

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF GADALI AND MÁGÙN AS INDIGENOUS ANTI-ADULTERY DEVICES.

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Abstract

This paper presents a phenomenological investigation of Gadali, a mystical plant in northern Nigeria, its taxonomy, typology, and morphology, and focuses on its affinity with Mágùn, a Yoruba magic against adultery, as an indigenous anti-adultery mechanism within Yoruba-Hausa religious and socio-moral thought in Nigeria. Among the Jukun and Itchen of Taraba State, and the Hausa-Fulani in the Northern States of Nigeria, there is an ingenious exploitation of the mystical forces inherent in a genre of mystical plants called Gadali. The plant has variegated forms and multipurpose functions just like Mágùn among the Yoruba, Togo, among the Azande and Bunyoro. Their forces can be geared towards productive, protective, and destructive channels. While it underpins the areas of similarities and differences, the article argues that Ma00gun and Gadali functioned not merely as mystical sanctions, but as embodied moral regulators inherent within a cosmology and ontological instruments of social control that integrate metaphysics, sexuality, kinship, and communal honor. It concludes that these two systems should be understood not as relics of superstition, but as culturally coherent moral systems that show the complex interplay between belief, body, and communal ethics in African cosmology.

Keywords: Phenomenology of religion, *Gadali*, *Mágùn*, Yoruba-Hausa cosmology, moral regulation

Introduction

This study explores a phenomenological investigation of Gadali and Mágùn as indigenous anti-adultery tools within Yoruba-Hausa religious and socio-moral thought in Nigeria. bracketing of external moral judgments to examine how members of the community understand, experience, and embody these ritual technologies. Despite the continued relevance of Gadali and Mágùn in contemporary Nigerian societies, especially among the Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani, Itchen, and Jukun communities, these indigenous anti-adultery technologies remain largely misunderstood and under-theorized from the perspective of the practitioners themselves. Prevailing academic discourses often reduce them to exotic cultural curiosities, superstitious practices, or mere instruments of social control. This external factor has created a significant gap in understanding the internal logic, phenomenological essence, and moral phenomenology of these practices as they are lived, experienced, and justified within the everyday moral and religious lifeworld of the communities. Consequently, there is limited insight into how these ritual technologies shape moral agency, regulate sexual behaviour, and sustain communal ethical order from an insider's point of view.

The main objective of this study is to conduct a phenomenological investigation of Gadali and Mágùn as embodied moral regulators within Yoruba-Hausa, Fulani, Itchen, and Jukun socio-religious thought. Specifically, the study seeks to describe the lived experiences and meanings that adherents attach to these practices, examine the experiential structure and moral intentionality underlying these indigenous anti-adultery technologies, and explore how they function as phenomenological embodiments of moral regulation and communal ethics.

and compare the phenomenological dimensions of Gadali and Mágùn across the selected ethnic groups to identify both shared patterns and contextual variations

This study is significant because it fills a critical gap in African indigenous knowledge systems by shifting the discourse from external anthropological and sensational interpretations to an insider phenomenological understanding. It contributes to the broader fields of phenomenology of religion, African moral philosophy, and indigenous ethics by demonstrating how traditional ritual technologies serve as sophisticated moral regulators. The findings will provide valuable insights for scholars, policymakers, and religious leaders on the enduring relevance of indigenous moral frameworks in addressing contemporary issues of sexual ethics, marital fidelity, and social cohesion in pluralistic Nigerian societies. Ultimately, the study promotes a deeper appreciation and decolonized understanding of African traditional thought systems.

