



## Women Trauma and Stereotype Tradition in Tunde Kelani's Film, Thunderbolt

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### Abstract

Stereotype tradition and gender injustice constitute the trauma that majority of women face in the marital relationship in Yoruba cultural setting. These issues were explored in Tunde Kelani's film, Thunderbolt (Magun). Employing the narrative content analysis technique the film reveals various issues relating to women trauma in Yoruba stereotype tradition which empowers men against women. Suspicion, cultural chauvinism, betrayal, ambition, poor communication, lack of trust, wrong accusation and dominance constitute conflicts between couples in the film. This shows that the issue of conflict and gender injustice against women is a common trait in Yoruba cultural setting. The film is a lesson on many unresolved conflicts in marriages relationships while proposing trust and open communication which will improve and contribute to positive conjugal relationship development.

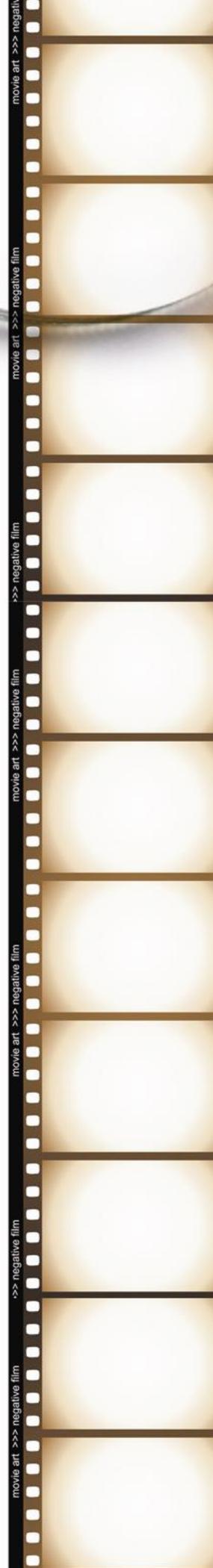
**Keywords:** Women Trauma, Stereotype Tradition, Gender Injustice, Yoruba Culture, Thunderbolt Movie



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# Women Trauma and Stereotype Tradition in Tunde Kelani's Film, Thunderbolt

Olugbenga Elegbe

## Introduction

The Yoruba culture is the aggregate of the ways of life of the Yoruba-speaking Peoples of southwestern Nigeria and others in diaspora. It is a continuum beginning from their subsistence, communal, agrarian life of the pre-literate and pre-colonial times to the capitalist, individualistic, free-enterprise life of the literate, colonial and post-colonial, modern times. In other words, a continuum of the traditional and modern aspects of the Yoruba culture provides a true picture of this concept. It is a dynamic phenomenon (Alaba, 2004: 2).

Yoruba traditional marriage is held sacred and in high esteem. The moral and social value attached to the marriage institution reflects the general cultural values among the Yorubas. There is a stern punishment for the act of adultery in most societies. Among the Yoruba natives of West Africa, the punishment for the woman is harsher than her male partner in the crime. Though the man takes a less penalty when caught, he receives severe penalty, such as death by spiritual means called *magun*, when trapped during the act. In the Yoruba worldview, an adulterous man stands the risk of death through it.

*Magun*, which in Yoruba literally means “do not climb” is a dreadful deadly charm, usually employed by the offended husbands to punish adulterous women having illicit sexual affairs with men, or vice versa. The varieties of *magun* in Yoruba land differ from one person to another and people are potent than one another when it comes to traditional charms and voodoo. Among the Yoruba natives, there is a popular saying that “What is infinity is what is called charms where one man’s knowledge in charms ends is the beginning of another man’s knowledge”. This means the use of charms depend on the knowledge of individual charmers in term of potency.

However, as many as the varieties of *magun* are, the potency of this charms can be classified into two: one which immediately kills a man who has sex with the woman with *magun*, and the second would defer its action till the man who has sex with the woman eats a particular food or does a particular thing which would immediately activate the potency of the charms and kill him afterwards. The second type is like a time bomb waiting to explode.

