will be better for us because most of the British members of parliament to the prime minister level were being prepped up by their wives at home to be what they became. Even in the kitchen, they keep talking to them, 'you'll be a backbencher for life', things like that. And the man would continue to struggle until he becomes the prime minister. So I think we need our women to be allowed to have a say in what we do and in our lives. I think this play has shown that through Iyaloja.

RESPONDENT 4: Let me ask, is it intentional that the male folk were not represented in the new generation? In the market there are no men. I'm seeing it as being symbolic. And if that is so, it could spell, let me not say doom, that women can actually do what 'supposedly' men are to

do, even without... and I think they need the men also just like the men need the women. I try to read meaning into it, why should we see only the girls but not... it was very vital that the man appeared at the point at which he appeared because that wouldn't have made any significant impact without his presence and the production manager has little or nothing to do with that... you cannot capture that scenario effectively without that man. Beyond that, why didn't we introduce one or two of them in the resistance like we have girls.

RESPONDENT 2: In addition to what he said, what I saw is relevant to our Nigerian contemporary society is lack of understanding from our part is the source of all conflict as we see it here in the play. That is why literature is powerful. It's even more powerful than history because history does not readdress the very events that have happened but here you can extend it to unity, so I think it is very relevant in terms of... because most of the conflict, most of the crises we have, if we look at it, the root of it is lack of understanding, we jump into conclusions before we actually study the situation. So in this context it is very relevant.

RESEARCHER: Ok, so it is relevant in that women should be given voice. It is relevant in that we need to understand our cultures, appreciating the differences in our cultural heritage.

RESPONDENTS CHORUS: Yes.

RESEARCHER: Wow, this has been quite incisive, quite exciting.

RESPONDENT 5: Did you intentionally have more women in the market than men? Did you study how the population of women vis-a-vis men in Nigerian markets or African markets?

RESEARCHER: Ok, we tried to stay within the context of the play text. So it is the play that informs what we staged tonight. In the play really, there are just women, the only man that appears in the market other than the police people that were sent is Elesin Oba. Even, people in the stage direction that passed, two women passed through. But here we have the young man who was following the young girl all over and then Elesin himself.

RESPONDENT 6: Thank you sir. From the beginning you asked a question and you said how does he see meaning according to the text.

RESEARCHER: From his reading of the text.

RESPONDENT 6: Yes. The way I see it from the African perspective, that's in the character of the women and the Elesin himself, meaning is not physical but it is transcendental and in applying that to the present society. We see in the play that the death of that Elesin Oba is what would save the whole people of the village. And the way his son died, another person died, i see it as something continuous because everything is symbolic. And in our society today, looking at meaning to be transcendental, I'll like to speak it in the light of the Christian religion which also the symbolic character of that Elesin alludes to Jesus Christ which died. You know, literature is social, is society and we speak on things that are real. Now, as a Christian, I believe as other Christians that, the death of Jesus Christ saves so many. And in this our present society, I don't like the ideas that I don't believe in work in life. If there will be faith, there'll be an appreciation of this meaning, of what the death of Christ symbolises; this is what will save us in this life. I know that yes it is good to allow the women to have their way and some other things but we have been trying these things over time and they have not worked. There have been feminist protests for long and there have been issues of, like our uncle said, if NYSC students should go somewhere they should appreciate their culture, we've been trying to appreciate cultures and views but truly truly speaking, up till now it has not worked in the world entirely the chaos is even getting worse but me I'msaying that the symbolic character of Elesin to me in our society today only points to the person of Christ.

RESPONDENT 3: Why Christ sir?

RESPONDENT 5: What of the boy that died in Tunisia from hunger. What of the one who set himself on fire?

RESPONDENT 3: Without death there cannot be a regeneration, ok? So for a society to regenerate there must be death. Death regenerates society. The death of Christ, in fact some people are saying that the coming of Christ is not as important as his death. If Christ had come and then he didn't die then there's nothing. Death in this context is like a form of sacrifice; somebody giving his life for somebody. Now Elesin Oba didn't give his life, it was Olunde that gave his life. It is the son that died for the community and it is that death that saved the community.

RESPONDENT 6: I will like to explain it further...

RESPONDENT 5: You see life is not complete without death. There's an artist called, Ben Asawi. Ben Asawi is a believer in dualism: life/death, black/white, back/front, right/wrong. In all his artworks, he was a painter and sculptor at the same time, so he said his life becomes complete when he dies, that he is total at death. I read a lot about him. Death is life.

RESPONDENT 4: Let's bring out this contemporary relevance also, in the attempt to shield Elesin from death, more than Elesin died.

RESPONDENT 3: The attempt of the Europeans to shield Elesin from death, an alien to shield him from what he is supposed to do.

RESPONDENT 4: I mean it has some contemporary relevance. Our inability to be very careful and decisive in solving some contemporary issues in our society could lead and excavate several disasters. But I was wondering why are the Europeans shielding only one man from death and several die.

RESPONDENT 6: The problem why that man was shielded is because the Pilkings himself has failed, he has not been able to see and understand and today even though Christ died why it is not saving many is because....

RESPONDENT 5: Mallam, you see... No we are not against Christ Christ, Christ is ok, is wonderful...

RESPONDENT 6: No I'm just...

RESPONDENT 5: No wait, you see something I've realised is that it is also not good to stick to your own culture and say that it is the best against all others. That is also our problem which this play has addressed. You have to appreciate, every culture has its own values and it has its own vices. The white man decided that his own culture is the best and that man must not die. Does that not say something?

RESEARCHER: So, thank you so much for coming, I really appreciate this. Thank you so much.

NAMES OF RESPONDENTS

Olagunju Tosin- Respondent 1

Aliyu Munkaila- Respondent 2

Joseph Stephen- Respondent 3

Amodu Jonah- Respondent 4

Murtala Sani- Respondent 5

Jacob Ayuba Tanze- Respondent 6

Agatha Onyi Sunday- Respondent 7

Sanni Mustapha Kayode- Respondent 8

APPENDIX D:

Focus Group Discussion 2 (Theatre and Performing Arts)

RESEARCHER: As you have been told, this is supposed to be a discussion to elicit information based on the performance you have seen. The topic of the research is *Interpreting Aspects of Pretext, Text and Context in the Stage Production of Death and the King's Horseman*, an ongoing PhD research. We will be asking some questions which will need your responses so as to build up data for the research. Before I kick start the question, I will just like us to say out our names just for the purpose of recording. We also have it on our list. Thank you. I'm supposed to ask if you all have read the text, so I will just presume you all have done that and move to the key questions. What is your view or interpretation of the play text? We are trying to get your response towards the play text first before we move to the performance. What is your view about the play text? What is your interpretation about the play text? Let's feel free to talk.

RESPONDENT 1: If I may start, I am Sylvanus Dangoji, department of Theatre and Performing Arts. So, about my view of the play text, I see it as one of the classics of Wole Soyinka and *Death and the King's Horseman* is a play that he has used as a voice to challenge some of the issues that he has used as a voice to challenge some of the issues that he has with foreign intervention in the indigenous African culture. And we understand Wole Soyinka to be one of the earlier scholars of African descent who studied in Europe and also learnt certain things about western knowledge of theatre, western knowledge of culture. So I see in the play the voice of Wole Soyinka's pointing out some of the contributions of how he thinks the intervention of outsiders in the native affairs of Africans sometimes has its own problems, so on that note we can say it is a powerful play. But there isn't any endeavour, any creative endeavour, artistic endeavour that also does not go without its contradictions, without its limitations, so in the dialogue the use of language for instance, we see Sergeant Amusa as a low class person has not attained the kind of western education because of his choice of words, vocabulary that he uses. But I have difficulty with other noble characters in the play; Iyaloja, Elesin Oba, who connect with Simon Pilkings at a level of intellectual engagement, exchange, and I wonder how they master the use of the English language to engage with the white man at that level of debate. Is it

that they learnt enough English because they are high class people? So they spoke better than Sergeant Amusa, who is a worker in the white man's system, or they are speaking at some level and then some concurrent interpretation and translation is going on? But you can see that they obviously spoke in the English language. So I appreciate the boldness of Soyinka, the work that he has done, but also think that the first generations were reacting to a level that is too much and if we compare with Ngugi wa Thiongo, who at some point thought that ok he could even do the plays in vernacular. He later also confronted the issues of even writing and producing plays in vernacular, Kikuyu. How many people were literate enough to even read the Kikuyu text? So those are other issues of limitation. But as a creative work you will not see it as one hundred per cent perfect but I think it is a seminal work and it is a very powerful work. That's my reaction to the play text *Death and the King's Horseman*.

RESPONDENT 2: Maybe I should take cue from what he is saying. My name is Lumumba Dodo from the Theatre and Performing Arts department of ABU. Like he said, the text itself is a seminal work and I think it goes to a very large extent to exemplify his concept of African tragedy. If you remember in his treatise on African tragedy in his *Fourth Stage*, he talked about that ethos that the community has and that it's placed on the tragic character and the failure of the tragic character to carry that communal ethos to its logical conclusion, to carry the action that will help in building the cosmos of the people, to make it stabilise. You notice that in the play itself, Elesin Oba who is supposed to have carried all the problems of the people to follow his Oba and lead him correctly through the abyss of transition so that his Oba will take his rightful place in the pantheon of the ancestors. Having failed, we see that the society, the whole society and the worldview of the Yoruba people now in a situation that is not properly, to use Iyaloja's words, 'at a precipice', even if it could make tip off. It is a powerful attempt to probably put his theory, the theory of the 'fourth stage' now in paper and on stage in the later end. So, in terms of characterisation, like the last speaker has said, there are problems of communication but of course that is the problem that any playwright, African playwright, who is within the milieu, who has gone through what Africa itself has gone through, if I may use Ali Mazrui's concept of Africa being a continent that has gone through three stages of experiences. As a playwright within that kind of milieu, you have no choice in terms of trying to communicate but to use some of vestiges of the colonial experience in order to put it in... if you put in perspective also the

argument largely seems to be a counter to the classical European argument about tragedy, about theatrical performances, Soyinka in his own way was trying to, at that point in time, to say that we too, yes, we have our own ways of presentations, of cultural presentations and things like that, and we see it displayed in tonight's performance. We see the argument between Iyaloja and Mr. Pilkings about trying to bring a 'new order' you know Pilkings is thinking that he is doing a world of good to the community there by trying to stop somebody from committing suicide. But in the African sense, the Yoruba world, cosmology, that is not suicide. It is a rightful act for him to do, he was born to do it, because he was born into the family of the king's horsemen and it's their duty to do it. Once you don't perform your duty in the society, the society is at risk.