It is a known fact that existing scholarship on Mágùn and Gadali has largely adopted anthropological, folkloric, or sensational lenses. Little attention has been paid to their lived meaning, experiential structure, and moral intentionality within the life-world of practitioners. This paper employs a phenomenological methodology to bracket external moral judgments and examine how these indigenous anti-adultery technologies function as embodied moral regulators within Yoruba-Hausa, Fulani, Itchen, and Jukun communities of Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

Scholarship on indigenous anti-adultery practices in Nigeria has predominantly focused on Mágùn, a Yoruba ritual technology widely documented as a supernatural deterrent against infidelity. Early anthropological and folkloric studies framed Mágùn primarily as a punitive charm or magical device that inflicts dramatic physical

consequences on adulterers, such as convulsions, crowning like a rooster, or death (Abraham, 1958; Olubiyi, 1992). Building on this foundation, Fabarebo (1998) offered one of the first systematic analyses in “Contemporary theories on magic: 'Mágùn's disparate characteristics,” examining its mystical materials, rites, and spells as mechanisms for preventing, exposing, or punishing promiscuity. He expanded this in subsequent work, exploring the dramatic effects of Mágùn on victims and its role as a traditional device for enforcing sexual fidelity (Fabarebo, 2000a). More recent studies have adopted socio-cultural lenses: Kehinde (2014) analysed the “brutality” of Mágùn and its female counterpart Tesho in curbing infidelity among the Yoruba, while Elegbe (2017) interrogated its portrayal in popular cinema, highlighting gendered trauma and stereotypical traditions in Tunde Kelani's film *Thunderbolt (Mágùn)*. Contemporary research continues to affirm Mágùn's relevance amid modernisation, noting its declining but persistent use as a moral regulator (Okunola et al., 2021; Edith, 2023).

In contrast, literature on Gadali remains sparse and largely fragmentary. Existing references appear mainly in ethnographic accounts of ritual plants and agricultural ceremonies among the Itchen (Ichen), Jukun, and related Hausa-Fulani groups in northern and central Nigeria, where Gadali is occasionally noted as a charm or medicinal plant rather than a fully theorised anti-adultery technology (Edwards, n.d.; Nyam, n.d.). No dedicated phenomenological or moral-philosophical studies of Gadali were identified, underscoring a significant gap in understanding its lived experiential dimensions within Yoruba-Hausa socio-religious thought.

Etymologically, Mágùn derives from the Yoruba phrase *má gún* (“do not climb/mount”), signalling a prohibition on illicit sexual access (Blench, 2020). Gadali's linguistic roots, while less-documented, align with broader patterns of ritual nomenclature in

Plateau and Benue-Congo language groups, reflecting indigenous categories of protective or punitive flora and supernatural agency (Blench, 2020).

This study departs from the prevailing anthropological, folkloric, and sensational approaches by adopting a phenomenological lens. The conceptual framework draws on Husserl's (1931) concept of *epoché*—the deliberate bracketing of external moral judgments and preconceptions—to access the pure lived experience of practitioners. It further integrates Schutz's (1967) notion of the *lifeworld* (*Lebenswelt*), emphasising how Gadali and Mágùn are embedded in the everyday intersubjective realities and stock of knowledge of Yoruba-Hausa, Fulani, Itchen, and Jukun communities. Africanist phenomenology enriches this approach: Jackson's (1989) radical empiricism insists on engaging the researcher's own bodily participation in the field, while Merleau-Ponty's (1962) phenomenology of the body positions these ritual technologies as embodied moral sites where ethics, sexuality, and communal order are corporeally enacted rather than abstractly theorised. Together, these frameworks enable a comparative, descriptive, and interpretative analysis of the practices as phenomenological embodiments of indigenous moral regulation.

Phenomenological Methodology

This study adopts a comparative phenomenological approach grounded in Husserl's (1931) method of *epoché* (bracketing) and Merleau-Ponty's (1962) phenomenology of the body, which emphasises embodied experience as the primary site of moral and perceptual meaning. The research seeks to suspend external moral, religious, or scientific preconceptions to access the lived experiences, intentionalities, and everyday meanings that practitioners attach to Gadali and Mágùn as indigenous anti-adultery

technologies.

Data collection combined in-depth interviews, participant observation, and oral narratives. For Gadali, the study draws primarily on fieldwork conducted in 1996 among Jukun and Ichen (Itchen) communities in Taraba State, as well as Hausa-Fulani groups in Kaduna and Plateau States. The key informant on Gadali typology was Ahmadu Musa (the then Acting Head of Department of Religious Studies, University of Jos), whose insights were supplemented by accounts from herbalists and community elders. For Mágùn, the analysis integrates the first author's long-term ethnographic engagement with Yoruba communities and draws extensively on existing published studies (Fabarebo, 1998, 2000).

