



Yorùbá Theatre Practice and Nollywood

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ABSTRACT

Yorùbá theatre practice has an extensive background which is deeply entrenched in the Yorùbá people's traditional approach to ritual and entertainment. The development of theatre in Yorùbáland from travelling actors to the contemporaneous practice of the culture in the film medium is an intriguing phase of maturity of the Yorùbá theatrical tradition. Nollywood has made the whole world a stage for Yorùbá theatre. By extending the performance space beyond the physical stage of the auditorium, Nollywood is what may be considered the current and future of Yorùbá theatre. The demand for relevance and a focus on the interests of today's audience all play a significant part in the shift of Yorùbá theatre from stage to film medium. Nollywood has helped Yorùbá theatre practice by preserving Yorùbá stories for widespread popular acceptability and global attention. Yorùbá theatre is an exposition of Yorùbá tradition and culture, thus it might be helpful to understand the worldviews held by the people who created it in order to better appreciate how it is practiced today, as well as the contributing factors that shape how the practice of this theatre is showcased in what is now known as Nollywood. This paper aims to point out how significant it is to understand the theatre that was developed in Yorùbáland and how the culture comes across in the film adaptations of Akínwùmí Ìṣòlá's *Şaworoide* and *Efúnşetan Aníwùrà*.

KEYWORDS

African theatre, intertheatricality, indigenous performance space, Yorùbá travelling players, traditional societies, religious culture, film medium.

1. Introduction: Theatre and the Dimensions of Practice

Myth and ritual have been identified as having a significant influence on the earliest forms of theatre and dimensions of practice. The premise that theatre's beginnings are connected to myth and ritual remains the most widely accepted theory (Brockett and Hildy 2014: 1; Yerimah 2016: 24-25). Some critics, like Michael J. Anderson (2005), make the observation that the increase in 'adaptive mythmaking' which was best exemplified in ancient Greek culture by the recognition of the freedom to appropriate epic contents and creatively alter traditionally defined myths and sacred rituals as particularly evident in Athenian tragedy, provided the common ground to further describe the emergence of theatre and dimensions of theatre practices in many communities (Anderson 2005: 121-122). It has been noted that myth and ritual had a significant influence also on the Ramlila play-cycles of northern India and offered precisely the same cultural treasures, much like they did on Greek theatrical practice (Storey and Allan 2005: 2). The atmosphere provided by myth and ritual allowed the theatre to evolve into a new way of expressing the identities of cultures in many parts of the world. However, theatre developments and practices differ, partially determined by the environment, adaptability, and worldviews, and partly dependent on the traditions of play-like actions and a sense of history. The environment's theatricality of the culture is crucial to the development of theatre in ways that are appropriate for highly dramatic forms (Fabian 2004). Ian C. Storey and Arlene Allan (2005) emphasise that plays were performed in public in classical Athens, at a theatre close to an altar of a deity and as part of that deity's devotion, in broad daylight while audience members would be aware of their own duties as audience members (Storey and Allan 2005: 3). The theatre as an art form is the culmination of many years of development and its practices are significantly informed by ethnic backgrounds and shared identities.

The capacity of any given community to adapt the materials of its culture to relatively new systems and embrace newer types of conventional adjustments that could meet the needs of its audience is the right framework to reassess the future of arts and tradition in that community. How important theatre is to a community's residents will define their level of engagement in the art form and the functions that community will assign to theatre in its advancement. The theatrical arts, which were formerly present in every culture, either survive or perish according to the society. The theatrical characteristics are determined by the experiences and surroundings in which theatre is brought to life because no two environments are exactly same and because there is no fixed model of theatre or theatrical activity. The experiences and environments in which theatre comes to life dictate the theatrical dimensions. The Palestinian society in the occupied territories, which is influenced by Arab history, religious culture, and the arts, with the curfews and restraints imposed by the Israeli government, is one of the many examples of how the

development of theatre and its various practices are shaped by specific situations and experiences. The need for Palestinians to express their struggles, what they encounter in their land and their experiences outside of their territory, has been acknowledged as a key factor in the development of professional Palestinian theatre (Snir 2005).

The sense of adaptability and inventive staging of accounts using the occasions in the environments or stories based on religious narratives as the raw materials, created by the talents within different communities and serving as a vehicle for shared identities and awareness, that has been most formative in the advancement of theatre as a structured artistic genre across cultures, pointed in the direction of the regionalised models of theatre practices that have also emerged in theatrical dimensions such as in the Jewish community in the present day Israel and among the Yorùbá people in the southwest of modern-day Nigeria. It has been notably pointed out that due to the dearth of native theatre practices and classical record of theatrical traditions in its culture, Israeli theatre resorted to the ancient Hebrew canonical texts as a source of inspiration by adopting the stories for its creative advances, stage productions, and theatre practices contrary to Orthodox Jewish beliefs that theatrical performance of biblical passages on stage is unlawful owing to their sacred status. Outside of the Purim festivities, which mark the deliverance from the ancient Persian ruler Ahasver as it is recounted in the Book of Esther, conventional theatre was essentially a prohibited medium for Orthodox Jews, especially because of theatre's underlying strong association with the cult of Dionysus in ancient Greece, and in ancient Rome sacrifices were usually performed before the commencement of the “stage games”, or *ludi scaenici* (Rokem 2001: 305-307; Block 2017: 153-154). In Yorùbá community, the Ọ̀yọ́ Yorùbá sacred Egúngún¹ cults, indigenous religious observances such as the worship of the ọ̀rìṣàs², and Ifá³ divination recitals had a significant impact on the early development of Yorùbá theatre and practice (Adedeji 1969; Yerimah 2016; Babayemi 1980). Yorùbá theatre is first and foremost a cultural spectacle. Ahmed Parker Yerimah (2016) rightly affirms that the richness of Yoruba culture, in contrast to other indigenous groups in Nigeria, is situated in the tradition that readily provided the creative new ways of keeping its community entertained. As written culture developed in the early 19th century, existing performance styles that stemmed from indigenous observances began taking on the form of conventional practices (Yerimah 2016:28-29).

Actor training, staging principles, and professionalism differed from community to community the more the theatre developed along the lines of adaptation and synthesis between innovation and modification (Anderson 2005: 121). Anderson draws attention to the fact that the essence of any art form that emerged from a certain culture or group is the presence of an

¹ Egúngún: Egúngún is the Yorùbá term for masquerade.

² Ọ̀rìṣàs: Ọ̀rìṣàs is a plural form of Ọ̀rìṣà, which means deities in Yorùbá traditional religion.

³ Ifá: Yorùbá divination oracle.

actiology - a considerable analysis of the actions in a staged performance- as the foundation text for modern society (Anderson 2005: 128). The opinion that Anderson is expressing is that the influence a practice has on a current audience should be used to evaluate if a practice is still worthwhile in a given society. In other words, a practice's relevance within a culture should be determined by its applicability to a society. This emphasis on an actiology takes into account the necessity to understand a cultural form and its continuous impact for later generations, particularly with regard to the larger picture of the global market.