RESPONDENT 3: I am Salaudeen Habeeb from department of Theatre and Performing Arts. Based on my interpretation from my reading of the play text, I used to see it as a form of African tragedy and an attempt by Wole Soyinka to divert from the European form of tragedy, tragic hero should be from a noble family and so on. But at the end I discovered that Wole Soyinka has something hidden in that play but I didn't understand until tonight's performance. First of all, Aristotle says that the tragic hero must be from the noble family, Elesin Oba is from the nobility; it must have a tragic flaw that will lead to his downfall, Elesin Oba had a tragic flaw which is he wants to enjoy himself before leaving which led to his downfall, the downfall of the tragic hero according to the Aristotelian concept must affect all other characters in the play, the society was in chaos, so all the European criteria and steps for trace of the tragic hero is still displayed in the play. Initially, my own understanding of the text is that it is a play that tends to discuss vividly the concept of the clash of culture, where they bring in the issue of the Captain that had to sacrifice his life for the people for continuous travelling through the sea, and what Elesin Oba too is trying to do, that was at the point at which I understood the play. So many lines had no meaning to me, especially the riddle of the 'Not-I-Bird'. But for me when I read it I called it the 'noti' bird. From the performance I actually got a lot of understanding, but since we are talking about the play text first, that's my understanding.

RESEARCHER: Maybe I should just quickly move to the next....

RESPONDENT 4: No, but my understanding of that text, I read the play and I think I need to add my voice, even though I am not in the mainstream theatre arts practice, but by my

understanding of that text, Wole Soyinka is not making any mistake like Dodo had said. It is a clear statement about the European or American lack of appreciation of other people's perspectives on what life should be, this concept of superiority, my ways are the only ways, and he is questioning the logic in that and that is why he has brought those duality you have seen. In the case of the Captain blowing up himself, is ok for him to do that sacrifice, whatever it is, for his own country, but it is not ok for Elesin Oba to kill himself, so who is the hero in this instance? He is asking a lot of questions so that you examine yourself. It's this thing about people understanding culture and the ways of other people and then accepting it on its merits without questioning it, because they are also not questioning your own culture. Now, if you look at it, I don't have a problem with the, unlike my friend Sylva, the characterisation and the use of language, because like you said, whichever way you look at it, he (RESPONDENT 2) rightly pointed out that Ngugi tried it and it didn't work. Ok, whichever way you look at it my understanding is conceptual, because the Iyaloja is at the level of intelligence that equates that of the District Officer, so they must be able to engage at that level. Of course Sergeant Amusa is at a lower level and so the characterisation is to help you understand the level at which he is, he cannot engage the District Officer like Elesin Oba and Iyaloja will engage him at that level of intellectualism to be able to show the equity between the two different cultures that he is trying to show that everybody has his own merits and his own demerits, the only thing is for you to be able to appreciate what the other person is doing. But for me, the criticism I have for the text is that for some strategic reasons Wole Soyinka refuse to bring in the issues of why the colonialist in the first place came to Africa. It was deliberately downplayed and for me any discourse on what the white man was doing in Africa without bringing in the economic perspective to it, will diminish whatever strength your story is, because they didn't just come and tell us they were better than us. They also came for the economic reasons, they were looking for things and they are still looking for, they have left us and that is why I still find the play very relevant.

REASEARCHER: Ok, in what way(s) does your reading of the play text correlate with the performance tonight? In what areas do you think your reading of the play correlate with the performance tonight? What are the meeting points between the play text and the performance text you have seen this evening?

RESPONDENT 5: Danladi Adigizi is my name, looking at the play text basically it talks about clash of cultures, the white, the European and the African culture. Now, coming into the performance, in the place of Olunde and Mrs Pilkings bringing hand in hand the Captain and the sacrifice of Elesin Oba, there we can see a clash of cultures within the play we can see the clash of cultures and in the performance also there is still the issue of clash of cultures and so many examples like putting hand in hand what is acceptable in the western side can still be acceptable in the African side, but the westerners have this interpretation that we are the only ones who can do things the right ways, your own way is barbaric and to me that is where the ideology of these barbaric nature of a thing, because you are inferior to me so anything you do to me is not acceptable at all.

RESPONDENT 6: I am Victor Ihidero from the department of Theatre and Performing Arts. Reading Soyinka's play text, *Death and the King's Horseman*, I wouldn't say as he (RESPONDENT 5) has said that the play is a clash of cultures. From what I get from the reading of the play text is the fact that there is a misunderstanding of interest in the play text, but in the performance we can actually see the clash of cultures, and how is that in the play text? Now, in the performance, there is something that the two ladies did here, mimicking the western ways. Now we can see the young girls, the African system understanding the cultural norms, values of the west and relating to them at that point. But there is a failure in the part of Pilkings to understand Elesin Oba or the people's disposition towards their cosmos. Now, the presence of Pilkings in Africa, in the Yoruba worldview, has raised an issue, I think all what he did was to put a cessation, an end to the Yoruba cosmic world; Olunde is dead. Reading the play text you get the picture that Olunde committed suicide, Elesin Oba committed suicide, but in the play text, there are cultural significations of that. There is this place where Elesin Oba had to kneel down before the son, that is an abomination in the first place, a reversal, so Olunde has gone out, he is not supposed to see his father, he came back, and is seeing his father, there is a clash there, but you won't get that in the mere reading of the play text. Now going further from there, the analogy that they try to draw between the Captain and Elesin Oba, and what he is to do, there is a difference in that, now Olunde was able to understand that this is what the Captain did in order to save the people, it is not far from what my father is trying to do to save our own people, so why is it an issue for Pilkings. Now because Olunde, and Africans as it were, understands this view,

and Pilkings not understanding that is where there is a breach. So, from the text you read and see that there is a misunderstanding, but in the performance there is a clash of cultures.

RESPONDENT 7: I am Yomi Onifade. I think I won't agree that Pilkings does not understand the African world. Pilkings understands the tradition very well. But what Pilkings was trying to cover up is that why will you commit suicide because a king died, this must stop. He felt that tradition is barbaric, is something that shouldn't be heard of, he felt that when something blew something up that was heroic, but why must you die? You should die for something reasonable, not dying for something because a man died you have to be buried with that man. I would not see it as a clash of cultures too. Pilkings understood the culture but he is trying to save a life. But if I want to argue in this point, if you look at the son to Elesin Oba, Olunde, he had gone there, despite the fact that he has gone there, Wole Soyinka is trying to tell us that look sometimes when we felt that when we leave the shores of our environment, we find that all those cultures, all those things like ethos, that make us, we should let them behind, look at what Olunde said, Yes I have learnt so many things there, thank God for your people, they have made me to understand that I have to hold on to my culture because if you cannot be trustworthy when it comes to your things, then I should hold unto my own, he also went there, learnt so many things. So Wole Soyinka is trying to tell us that Africans sometimes don't need to lose, there are some vital elements in our culture we need to hold so strongly, that if you hold them, definitely we can just pass them on, we can see what displayed here, actually when I read the text I didn't understand the text much the way I understand the stage play, we can see there is a place where Olunde was saying that look, I even saw many people die, I saw the deaths, I saw the way so many things are marvelled and turned around. You can see everything was displayed here tonight. I think in this performance, Wole Soyinka is trying to explicate that look, we Africans we have culture to hold on to despite the fact that we have the training of the colonial masters.

RESPONDENT 2: Essentially, let me add to what he is saying, though the last time I read it was more than ten years ago, the performance has refreshed most of what I have read, it cannot be all. Essentially, I look at it as Soyinka representing an Africanist view of the whole debate about whether we have art forms or whether we can equate our art forms as tragedy, the way the western world have enunciated through the treatise of Aristotle and things like that, and it's just

like the reharsh of what is there. Like he (RESPONDENT 3) said, Elesin Oba belongs to a particular class and it just fits into what Aristotle has said, that a tragic hero must be from a particular class and Elesin Oba also fits into that particular shoe, and he must have harmatia and of course he had it, as we saw it here today. But the essential thing I want to drive at is that at the end of the day, we see, although Soyinka tells us in the text, in his authorial something, that we shouldn't look at this text as a clash of cultures, that Pilkings was just there as a mere incidence, and that brings me to the point about what he said about that colonial experiences of Africans, you cannot wish that away, they were here on a particular purpose and Soyinka in his write up has failed to convince us that we should not consider Pilkings' presence as really important but we see even in the argument, we see the arrogance of the British culture, we see the arrogance of the western culture. While they can say somebody who blows up himself as being heroic, they don't want to see Elesin Oba's act that he is supposed to have committed in order to save his own race as barbaric. Well, that apart, let me bring in another fresh angle to it, you (RESPONDENT 7) talked about trying to save a life, probably you are looking at it from a Christian perspective, there is something that I am trying to argue or to perceive, both from the play text and the performance itself. So if Elesin Oba committed the ritual suicide so what? Now that he didn't do it, so what? The society still moves on, it's still moving on, recently the last Ooni of Ife died, the person who was supposed to do that picked race and went and hid himself in T. B Joshua's church...

RESPONDENTS CHORUS: Abobaku, that is somebody who dies with the king...Pilkings represents Christianity today... a cow can replace the Elesin.... Pilkings represents modernity, new ways....

RESPONDENT 6: Looking at it from a humanistic angle, a man needs not die for something, something should be worth dying for, this is the clash, this is the essence Elesin is to die, that is where the clash is coming from, Pilkings is saying you are a man, you should die for something, Elesin is saying this is what I am born to do, so there is a clash.

RESPONDENT 4: I like the fact that I am not from the mainstream theatre person. I have the liberty to look at it from a different perspective. For me, Wole Soyinka being a theatre practitioner, who has also studied the theories of theatre and all of that, has only appropriated

that as an instrument for him to deliver his message, and that message is very simple, that no culture is better than the others. The intellectualism and the grounding in the Yoruba cosmology and vis-a-vis the British system, has been played out clearly to show that for the Yoruba, they have an answer and they have their own culture that answers to whatever situation while you have your own, and it is not by error that he keeps pairing characters in the play, they could see that Pilkings has come to Africa and has learnt some aspects of the Yoruba culture but it didn't stop him from being the British person that he is. So he is conscious about who he is. It is the same thing that Olunde has gone to England, he has understood their ways of life, it didn't change... infact Pilkings expected that Olunde would have become British while he has refused to become African. These are the things that Wole Soyinka is saying, why do you think I should become British when you will not become African and you are not better than me, and that is the way I am seeing it, all these theories about who is royal or not is to be able to deliver as a theatre person, the message that he has set out, and if you know who Wole Soyinka is, he gave us the background so you understand where he is coming from, he is pursuing a perspective about what the African person should be and how other people should perceive him, as an equal and not an inferior person.