There is one thing which is a must for the two types of charms when they are to be used: the woman who is suspected of the act of adultery with another man must cross over or walk over the charms that must be placed on the floor (usually at the door entrance) without the woman's knowledge of it. The charms would then be removed quickly from the floor, not to allow a situation whereby the woman would walk or cross over it the second time, for this would destroy the potency of the juju (Ojo, 2013:136)

The Yoruba culture and myths have been deployed into films by the Nollywood film industry to promote the Yoruba culture and ensure a society free of misconduct. Film came into Nigeria in August 1903 via the instrumentality of the Indian-Lebanese merchants. Opubor, Nwuneli and Oreh (1979) note that "the medium of film was itself still new in those days, and still technically in its infancy; content was largely documentary". However, in spite of these reports, it was the magic of the moment for people to see moving pictures. For many years, films continued to be shown to full houses in Lagos, and was commended for relieving the monotony of Lagos life through entertainment. The first moving in Nigeria came through the Balboa and Company, a Spanish firm, in 1903 and toured West African countries. It was a silent film that predated *The Jazz Singers*, the first of the talking pictures. The success of this exhibition encouraged other merchants, notably Stanley D. Jones and Albuero, who were based in Lagos. At this period, cinema activities were limited to Lagos before it spread to other parts of the then Western Nigeria,

Ibadan. It was observed that film has evolved through three crucial socioeconomic stages in Nigeria: the colonial/independence period, the post-independence period and the post-indigenization Decree period (Olayiwola, 2011).

The Yoruba travelling theatre practitioners in motion picture production were perhaps the most auspicious single factor in the evolution of an indigenous cinema in Nigeria. Hence, having established a rich tradition of touring plays, the travelling theatre made a debut to the Nigerian film (Olayiwola, 2011).

### **The Problem**

Women trauma from jealousy and suspicion in marital relationship constitute major problems in Yoruba cultural setting. Sources of these issues are subject in literature, media and films. Everyone experience great happiness when they find someone to whom they can entrust themselves. This happiness can last for a lifetime for some couples. However, most couples experience conflicts which can weaken their safe feelings or ability to trust. When trust diminishes, giving and receiving love reduces, and then jealousy and suspicion creep into the marriage. A good example of this is the marriage between Yinka and Ngozi in Tunde Kelani's *Thunderbolt (Magun)*, in which Yinka displays suspicion and jealousy.

According to Psychology Today, (2016) Jealousy is a complex emotion that encompasses many different kinds of feelings ranging from fear of abandonment to rage and humiliation. Jealousy can strike both men and women when a third-party threat to a valued relationship is perceived, it can be a problem among siblings competing for parental attention, or envy after a more successful friend. Conventional wisdom holds that jealousy is a necessary emotion because it preserves social bonds, but jealously usually does more harm than good, creating relationship conflict and strife. It's been stated that males feel a strong response when exclusive sexual access

to a partner is breached, whereas they don't respond as fiercely when a partner is having emotional needs met by other potential romantic partners. Females, it's purported, experience the reverse. They feel more anxiety when they see their partner engaged in emotional closeness with another.

Suspicion on the other hand, works with jealousy. To suspect means to believe someone is guilty of something with little or no proof. It means to doubt or believe the case is probable. Several issues have a hint of suspicion in them and suspicion is not healthy or profitable for any marriage. Couples suspect their spouses' motives, thoughts, words, actions, movements, intentions and relationships. Suspicion destroys marital relationships because there is no way one can doubt one's spouse and be happy. This makes communication tensed and heated up, which propels conflicts in marital relationships.

Therefore, this study set out to examine the extent to which jealousy and suspicion in marital relationships lead to trauma and gender injustice against women in Tunde Kelani's film, *Thunderbolt (Magun)* and also investigate how these issues lead to marital conflict, how they are resolved and lessons for marital development are provided.