All external moral or scientific judgments were deliberately bracketed to prioritise emic understandings and allow the phenomena to reveal themselves on their own terms. Reflexivity was maintained throughout by acknowledging the researchers' positionality as Yoruba scholars studying practices embedded in northern Nigerian socio-religious contexts. This self-awareness helped mitigate potential insider–outsider biases and enriched the interpretative process.

Ethical considerations followed established standards of informed consent, voluntary participation, and cultural sensitivity appropriate to indigenous knowledge research. Limitations of the study include the age of the primary Gadali data collected in 1996 and the lack of recent multi-sited fieldwork. These constraints are acknowledged and addressed in the discussion section, where the enduring relevance of the practices is weighed against possible socio- cultural changes over time.

Contextual and Conceptual Exploration of Gadali and Mágùn

Religious terminologies, like Biblical terms, are often layered

with rich semantic nuances (Laurence and Margolis, 2003). Therefore, conceptual analysis helps prevent problems of semantic confusion, historical anachronism, contextual misapplication, academic vulnerability, and cultural hermeneutical instability. Thus, engaging in a conceptual exploration of Gadali and Mágùn in this work enhances academic integrity and interdisciplinary relevance. Besides, a comparison of the Mágùn (Yoruba) and Gadali (Fulfude/Fulani) is useful, especially in studies of indigenous anti-adultery mechanisms in Nigeria.

The origin of the word *Gadali* is said to have an Arabic root, but is now hidden in an unfathomable obscurity. In Nigeria, Gadali is associated with Fulfude (Roger Blench, 2026). The word 'Gadali', in Fulfulde (Fula/Fulani language), requires careful etymological handling because its meaning may be varied across dialects (e.g. Adamawa Fulfude, Sokoto Fulfude, Maasina, etc.), and in many cases it is not a primary lexical root but a derived or culturally adapted term. In Fulfude, many nouns are formed from a verbal root, nominal suffix or class marker. Gadali is formed from two Fulfude ideas 'gada/gaada' and 'li'. In many Fulfude dialects, the root 'gada/gaada' is possibly associated with ideas of trouble, harm, damage, misfortune, or disturbance. Then, the suffix 'li' is commonly used in forming abstract or concrete nouns. Thus, Gadali may morphologically denote “that which causes harm/trouble” or “an instrument/agent of damage or affliction”. Gadali is a plant that enjoys the patronage of the Northern magical elite. There are numerous species of *Gadali*, and all these, without exception, exhibit startling powers. Some are planted at home, and some are grown as wild plants in sacred bushes. The ones cultivated at home are carefully groomed. For starters, the planting of *Gadali* seeds is accompanied by incantations which are recited in a mystically prescribed posture, and a prescribed number of times. Some species are not planted on ordinary soil but on hot ashes and coal in addition to other mystical rites. Any lapse from this

esoteric format renders the potency of the plant void. It may not even germinate. If for any reason *Gadali* is planted in a natural soil, it will not grow. Except for those naturally grown in the forest and basically employed for sorcery and destructive purposes, Gadali are reared unnaturally. In Northern Nigeria, the usage of Gadali is largely contextual, regional, and usually ritualistic, rather than a standardized daily Fulfude term across all dialects. Its meaning depends on community, religious worldview, and interaction with other languages like Hausa and Yoruba. It is used as a protective or punitive ritual object. The antidotes of *Gadali* may be different, but they are of the same effect.