RESPONDENT 8: Beyond the issue of African culture, I think we will not just discuss the play *Death and the King's Horseman* from just the perspective of an African culture. I think we should also look at it from that limited angle of it being the Yoruba culture, not necessarily the African culture because what was displayed in *Death and the King's Horseman* can be specifically put within the context of the Yoruba culture rather than the African culture. What I mean is that what Wole Soyinka was portraying in that play does not represent the entire view of the African culture, of the African cosmology. And also beyond the issue of talking about clash of cultures, I will like to talk about influence of culture because when you look at it very closely, take yourself away from the idea of what Wole Soyinka is talking about and look at it from your own perspective, you will see culture trying to interplay, culture trying to influence, culture trying to relate. At some point even Pilkings' wife was trying to begin to understand the complexities of the culture she has found herself, influence of culture has been seen even in the house help of the Pilkings. So beyond the issue of clash, there is also the issue of interplay, there is also the issue of mix, there is also the issue of influence, influence that have brought about

some forms of outcomes, some of the outcomes reactionary, some of the outcomes revolutionary, some of the outcomes positive and negative, or whatever how you can put this into perspective. So beyond the issue of clash of cultures there is also the interplay that have brought about influence in that light.

RESEARCHER: Ok, what areas do you think the play text differs from the performance tonight? Are there any points of difference?

RESPONDENT 8: Yes, I think of course there are some points of difference when you read the play you find out that there is this deep presence of the use... especially in terms of the use of language. Today the performance has shown some great amount of the use of the Yoruba language, the use of traditional language which of course you don't see playing out in the play text.

RESPONDENT 6: Ok, let me pick up from there. Now in the text and in the performance there is a paradigm... there is a gap, a wide one between that concept of the 'Not-I-Bird' and the performance. If you read the text, a close reading of that text, you see the 'Not-I-Bird' is just on its own, there is no connection between the 'Not-I-Bird' to the character and performance of Elesin Oba. There is something that happened in the performance, while Elesin Oba was going to wherever he was going to, there is something that played out here, you know, the 'Not-I-Bird' not wanting to take responsibility, so from there we are able to trace that, 'ah, are you sure this guy would die?' The 'Not-I-Bird', the hunter appears but did assure I am not the one, I am not responsible here, i am not responsible. So that gives us that first sign that this man may not go. Iyaloja now reminds us in the performance again towards the end, reminding Elesin Oba of what Elesin Oba had said, that you were not ready to go, or forget all these sorrows that you are displaying in this place, you are not ready, if you were ready you would have taken that step. So in the text we can relate to the differences of this man not ready... but in the performance it was just awesome.

RESPONDENT 1: Alright, my own contribution is that stage realisation of any play text requires some artistic interference of the concept from which the director visualises the play and tries to put it into life. And then definitely the crew, the cast and crew do their productions

meetings and agree on certain things, so we are seeing the text through the eyes of the producers. So the performance is different from the text in the sense that you see it the way the producers want you to see it, so that's a major difference. But one difficulty I struggle with is the absence of males among the townspeople. I'm not sure that was the sense I got when I read the play. When I read the text, I'm aware that Iyaloja is the leader of the market women so there would be a dominance of women in scenes that have to do with market, scenes that have to do with how they interacted with the Elesin Oba when he came to place demands on what he wanted before he could make the transition. But in other aspects and what happened in the town in the course of the hours within which that saga lasted up to the point that they brought the corpse of Olunde to Elesin Oba to see how his son has done what he couldn't do, I am lost with the total absence of men in the townspeople and I think in the audience somebody sitting beside me asked whether it is a town of women, it is women that do even rites like this, so where have all the men gone?

RESPONDENT 3: Again, especially on that aspect of... based on the reading of the text, you will see that there are a lot of very large west African kind of enjoyment that Elesin Oba had before leaving that he was having before the play proceed but I didn't see any. I was expecting I was going to see gourds with palm wine here, they serve him the biggest meat at least he can enjoy himself and the only request he could make, or the two requests he made was that of the clothing and that of the seed he intends to plant. So, on the second notice there is a very wide margin of difference between the text and the performance. Those lines I saw them as just distraction, the line of 'not i' 'not i', like he said earlier on, but when he now got to a place, he said so many lines that is even against the Yoruba culture. In Yoruba culture we know that it is the gods that have control of somebody's fate and destiny, he said "I am the master of my fate", that is a clash of the culture from the beginning. He said the 'Not-I', when he was relating to the 'Not-I-Bird', when it got to the hyena, the hyena said 'not i' and ran away, when it got to the squirrel he said, he now said even the 'Not-I-Bird' we are talking about even came to my roof and perched on top of my roof, Iyaloja now said and what happened, he said what happened, are you asking me, when i rolled out my mat the 'Not-I-Bird' just fly away happily. What does he mean? 'Not-I', meaning that himself is also a party to 'not i'. That is a very deep interpretation that I've never thought of except in this performance that I saw it. Saying that, 'not i', even me o I'm not ready to die. So, all those things he didn't do them, he said something again, he said, 'life

is honour and honour ends when life ends', and his own life, he is not going to end his own life, that's another instance but he wasn't interested in doing that for the sake of his people, he rendered that line while they were trying to tell him to go but he needed to plant a seed. If you look at it there is a very wide... in fact I got a lot of things in the performance that has to do with clashes of culture even in the speech, in the lines rendered by Elesin Oba himself that makes it so prominent.

RESPONDENT 2: I think essentially, just like Sylva has said, a play text is different from a performance text, so what we have seen tonight is essentially just the candidate's own perspective and interpretation of that text, that is what he had already set out to tell us, that he is disregarding what Soyinka had said, what Soyinka is trying to coarse us into, don't look at it from that perspective, look at it from this other perspective, he is saying no I'm throwing away that your perspective that you are asking us to look at it from and this is my perspective and there are a lot of examples from within the text itself that shows that I can do it this way, I can present it this way. And I hope the candidate would take up the challenge to probably brush up the performance and take it out of this place so that people also can have another vista of all this the almighty Soyinka's presentation.

RESPONDENT 4: If I may just add again from a lay man's perspective, there is this thing in visual arts that we say that once you produce an artwork and present it, it is out of your control, it is subject to varied interpretations and you cannot decide for whoever is looking at it what he thinks about it, whatever it is that is the message you had before, anybody looking at it is informed by his own experiences and his own reactions to it, and that is the licence for me that every theatre director has. Yes this is what the playwright intended but I can appropriate his symbolism and his text into also charting an experience that I want people to share with me and we have that licence, we cannot question the basis in which he wants to show the contradiction of Elesin Oba challenging the very existence of the culture that he is coming from. I think for me, I don't see any issues with that, that is the way I am looking at it.

RESEARCHER: From your viewing of the performance tonight, what do you consider to be the major conflict and which characters would you say drive the conflict?

RESPONDENT 3: For me the major conflict is that of the character of Elesin Oba, that is the major conflict. The so-called 'baba', the messiah that they were looking up to, that is supposed to rescue them, is the one rendering lines of I am not ready, that is the major contradiction, not even Pilkings trying to stop it.

RESPONDENT 6: I think again in addendum to that, there is even an internal clash because if you look at the dialogue between Iyaloja and Elesin Oba, it's as if they are not from the same world, the same cosmic presence. Iyaloja seems to understand the basis of that cosmology than Elesin Oba himself, because if you remember all her lines reminding him of this is what you should do that you didn't do, even going back to the 'Not-I-Bird', reminding him of his instances then. Then what Pilkings' presence in the text only oils that internal clash that is there, that is how I see it. Then again the coming of Olunde himself carries its own, it comes with its own contradictions, your father is kneeling down before you, who does that? They were not supposed to see in the first place, and now they are seeing.

RESEARCHER: So what would you tag the central theme of this performance?

RESPONDENT 6: Clash of cultures. Soyinka cannot run away from it. He cannot write a text and say that don't look at it from this angle, look at it from this angle, no, we are the receivers, we are his audience, we are the people watching it, don't tell us...

RESPONDENT 3: Bearing in mind there are different schools of interpretation, you can't choose for the reader.

RESPONDENT 4: I'm not seeing any culture clashing really, honestly I think I agree with Soyinka that cultures are not clashing. I think it was the attempt of two cultures trying to establish themselves as independent cultures...

RESPONDENT 2: Two arrogant cultures.

RESPONDENT 4: Yes, trying to establish their independence, that's the way I see it but there was no attempt to clash. If you look at it from the perspective of the British, from the text, the British system that the text presented was trying to insist that look my culture is superior to your

culture so anything that you are doing that I think that is not correct, I should correct you because you don't know what you are doing is wrong, what I'm doing is...

RESPONDENT 8: But that is the clash...

RESPONDENT 4: It is not a clash

RESPONDENT 8: Ok, then what do you term it as?

RESPONDENT 4: You don't understand. The other person is saying, no what you are also doing, because they were constantly referring to what the British were doing. Ok, don't you think that this thing you are doing... what is the difference between what you did and what I have done? The only difference is that this is the way me I do my ritual, that is the way you do your ritual. When your king dies, do you do this, do you do that? They have constantly been questioning the superiority of the other culture to show that their culture is not any less than that person's culture, that's the way I kept seeing it, and that is why the experience of Olunde going there to have tasted it and also came back to insist that ok I have seen your culture, I like some things about your culture but I am still who I am, it does not change who I am. And the same thing Pilkings who came and has been doing that says that ok I understand your culture, if you want to kill yourself... that is why his wife keep saying, first he said if you want to kill yourself and then his superior came to tell him that he is misbehaving, this is how it should be, look this people don't know anything, we know it, you have to put them in line. When you say cultures are clashing, I don't understand, how did they clash in this performance?

RESPONDENT 6: Just disagreement.

RESPONDENT 2: Let me come in, I think we are leaving out this historical background to the whole thing. Colonialism is there, hegemony is there, dominance is there, ok. The British came into Africa conquered us that is through and through. But we the Africans are trying to resist that dominance of the British to some extent by trying to bring up their end, we see that in the production, we see that in the text because we try to... was it Elesin Oba or Olunde who was trying to say what the British Captain did and you are stopping my father from doing this, his rightful duty. But maybe Soyinka did not bring it to the fore and we didn't see it here on stage also, that struggle, that historical struggle, that cultural struggle to throw off that dominance of

the British and it is a real fact today, what we have as Africans or as independent countries in Africa today is just flag independence, we have not originally gotten the true independence that we are supposed to have had before the British or before the white men came. So as much as possible, what we display today would be something similar to what used to happen but of course we still see the dominance of the western culture in us. There's an extent to which we can go and we saw it today that Pilkings interrupted that particular act of ritual suicide which was to save the cosmology of the Africans.

RESPONDENT 4: Thank you mallam Dodo but can I just say this? You know I made a critique of it earlier when I said that I'm confused why Soyinka would deliberately leave out the interest, the reasons why the British in the first place found themselves in Africa and we were attempting to do that. But I don't think he completely left it out and I like the interpretation that the director has given to this play and you asked a very interesting question, what is the point of conflict in this thing? And for me, it is the salient one that we are refusing to talk about. Why will the director show us that from the beginning an Elesin Oba was giving us signals that he was not ready to die and he is hanging unto using excuses and hanging and agreeing to the British, is that not precisely the political perspective that we are avoiding. I'm still trying to reconcile myself on why the... Wole Soyinka would completely obliterate the political perspective and try to focus on culture. But I think he deliberately did it to hide the fact that he is talking to the African leaders, if you like, because they are represented in the character of the Elesin Oba, that is the way I saw it. His pretence, despite all the things his people have given him, his pretence to want to die but refusing to die and asking for more and hanging on, is that not what we've been experiencing? Is that not what our leaders have been doing? That's the way I'm looking at it and that is what is sustaining the interest. He was looking forward to the British coming to save him, in fact he was wishing they would come and save him and that was why he quickly did that. He wanted the position, knowing the implication of it, it is just like when our leaders contest for office for four years, they know that four years it would finish, and then you have an opportunity of a second term, but at the second term, they want to change the constitution to do a third term, they don't want to follow that small window and pass, and that's the way I see it.