### **Tunde Kelani's Film, *Thunderbolt (Magun)***

Most African films, such as *Emitai* (Sembene, 1971), *Tilai* (Ouedraogo, 1990), and *Tsotsi* (Hood, 2005), gain international recognition for their universal stories, however Nollywood films (Nigerian film industry) produces stories intended almost entirely for the African market. As Nollywood is supported by the African market instead of foreign investment, its videos have become a platform for the discussion of the issues considered most important by local populations. Tunde Kelani's *Thunderbolt* (2000) is a prime example, as it explores the disunity among African peoples, the role of supernatural beliefs and folklore, sexual politics in Nigerian society, and the

conflict between modernity and African traditions. While *Thunderbolt* provides a distinctly African discourse, like most Nollywood video-films it does not resemble the “African art-film” aesthetic so much as Western melodrama, particularly the soap-opera (Murphy, 2007).

*Thunderbolt (Magun)* is the story of a couple (Ngozi and Olayinka Ajiboye) who falls in love in the camp during her NYSC (National Youth Service) and later gets married shortly after the Orientation Camp. The marriage soon starts experiencing challenges when the husband begins to listen to hearsay about his wife having extramarital affairs. Olayinka Ajiboye (Lanre Balogun) is incorrigibly jealous, egocentric and possessive. He is the first husband of Ngozi (he approached and married her as a Youth Corp member). He is very insecure and so listens to the hearsay from friends, which are rumours that hold no water. He lives away from his wife (save for weekends) and because of that has a hard time trusting her.

He is also a very greedy man. When told by his friends that afflicting his wife with *magun* will divert her wealth to him, he easily agrees, by endangering his wife with the *magun* charm. His character represents that of every young man who is just out to have fun; for this reason, he does not want to lose the pretty Ngozi, leading him to go as far as marrying her. However, his exposure as the evil culprit who inflicted his wife with the deadly curse culminates in his losing his marriage. Later, a flashback reveals that his unfounded suspicion and his wife’s great wealth, were the reasons why he places magun on her. If she happens to be a promiscuous woman and she dies, he is justified; if she is not promiscuous and refuses to sleep with another man, she will still die and he will inherit her wealth.

Ngozi, having seen and realised what has happened, is sorrowful that the evil perpetrator is her husband. She resorts to counting her days, for she has five more days to live. Her friend, Janet (also a corp member), to whom she bemoans her fate, advises her to go after the long-standing admirer, Dr Dimeji Taiwo (Wale Magaulay) since no specification has been made on the type of

man she should bring. To satisfy his long lust for her and to commence on the killer magun research, Dr Dimeji Taiwo (Wale Magaulay) readily agrees to it, based on his terms. Saddened to be an object for a research, and knowing she has no alternative, Ngozi engages in the sexual act with Dr Dimeji Taiwo (Wale Magaulay) in the presence of the local traditional herbalists, Mama Tutu and Dr Dimeji Taiwo's (Wale Magaulay) friends at his village hospital. Dr Dimeji Taiwo (Wale Magaulay) choke on his blood after the act is over but the local traditional herbalists use their powers and ensure he does not die. A traumatised Ngozi was finally free after the ordeal. Since the curse is finally broken, in reciprocation of his love, Ngozi accepts his proposal and marries him.

The cast of *Thunderbolt (Magun)* are Uche Obi-Osotule (Ngozi), Lanre Balogun (Yinka), Buki Ajayi (Mama Tutu), Larinde Akinleye (Vee-pee). Other casts include Ngozi Nwosu (Janet), Wale Magaulay (Dr Dimeji Taiwo), Adebayo Faleti (Herbalist1), Yemi Solade (Dele Ibrahim), Akinwumi Ishola (Professor), Tony St Iyke (Mike), Olanrewaju Salami (Hero), Mumin Wale Kelani (Doctor 1), Tunde Awosanmi (Doctor 2).