The mainstay of theatre as an art form within a tradition is not mainly to be adopted to dramatise real or imagined experience, its practice ought to methodically select historical or mythical resources from the past that uphold a constructive sense of self-identity and ethical principles (Binam Bikoi 2010: 3). As a result, in order to remain relevant, especially in the context of globalisation, artistic creations and conventions must be continually reformulated (Binam Bikoi 2010: 7-9). Charles Binam Bikoi (2010) makes the point against what he calls “archaeological approach to African culture with the suggestion that a tradition should not be static, rigid, and stale. It needs to be continuously recreated (Binam Bikoi 2010: 8). In this sense, in order for artistic creations and conventions to meet modern standards and global relevance, they must be continually reformulated to serve the objectives for which they were developed by the people who originally own the tradition (Binam Bikoi 2010: 8-9).

Tradition is tied to an environment, to a culture of how various people create and recreate novel forms of expressing themselves, actively seeking out different answers to different problems, and adjusting to 'ideas and objects' from elsewhere (Falola 2003: 2-3). Tradition is a fundamental component of a people's identity. While some of the behaviours narrated in regional myths are deemed to have universal interpretations, some are construed as unique to a specific subset of people within the parameters of a particular social setting. It is important to emphasise that globalisation should not be thought to be a means of Westernising non-Western traditions. Globalisation is not the same as Westernisation (Eriksen 2003: 3). More particularly, it is centered on legitimately formed coalitions that would uphold moral principles, standards, and behaviours that people from many different cultures and traditions around the world mostly share that could lead to “changes in the multi-directional flow of ideas and practices” (Howell 2003: 202). In other words, globalisation, in relation to artistic creations and conventions, is not a post-colonial alternative to introducing Western values into other cultures and practices. It simply deals with the needs to adjust art forms and practices to modern public's interest, stripping them of materials that have become problem areas for the larger community for economic gains and intercultural dialogues. To borrow a term from Woynarski et al. (2020), the so-called “imposition of Euro-Western frames should not be assigned to globalisation. Needless to say, the film

medium, a more recent creative form of art and a major worldwide industry, now shapes how traditions and cultures are seen all over the world (Barsam and Monahan 2010: 2). Aesthetics, theatrical arts of non-European communities, social ideals, and indigenous characteristics are promoted through films, and the Yorùbá theatre has carved out its place as an intriguing cultural force.

2. Intertheatricality and Yorùbá Theatre

Simon Shepherd and Mick Wallis (2004) define the concept of intertheatricality as an exposition of the relationships between theatrical texts, staging techniques, genres, conventions, memory, and a shared language of entertainment within a given theatrical tradition (Shepherd and Wallis 2004: 43). Intertheatricality, a concept credited to Jacky Bratton (2003), posits that while each performance is a unique moment of clarity, all entertainment art forms and aesthetics embedded in a certain culture of theatrical tradition are interdependent. The idea that all aspects of performance within a theatrical tradition are interconnected even when they are separated from one another is at the heart of intertheatricality. Yorùbá theatre, which first made its appearance in the early Seventeenth century when the Òyó Mèsì⁴ ruling council hired six men to dress up in masks modelled after the dreaded Egúngún Yorùbá cult of the ancestors in order to scare away delegations directed by the reigning monarch Aláàfín⁵ Ògbólú to survey the land of old Òyó in an effort to move the kingdom back to the location against all odds, has benefitted considerably from its “distinctive Òyó system” with its identifiable dominant culture of performance conventions. The masked men, who had been caught and discreetly entrusted into the hands of the King's Staff Bearer known as Ológbìn Ológbòjò and his kinsman Èṣà Ògbín, underwent formal training as comic actors in the palace, recreating the aborted Òyó Mèsì scheme to amuse the King and also officially licensed to put on shows open to the public. When the Egúngún ancestral cult governing body infiltrated the space as a business opportunity, it brought into the art form a wide variety of entertainment aesthetics and repertory, consisting of spectacular acrobatic dance in action, improvised playlets drawing from both the real and the make-believe worlds, satire, mime, chant, song, music and organisation which were of its own making and contributions, and creative birth of a travelling theatre known as Aláárinjò the masque-dramaturgs' tradition in Yorùbáland (Adedeji 1969: 201). The operation of Aláárinjò touring theatre groups in taking their kind of entertainment to every corner of Yorùbá country as showmen at a time when many households and villages did not have the luxury of television sets and reception was a contributing factor that aided the expansion of Yorùbá theatre as a culturally organised commercial theatre in its early days.

⁴ “Òyó Mèsì: Traditional Yorùbá council of lawmakers.

⁵ Aláàfín: The kings of Òyó are known as Aláàfín, which literally means “One who owns the palace.”

The later-emerging Yorùbá popular theatre, which flourished from the 1940s through the early 1990s, was a creative synthesis of church-style dramas and significantly enhanced independent secular performance, with a focus on plays based on Yorùbá historical people, experience in urban culture, and peasant life. Yorùbá actors who were well-known for their work in popular theatre excelled as dancers, choreographers, drummers, and lyricists. For the most part, many of Yorùbá theatre's early theatrical films were shot on celluloid and screened in cinema theatres. Some of the well-known names most closely associated with Yorùbá popular theatre as practitioners on stage, radio, television, and film are Hubert Ògúndé, Dúró Ládiípò, Kólá Ògúnmólá, Moses Oláiyá (Baba Sàlá), Oyin Adéjòbí, Jimoh Aliu, Ìṣòlá Ògúnsolá, Akin Ògúngbè, and Moses Omilani (Adedeji 1969; Adelugba and Obafemi with Adeyemi 2004; Barber 2004; Balogun and Macaulay 2022; Babayemi 1980).

Yorùbá popular theatre's models of performance space and systems of drama presentation were professionally in constant transition from earlier adopted indigenous African concepts of performance space to 'old-fashioned Western dramatic form' (Barber 2004: 178). Despite being influenced by oral tradition, in which plays are first improvised before being written down, there is a well-supported argument that literacy in both English and Yorùbá helped the Yorùbá popular theatre connect to a variety of audience segments (Barber 2004: 178-179).

The spontaneous responses of those in the audience are of the utmost importance in the theatre, and they played an important role in how Yorùbá theatre companies consistently integrated new ideas- including a few repetitive humorous lines, moral dimensions, and conflicts- into the stage performances of their plays (Barber 2004: 180-181). By creating story ideas, improvised dialogues, characterisations, and engaging acting that pulled in the audience, the Yorùbá theatre companies developed for themselves an innovative and experimental way to developing written texts for the staging of their plays. In practice, code language, music, song, and dance are all interconnected within the theatricality of the culture” and continue to serve as a practical method by which some dramatic actions are given complementary meanings when viewed in the context of the genres with which they are associated. Plays such as *Yorùbá Ronú* (Yorùbás, Think) by Hubert Ògúndé, *Ọba Kòso* (The King Did Not Hang) by Dúró Ládiípò, *Lànké Òmùtí* (Lànké The Drinkard), the stage adaptation of Amos Tutùqlá's novel *The Palmwine Drinkard*, by Kólá Ògúnmólá, and the soap opera *Gbádékó*⁶ (Suspend the Crown) by Adé Olófin serve to demonstrate the astounding way in which all entertainment aesthetics within Yorùbá tradition are dramatically homogeneous while their appropriateness as distinct categories are also utilized to great effect.