RESPONDENT 6: Another thing you look at in this performance is this flag. We have two worlds already in this play, that is the Union Jack, representing modernity and we have Elesin Oba representing traditionality. Now there is a clash, between this flag, between modernity and traditionality, which would see the light of the day and by the end of the day, it was the total cessation of our world, and the only hope or future that we have is the pregnant lady which we don't even know whether the pregnancy can even come to maturation...

RESPONDENT CHORUS: We can't confirm that... Whether it would be male or female... Is it every seed you plant that germinate? No....

RESPONDENT 6: In fact the future of the African continent is even at stake, for Soyinka we should now tender this woman and ensure that she gives birth because our future lies in her womb. So, thus far now, have we been able to do that?

RESPONDENT 1: The moderator asked a question on who exemplifies the conflict in the play, for me it is the playwright himself.

RESEARCHER: No, now we are talking about the performance.

RESPONDENT 1: When we begin from the playwright you may see my own illustration. He is somebody that was among the earlier group of Africans that had this contact with western education, western orientation and because of that, he was somebody that tried to draw parallel to show us that what is obtainable in the European worldview according to European paradigm, you could find a parallel of it in Africa and I think he is a product of those two streams; he is an African that wants to hold on to his culture, he sees the value and he uplifts the key things that are relevant to the African culture but he had also had the exposure to western education. So for me it is Soyinka and Soyinka coming back as Olunde, so for me in the play, Wole Soyinka himself is Olunde.

RESEARCHER: Ok, let's move forward, are there cultural values displayed in this performance? In what instances in the play text did you notice that?

RESPONDENTS CHORUS: Of course... obviously.

RESPONDENT 5: In the performance we watched this night, we could see how it is not concretely obtainable in African society for women to basically be custodians of tradition. You could see how Iyaloja was constantly reminding Elesin Oba of the cosmic implications of his refusal to commit the suicide he is supposed to commit, the sacrifice. So we could see how in the performance, we are able to see how it was given to women to be able to make sure that men... Elesin Oba ideally is not supposed to be told by a woman of the implication of his refusal to commit...

RESPONDENTS CHORUS: Are you Yoruba?... Not Iyaloja... No No No...

RESPONDENT 7: If we look at it, in the Yoruba culture there is something that when you marry a new bride, there is something that symbolises that that bride actually is something that you take, is not tokunbo, that it is original, you can see when Elesin Oba is coming out he had a calabash with a white cloth, that symbolise that that....

RESPONDENT 2: But the white cloth was not stained. I get the point that you are trying to make but it wasn't stained. That also has some theatrical implication also if you want to look at it from that perspective but we can take it as an imagery of what is supposed to have been or maybe it is just a directorial problem.

RESPONDENT 7: That is what it symbolised when he was coming. And again if you look at this tradition of burying somebody with king, it has been in Yoruba cosmology for long, it is not something that just come out of the blues, it has been for long for we saw the reflex in Ife recently, the king dies and the Abobaku ran away. Another one is that, if you look at culture the side of Iyaloja, in Benin kingdom Iyalojas have been the people that are strong custodians of culture. In Benin kingdom, a woman cannot just approach the king, when you are approaching the king you use handkerchief to cover your mouth when you are approaching the king, you cannot even say anything. But Iyaloja can come into... the king can summon Iyaloja, it shows how powerful Iyaloja is.

RESPONDENT 2: Let me just correct what he said, actually in African culture, everybody has a role, so women themselves have a role to play in the cultural setting don't look at it from the perspective of the western feminist position, women have a special role that they play in the

society and we see it displayed here tonight. The women, in the person of Iyaloja was the carrier of culture, in my place we have a society that is supposed to be for men but even within the society there are some few women that are allowed into such society and they assume certain powers because without them the rites of that particular society would not be complete. So I see Iyaloja as performing her right as a purveyor of culture, as a guardian of culture, she played her role well and she did it well, she represented the culture.

RESPONDENT 6: I think in addendum to that, the role of Iyaloja in this text, the performance of the text, Iyaloja is a market leader and it is even a cultural office. So, from the text you can see that when the young man and the young lady were doing something very modern, the woman had to say no, in our worldview we don't do this, this is how it is done, so he had to come back, the lady had to kneel down, beg and everything was settled. Then, you see the other young lady coming to do her thing, praise singing, going from stage to stage to greet the elders, that again. Then Pilkings also, in his own worldview, also carries that western value to say that no... the whole idea of ball room, for example, is a cultural thing for them which is different from the way we see those people celebrating, so you can see the African idea of celebration and the western idea of celebration, in terms of their dance.

RESPONDENT 8: Based on what I have been able to gather, we will not just look at this play from just the angle of clash of culture, we will also look at it from what he had just said, that there is also that interaction of culture or trying to preserve the dignity of culture and how the white characters have done it and how the Yoruba characters have also done it. Then also looking at it from the angle of having the value based on your question, we will also look at the minor characters, Joseph, Amusa, they showed that Africa has high level regard for respect, they respect authorities, they respect their elders, they respect people that are above them. And that is why you could even see when the officers have sent them to go and arrest Elesin at some point in time they were very careful the way they talk to her, the way they react to her, the way they want to treat her because they know that she is an institution that should be given some kind of regard. And also the way Joseph, despite the fact that he has even been somehow transformed to another type of thinking, he still gives regard to his foundational culture, so that for me is very very valuable, very useful, it speaks a lot, it tells us that even though we will begin to have some kind

of influences, ways of the very indigenous culture we belong to and all it demands. We must also have a way of not just throwing out our culture simply because we are now Christians or Muslims. We must also have some good amount of knowledge and understanding and sense of dignity to the culture that we belong to.

RESEARCHER: Ok, so how does this performance tonight demonstrate the clash of cultures? I know we have hinted on it before but how does it specifically demonstrate a clash of cultures?

RESPONDENT 1: One demonstration for me is the reverence or irreverence with which African artefacts are treated. For Pilkings and his wife to use masquerade costumes to dance their Halloween party just shows the level to which their thinking... in fact by calling them costume... costume is a western word anyway, in Africa we don't call it costume, masquerade is the dress of the spirits, the attire of the gods.

RESPONDENT 4: To answer that question, two characters exemplify what we might call the clash of cultures; Sergeant Amusa and Joseph. That is where you will say cultures have clashed, because for Joseph he has received Christianity, it has confused him with his culture, at one point he wants to respect what his culture says and at another point the Christian doctrine he has received is conflicting with his own traditional belief system and so you could see the confusion in him. The same thing with Amusa who is taking orders from the British people and then when he sees Iyaloja, he remembers that she is one of his and this person shouldn't be, within the culture of the... those people exemplify a clash of cultures, that is why the confusion for him, it was there, it is a clear clash of cultures.

RESPONDENT 7: If clash within the character, I can accept that it is a clash of cultures, but if you say that Joseph is having clash with Amusa then we can say it is clash of cultures, but he is trying to look for a balance here, that is cultural dilemma, he is trying to look for balance here, balance here, if you don't know what to accept, maybe I should go forward or I should go backward, that's a dilemma, there's no clash there.

RESPONDENT 6: I think, for me the clash of cultures remains the characterization of Elesin Oba and Pilkings and their dispositions in terms of their ideas and how they see life, how they see humanity, this one is saying that no we should have something to die for, this one is saying

death is something that I was born to, to die to save my people, so they cannot agree, so while this one is saying his own, this one is saying his own, so they cannot move forward, so what that resulted to is a total collapse.

RESPONDENT 1: And let's still come back to my first point of the English language being used to convey African experience, African feelings and worldview, there are interjections of Yoruba exclamations, of Yoruba statements by the producers, by the actors who are familiar with Yoruba language, but I think in the text, from beginning to the end, maybe songs are rendered but I did not see the use of Yoruba language. That in itself is a dilemma to struggle with, how to convey and express, using a good mastery of the English language which the playwright has, to communicate an African experience, so we translate into English, we use the English language to visualise an African experience and I think it is something that....

RESPONDENT 6: Let me bring something from the performance, drawing again analogy from the Captain's experience and all of that. Now, in this performance, we see the way the actors, the way they used this part of it, the first line that this world is a market, we are all trading, after buying and selling we will all go back to our various places, that's one. But for the people in the boat, that's their own worldview, we are all in the same ship sailing, going somewhere, at a point we have to leave each other. Same thing, we see that happen here, but our inability to now relate to ourselves and say that this life is a market place, you buy and sell, and we go home, we are sailing together at a point we may not arrive together to where we are going to, so our failure to understand each other, the failure of Pilkings and Elesin Oba to understand each other brings about that clash which is now leading to the death of Elesin Oba and the son, because that clash affects Africa, or the Yoruba worldview the most, more that the way it affects the British system. That's how I viewed it.

RESPONDENT 3: Well, a lot of places, the display between Iyaloja's son and the lady, that's a clash for me, also the refusal of Elesin Oba to die is another clash of culture, it is the greatest of the clash because if Elesin Oba as a central figure is willing, before Pilkings gets his men ready and gets to that point the deed must have been done, so the major clash for me is that of Elesin Oba's refusal to die, that's the major clash for me.

RESEARCHER: So, how did women serve as instruments for inculcating values in this performance tonight?

RESPONDENT 4: Iyaloja...

RESPONDENT 1: Several examples have been cited of Iyaloja.

RESPONDENT 6: Iyaloja resonates that, even,Mrs Pilkings, Jane Pilkings, we can see how she was trying to talk Olunde into that, you've gone to school there, you have a bright future ahead of you, my husband and I, we don't have any doubt that you'll be a fine doctor.

RESPONDENT 1: Then at the time that Sergeant Amusa has mobilised his constables to come and break through the file mounted by Iyaloja, the younger girls came and challenged them some more, the fact that the younger girls could stand up to uniform men and even seize their berets and batons, that really brought them down that much.

RESPONDENT 5: That could also mean that a younger generation is coming up.

RESPONDENT 1: More revolutionary.

RESPONDENT 3: Pilkings, sometimes, after independence, Pilkings would go and leave but those mothers (the young girls), prospective mothers would come up and continue... make their existence to continue.

RESEARCHER: Ok, finally, do you think this performance tonight is relevant to contemporary society?

RESPONDENT 1: Yes

RESPONDENT 4: I'm waiting for those that said that Amusa and Joseph are not...