Tunde Kelani, a Nigerian film-maker, storyteller, director, photographer, cinematographer and producer, was born on 26 February, 1948. He has been in the career for more than four decades. He specializes in producing movies that promote Nigeria's rich cultural heritage and have a root in the documentation, archiving, education, entertainment and promotion of the culture. According to Akinwunmi Ishola, the writer of thunderbolt novel, Tunde Kelani is a very consummative, creative, innovative, imaginative cameraman; he is a director that knows about filmmaking and he is very good in telling stories in pictures.

He is also known for his love of adaptation of literary materials into movies, as most of his works have followed that style of filmmaking including *Ko se Gbe*, *Oleku*, *The Narrow Path*,

*White Handkerchief, Maami, Dazzling Mirage and Thunderbolt*. At an early age, the rich Yoruba culture and tradition he experienced coupled with the experience he garnered at the London film school, where he studied the art of filmmaking, prepared him for what he is doing today (British Film Institute, 2016).

## **Method**

### ***Procedure***

The study employed the qualitative narrative content analysis. This is a narrative method used in analyzing the content and issues in a movie in relation to the themes and characterization. Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1277-1288) define qualitative content analysis as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns. The goal of content analysis is to arrive at a broad description of a phenomenon through the use of concepts or themes describing it. It allows the researcher to test theoretical issues to enhance the understanding of the data.

### ***Sample Size/ Sampling Technique***

The purposive sampling technique was used to select the movie *Thunderbolt (Magun)* as the movie deals with the issues of jealousy and suspicion in marital relationships, based on the purpose of the study.

### ***Data Collection/Analysis***

Data for the study was collected through narrative and descriptive methods, using film review methods of data collection. Issues of interest were extracted from the film and analysed based on the research objectives of the study.

## Result/Discussion

### Issues of suspicion, greed and gender injustice in the film “Thunderbolt” (*Magun*)

#### The issue of suspicion

The film shows the effect of gender injustice towards women in marital relationships. The storyline shows the issue of suspicion, cultural chauvinism and betrayal. The issue of suspicion is portrayed by Yinka Ajiboye, the husband of Ngozi. His wife’s virtues (beauty and character) draw the attention of men to her. However, despite the fact that he wins her over in the national youth service camp, he is not too sure of her integrity, maybe due to the fear that someone who is better in the art of wooing might someday come along and take her from him. This insecurity of his, foregrounded by his friends’ comments on Ngozi’s beauty, makes him behave in an irrational way and propels him to take an irrational decision.

It is this jealousy, informed by suspicion that caused his visit to Oleyo on the first occasion and subsequently. Jealousy makes him afflict Ngozi with *magun*, hoping his imaginary rival will suddenly die after having sex with his wife. Placing the *magun* curse on Ngozi is a way of allaying his fears and subsequently winning back the loyalty of his wife. The action has an adverse effect on the afflicted. Apart from the joyless and lonely life she endures because of lack of trust on the part of her husband, she prepares for death after her knowledge of the *magun* and would have died had there not been one willing to cross the final bridge of being totally cured with her.

In a nutshell, jealousy, birthed by unfounded suspicions, does nothing worthwhile for any of the characters in the film. The cause of every character’s troubles is jealousy. According to Harris (2004:62):

One relatively straightforward idea about jealousy in romantic relationships is at the center of a hot debate among psychologists. Jealousy, it was suggested, might have given a fitness advantage to men and women

in our ancestral environment. But the selective pressures on males and females struggling to survive and reproduce in this environment were asymmetrical. Thus jealousy, like many of the emotions associated with mating, came to have a different character in men and women. The notion that jealousy evolved into an “innate module”—a wired-in brain circuit that has different primary triggers in men and women—is one of the most celebrated applications of an evolutionary approach to psychology (p.62)