⁶ I always remember the “moment of crystallisation” brought about through the ingenious fusion of musics, songs, and praise-names in *Gbádékó*, the soap opera by Adé Olófin Theatre Group in the 1980s, when Láludé as the Afòbajé the traditional kingmaker- one who is to install a new king- chillingly plays the villain, openly refuses to

The Yorùbá theatrical tradition uses music, song, satire, chant, mime, and dance as a medium through which completely new experiences can be conveyed in ways that are in keeping with the language that is shared with the audience and that can also significantly clarify the meaning that is situated in the theatrical texts. Due to their propensity for attentive listening, the Yorùbá audience frequently took part in the entertainment language through spontaneous responses to the importance and significance integrated into each and every component of the performance. Most plays by Yorùbá popular theatre companies were not written down as publishable theatrical scripts when they were being performed. The actor-practitioners depended on an exploratory attempt to create model scripts that effectively conveyed an eclectic combination of songs, praise-names, invocations, melodious chants and their own ideas of stage movements, genres, traditions, and shared identities of the period. It might be argued that Yorùbá theatre companies gradually started to adopt published plays and novels in both English and Yorùbá as sources for their productions due to a combination of “survival instinct” and the need to appeal to elite audiences (Adedokun 2009: 30-31). Although it has been correctly stated that in the Aláárìnjó Theatre we have found the universal in the particular, and that its achievements are reflected in the form and style of the 'new theatre,' (Adedeji 1969: 375) the significance of the Aláárìnjó Theatre era through the medium of Nollywood films today does not stem from a struggle for survival. Its theatrical practice has influenced how the Nigerian story is portrayed to international audiences.

crown the man named Oríoyè Arídegbé Ọmọ Arójògbinkà in spite of all his pleas, shatters his life ambition, and puts a hold on the installation of a new king. Lálùdè is all out to make a public show of shame of Arídegbé. As it is narrated to Lálùdè in confidentiality by his mother Fadékèmi, the now aged Oríoyè Arídegbé Ọmọ Arójògbinkà is the biological father of Lálùdè and her reason for being alive in exile is due to a narrow escape from the secret attempt to murder Fadékèmi in a thick forest while pregnant with his child, Lálùdè the present Afọbajẹ. Unknown to Oríoyè, Lálùdè the present Afọbajẹ is his son from the long forgotten Fadékèmi. I was probably six or seven years old when I saw the production. But the “intertheatricality” within Yorùbá theatre is still quite stimulating to me, especially with the impressive dramatic pace and finality in which Lálùdè comports himself, rises and says: “Mo gbádékó!” (literally: “I hang the crown”), followed by musics, songs, and praise-names:

Afọbajẹ, s'ẹyin n'ipinlẹ oyè,
Oun tí a mọ,
T'ó dá ni l'ójú, n'íbi a gbé bí ni,
Olórikunkun kò lè j'ọba àwa,
L'áti ipinlẹsẹ tí a gbónjú bá,
Ilé l'áawò k'átó s'ọmọ l'órúkọ.

Kingmakers, you are the foundations
For the installation of true chieftains,
This is what we know without gainsaying,
This has been the tradition of our land,
Whoever is stubborn can never be enthroned
as our king,
Right from time immemorial,
The home of a child is usually first considered
before he is given a befitting name.

3. Projections of Yorùbá Theatre Practice in Nollywood: Akínwùmí Ìṣòlá's *Şaworoide* (*Brass bells*) and *Efúnşetán Aníwùrà*.

Yorùbá theatre has maintained a significant cultural position as an industry and creation of its community in post-independence Nigeria. Jeremiah Comey's (2002) views that, just as great artists define themselves by their art, so do brilliant film actors communicate through their quality, which is personality combined with talent, are applicable to Yorùbá theatre performers from the court of Alààfin Ògbólú in Òyó in the seventeenth century to the present day Nigerian home video revolution (Comey 2002: xi). Yorùbá language film, with independent film producers and an extensive network of distributors, is one of the most widely recognised in the Nigerian video film industry. In today's changing entertainment field, the adoption of the new reality of making theatrical films for pay cable, YouTube, and, especially, home video accounts for the strong presence of Yorùbá theatre with Yorùbá-produced language films as a principal performer in Nollywood, a relatively newer expression in the Nigerian film industry. Nollywood, the brand name for the Nigerian film industry, is said to have been formed in 2002 by New York Times reporter Norimitsu Orishi to allude mostly to English-language films with production and distribution centres in Lagos, Onitsha, Asaba, Enugu, and Aba (Haynes 2016: xxiii). While Nollywood serves as the formation of credible film culture and a sense of internal self-improvement in Africa's most populous country, it is not a stereotype of the United States of America's Hollywood, one of the world's oldest film industries, or India's Bollywood, the world's largest film industry (Giwa 2014: 1-2).

Nollywood is deservedly considered as a particularly unifying cultural art form on the African continent and in its diasporas (Krings and Okome 2013: 1). Nollywood has positioned Nigeria as a nation with a booming film industry. In Nollywood, Yorùbá theatre practice, with its indigenous origins of stories, particularly West African mysticism and spirituality, can be seen in theatrical films that are not sensationalised and made by the people themselves. Subtitling for Yorùbá language films has additionally helped to further broaden their appeal and their audiences far beyond the boundaries of their indigenous dialect. Yorùbá tradition, with its more robust mix of theatre, drama, and film history, has remained popular with Nollywood audiences, as evidenced by productions of Yorùbá-language films such as *Şaworoide* (*Brass bells*, 1999) and *Efúnşetán Aníwùrà* (2005) by Akínwùmí Oròjídé-Ìṣòlá. *Şaworoide* was first made into a film in 1999 before being published as a novel in 2008. The film opens on the traditional drum known as 'Dùndún' among the Yorùbá, and is referred to as the *Şaworoide*, a sacred drum with the brass jingle bells that serves as the essential connecting thread between events in the film, reeling out the verses:

Aṣọ funfun ní sunkún aró,
 Ìpilẹ̀ ọ̀rọ̀ ní sunkún èkejì rẹ̀, tan tan tan!
 B'ójú bá yẹjú, k'òhùn má yẹhùn...

It is the white fabric that indicates its need for dyeing;⁷
 It is the initially spoken word that usually precedes
 the next sentence.
 Our pledges to one another shouldn't be broken
 even when we are absent (*Şaworoide*, 1999).