RESPONDENT 1: He has cited examples of people who come into office, the enjoy the perks and privileges of the office and even lay claim to additional entitlements as a result of office but don't discharge the responsibility, like Elesin Oba.

RESPONDENT 4: The second point, that is for me, maybe because of my background, we deal with symbolism, is the fact that, the British flag is hanging in an environment, tells you who is in

charge, despite the fact that it is supposed to be in an African setting, in an African environment, but somebody is in charge, and that is why for me, it was this thing about somebody imposing himself and somebody resisting rather than when you clash you are equals.

RESPONDENT 1: Then another thing is that, in a situation where you say there is foreign interference, that foreign interference is implemented using people that are from the inside, Pilkings by himself could not effect all that arrest without the effort of Sergeant Amusa, in the first place, it was Sergeant Amusa who came to inform him that this is something that was going to happen, he knew that there were rites to be performed but he did not know that it will culminate in the ritual suicide, and it is Amusa that came to inform him, so he now effected the process of arresting... so it shows that if you want to call saboteurs, you want to call the informants, you want to say that there are people who sell their own people, who are used as tools, as instruments to infiltrate their own people, you find them as agents of the outsiders.

RESPONDENT 3: To the contemporary times, the character of Olunde can also speak in that respect. Olunde coming back to fulfil his father's rite is not the real intention of Olunde, because without passing through the rite of initiation and when one Elesin Oba still lives another Elesin Oba cannot be, like when a king is not dead another king cannot come up, but the fame that the Captain enjoyed when he sacrificed his life for his own people, for him to be celebrated is the same thing Olunde came to fulfil there so that he will be celebrated, yet the real essence has not been fulfilled.

RESPONDENT 6: For me, one of the very relevance of this performance is the pregnant woman. Soyinka expects that the community tender that woman so that she would be able to deliver somebody that would be able to save the community, but till now that child has not been delivered...

RESPONDENTS CHORUS: That child could also be female... A female child cannot be Elesin Oba.... She is responsible for the kitchen and other rooms...

RESPONDENT 6: The child has not been born so in that case the community is still at chaos.

RESPONDENT 4: No, you missed the argument. Let me just say something, you missed it a little. Did you hear what she said? 'Where does she come in in this matter?' where do we come

in in Nigeria's situation now? Where does she come in? Nobody is asking her opinion, nobody wants to know whether she wants, even if there's a baby, because we have not been told that there's a baby. He must have shot blank anyways. You understand, but nobody wants to ask her. She is not even... they are not even interested in knowing anything about her and that is the situation we are in, negotiations are going on, things are being done, nobody is asking us.

RESEARCHER: Ok, so thank you very much for your incisive comments. God bless you very much.

NAMES OF RESPONDENTS

Sylvanus Dangoji- Respondent 1

Lumumba Dodo- Respondent 2

Salaudeen Habeeb Adebayo- Respondent 3

Gambo Duniya- Respondent 4

Danladi Adigiza Barnabas- Respondent 5

Victor Ihidero- Respondent 6

Onifade Abayomi- Respondent 7

Abel Idebe- Respondent 8

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Emmanuel Tsadu Gana

Appendix E

FGD Group One Photos

A photo of the researcher conducting a Focus Group Discussion with Discussants largely from the Department of English and Literary Studies on the 8th of November 2016

Another view of the Focus Group Discussion with lecturers and Students of the Department of English and Literary Studies on the 8th of November 2016

Appendix F

FGD Group 2 Photos

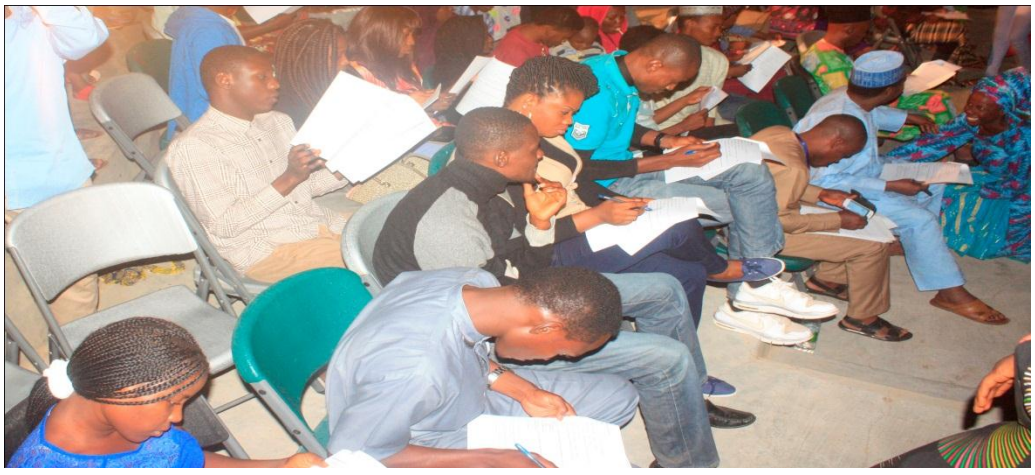
A photo of the research assistant conducting a Focus Group Discussion with Discussants largely from the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts on the 8th of November 2016

Another view of the Focus Group Discussion with lecturers and Students of the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts on the 8th of November 2016

APPENDIX G

Questionnaire Photos

A cross-section of audience filling questionnaire after watching the performance of *Death and the King's Horseman* at the Ahmadu Bello University Studio Theatre (Drama Village) on the 9th of November 2016



A cross-section of audience filling questionnaire after watching the performance of *Death and the King's Horseman* at the Ahmadu Bello University Studio Theatre (Drama Village) on the 9th of November 2016

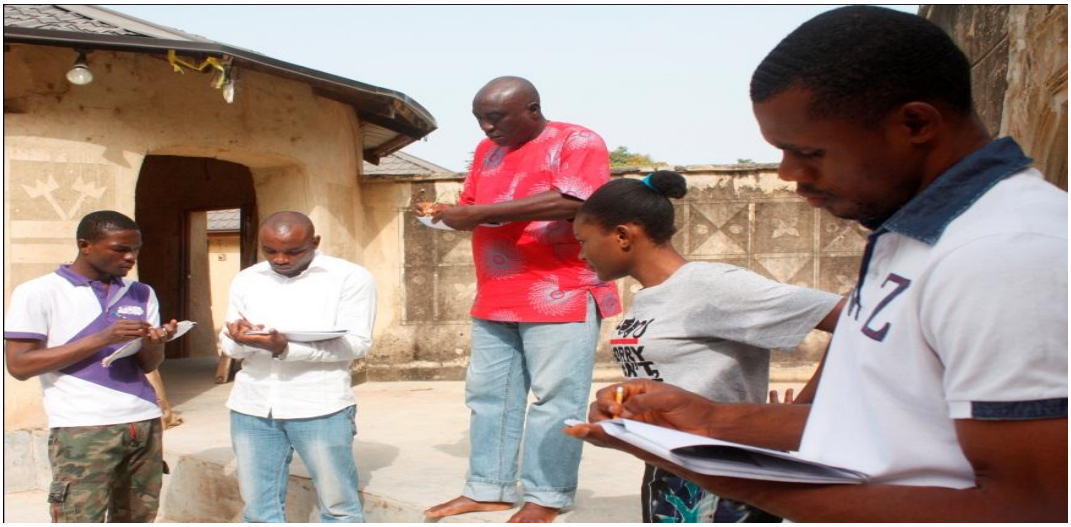
Appendix H

Production Process Photos

A photo of the cast and crew having a Production Meeting

A photo of the cast having Songs Rehearsals

A photo of actors during a session of exercises



A photo of the director and actors blocking stage movements and deconstructing lines in their scripts

A photo of one of the rehearsals sessions

A photo of another rehearsals session

The Ahmadu Bello University Studio Theatre's carpenter and some members of the crew constructing a set for one of the scenes in the production

Appendix I

Production Performance Photos

A photo of a scene in the market showing Amusa and his Constables with the defiant market women

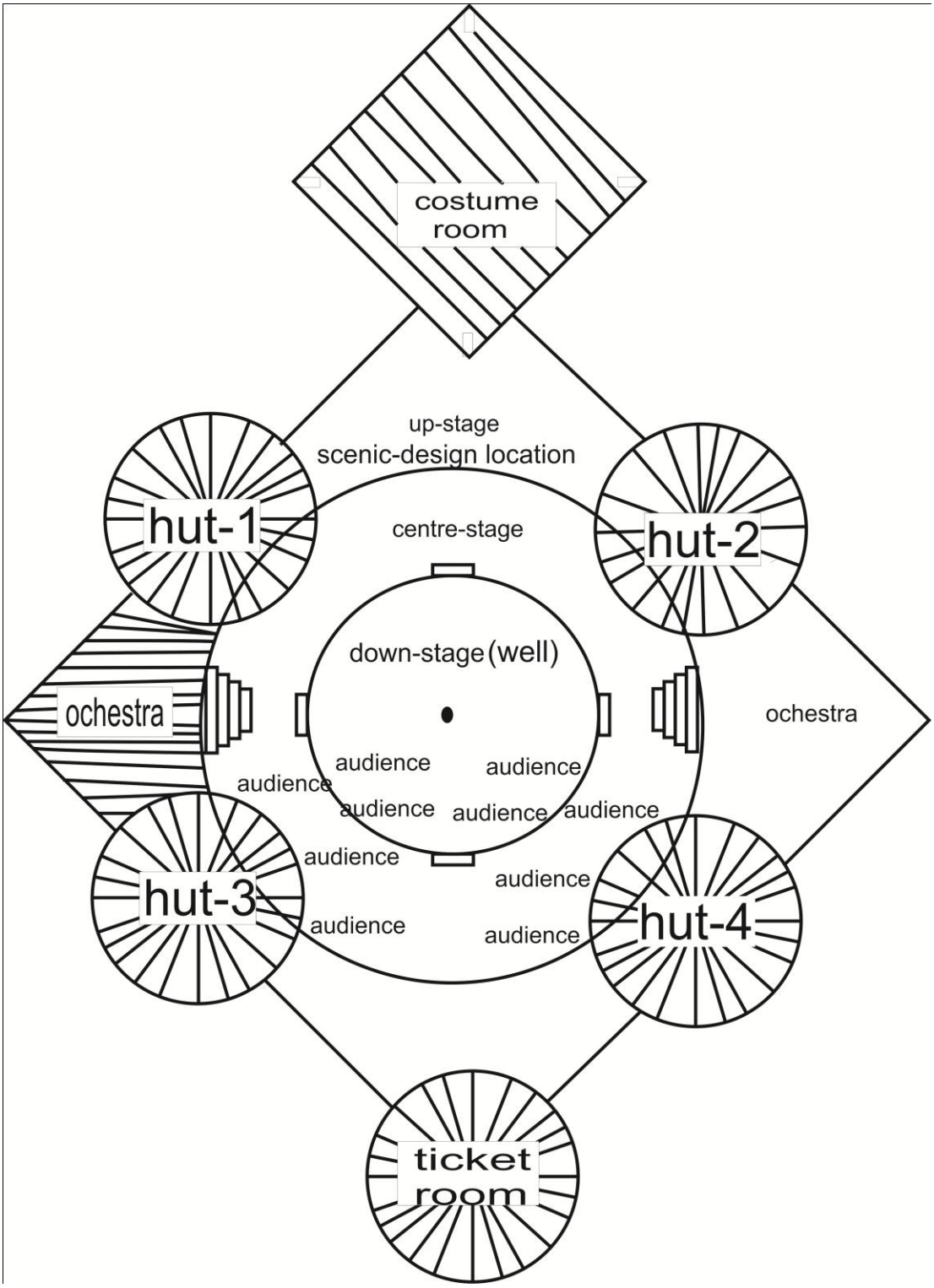
A photo of Iyaloja and the Bride after Elesin Oba's suicide in Pilkings' jail cell. In the background is Pilkings and wailing market women

A photo of Elesin Oba interacting with the audience.