More specifically, Buss (1995) concluded that a specific set of brain circuits determines a jealous reaction, and found that men were more jealous about *physical* infidelity while women were more jealous about *emotional* infidelity. In the film while Yinka took all physical action to revenge on his suspicion of Ngozi infidelity, Ngozi is only emotionally disturbed about Yinka’s accusation in which she tries to defend herself. This issue was also treated a film titled *Suspicion* (1941) by Alfred Hitchcock. In the film, a handsome, irresponsible playboy Johnnie Aysgarth (Cary Grant) meets dowdy Lina McLaidlaw (Joan Fontaine) on a train and charms her into eloping despite the strong disapproval of her wealthy father, General McLaidlaw (Sir Cedric Hardwicke). After a lavish honeymoon and returning to an extravagant house, Lina discovers that Johnnie has no job and no income, habitually lives on borrowed money, and was intending to try to sponge off her father. She talks him into getting a job, and he goes to work for his cousin, estate agent Captain Melbeck (Leo G. Carroll). Just like in *Thunderbolt* in which Yinka plans to kill Ngozi to gain control of the wealth. This relates *Thunderbolt* to a supernatural African belief that a man must be richer than his wife. Hence, Larkin (2001) refers to two examples of this storyline in his article “Video Awudjo!” In *Living in Bondage* (Christian Onu, 1992) a man is told by a cult of successful businessmen that he must ritually sacrifice his wife in order to gain wealth. In *Time* (Ifeyanyi Oyeabor, 2000) a man makes a deal with a witch that makes his wife get sicker and sicker, but makes him wealthier and wealthier. After she dies he keeps the corpse, as money continues to come out of her mouth. Larkin asserts that these stories relate to the uniquely skewed

distribution of wealth in Africa (Murphy, 2007). Though *Thunderbolt (Magun)* show some difference on the issue of jealousy and lack of trust that drives the man to desire his wife's wealth. This story represents figuratively the everyday life of an Africans family setting in their quest for wealth and fame.

### **The issue cultural chauvinism**

The issue of cultural chauvinism pervades the storyline of the film. Cultural chauvinism is a feeling that one's culture is superior to that of others. The characters that show the chauvinism tendencies are the Igbo characters. The youth corp member that Ngozi is engaged to before she meets Yinka wonders with disgust why she, an Igbo lady will settle for less. He is irritated by her decision to marry a Yoruba man and without mincing words, prophesies her suffering if she eventually marries the Yoruba man.

Ngozi's grandmother is not altogether pleased with her wanting to marry a Yoruba man and thus expressly gives her disapproval. She eventually gives her approval as she advises her granddaughter to be chaste and ensure her would-be husband meets her untouched (a virgin). In the same vein, Ngozi's father is also of this opinion from the onset, but he gets the chance to verbalise his disapproval of the Yoruba race when the sole representative of the Yoruba race (Yinka Ajiboye) chooses to exemplify terrible character traits. Though he sees the goodness in the Yoruba through Mama Tutu, he still does not fail to voice his opinion with regard to how generally bad the Yoruba people are. However, the Vice Principal (V.P) of Ngozi's school is quick to correct this hasty judgment of the Yoruba people, making Ngozi's father see that only a few of them are bad. Using his words, 'a race is a race and a man a man'.

Yinka's mother also displayed chauvinistic tendencies. Though she always puts up a good front whenever Ngozi is around, her disapproval of her (Ngozi's) culture is palpable. She is brash when she, with disgust, refuses the food (an Ibo dish) that Yinka serves her. She also expresses disapproval at their baby's name, saying she wonders why they give a child a name best fitted for a dog. It is later seen that her joyful readiness to give Ngozi the soup she has just cooked when Ngozi comes to collect Hero (her son), is born out of her disapproval for the Ibo culture, especially their cooking, which she sees as poisonous. However, it is gladdening that the issue of chauvinism is adequately resolved in the film by characters like the V.P and Ngozi herself. Ngozi tells Dimeji at the end of the film, when he expresses fear that she may find it hard to trust Yoruba men again, that 'there are only two tribes/race, the good and the bad people'. Conclusively, saying a tribe is bad because one representative of that tribe is bad is tantamount to making the fallacy of hasty generalization, for a race is a race and a man, a man.