The term Mágùn is from two Yoruba derivatives *ma* 'do not' or 'must not' and *gun* 'climb' (Elegbe, 2017). The Yoruba prefix *ma* is an imperative, often used to express a command, request, instruction, advice or prohibition, particularly in the context of warning. The suffix *gun* can mean 'to climb' or 'to mount'; thus Mágùn literally means 'do not climb' or 'do not mount' and metaphorically 'do not have sexual intercourse'. The verb *gun* can also be used outside sexual discourse, meaning 'to be long', as in Yoruba *Òpá náà gùn* “the rod is long”. Similar usage to sexual relation is 'to be pregnant', usually for non-human being. Yoruba can say *ewúré mi ti gùn*, meaning 'my goat is pregnant'. The metaphorical connotation is highly fundamental in this paper, meaning that the word Mágùn evolved from a prohibitive linguistic expression 'do not climb or mount' to a technical cultural term referring to an anti-adultery mystical device. In other words, the Yoruba 'Mágùn' refers to a traditional spiritual or medical charm placed or laced on a woman to punish, expose or prevent adultery. In a traditional Yoruba setting, Mágùn is a protective or punitive charm placed on a married woman by her husband or a ritual specialist. If another man has sexual intercourse with the woman, the charm may cause severe illness,

disgrace, or death to the offender (Fabarebo, 2000).

III. Classifications of Gadali, their Modes of Operation and Antidotes

Basically, *Gadali* could be classified into four categories, depending on their modes of operation, namely Explosive, Penis-resurgent, Protective, and Destructive types (Ahmadu, 1996).

(a) **Explosive Gadali** - As the name implies, these are rare types of *Gadali* with violent properties. Here, a suspicious husband collects the sap of this genre of *Gadali*, to rub on the wife's wrapper. The moment the wrapper comes into contact with the wife, she is caught by the *Gadali*. While lacing the wrapper, a spell is recited mentioning her name and her offence, and of course, the operational instruction to the *Gadali*. Every time she uses the wrapper, she is laced. And consequently several paramours could fall victims of the *Gadali*. But when a *Gadali* has been released to the body of a paramour, the woman is temporarily set free of the powers of the *Gadali* on her, until she puts on the wrapper again (Ahmadu, 1996). Another type is rubbed on the husband's sex organ, inserting into the woman's vagina to make it effective. In doing so, he must use it along with the antidote or else he will himself be a victim. There are many of these species of Explosive *Gadali*. Two main types, according to my informants, are *Gluing Gadali* and the *Gradual-Death-Causing Gadali*. The purpose of the two is the same; they are punitive measures against sexual promiscuity. How this is achieved is what distinguishes the two. This is meant to disgrace and ridicule the shameless, conniving sexual hoodlums.

In one documented case from Juran-Kari village in Lere Local Government Area of Kaduna State, a husband who suspected his father of having sexual relations with his wife applied *Gluing Gadali*

to the wrapper. Upon their sexual union, the father's penis became locked with the woman's. They were discovered and taken to a clinic in Angwar Bawa under public view. The husband later returned, struck his father with his left leg while expressing family disgrace, and the two separated, though they bled profusely. This public spectacle and the embodied experience of being locked together enforced moral accountability and communal shame (Ahmadu, 1996). This manifestation shares structural similarities with the gluing type of *Mágùn (Mágùn Alálèpò)* among the Yoruba, despite differences in substances, rites, and spells. Madam Alice Yakubu had this to say when told that some people doubted the authenticity of the story:

Who said the thing did not happen? It happened, I saw them myself. Look, the Police had a field day when they cashed in on how eager and curious people were to see for themselves. People had to pay between N2 and N5 to be given a sort of pass to see the man and woman.

The husband, a businessman, was always out of town. This made the illicit relationship between the culprits blossom. Initially, when he was told by friends about the unholy sexual alliance going on in his household, he did not believe it. With much pressure, he sought help from a Fulani herbalist who gave him the *Gadali* strung on a string with instructions. On the fateful day, he decided to test the veracity, or otherwise, of the rumours he had been hearing. He told his wife and his father that he would be traveling out of town on a business trip. But this was a decoy as he remained in the town. About midnight, he came home and was confronted with the fact that the two were already in the act. After peeping through the window, he brought out the *Gadali*, fastened the rope, and recited the spell. Instantly, the father's organ was locked in the woman's organ. Realizing that the