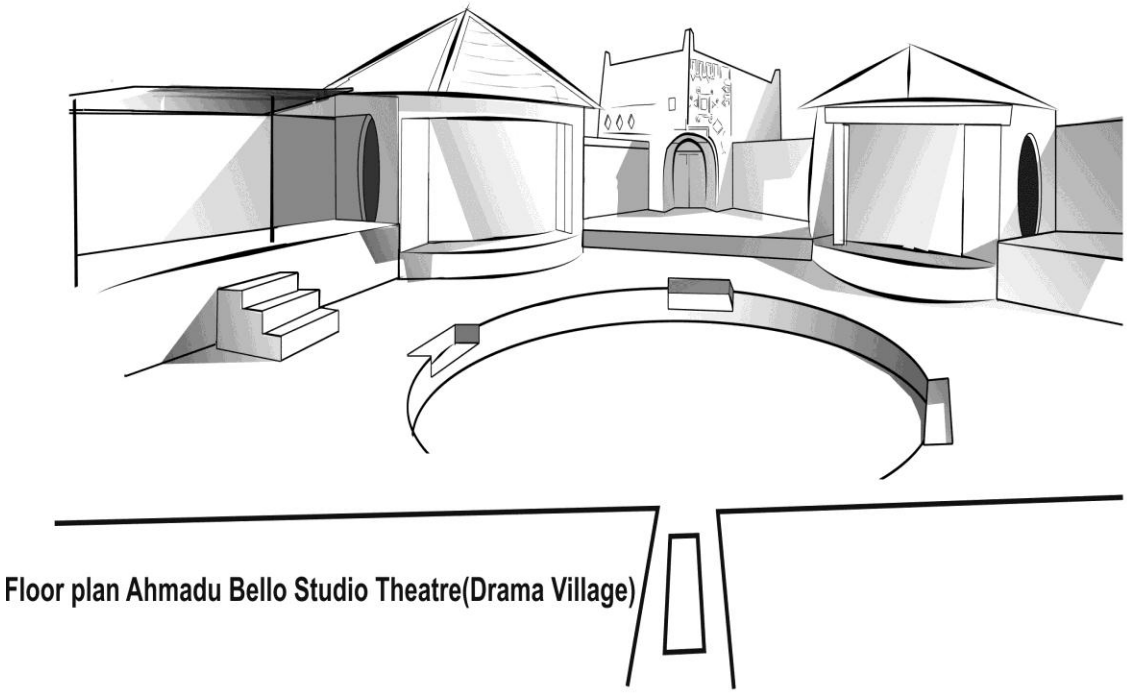
A photo of Elesin Oba acting in the midst of the audience.

A photo of a scene in the market.

Appendix J

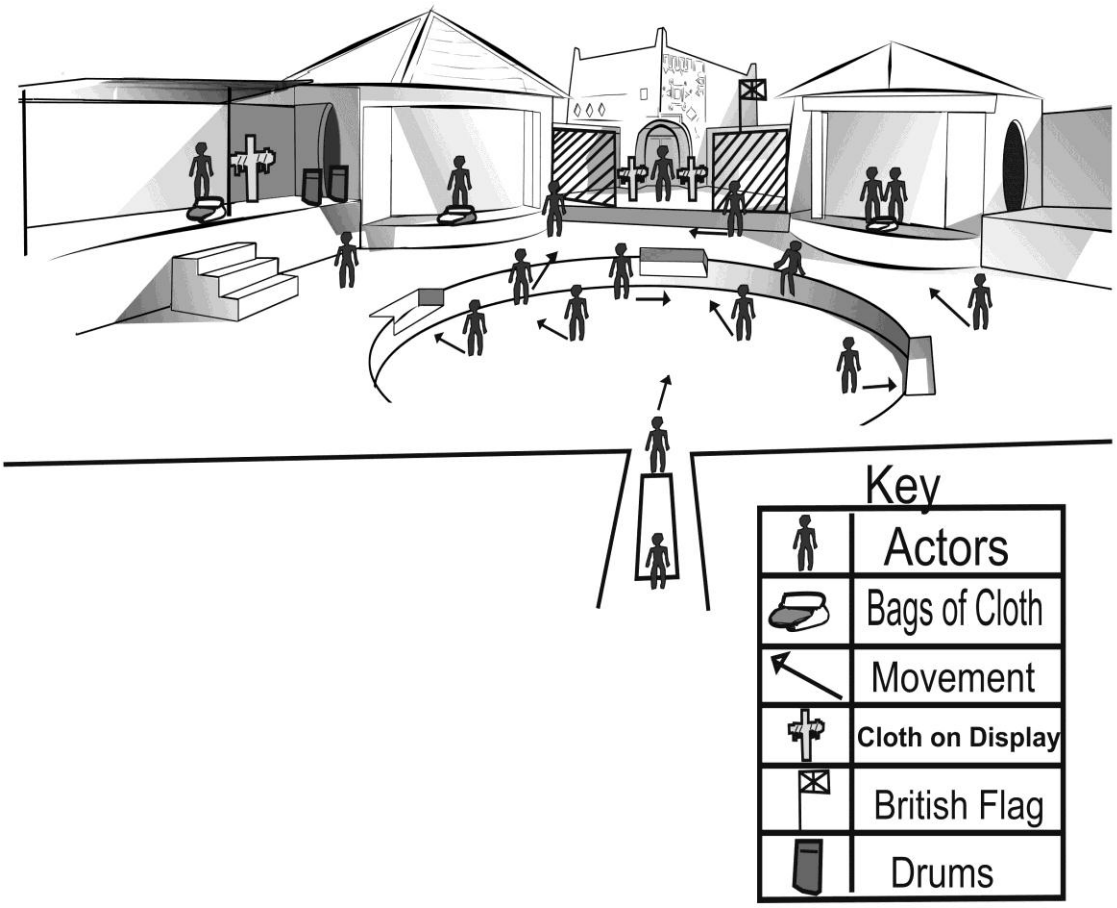


Aeriel view of Ahmadu Bello University Studio Theatre (Drama Village) Floor Plan

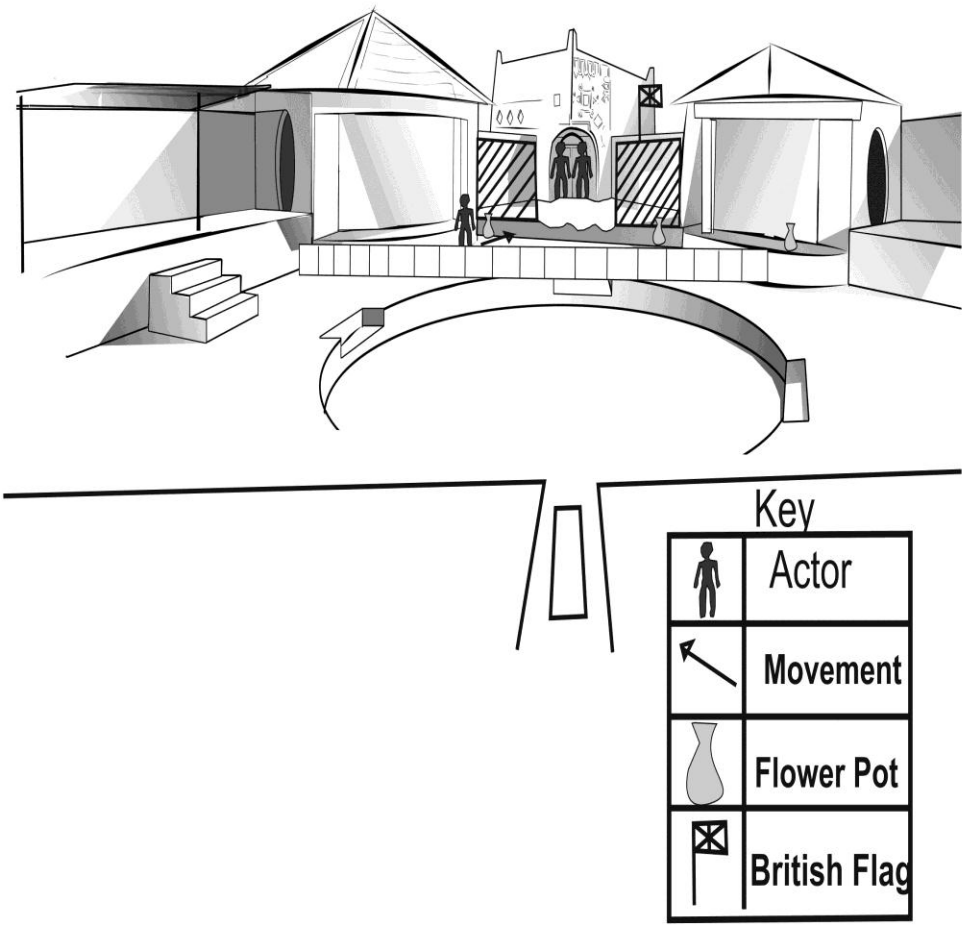


Floor plan Ahmadu Bello Studio Theatre(Drama Village)