### **The issue of Betrayal**

The issue of betrayal is evident in Ngozi's eyes as she silently sheds tears when the evil Yinka has done to her becomes evident to all. Yinka has greatly betrayed her love and her trust by going to the extent of placing the death sentence on her and still refusing to help her to totally get rid of the curse. The theme of betrayal would not have been well grounded if Yinka is forced to perform the last rite, even after his sin is found out. If the events had played out for Yinka the way it does with Dimeji at the end, Yinka might have gloried in his having saved the day, seeing that though he places the curse, he is still responsible for eventually lifting it. It would have served as a lesson to other men as it is evident that no one will like to go through what Dr Dimeji Taiwo (Wale Magaulay) went through in saving Ngozi.

Likewise, Mama Tutu, in the process of protecting her nephew, Yemi Solade (Dele Ibrahim) betrays Ngozi's trust. The latter's word to the former's nephew when he finds out and confirms the *magun* curse on Ngozi(as he runs for his dear life), is 'I trusted her'. It is obvious Mama Tutu would not have forgiven herself if she had allowed her nephew to 'toy with death'. The young man would have died had he gone ahead to have sex with her. The issue of ambition is shown in Yinka's character. His knowledge of the inherited wealth of Ngozi plays a very crucial role in his betrayal towards Ngozi. As advised by his friends, he places *magun* curse on Ngozi, bearing in mind that he will win no matter how it turns out. If Ngozi is promiscuous, her sex partner and his rival would die and he (Yinka) would inherit her wealth; even though he takes a risk, he is sure to win the game whichever way it ends. His friend says, 'there's only one way to know and if not, she is wealthy'.

According to Atanda (2015) quoting Smith's (1997) critical essay on "Engels and the Origin of Women's Oppression" poses a question, on why are women oppressed. He, however, locates the reason to class society, as an integral essence. Hence, the class difference between Ngozi and Yinka is a critical issue in the film. Atanda (2015) however agree to Smith's (1997) position, that:

the very reason of oppression in the nature of man, is that is, his fate conditions him to be oppressive...Women, therefore, become victims of oppression. It is, therefore, becomes imperative for victims, in time and place, to display, overtly, or covertly, the scars of oppression (p.21)

Atanda (2015) however submitted that "in many cultures of the world, the "subordination of women" to men had been factored to many reasons. Most of the attributed reasons find their place in perceived traditions and cultures of a given society, biological conception, politico-economic factors, and socio-religious tendencies; all at a point in time became anachronistic to

women's development". Tunde Kelani try to showcase some of these issues in *Thunderbolt (Magun)*.



Ngozi and Yinka in a conflicted mood

The characterization display realities of the themes in the movie. This paint the reality of the story to the audience. This can be seen from Yinka's reaction to Ngozi, his wife, when the words of his friends flash through his mind, telling him that men visit his wife at her place of service in Oleyo. His once romantic mood suddenly turns cold. This is because he has begun to nurse jealousy in his mind, premised on the fact that they are separated by distance: Ngozi works in Oleyo and he lives in Waasinmi. He assumes the distance has given her the freedom to flirt with other men. The following morning, Ngozi too is cold towards him. When he asks her what the problem is, with tears in her eyes, she explains to him how hurt she feels. Her face carries a bitter expression. His eyes too are red and he moves closer to her to beg for her forgiveness.

### **How suspicion, greed, and jealousy lead to gender injustice in the film**

The storyline of the film shows that poor communication, lack of trust, wrong accusation, aggressive behavior, and lack of close interaction between the husband and the wife are major factors that lead to the conflicts between the couples.