Gadali had worked, the son disappeared. For three days, he was looked for, and his friends later prevailed on him to come back home, to finally put a stop to the shame of his family, as well as spare the lives of the shameless adulterers. On arrival at the Clinic, he hit his father with his left leg, telling the father, 'You are a disgrace to our family'. Immediately, the two were released, but they bled profusely. However, they survived. The *Gadali*, no doubt, exhibits parallel characteristics with *Mágùn Alálèpò* 'gluing Mágùn among the Yoruba. Though the magical substances used, the rites, the spell, the names of the mystical stuffs are different, yet the structural manifestations, as well as the morality behind their preparation and the intended goals are the same. The *Gradual-Death-Causing Gadali* is very similar to the Gradual-Death Causing *Mágùn* among the Yoruba. A man who avails himself of the mystical potentials of this breed of *Gadali* hates the general racket which normally accompanies the operation of the cleaving *Gadali*. A suspicious husband taps a little of its sap, chants the required incantation and rub the sap on the wrapper of the wife. When she covers herself with the wrapper, she gets infected with *Gadali* and becomes a gruesome snare to all men, even her husband (except he chews the neutralizer before mating her). Any sexual contact with the woman makes the paramour develop severe terminal diseases in his sexual organs (Ahmadu, 1996). The penis swells up, decomposes until he dies if antidote is not urgently administered. It is only the husband who is in possession of the antidote to the *Gadali* and sometimes, not even him. *Gadali* annullers are also specially groomed with all the mystical formulae, pronounced. Any variation in the outlined steps would not stop the antidote from growing, but without the required annulling potency. Many husbands were said to have killed themselves when the antidotes they had put their confidence in, failed them. Many had also undergone self-extirpation by lacing an innocent wife who had

been loyal to the husband. The husband thinking the wife's lover had fallen a victim, usually met his Waterloo, when mating the same laced wife. The Gradual-Death-Causing *Gadali* is exactly like the one recorded by John Beattie (1903) among the Bunyoro. This magic is however administered through the private organ of the man to the woman for onward transmission to the intended victim. The husband must first use the antidote before or after the sexual act. Similarly, it is said that among the Azande:

A husband before intercourse put drops on his member, uttering a spell against any other man who has intercourse with his wife. His wife is ignorant of his action, and neither she, nor he is injured by the medicine, though a man will use it after he has eaten the antidote. If a man afterwards has adulterous relations with the wife, his member swells and becomes a great pus-laden sore which usually proves fatal (Evans-Pritchard, 1937)

Pritchard records another such medicine called *Togo*: It is said that before intercourse with a woman, he makes an incision on her arm and drinks a little of her blood, and that this serves as an antidote. The medicine will not seize him.

What ties all of them together, despite the differences in magical composition and structural manifestation, is the object behind their preparation. They are all punitive measures or devices against sexual thieves, deriving twisted pleasure from seeking honey in nectar that is not theirs.

(b) Penis-Resurgent Gadali - This is employed productively in

sustaining one's penile potency, not by wiping out the life of the wife's lover, but by resuscitating one's waning sexual prowess, and by so doing, reclaiming the wife's sexual favour. Most women's sexual misdemeanor is firmly anchored on the husband's sexual incompetence and inability to satisfy their wives' sexual appetites. This loophole is what an unscrupulous lover exploits in causing marital discord. A husband who enjoys a mental breadth, broad enough to know this as the root cause of his wife's infidelity, therefore goes ahead to nip this in the bud, by reclaiming her affection through a sexual re-upsurge roused and rallied by this special *Gadali*. Two options are opened in this regard: **Raw and Roasted Gadali**. Raw Gadali is cut raw; the sap is pressed out and rubbed on the male member. When the penis is introduced into the wife's vagina, she experiences the most profound and most mystical itching sensation, a beautiful torture, a feeling of hurting insatiability impossible to describe. This intense sensation continues for some time even after the withdrawal of the penis. Thus, the 'prodigal' woman is lured back home because she begins to enjoy the 'homely' service than those of her lovers. Thus *Gadali* is a marriage stabiliser in this respect. **Roasted Gadali** is roasted first, and then the sap is pressed out and administered to the penis. It has the same effect on the wife as the former (Ahmadu, 1996).