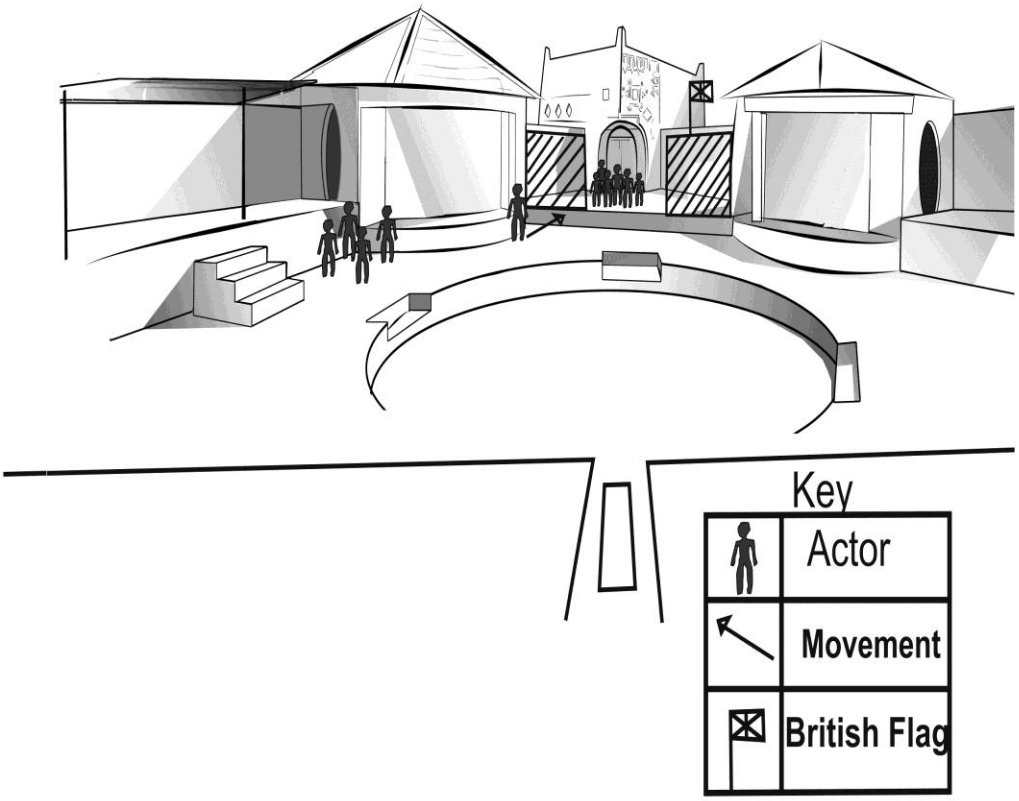
Audience view of the Ahmadu Bello University Studio Theatre Acting Space



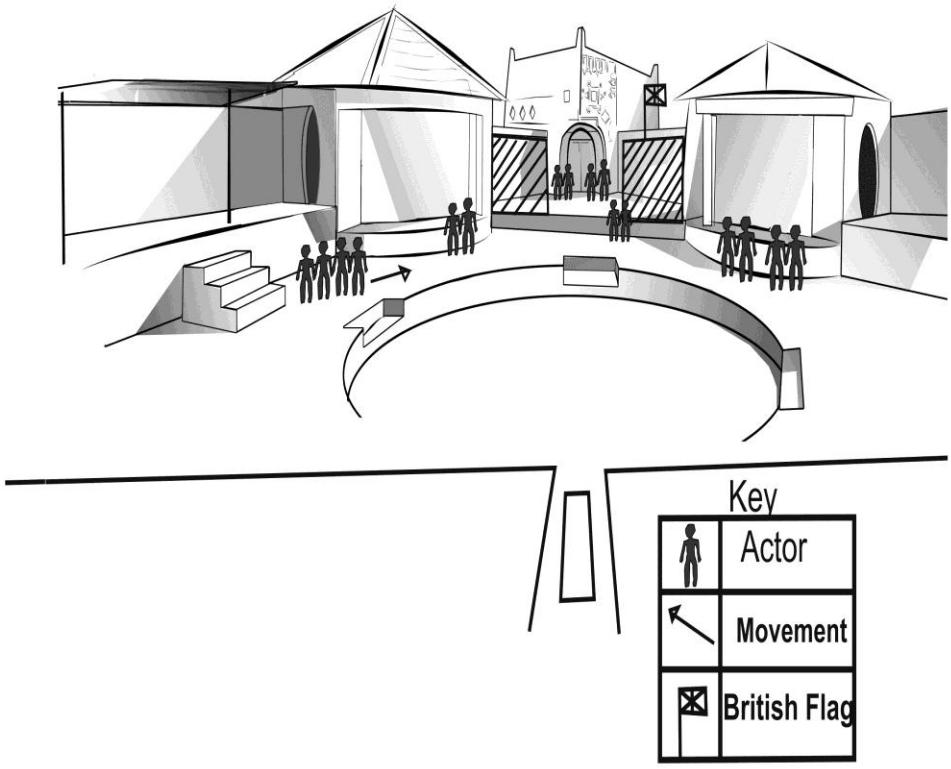
Groundplan of Act 1



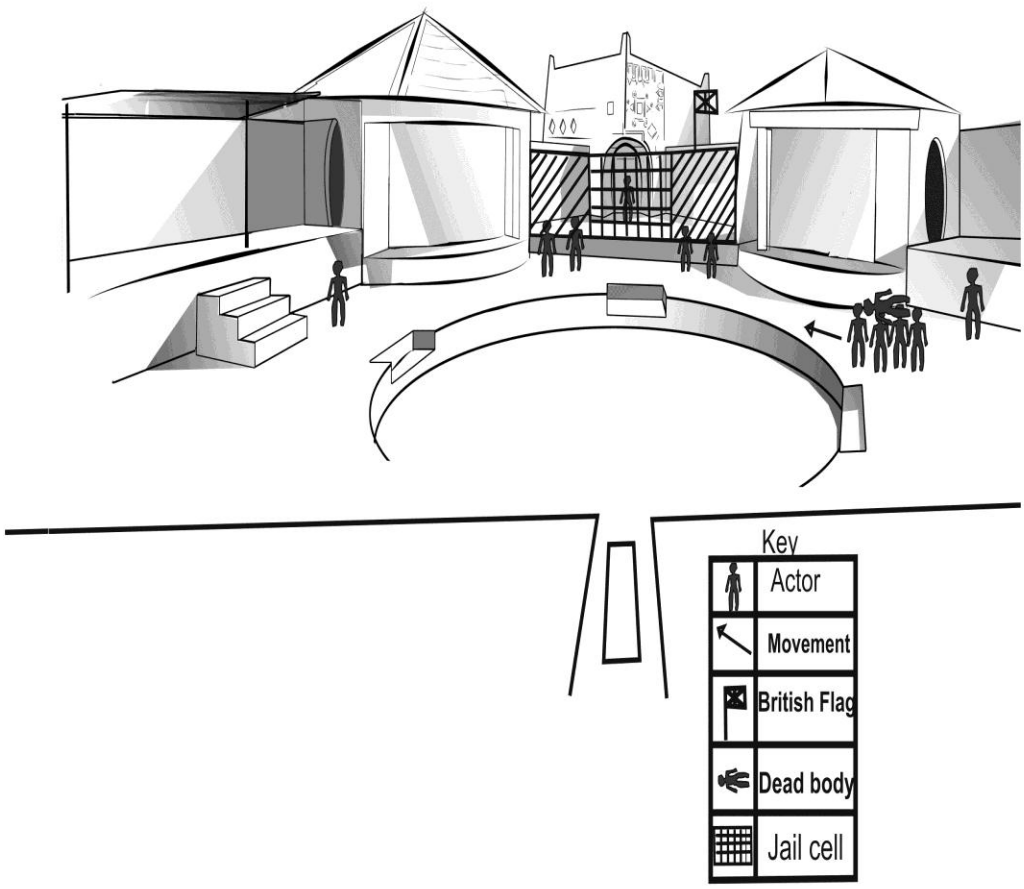
Groundplan of Act 2



Groundplan of Act 3



Groundplan of Act 4



Groundplan of Act 5

Appendix K

Performance Songs

Song 1: (Chant)

Woun tete mo p'ori lowo o

Woun tete mo p'ori l'ola

Woun tete mo p'ori ni gbo gbo nkan

Nba ti ma saa'gun

Woun tete mo p'ori ni, nba ti ma sa nkan

Gbogbo akitiyan eda l'aye o, lowo ori l'owa o

Mo fe d'ogun, mo fe d'ogbon n'ile aye, nbe lowo ori

Bo ti le hun ko pe to o, ara mi, kadara maa se o

Babalawo ko le ye e, onisegun ko le ye o

Lo je n ni, ai tete mo p'ori lowo o

Woun tete mo p'ori l'ola

Woun tete mo p'ori ni gbo gbo nkan

Nba ti ma saa'gun

Woun tete mo p'ori ni, nba ti ma sa nkan

English Translation

They did not know early that destiny is riches

They did not know early enough that desitiny is wealth

They did not know on time that everything is determined by destiny

They would not have consulted the oracle

Not knowing sooner that it is all about destiny

I would not have consulted anything at all

All the struggles of life is dependent on destiny

I want to be this I want to be that in life

All depends on destiny

No matter how long it would take

Destiny would surely prevail

No soothsayer can alter it

No medicine man can revoke it

That is why I say

They did not know early that destiny is riches

They did not know early enough that desitiny is wealth

They did not know on time that everything is determined by destiny

They would not have consulted the oracle

Not knowing sooner that it is all about destiny

I would not have consulted anything at all

Song 2 (Marketplace)

Oja l'awa nlo 2x

Kidiri, kodoro, kidi horihori

Kin lo t'aja owo mi o

English Translation

We are heading to the market

To go and sell the goods I have

Song 3 (Supplication)

N'ibo l'eda ti m'ori wa

Ajala o, Alamo ire 2x

Morimori 2x

Mori mii, s'ire

English Translation

Where do humans beget destiny?

Ajala, moulder of goodwill

Moulder of destiny/2x

Mould me a destiny of gooodness

Song 4 (Affection)

(Solo) *Mo fe fe o, omo'birin yi*

Mo n'ife re, omo'birin yi

Wa s'aya mi, omo'birin yi

Ka f'ira s'okan, omo'birin yi

(Girls) *ife, ife, ife, ife* 2x

English Translation

I want to marry you, this young woman

I love you, this young woman

Come be my wife, this young woman

Let's become one, this young woman

Love, love, love, love/2x

Song 5 (Affection)

(Solo*) Ara, e ba mi gboro kan o, oooo*

Oro yii ka mi laya, mo wi o

Omo kan nbe ti mo o feran o

Bi nwo se baa soro, ko ye mi rara o

Nko ri iru erin eyi ri o, ooo

Nko ri iru ife eyi rii o, ooo

Omo oni'wa tutu yi oo

Mo fe mo ile re o, kin ma ba e lo

(Girls) Baby je n maa ba e lo

Honey ki n maa ba e lo

Ololufe, je n ma ba e lo

(Refrain) Oh what a feeling, burning me all up, I cannot help my self

Baby, I wanna love you

I wanna be with you, both night and day, share my life with you

Baby I wanna love you

Oh what a feeling, locking up my lips, I can't express myself

Baby, I wanna love you
I wanna be with you, grow old in your arms have babies with you.

Baby I wanna love you...