The Şaworoide verses are later picked and fully recited by Amawomárò the old Ifá priest and called the Ifá chants Òtúrá Méjì:

Aṣọ funfun ní sunkún aró,
 Ìpilẹ̀ ọ̀rọ̀ ní sunkún èkejì rẹ̀, tan tan tan!
 A dífá f'Adéròmókun,
 Ọmọ Ọ̀ni Àlànàkàn Èsùrú,
 Nijótí òmékún şèráhùn ire gbogbo.
 B'òkan bá yọ nínú igbó, a b' ọ̀nà wá.
 Ire gbogbo, mà mà wá Jogbo wá ò,
 Ire gbogbo,
 Bá a bá dami órí,
 A b'ésè wá, ire,
 Ire gbogbo, mà mà wá Jogbo wá ò,
 Ire (*Şaworoide*, 1999).

It is the white fabric that indicates its need for dyeing;
 It is the initially spoken word that usually precedes
 the next sentence,

⁷The author of this paper provided the English translation here.

Are the priests who performed a divination for Adéròmókun,
 the son of Ọ̀ni Àlànàkàn Èsùrú,
 On the day he was complaining about his lack
 of good fortune,
 One comes out of the woods, the other comes
 out of the paths.
 Come and visit Jogbo, good fortune.
 Good fortunes.
 Water will trickle to the feet if it is poured on
 the top of the head.
 Come and visit Jogbo, good fortune.

The plot of *Şaworoide* revolves around a conflict of interest between power and greed at Jogbo, an imaginary contemporary community in Yorùbáland whose current king Lápité, deciding to bypass the age-old traditions of his progenitors in order to exert his corrupt practice unchecked with the encouragement of some of the chiefs around him, sets out to wipe out whatever stands in his way. Lápité refuses to complete the age-old rite of swearing an oath, having incisions made at the centre of his head and applied with the powder that is kept in a small brass container being a symbiotic sacred relationship with the sacred drum's brass jingle bells and the ceremonial brass crown that is a taboo for any king to wear without submitting to the entire process as put in place by Ọdẹjídé the first king of Jogbo to check his successors.

Lápité becomes restless after being informed secretly in his chamber of his impending death by excruciating headache if he wears the ceremonial brass crown as culturally expected and the sacred drum is beaten to his hearing by the drummer Àyángalú. As a result, he sends hired murderers after Àyángalú, who flees in the middle of the night after being tipped off by Badà, taking the sacred drum and Adébólá the son of Adébòmí the deceased prince with him, branching at the house of his son Àyánníyì and informs him to flee with his wife as well. Àyángalú's house is ransacked, and a drum, presumed to be the one with sacred status, is carried to Lápité. A series of rebellions break out in Jogbo, organised by youth leaders and farmers, against the encroachment of the timber business on local farmlands, despite their requests to Lápité to end the monopoly. Lápité authorises the timber business management to sneak in weapons to combat the agitators and also to obtain weapons for himself. Adébólá, the son of Adébòmí, is warned by Àyángalú not to reveal his birth name to anyone in Jogbo and is sent with 'àrokò'- a symbol of code language to Amawomárò, praying for protection on Adébólá's journey:

Àyúnlọ, àyúnbò l'owó nýenu,
 Àtẹ̀pẹ̀ l'ẹ̀sẹ̀ n̄tẹ̀nà.
 Erù kii p'òşùkà, ełérú l'ẹ̀rù n̄pa (*Şaworoide*, 1999).

The hands reach the mouth without boundaries.
 For a very long time, the sole of the foot will tread the routes.
 The burden will be carried by the carrier, not by
 the piece of fabric that is put on the head to lighten the load.

Adébólá introduces himself as Arẹ̀sẹ̀jábàtà when he arrives in Jogbo and is asked his name by Amawomárò. Adébólá is further cautioned by Amawomárò, who has recognised him,

not to ever use his real name when speaking to people in Jogbo. Instead, he should claim to be a stranger who has come to the area to learn the Ifá divinatory system from Amawomárò. Amawomárò, casting Ifá to forecast what Adébólá's arrival will bring forth, says:

Ìrosùn Méjì

Igún lá àlá, Igún j'orí,

Àkàlámòngbò lá àlá, a sì j'èdò,

Adiẹ lá àlá, a t'owó ẹni d'owó ẹni,

A t'owó ẹni d'owó ẹni l'adiẹ fi d'ótù Ifẹ:

A díá fún Onílégogoro-Àgbàyè,

Èyítí Ifẹ gbójúlé,

Wón ní ó rúbọ nítorí ikú, ó ẹé, ikú ò paá.

Ifá, mo gbónkàn lé ọ, àgbàyè,

Onílégogoro, àgbàyè,

Ifá, mo gbónkàn lé ọ, á-a-gbaye,

Onílégogoro, àgbàyè (*Saworoide*, 1999).

— 13 —

The vulture dreamt and feeds on the skull,

The hornbill dreamt and eats the liver,

The fowl had a dream that it was going to travel from hand
to hand,

It was from hand to hand that the fowl arrived
in the old town of Ife,

Are the priests who performed a divination
for Onílégogoro-Àgbàyè

That Ifẹ relied on.

They requested that he carry out a ritual to prevent death;
He did so, and his death was prevented.

Ifa, I place my faith in you; spare me from dying,
You whose dwelling is a towering building,
save me from dying.

Ifa, I place my faith in you; spare me from dying,
You whose dwelling is a towering building,
save me from dying.

Amawomárò recites Èjì-Ogbè while guiding Adébólá in the Ifá divinatory recitations.

Èjìogbè, Èjèjì mogbè, n ò gb'ènikanṣoṣo,
 Adíá f'ójúoró n rée rè sàlèàbàtà,
 N'rèè kanrí omọ níbíbí,
 È wolé ayò, ẹ w'omọ,
 A kii bálé ayò l'áikún,
 È wolé ayò, ẹ w'omọ (*Saworoide*, 1999).

I do not take sides; I support the two sides evenly,
 Is the priest who conducted a divination for the Seaweed
 Shortly before she travelled far into the marshes
 In order to produce a child of her own
 At the time she was childless.
 Take a look at the board game and the seeds,
 There are always seeds in the board game;
 Examine the board game and examine the seeds
 that it contains.

Amawomárò is secretly consulted by the youth leaders for a solution to stop Lápitè's onslaught, who is using the police to arrest and imprison their members, newsmen, farmers, and members of hunter groups. Amawomárò informs them of the solution and the consequences—the brass crown must not be removed from the palace for fifteen days. If it happens, because it is a taboo, Lápitè is expected to choose between exile and suicide. Arápáregangan, the daughter of Lápitè, and Arésèjábàtà, also known as Adébólá, meet at a dance competition and develop a friendly connection. Olójowòn, a Jogbo logging company stakeholder, eventually finances and promises to provide firearms for the agitating youths to topple Lapite, but later backs out, leaving them in shambles. The youths attack and steal the royal brass crown off Lápitè's head during the dance competition's grand finale. Lapite is enraged when Amawomárò is brought in to offer a solution for recovering the stolen crown and he claims the only option is for Àyángalú, who is regrettably currently in exile, to beat the sacred drum. He calls Amawomárò a traitor and verbally abuses him. Làgbàiyí, an official of the logging company, promises to help Lápitè find the stolen crown during his visit. Òpálábà, the elderly palace bard, starts singing while listening to the talk from the stairway:

Alákiísà ñjò l'óru,
B'ó pé, ilẹ̀ á mó l'òla (*Saworoide*, 1999).