### *Poor Communication between the Couple*

The poor communication between the couple leads to a lot of gradual conflicts in the film. Ngozi is a young and extremely beautiful woman this makes Yinka believe that she will not stay away from other men. Hence, Yinka becomes jealous as he listens to what his friends tell him about his wife. He stops attending to his wife in bed, even when Ngozi's landlady buys him Odeku (an energy drink) to make him perform and forget all the accusations against Ngozi when he visits her at Oleyo. At first, she tells him about her decision to stop working but he asks her to forgive him for suspecting and accusing her of infidelity.



*Yinka on a surprise visit to his wife at Oleyo*

He promises not to repeat it. At a point, he pays her a surprise visit at Oleyo, though in her absence because she sleeps at her friend's (Janet) place. Her landlady has gone to Lagos and Ngozi does not want to stay in the house alone. Yinka misinterprets her absence for infidelity. Yinka her husband assumes she must have slept over at another man's house because he is not even at school. Yinka reacts aggressively when his wife Ngozi joins him back at home in Waasinmi; he finds it hard to believe her explanation, being a jealous husband. At this point, Ngozi is already a carrier

of *magun* ‘the sexually assisted disease’ as the VP puts it. One is still placed in suspense on who places the spell on Ngozi, who claims she has never been promiscuous in her life.

### *Lack of trust between the couple*

The distance between the couple and the fact that the VP is jovial and he likes to relate playfully with the female staff add to the rumor that Yinka’s friend suggested to him in Oleyo even though the VP’s intention is clear and he never thinks of having an affair with any of them. Yinka’s friend says the VP is close to Ngozi and that she also entertains a doctor who is ready to take her over by all means because Ngozi is a young beautiful Igbo Youth corp member.

Yinka is to blame for believing the report of his friend without listening to his wife. That shows lack of trust on the part of the husband despite the fact that he knows she did not defile herself sexually before marriage, even in the courtship with her. She was sexually chaste till marriage. Yinka prefers listening to his friends over the faithful words that came from his wife’s lips with tears. True conflict is displayed when Yinka turns his back on Ngozi and she does the same after pouring out her mind that she will never be unfaithful in her life. She refuses to yield to his touch when they are on the bed.



*Fig. 3 Yinka in conflicted mood with his wife, Ngozi*

Ngozi is firm in her reaction as she tells her husband that she will resign when she gets back to Oleyo. Yinka shouts at Ngozi because he did not find her at home when he visited her in Oleyo and had to drop a note for her at the door to let her know that he was at her house. The reaction of Yinka in doubting Ngozi sexual sanctity further support Alaba (2004:11-12) submission of Yoruba concept of sexuality that:

Sexuality is central to Yoruba life. Both in the olden days and in modern times, the Yoruba culture emphasizes the necessity of experiencing and expressing this aspect of human nature legitimately. Illegitimate sexual relations are not condoned; but they occur as exceptions to the rule of sexual continence (p.12)... Illicit sexual intercourse is not encouraged at all by the Yoruba culture (p.11)

Yinka being a Yoruba born and bred will not take any chance of infidelity from the wife hence his close monitoring of his wife which led to her been laced with *magun*. This is an injustice to Ngozi because as Yinka is free to have relation with other people even the opposite sex the wife also should have the same freedom.

### *Wrong Accusation*

Yinka's actions give the audience the assurance that there is a communication gap between himself and his wife when he listened to his friend's accusation against his wife Ngozi. All these problems lead to conflicting situations in the storyline of the film. This is great injustice to Ngozi being a woman, and she cannot defend herself due to the issue of gender imbalance between men and women in Yoruba cultural heritage. While Yinka is free to accuse his wife, she is not free to accuse him or defend herself.