English Translation

People, help listen to this issue

The issue is unfathomable, I say

There exists a lady I love

But I do not understand the tactics with which to approach her

I have not seen this kind of love before

I have not seen this kind of smile before

This lady of soothing character

I want to know your home, to follow you there

Baby, let me go with you

Honey, I'll go with you

My lover, let me go with you

Song 6 (Admonition)	**English Translation**
Omo mi seun rere ti re a dara o, omo mi gbo temi ti re a dara o 2x	My child, do good and yours will be well. My child, obey me and yours will be well /2x
Iya mi maa seun rere, gbadura fun mi	My mother, I'll do good, pray for me
Mama mi maa seun rere, gbadura fun mi	My mother, I'll do good, pray for me
B'omode ba huwa buruku w'ani iya re l'oko	When a child misbehaves, they'll say she is being taught by the mother
B'omode ba huwa buruku w'ani mama re l'oko	When a child misbehaves, they'll say she is being taught by the mother
Iya mi f'ona t'oda han mi l'aye	My mother showed me good path in life
Mama mi f'iwa t'oda han mi l'aye	My mother showed me good attitude to life
Omo mi seun rere ti re a dara o, omo mi gbo temi ti re a dara o 2x	My child, do good and yours will be well. My child, hear me and yours will be well/2x

Chant: (Oriki Iya)

Tani n'je se bi iya?

Ko le e si t'aye o fi pa re

Iya lo loko to wani waye

O fe mi wewu

O lo si agbede meji orun oun aye

O wawa w'aye tan

O fun wa ni bugbe

Ko je a raun

L'odo abiyamo t'omo lakoko

Iya n'fe ka jeun ka yo

Iya n'ife ka reru ka so

Iya n'je irora iya omo

Irorun omo, fitina omo

S'oun naa ni t'iya?

Leyin alaafin orun

Iya loke miran f'omo

Orisa n'iya ti o lafiwe!

English Translation (Mothers' Eulogy)

Who can be like a mother?

There can be none compared to her till the end of this world

She is the vehicle that brings one into the world

She risks for life because of me

She stands between heaven and earth because of me

She brought us to the world

She gave us a comfortable place to stay so we would not complain

For a mother, her child comes first

Mother wants us to eat and be filled

Mother wants us to carry load and put it down

She bears the suffering of her own child

A child's comfort, a child's troubles

Are they not all a mother's?

After God almighty

A mother is another pillar for the child

A mother is an incomparable deity!

Song 7 (Self-appraisal)	**English Translation**
Iromi to n jo, to n jo lori omi	The dancing dragon fly, dancing on the river
Baba oni'lu to n lu, n be ni sa le odo	The drummer drumming, is beneath the river
Song 8 (Demand)	**English Translation**
(Call) *A...ye, a...ye o...*	(Call) We shall survive, we shall survive
(Res) Perengede a...ye o, perengede	(Res) Certainly, we shall survive, certainly
(Call) A...ye, aye o...	(Call) We shall survive, we shall survive
(Res) Perengede, a...ye o, perengede	(Res) Certainly, we shall survive, certainly
Song 9 (Homage)	**English Translation**
(Call) *E kan sara si o*	Call: Pay homage to him
(Res) Arabaribiti, o tobi o baba ni	Res: Gigantic, he is mighty, he's a father
(Call) Ekan sara si o	Call: He is a warrior
(Res) Arabaribiti, o tobi o baba ni	Res: Gigantic, he is mighty, he's a father
(Call) Ajanaku ma ni	Call: He's a father, he's a father
(Res) Arabaribiti, o tobi o baba ni	Res: Elesin is a father to us all
(Call) Baba ni, baba ma ni o	Only those who experience him can tell how it is
(Res) Baba l'elesin nini aye awa, eni ba too wo, lomo bo se ri	Call: Pay homage to him
(Call) Ekan sara si o	Res: Gigantic, he is mighty, he's a father
(Res) Arabaribiti, o tobi o baba ni	

Song 10 (Admiration)

Iyaloja: *Ani baba kan o..*
Ani baba kan o...

Res: *Baba ara to mo iyi omo*

Iyaloja: *Ani baba kan o..*
Ani baba kan o...

Res: *Baba ara to mo iyi omo...*

All: *Elesin ku ise*
ehhh ehhhh ehhhh, ku ise...

Ad-lib: ***(****ku ise re o)*
ehhh ehhhh ehhhh, ku ise…2x

Oluwa ku ise,
ehhh ehhhh ehhhh, ku ise…

Ad-lib: ***(****ku ise ooo)*

ehhh ehhhh ehhhh, ku ise…2x

Girls*:* *Ki ilu le roju, erin ma wo ni o*
reterete ooo, baba, ku ise…3x

Iyaloja*:* *(call) Oluwa ku ise*
Res*:* *ku ise*
Call*:* *Baba mi ku ise*
Res*:* *ku ise*
Call*:* *Elesin ku ise*
Res*:* *ku ise*

All*:* *ki ilu le roju, erin ma wo ni o*
reterete o, baba ku ise…2x

English Translation

Iyaloja: We have a father...
We have a father...

Res: wonderful father who knows the child's worth

Iyaloja: We have a father...
We have a father...

Res: wonderful father who knows the child's worth

All: Elesin, well-done
ehhh ehhhh ehhhh, well-done...

Ad-lib: **(**well-done)
ehhh ehhhh ehhhh, well-done …2x

Our Lord, well-done
ehhh ehhhh ehhhh, well-done …

Ad-lib: **(**well-done ooo)

ehhh ehhhh ehhhh, well-done …2x

Girls: For the peace of the land, an elephant must fall
reterete ooo, father, well-done …2x

Iyaloja: (call) Our lord, well-done
Res: well done
Call: my Father, well-done
Res: well-done
Call: Elesin well-done
Res: well-done
All: For the peace of the land, an elephant must fall
reterete ooo, father, well-done …2x

Call:	*mo de wa so pe*
***Res**:*	*ope*
***Call**:*	*mo de wa so pe*
***Res**:*	*ope*
***Call**:*	*ni mo de wa so pe oo*
***Res**:*	*ope*
***Solo**:*	*emi to se l'ore ni mo nbo….* *mo de wa so pe…..* *awa to se l'ore ni a nbo…* *a de wa so pe oooo, eh!*
***Elesin**:*	*eyin!!! bi olode o ba ku* *oju ide re kin wu ikoriko* *ko sa aseyin olubori* *ato fi arati bi oke* *ti emi* *a le mi no emi* *ti mo fi goke odo ki afara to ja* *ara efi oju ire wo mi* *eniya efi owo anu kan mi* *emi na ko..* *se b'eledumare ni* *oluwa mi ahhh* *baba mi* *eledumare* *ogba gba ti gba alara ilara* *oba aa ji ki* *oba aa ji rii* *eyin! beeee ni*
***Girls**:*	*ki ilu le roju, erin ma wo ni o* *reterete o, baba ku ise…2x*

Call:	I have come to give thanks
Res:	thanks
Call:	I have come to give thanks
Res:	thanks
Call:	I say, I have come to give thanks
Res:	thanks
Solo:	I, the beneficiary of your help, is coming I have come to give thanks….. We, the beneficiary of your help, are coming we have come to give thanks oooo, eh!
All:	For the peace of the land, an elephant must fall reterete ooo, father, well-done …2x

Song 11 (Nuptial)	**English Translation**
E rora mi a gbese	Move your feet gently
Oko iyawo wole	The groom comes in
E rora mi a gbese	Move your feet gently
Oko iyawo wole	The groom comes in
***Call**: Okuta nbe l'ona*	Call: There is a stone on the way,
***Res**: Rora mi a gbese lokan kan*	Res: Gently pick your steps one by one
***Call**: Rora mi a gbese e*	Call: There is a stone on the way,
***Res**: Rora mi a gbese lokan kan*	Res: Gently pick your steps one by one

Song 12 (Disapproval)	**English Translation**
Call: *Olopayi olopayi o*	Call: This police, this police!
***Res**: Inumba tere kutere inumba*	Res: Inumba tere kutere inumba
***Call**: Talo npe olopayi o*	Call: Who called this police?
***Res**: Inumba tere kutere inumba*	Res: Inumba tere kutere inumba
***Call**: Kilo wa se l'oja yi o*	Call: What do you seek in this market?
***Res**: Inumba tere kutere inumba*	Res: Inumba tere kutere inumba
***Call**: Iwo aja oyinbo yi o*	Call: You this white man's dog.
***Res**: Inumba tere kutere inumba*	Res: Inumba tere kutere inumba

Song 13 (Acclamation)	**English Translation**
Call: *Talo lawa o l'ogbeja o*	Call: Who says we have no defender?
***Res**: Kayi a l'ogbeja o*	Res: Stop it! We have a defender
***Call**: Omo kekere l'ogbeja o*	Call: The little ones are the defenders
***Res**: Kayi, a l'ogbeja o*	Res: Stop it! We have a defender

Song 14 (Commendation)	**English Translation**
Iya lo l'omo l'otito	Of a truth, the mother owns the child
Iya lo l'omo l'ododo	By fact, the mother owns the child
L'ojo iyawo o	Call: On the wedding day
Iya lo l'omo	Res: The mother owns the child
L'ojo idunu o,	Call: On a joyous day,
Iya lo l'omo	

Song 15 (Ritual)	**English Translation**
Ale le... awo mi lo o...	Night falls, my cult moves on
Ale le e e e... awo mi lo...	Night falls, my cult moves on
Ale le e e.... awo mi regbo...	Night falls, my cult moves home
Iko ide nlo o, s'iwaju	Time keeps moving forward

Chant: (Elesin in Trance)

Agilinti nii sawo won

Lode isalu aye

Agalanta nii saro won

Lode isalu orun

Elekun'sukun

Olofo n'sofo

Ki koowe mase ku

Seyin kule awa

Adogiri alapa

Ti ko gbedoo wo

Lai lai

English Translation: Note

The chant is a spiritual expression which cannot be literaly interpreted to capture its contextual sense.

Song 16 (Dirge)

Osupa len tete

Osupa len tete

Osupa le lale ana 2x

Osupa orun da

Chant: (Elesin and Olunde Meet)

Eewoooo reeee ooooo

Aso fun fun ni n'sukun aroooooo

Ejigbaworo ni n'sukun ikeji

Tan tan tan

Chant: (Olunde's Body Unveiled)

N'wo mo bi olori gbe 'yan ri oooooo

N'wo ba le yan temi

N'wo mo bi afuwape 'yan ri ooooooo

N'ba le yan temi

Ibi kan na la'gbe yan ri oooooo

Kadara o pa po ni

Ese lon'sare oooo

Ori o re bi kan

English Translation

The moon hangs cautiously

The moon hangs cautiously

The moon that hung last night /2x

Where is the heavenly moon?

English Translation: Note

The chant is a spiritual expression which cannot be literally interpreted to capture its contextual sense.

English Translation: Note

The chant is a spiritual expression which cannot be literally interpreted to capture its contextual sense.

Song 17 (Dirge)

Osekere e e e 2x

Osekere eye ora

Eye ora ti nfori so

Arugbo n sunkun a fi sofa

Afi sofa, afi yaa loge

Aloge n yo gangan laya

Osekere e e e 2x

English Translation: Note

The chant is a spiritual expression which cannot be literally interpreted to capture its contextual sense.