For the one who dances in rags at midnight,
The day will soon break.

Òpálábà responds with proverbs when Séríkí validates what he has heard to him: Olè l'òun ó ò bá ọ tún ilẹ̀kùn ilé rẹ̀ se, ò ñjò, ò ñyò, o ò fura? (A burglar offers to help you fix your house's door and you start dancing and celebrating, shouldn't you exercise caution?) Òpálábà sings:

Àṣá ñb'èyèlé ṣ'éré, èyèlé ñyò...(*Saworoide*, 1999).

The pigeon delights in the hawk's playful interaction with it.

Òpálábà starts singing in response to Séríkí's comment about how hard it is for anyone to grasp what he is saying.

Kò ì yé wọn, yòò yéwọn l'òla (*Saworoide*, 1999).

It has not become plain to them, they will understand it
better tomorrow.

Colonel Làgàta, the director of the logging company's security team, is brought to Lápitẹ̀ as the person in charge of leading the military forces against the youths to recover the crown. The assembled crowd sings in celebration as Làgàta brings back the crown as he has earlier promised.

Kúrùkẹ̀rẹ̀ wọn, ó ti tán o!
Kúrùkẹ̀rẹ̀ wọn, ó ti tán o,
Adéidẹ̀ ti padà dé o,
Kúrùkẹ̀rẹ̀ wọn, ó ti tán o! (*Saworoide*, 1999).

Their exhalations have all come to an end!
Their exhalations have all come to an end,
The brass crown is back home,

Their exhalations have all come to an end!

The following dancing moves by Balógun and Lápité are stylish (*Saworoide*, 1999). Làgàta inquires of an officer who is a native of Jogbo about what may be done to solve the corruption in the community as he plans his scheme to usurp Lápité's reign, and the latter responds:

Òsùpá lé, ẹni ò gún (*Saworoide*, 1999).

The moon sets, and you say that its luminescence is
not in the proper place.

Làgàta firmly:

Ohun ọwọ mi ò tó, mà fi gògò fàá! (*Saworoide*, 1999).

I'll use a staff's hook to securely hold anything
that is out of my grasp.

During the celebration of the return of the brass crown that is hosted by Lápité, Adébólá, under the effect of alcohol, tells Arápáregangan that he is the son of Adébòmí who is murdered many years earlier. She receives word from him that his father, Adébòmí, is also deserving of the Jogbo crown. Excited, Arápáregangan slips to her mother, queen Tinúọlá, to ask her if anyone ever goes by the name of Adébòmí, while Lápité is listening in on their talk. Balógun is called aside by Lápité to be informed of the news, and he identifies Adébólá as the one who will contend with him for the throne because of their own failures not to have also slain him. To Tinúọlá's dismay, Lápité knows Arápáregangan to be a bastard whose pregnancy is brought to the palace, so he orders Balógun to find a means to kill Adébólá right there. If that proves difficult since Adébólá is with Arápáregangan, both of them should be slain. Arápáregangan is instructed by Tinúọlá to leave calmly with Adébólá and flee. When Lápité asks Làgàta for anything he wants in return for bringing back the brass crown, Làgàta stands up in the middle of the crowd and addresses the group, calling attention to Lápité's debauchery. Làgàta declares that Jogbo's throne has been annexed by the military, signaling that a permanent transformation has occurred. He tells Lápité that the brass crown is what he needs in exchange and asks him put it on his head. When Lápité accuses him of being a traitor, he shoots him dead. The chiefs pledge allegiance to Làgàta, who is equally unscrupulous and vicious as Lápité, upon Lápité's passing. He asks the chiefs for a list of the names of individuals who can cause issues for him. Balógun

and Séríkí are addressed thereafter by Òpálábà as Afowófonná (Those who stack burning coals on their palms).

Afowófonná a lè m'ówódúró?
Afowófonná è é m'ówódúró ò! (*Saworoide*, 1999).

Can anyone hold their hands still
while stacking burning coals on their palms?
Anyone stacking burning coals on their palms
cannot keep their hands still!

When they inquire about the significance of his ambiguous phrase, Òpálábà responds, Èni tó sù bèrè t'ó n dè ihò òkété, kò mò pé Ọba Òkè ñdè tiè náà l'èyìn (The person who bends to dig the grasscutter's hole is unaware that the king of heaven is also digging up a hole from behind for him), and starts to sing: Òjò tó rò tí ò dá, Ọlórún ló moye èni tí yóó pa (Only God knows how many people will be soaked by the rain, which has not yet stopped) (*Saworoide*, 1999).

Amawomárò, along with a couple of the youth leaders, goes to Àyángalú to notify him of the terror that the reigning king Làgàta is inflicting upon the population at large. They inform him of their strategy, which entails inviting him to play the sacred drum next to Làgàta while he is donning the brass crown. The cliques that visit Làgàta perform songs to slight the reign of Lápitèthe former ọba (king) to demonstrate the support the general public has for Làgàta.

O j'ọba lọ, kii s'ẹgbé ọba,
Egbé Baba rè ní ẹ! (*Saworoide*, 1999).

He is more superior to the king. He is not on the
same level with the king. He shares the same class
as the king's father.

Yorùbá message transmission through drums features as an entertainment esthetic in the context of the film when Àyángalú utilizes the sound of the sacred drum to communicate with the spirit of Àyánniyì to encourage him to think about returning home at the right time, which happens toward the end of the film.

Àyánníyì sùré teteete wá!
 Ojò ojòkan, n'ilèó jẹ ni.
 Ikán ní ó j'orí,
 Ìtalẹ a j'èdò.
 Ìdí t'òbìnrin fílẹ̀kẹ̀sí,
 Ilẹ̀ ni yóó fí jẹ.
 Káàsà, igí dá! (*Saworoidẹ*, 1999).

Àyánníyì turn up swiftly!
 One day, this earth will feed on a man.
 The head will ultimately be eaten by termites.
 Liver will be eaten by ants.
 The dirt will devour the waists that women
 adorn with beads.
 It's a pity, really!