## Resolution and lesson learnt from the film

Tunde Kelani's film, *Thunderbolt (Magun)*, adapted from the literary text by Akinwunmi Ishola does not resolve the issue of jealousy and suspicion between Yinka and Ngozi. Yinka ought to perform the final examination to show love and affection which could have been a good lesson for marriages in conflicts instead of using another man (the doctor) who might have died, if not for the timely intervention of the herbalists who resuscitates him Yinka should have been in his stead. This would have served a big lesson to men who work on assumption without verifying the information given to them and may be thinking of placing *magun* on their partners without thinking of the effect it will have on their spouses. Regarding communication between the couple, it cannot be said that they did not make attempts to find out what led to their conflict. Ngozi tries to find out from her husband what leads to his jealousy; she does not leave the matter till the following morning. Then he tells her, 'I hear stories...' The wife, who is utterly amazed, gives him grounds for him to trust her by reminding him of the fact that he met her as a virgin when they married and that she is an Igbo woman whose culture forbids promiscuity in marriage. The following morning at the dining table, she tells him she will resign from her appointment at Oleyo to put an end to her husband's jealousy. On hearing that, Yinka apologizes, promising not to hurt her that way again. The story presents the husband as one to blame for not listening to his wife. The wife operates an 'open communication line'. She will not involve herself in what can ruin her marriage, for instance, she does not give in to the doctor's love advances. She gives Yinka reasons to believe her; this she does explicitly the first time the issue of jealousy comes up while they were in their home at Waasinmi. Also, while they are in bed together at Oleyo, she assures him that the inheritance she gets from her grandmother will not make her lord things over him. However, Yinka prefers to listen to the counsel of his friends at the bar rather than listen to the honest claim of his wife at home. Ngozi's claims in some of her statements are:

*'I have never been promiscuous in my life.'*  
*'Have you forgotten how we met?'*  
*'You met me untouched Yinka.'*  
*'As an Igbo girl, my culture forbids promiscuity in marriage.'*  
*'I would not lord my wealth over my husband.'*

The film ends on a good note for Ngozi because the deadly disease is taken away from her body. The unrelenting doctor proves his undying love for her, although it is also an opportunity for him to prove or disprove the 'efficacy' of the juju. He puts his life in line because he tells his friends 'I like the girl' at a drink joint. Eventually, Ngozi is able to find love in the arms of another man after the one to whom she first commits her entire life, Yinka her husband, betrays her. The doctor is revived after the intercourse with Ngozi and is rewarded for his sacrificial love by the acceptance of his marriage proposal.

One of the lessons learnt in the film is that every matter should be tested properly. Rash decisions should not be taken in a crucial matter like marriage without consulting the elders based on Yoruba cultural traditions on marriage. They are the ones who know better because of their experience. Yinka does not relate the happenings to his mother; rather, his drunken mates in the bar are his counsellors. At the end of the film, he loses his wife to the doctor for his judgment on assumptions. This proves that communication is an indispensable ingredient in every relationship because it fosters closeness. The distance between Yinka and Ngozi caused a communication gap. They only see each other at weekends. In such situation, trust serves as a pillar of relationship sustenance.

More so, listening or heeding to wise counsels will be helpful in all situations, especially in a relationship. Here, there is a contrast between Ngozi and Yinka. Yinka keeps listening to

friends in the bar, who perhaps do not have good homes themselves. Ngozi, on the other hand, has her landlady as counsellor who stands by her during and after her *magun* crisis.

### **Conclusion/Recommendation**

The fact that jealousy and suspicion are inevitable in interpersonal relationships, especially among couples, was established in the film. Likewise, jealousy is displayed as aberrant when it goes over the healthy threshold. Ordinarily, it should help couples to appreciate each other, make their love stronger and foster intimacy between them but when it becomes intense and irrational, it can cause irreparable damage to marriages just as seen in Tunde Kelani's *Thunderbolt (Magun)*.

There is need for trust and open communication in relationship, especially in marriages. If Yinka had trusted Ngozi, all the conflicts in the movie could have been easily resolved. Open communication will contribute to positive relationship development. If Yinka had discussed his suspicion with Ngozi, the issue of laying *magun* on her would not have arisen. The movie shows that listening is important in marital relationship. Hence, avoiding hearsay will further improve marital relationships and reduce gender injustice against women.

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