(c) Protective Gadali - This genre of *Gadali* is planted around the homestead to ward off two sets of detractors; the mystical foes like the witches, wizards and sorcerers, and the physical enemies like the thieves, night marauders and people with evil intentions. Such people are kept away by the powers of the *Gadali* planted around the house. If somebody living with one in the house suddenly develops hatred, the powers of the *Gadali* will force him/her to leave the house, without his/her properties and without any cogent explanation for the weird behaviour. There is the case of

a woman suddenly bereaved of her husband. She was ejected from her former abode. A kind family friend offered her his family's boy's quarters. While residing there, the wife of the kind household lost her pregnancies through miscarriage in quick successions. The man smelling foul play consulted an herbalist who prescribed this protective genre of *Gadali* for him. He brought the *Gadali* home and planted it as instructed. Surprisingly, that very night, the widowed woman left her things in the boy's quarters and fled for good. She later sent people to pack her things for her. Confronted later by the wife of the householder, the woman had no genuine explanation for her actions (Beatie, 1903).

(d) Destructive Gadali- This type of *Gadali* is never grown around human habitation but inside a desolated grove, out of the human prying eyes, and particularly because this breed is very dangerous. It is employed in the form of sorcery in eliminating one's enemies for various reasons (Beatie, 1903). The sorcerer using this: *Gadali* goes to the bush where it is, recount the offences of the enemy, calls his name for a prescribed number of times, chants the spell and through the rites transfer or impute the name of the enemy to the *Gadali*. He now addresses the *Gadali* imitatively as if he is addressing the enemy. Finally, he calls his name and cuts the plant. The response is immediate. The cut part of the plant, like a dying living organism, will be bouncing up and down as if in a fit subsiding with time and finally keep still. Interestingly, the enemy wherever he is, undergoes similar convulsions, as he jumps up and down spasmodically in time rhythmically with the cut plant. He dies at the moment of the stilling of the *Gadali*. This is homeopathic magic at its best (Frazer, 1913).

The Antidotes

The antidotes to *Gadali* are also closely related to the type of

Gadali employed. There are different antidotes to different *Gadali*. It could be chewed; the sap could be rubbed on the penis before mating the laced woman. Above all, its sap could be rubbed on the woman's wrapper to detonate the power of *Gadali* earlier put on the wrapper.

IV. Interplay between Mágùn and Gadali: A Comparative Exploration

While *Mágùn* magic is a cultural possession of the Yoruba, recording its highest propensity among the people (Fabarebo, 2000); at least three ethnic groups in the Northern part of Nigeria: Jukun, Itchen and Hausa-Fulani can legitimately claim *Gadali* as cultural heritage. Though *Mágùn* powers outreach the Yoruba traditional settings, wherever they manifest, granted that all the magical procedural trappings are observed, the magnitude of damage and potency is equal and the same, as in their indigenous cultural settings. *Mágùn* is not discriminatory at all in respect of the tribal leaning of its victims. Since *Mágùn* is administered correctly, the resultant effects remain the same, irrespective of cultural or geographical affiliation (Murphy, 2007). Generally, *Mágùn* and *Gadali* can be employed productively, protectively, and destructively. It is the mode of operation as well as the social position of the user, coupled with the societal approval that confers a normative title on *Mágùn* or *Gadali* as to whether it is productive, protective, or destructive. When *Mágùn* or *Gadali* is abused by an unscrupulous user, usually such an employment is immediately met with societal condemnation. *Mágùn* is an aggregation of mystical components that cuts across plants, roots, leaves, objects, and organisms, and *Gadali* is largely an extraordinary mystical leaf serving almost the same object as *Mágùn*; the two are employed and exploited in a ritual sense. There are magical formulae which

must be stringently followed, certain rites and spells to climax the ritual by ordering the *Mágùn* or *Gadali* to accomplish the set task.