— 18 — Làgàtà's secret state police is led to Àyángalú by Balógun. He is requested to bring the sacred drum to the palace. Àyángalú tells Balógun a lie, saying the drum is already burnt to ashes in an unintentional bush fire long ago. Adébólá and Arápáregáangan, who are nearby, run to Amawomárò to tell him that Àyángalú has been taken into custody. The long-forgotten Àyánníyì the son of Àyángalú enters as Amawomárò and the youth leaders who have come to see Amawomárò to carry out the plan of bringing Àyángalú to beat the sacred drum next to Làgàtà while he is donning the brass crown are at a loss for what else to do. When he introduces himself, Amawomárò asks him if he has the incision marks needed by custom to beat the sacred drum. To Amawomárò's delight, he replies in the positive. The drum is concealed in a large clay pot that is covered with a basket, and Adébólá takes the party there. The brass bells chime as Àyánníyì pulls it out and rattles it. Badà introduces Àyánníyì as his younger brother who has a deeper grasp of the praise-names of Jogbo to the head of the invited drummers during the ceremonies of Làgàtà's coronation, which would be commemorated by donning the brass crown, and requests that he join the group.

Làgàtà brags as he reads his inauguration address, saying: My own time will be a little different because nobody else can do what we are unable to achieve. The nail cannot bend anything that is challenging for the teeth to cut. One only loves Şàngó by compulsion. One is compelled to love somebody who is stronger than they are. I am invulnerable. I'm trying not to terrify you. During this dispensation, those who are aware of their limitations will enjoy. I am

now and always will be one of you. Today, I, Lagata, will don the brass crown. The kingship lineages now include one additional member. The military is now a member of the households that don the Jogbo crown. (*Şaworoidę*, 1999) Séríkí is asked to come over and place the brass crown on the head of Lågàta. In order to make the sacred verses audible, Àyánníyì steps out from the group of drummers and begins to beat the Şaworoidę in the direction of Lagata who, moaning in agony, collapses and dies, while the people in attendance run cover. Armed youths arrive on the scene to engage the soldiers, but they instead choose to show solidarity and go away without a fight. The ancient rituals are performed on Adébólá as the new king of Jogbo. The film closes with Òpálábà's thought-provoking counsel and song:

À t'omodé tó şubú, tó lẹ́ọ́ wo wájú,
 À t'àgbà tó kọ̀şè, tó w'èyìn wò,
 È ò ha jé á jọ gbìnmò pọ̀, ká tún ojú ọ̀nà náà şe,
 K'ámá baà máa jọ şubú mó(*Şaworoidę*, 1999).

Let the young men who stumble and look in the front,
 as well as the elderly who trip and look behind,
 come together to clear the way so that we will stop falling.

Òrò l'ẹyẹ ńgbó o,
 Òrò l'ẹyẹ ńgbó o,
 Ẹyẹ ò déédéé bà l'órùlé o,
 Òrò l'ẹyẹ ńgbó o (*Şaworoidę*, 1999).

Birds pay attention to the spoken word;
 they don't perch on rooftops arbitrarily.,
 Birds listen to words.

Şaworoidę (1999) is a political film that is anchored in the context of intertheatricality within Yorùbá theatrical traditions, with proverbs, folklore, songs and dances, music, Ifá divinatory chants, and the language of the drum all playing an important role in the narrative. What is happening in Nigeria, where political office holders refuse to abide by the country's laws and constitutions as laid down by the country's founding fathers engage in all forms of treason, is well captured in how Lápitẹ́, upon becoming the new king of Jogbo with his chiefs, turns the community into a wasteland due to underdevelopment while stockpiling money in foreign banks.

The way Làgàta is subtly recruited by Lápité as a tool against his own people who are advocating for good governance is clear evidence of the characteristics of military invasions into politics in post-independence Nigeria.

Efúnṣetán Aníwúrà was made into a film in 2005 after first being published as a stage play in 1970. The story revolves around the life and times of Èfúnṣetán Aníwúrà, a historical Ìbàdàn⁸ woman leader who, despite being renowned and unmatched for the kind of wealth she commands, allows the grief over the death of her only child, Tóoyòsí, who passes away during labour, to drive her to bitterness and sadism. She becomes a menace, enraged all the time, and obsessed with killing any of her female slaves who are with child. She is also unwilling to accept the pleas for mercy from the elders in the community. Látòòṣà, the head of Ìbàdàn council of chiefs, declares war on her after she rebuffs all of his entreaties to restrain herself. When her close friend Àjilé warns her that the people of the city wielding clubs, led by Látòòṣà, are closing in on her, Èfúnṣetán refuses to run and instead kills herself. To preserve her honour, she takes up a deadly potion before they get to her. Before the film shows Èfúnṣetán heading home with her entourage and a group of drummers, a prologue sums up the views about the current city of Ìbàdàn, the history of its former field marshals, and the great women such as the eponymous heroine, Èfúnṣetán, and their significant contributions to the advancement of Yorùbáland. Èfúnṣetán talks about Látòòṣà's expensive aspiration to obtain the war title of the Àrẹ̀ Ònàkakaṅfò a field marshal when it is not yet his turn. She complains to her friends about his repeated requests for assistance with firearms and welfare, which can be rather taxing for her (*Efúnṣetán*, 2005). When Èfúnṣetán requests the drummers to play the drums for her, the meaning of the melodies they produce—The peacock...Queen of birds—is made clear to us through the subtitle.

Yorùbá theatrical call and response songs for twins feature in the film when one of Èfúnṣetán's slaves is reported to have delivered twins and the newborns are brought to Èfúnṣetán, who starts the songs while others pick up the refrains:

Ìyálóde Èfúnṣetán Aníwúrà: Kẹ̀hìn dé, Táyéwò,⁹

Àwọ̀n Obirin: Olówó, l'ọ̀mọ ọ̀ mi,

Ìyálóde Èfúnṣetán Aníwúrà: Èjirẹ̀, Òrílàkí,¹⁰

Àwọ̀n Obirin: Olówó, l'ọ̀mọ ọ̀ mi,

Ìyálóde Èfúnṣetán Aníwúrà: Kẹ̀hìndè, Táyéwò (*Efúnṣetán*, 2005).

⁸ Ìbàdàn: An ancient city in Yorùbáland.

⁹ Kẹ̀hìndé, Táyéwò: Yorùbá name given at birth to twins.

¹⁰ Èjirẹ̀, Òrílàkí: Twins' honorific names.

Ìyálóde Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúrà: Kẹhin dé, Táyéwò,
 Other Women: My little ones are affluent,
 Ìyálóde Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúrà: Èjìrẹ, Òrìlákí,
 Other Women: My little ones are affluent.
 Ìyálóde Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúrà: Kẹhindè, Táyéwò.

At the imperial residence of Látòòṣà, the lyricist praises the legendary warlord with evocative phrases like Erin tí í mu omi pòkànpòkàn, (Water-guzzling elephant), “Ó gbégi ñlá sókó, Ó tẹròkò fidá rọ, (He hoists a large tree and bends Ìròkò¹¹ to hang his sword), Bí yòò bá ọ jà, a yan lọ bí Ẹḍẹ¹², A kùsáátà bí Ìwó, k’ó tó dé, oníjà a gbàgbé, ònlàjà a súnlọ.” (He will go as far as Ẹḍẹ and gracefully make his way to Ìwó to pick a fight with you. He who is to break up the fight would have slept off before he arrived, while his opponent would have forgotten.)

In the dirge upon Tóoyòsí's passing during labour, there is a clear allusion to a bird with quick and saddening flight: ...ẹyẹ, ure Ìbèlú òò, ẹyẹ. T'obá délé k'o k'ílé. (Pay respect to those you meet when you arrive home, bird on a wing) (*Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúrà*, 2005). A trader in the market makes fun of the revenue officials by declining to bribe them with what she has to sell. She describes it as extortion: “Ogun délù ú, Baálẹ gbégbò (Trouble is looming, the village chief is being treated for a rare wound), implying that the privileged will always look for excuses to exploit the poor (*Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúrà*, 2005). Látòòṣà responds to his friend Ọḍégbàró's suggestion to appease his irate chiefs who are opposed to his war expedition with lavish gifts: Pé kí nt'orí ọtẹ, kí n báwọn l'égbèrin ọrẹ (That means I should make acquaintances with eight hundred or so individuals to avoid connivance.) Látòòṣà tells Ọḍégbàró about the dispute involving him and Ẹfúnṣetán: Fún ra akèrèngbè tiẹ ni yóó sọbi á t'okùn bọ l'ọrùn (It is her own hollow gourd that will suggest how to secure a cord round her) (*Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúrà*, 2005). When they learn that Ẹfúnṣetán wants to speak with them, Ọṣúntúndé and another slave interpret the noises of the bird starling they hear overhead as a sign of evil that is going to come, illustrating the mystical belief in bad omens. Ọṣúntúndé fearfully: Koowéè! (Starling), while other slave replies: K'ó máa ké o, ẹrọ ṣiṣe (May it be appeased and its cries not herald bad omens.)

Ẹfúnṣetán uses proverb-laden words when talking to her slaves in order to make her

¹¹ Ìròkò: A hardwood tree.

¹² Ẹḍẹ and Ìwó are towns in Yorùbáland.

statement clear.

Ìyálóde Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúra: Hè-én-è! Èfúùfù ti fẹ, a ti r'ídi Adìẹ. Àṣírí ti tú!

Gbangba ti d'ẹkùn, kedere ti bèẹwò;

Ṣ'órò tí a ní kí Baba má gbò ni, Baba náà ni ó parí è.

(*Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúra*, 2005)

Ìyálóde Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúra: The wind has blown, we've seen the rump of the fowl,

The information is public knowledge. What was
previously kept a secret is now widely known.

It is the family's head who will ultimately come up with
remedies to the urgent problem that has been
withheld from him.

She sings and dances:

Ìyálóde Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúra: Yọkọlú, yọkọlú, kò a tán bí? Ìyàwó gb'ọkọ sánlẹ,

Ọkọ yọké; yọkọlú, yọkọlú, kò a tán bí?

Oníyèyèṣe bí òun lè muje,

Oníyèyèṣe bí òun lè muje,

Òkúùgbét'orùn b'okùn níbi Ẹfúnṣetán deṣí,

Oníyèyèṣe bí òun lè muje.

(*Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúra*, 2005)

Ìyálóde Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúra: Is the bragging not pointless? The husband developed

a hunchback as a result of the wife throwing him
to the ground. Is the bragging not pointless?

The stand-up act assumed there wouldn't be reprisal.

Ẹfúnṣetán had set a trap, and the idiot put her neck
right into it. The stand-up act assumed there wouldn't
be reprisal.

Adétutù, one of her slaves whose pregnancy is now known to her, is told by Ẹfúnṣetán to get ready for her execution before dawn. Adétutù sobs inconsolably as she is tied down and waiting to be executed.

Adétutù: Yèè-yèè-yèè! Kí l'etí ì mi gbò?

Ikú? Àbí kílẹ ti wí? Ìyá o! Ìyá o! Ẹ yéjòwọ,

È foríjímí o, n ò ní şerú è mọo;
 Yèè! Ikú oró o! Ikú oró, ikú iyà, ikú èşín n'ikú Abénilórí.
 Mo mà r'íbi ní t'èmi ná. Yèè! Ikú oró, orí mi burù o,
 Yèè! Ikú oró, ikú oró, ikú iyà, ikú èşín n'ikú Abénilórí.
 Yèè! Ikú oró, iyà mà jẹ mí ní t'èmi o,
 Yèè! Ikú oró, ikú oró, ikú iyà, ikú èşín n'ikú Abénilórí.
 (*Efúnşetán Aníwúra*, 2005)

Adétutù: What do I hear you saying, exactly? Death or, what do you say? Mother, Mother, I'm very sorry. I won't commit a similar offense again. Death by execution is an unfortunate ending; it is tragic, agonizing, and painful. I've already seen evil. Oh, the agonizing end. I've already got bad luck. Death is such a pain. Execution is a tragic, torturous, painful, and terrible way to go. Oh people, I have done something wrong! Execution is a horrible, excruciating, and painful way to go; it is an unfortunate outcome.

The elders in the community go to Efúnşetán to make a case for Adétutù, attributing the responsibility for the pregnancy to Efúnşetán's younger brother Akínkúnlé. Efúnşetán chastises the elders for coming.

Ìyálóde Efúnşetán Aníwúra: Kìí şe pé wíwá a yín yíi ò jomílójú o. Kò s'íbi àiráyè kii
 Ti èyàn án dé. È wòó, wón ní k'Órò¹³ ó má sòkò,
 Ó ní Èyí òun a mú l'ówóyíi nkó?...
 Şìgìdì¹⁴ tí ó lọ sọ f'Ólódùmarè¹⁵ ni, p'álààrèò wá mọ,
 Epo orí irèá rin. Òpò òròò kúnnú agbòn.
 (*Efúnşetán Aníwúra*, 2005)

Ìyálóde Efúnşetán Aníwúra: It's not that I'm unsurprised by your coming. There is nowhere a man's idleness cannot take him. They warned Orò not to throw stones, so he inquired, "What of this

¹³ Orò: Orò is a deity whose cult is a closely guarded secret.

¹⁴ Şìgìdì: A clay figurine that is regarded as having magical abilities.

¹⁵ Ólódùmarè: The name of the highest ranking sacred being in the hierarchical structure of Yorùbá deities.

particular one I'm conserving in my hand?...

The clay figurine that will inform Olódùmarè that someone who is terminally ill won't be gone soon will always have oil running down its head.

A lot of words won't fill a basket.