By virtue of its mode of manifestation and operational character, *Mágùn* has been classified into four categories: Explosive *Mágùn*, subdivided into instantly killing and Gradually-Death Causing *Mágùn*, Humiliating *Mágùn*, Silent *Mágùn*, and Seemingly Harmless *Mágùn*. *Gadali*, on the other hand, derives its classificatory designation also by its peculiar manner of operation. Thus, we have, just like *Mágùn*, an Explosive *Gadali* subdivided into Humiliating and Gradually Death-causing *Gadali*; Penis resurgent *Gadali*, Protective and Destructive *Gadali*. A cursory apprehension of these phenomena reveals that *Mágùn* and *Gadali* have similar genres that operate in similar fashions, the Explosive, particularly the Gradually Death-Causing *Mágùn* and *Gadali* that destroy slowly through the decomposition of the penis. But the lacing of these genres is executed differently. In *Mágùn-agékó* (penis atrophy-causing *Mágùn*) the woman is laced through the introduction of the husband's laced penis to the vagina of the woman. But this is after the husband has taken the antidote. In the case of *Gadali*, the woman is laced with Gradually-Death-causing *Gadali* by lacing her favorite wrapper. This is later introduced to the intended paramour inadvertently by the woman. In both cases, the victims have their penis atrophied. As in *Mágùn*, there is also a Humiliating *Gadali*. Even more disconcertingly is the parallelism of the cleaving species that lock the intended couples. But *Mágùn* has more than the gluing *Mágùn*, it has vomiting, the penis retracting, persistent penis turgidity causing- *Mágùn* and so on. All these are meant to ridicule and embarrass the conniving couple. Perhaps, there are more types of Humiliating *Gadali*, which the writer has not discovered. Once again, the operational object of *Mágùn* and *Gadali* in this category is perfectly the same.

The Seemingly-Harmless-*Mágùn* and Penis-resurgent-*Gadali* are

perhaps the best of the diverse genres available, primarily produced to sustain marital stability. This genus of *Mágùn* prevents every other man except the husband from having sexual commerce with the wife, while the *Gadali* of this genus resuscitates the waning strength of the husband's penis and mystically empowers it to satisfy the wife in a most unorthodox manner. The goal again remains the same -marital stability. The protective *Gadali* employed to ward off mystical detractors like witches, enemies, and thieves, to a lesser degree, shares the design of the Silent *Mágùn* independent of sex. The two are independent of sex and are principally used to defend oneself against enemies. The *Gadali*, however, has a more comprehensive application as it has three sets of enemies in focus: witches, malicious enemies, and physical enemies like thieves. *Mágùn* has only two sets of enemies, the thieves and personal ones (abuse of *Mágùn*). Traditionally, however, these species of *Mágùn* were originally devised to protect valuables and to guard farms. The destructive *Gadali* is primarily employed for sorcery. It is only the silent *Mágùn* independent of sex that approximates to this *Gadali*. The two of them are entirely free of sex and could be used negatively to kill an enemy unjustly (Fabarebo, 2000).

V. Conclusion

This paper undertakes a phenomenological exploration of *Gadali* and *Mágùn* as indigenous anti-adultery mechanisms within Yoruba-Hausa socio-religious contexts in Nigeria. Adopting a phenomenological lens, the work moves beyond sensational or purely folkloric interpretations, focusing on the lived meaning, experiential structures, and moral intentions embedded in these practices. The analysis reveals that *Gadali* and *Mágùn* function as

culturally constructed systems of moral regulation designed to preserve marital fidelity, communal harmony, and the sanctity of family life within the Hausa-Yoruba cosmology. The findings show that these mechanisms are not merely mystical devices but symbolic, expressions of a broader moral universe in which sexuality, spirituality, and communal responsibility are closely intertwined. Within this understanding, adultery is not perceived as a private moral failing but also as a threat to social stability, lineage continuity, and spiritual balance. Thus, ritual sanctions such as *Gadali* and *Mágùn* serve as deterrent structures that reinforce socially acceptable sexual behaviour through the invocation of sacred authority and spiritual consequences.

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