One of the elders responds to Èfúnṣetán's harsh comments with Wón ní ilóyá, Oníbodè Apòmù¹⁶; wón ko nífá, wón gbàá l'óbirin, òpèlè tí wón ó tún fi wádíí è wò, ajá alájá tún gbe. Òpòlóní tí a bá débi irù, ó ní ká fòó (The Apòmù border guard was informed that it was time to depart. His wife was snatched from him, his oracle was stolen, and the divining tray that should have been consulted to solve his problems—a stray dog went off with it. According to the frog, we should skip over issues that include tails) (*Èfúnṣetán Aníwúrà*, 2005). Itáwuyì admits to Òṣúntúndé that he is the one who is responsible for Adétutù's pregnancy after she has been put to death. He claims that he simply seeks Akínkúnlé's assistance to implicate himself in the crime in the hopes that doing so will prevent Èfúnṣetán from putting Adétutù to death and allow them to elope. When Itáwuyì makes a promise to exact revenge on Èfúnṣetán, Òṣúntúndé counsels, saying, Àwòdì gbé ọmọ àgbébò, àgbébò múra ijà, sè iran baba adie kan p'àsá rí ní? (The eagle snatches the hen's chick, the hen wants to put up a fight, has an eagle ever been killed by a chicken in recorded history?) (*Èfúnṣetán Aníwúrà*, 2005). Látòòṣà with the chiefs in his council agrees that Èfúnṣetán should be ordered to leave the city of Ìbàdàn; nevertheless, if she persists in staying, a reprisal will unavoidably be waged against her.

Itáwuyì conspires with Awero to poison the meal that she gives Èfúnṣetán, who, as she prepares to eat, is aware of the approaching death due to her supernatural power.

Èfúnṣetán, who is under Itawuyi's spiritual manipulation, considers eating the meal at first, boasting that it won't affect her, and asks, Èkúté kan a máa m'èjò nínú isà ni? (Can a rat hunt a snake in its hole?) (*Èfúnṣetán Aníwúrà*, 2005) She asks Àwèrò to sit down and eat the meal, saying that, B'ómòdé bá l'àṣò bí àgbà, ó dájú, kò lè l'àkìisà bí àgbà. Olópàá tí yòò m'Èṣù¹⁷ l'órítaméta kò tii gbaṣò (No matter how many clothes a youngster has, they cannot be as many as the rags of the elders. The police officer who will detain trickster god Esu at the intersection has not yet been given a uniform.)

She forcefully feeds Àwèrò with the meal. When Itáwuyì raises a machete to kill her, Èfúnṣetán begins to chant, takes the machete from him, and commands him to eat the poisoned meal.

¹⁶ Apòmù: A town in Yorùbáland.

¹⁷ Èṣù: The trickster god.

Ìyálóde Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúrà: Dúró ñbè! Àgbéro n'ikú í gb'ówó,
 Àrùmásòni Ṣìgìdì n rugbá oṣe,
 Ẹnikan èé ṣíwó lumí, A ìi f'Èṣù jókòó:
 Afopo èé r'ówó ó hórí, à rí tagìrì n t'ejò.
 B'íná bá r'ómi a gbàgbé ilé t'ó fẹ́ jó,
 B'ètù bá r'ómi a gbàgbé ariwo t'ófẹ́ pa.
 Ọmẹmu kan ìi b'ótíí rojọ́,
 Wàràwàrà l'omọ́dé í r'oko èsisi í bọ́,
 Aṣọ́ t'ó bá ti ya ìi b'ábéré j'jàkadì,
 Ọrí èé dúró n'íwájú iná.

(*Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúrà*, 2005)

Ìyálóde Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúrà: Keep still right there! Death typically hangs up its hand in silence. The clay figurine can never remove the calabash of soap that is set on its head. Excrements are not slapped with a bare palm. Èṣù is not used as a seat. One would not be able to itch his head with his hands while at work removing the oil from the palm kernels. A snake usually causes an instantaneous panic. When fire encounters water, it abandons the building it would have set ablaze. Gunpowder gives up the sound it would have created when it comes into contact with water. A drunken person does not contend with wine. Adolescents typically hurry out of a farm as soon as they are stung by nettles. A ripped piece of clothing cannot fight a needle. Shea butter doesn't withstand fire.

The use of the drum as a medium to transmit messages plays a crucial role when the people armed with sticks, led by Látòṣà, march toward the home of Ẹfúnṣetán and the drummers beat their drums to say, Àgbò méjì, kò gbọdò m'omi ní koto!...Ẹ s'òrò náà k'óyéwa, ẹ s'òrò náà k'óyéwa, b'Íkún l'óloko, bí tàkúté ni; Ẹ s'òrò náà k'óyéwa! Ojú ogun l'àńlọ, èèrò ojà p'aramó! (Two rams cannot drink simultaneously from a single gourd!...Give us an explanation

of the claims. Tell us whether the trap or the land squirrel is the true owner of the farm. Let the market crowds make way; we are moving toward the front lines of battle.)(*Eḡúnṣetán Aníwúrà*, 2005) *Eḡúnṣetán* ends her own life. Before *Látòòṣà* and the enraged people of the city can reach her, she takes up poison. Yorùbá theatre practice in the Yorùbá theatrical films, *Ṣaworoidẹ* (1999) and *Eḡúnṣetán Aníwúrà* (2005), enables us to gain insight into traditional Yorùbá communities, legal system scenarios, materials within the Yorùbá culture, and how class systems were structured at a certain point in time in Yorùbáland.

4. Summary and Conclusion

This paper is centered on Yorùbá theatre practice from its heyday in the Egúngún Aláárìnjó Theatre to the medium of Nollywood films to highlight how Yorùbá theatre has established itself as a prominent cultural art form and a leading influence in post-independence Nigeria. As we stressed previously, the performance forms created by various indigenous communities in the early days of theatre were frequently influenced by tribal festivals. Myths and rituals created a setting, and the versatility in employing ritual content for entertainment contributed to the formation of theatre and its various dimensions of practices in numerous cultures. Understanding the concept that explores the connection among theatrical texts, genre, stagecraft, entertainment language, and aesthetics within a theatrical tradition provides a stimulating understanding of theatre practices. We argued that Yorùbá tradition's entertainment aesthetics are all dramatically corresponding while also being perfectly suited in their own unique categories. In the age of globalisation, the budding film industry has gradually removed barriers to the transmission of cultures and customs.

Yorùbá theatre, through the use of culturally significant items as components of entertainment, with Nollywood positioning Nigeria as a nation with a booming film industry, continues to draw substantial audiences, even outside of its communities. Because of Nollywood, Yorùbá theatre today has a global audience. In both the films *Ṣaworoidẹ* (1999) and *Eḡúnṣetán Aníwúrà* (2005), Yoruba theatrical culture is evident. The strong prevalence of Yorùbá identity in *Ṣaworoidẹ* (1999) and *Eḡúnṣetán Aníwúrà* (2005) is within the frameworks of Yoruba lores, values, dance, music, recitations of songs of despair, and usage of imageries as functional texts. The demographics for Yorùbá theatre and accompanying spectacles are growing as a result of increased exposure through the film medium. Interestingly enough, many Yorùbá published novels and plays for the stage, such as *Ṣaworoidẹ* (2008) and *Eḡúnṣetán Aníwúrà* (1970), have been adapted for the film medium. In addition to its large viewership, Nollywood is currently repositioning Yorùbá theatre practice as a valuable expression of culture. The interest that modern audiences have in indigenous customs and cultures is evidence of the enduring appeal of Yorùbá theatre practice in Nollywood.

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BIO

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