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An Intertextual Analysis of Jími Ṣólaṅkẹ́'s *Ọ̀nà Là* (In The Path) via the Multiple Star System Theory of Mutual Illumination and Interaction[1]

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Abstract

The concept of mutual illumination between texts, genres, arts, and disciplines has been used in scholarly work for decades (Weisstein, 1973, 1993). Nevertheless, much of this literature lacks a firm anchor with regard to a literal source of the analogy "mutual illumination." We argue that by observing natural phenomena that actually mutually illuminate, influence and otherwise affect each other, greater insight into how texts interact in similar ways can be achieved. Thus, drawing concepts from astrophysics, with specific reference to multiple star systems, a conceptual framework is derived in which analogous relations are proposed and interrogated. This framework couches the discussion in a stylistic analysis of our primary text, Jími Ṣólaṅkẹ́'s *Ọ̀nà Là*, which is analyzed both on its own and also with reference to other texts which are interconnected, interrelated, and serve to "mutually illuminate" each other. We find that when considered in light of other related texts, the analysis of *Ọ̀nà Là* becomes much richer and, in the process, the understanding of the other texts is also enriched. Stylistic tools used in the analysis include various types of intertextual and intratextual parallelism, repetition, and silence.

Keywords: mutual illumination, *Ọ̀nà Là*, Roche lobe, intertextuality, stylistics

Introduction: Conceptual Framework

The term "mutual illumination" has been used for decades in scholarly literature primarily to refer to "intertextuality" between disciplines or arts (e.g. fine arts and written literature) (Chang, 1988; Fitzmyer, 2008; Kristeva, 1980; Weisstein, 1973, 1993). Nevertheless, "interarts" – the conception of which embraces intertextuality and mutual illumination – may still seem to be theoretically, methodologically, and terminologically immature (Riechel, 1994, p. 385). This perceived immaturity may, in part, be due to using analogies, such as "mutual illumination" without truly interrogating the analogy or returning to any literal source from which it is derived. I argue that when using the analogy of mutual illumination, it would be useful to look at natural phenomena that actually mutually illuminate (and otherwise influence) each other and then see the degree to which the nature of such phenomena is analogous and applicable to texts being studied or compared. An example of actual mutual illumination that could potentially re-inject meaning into what may otherwise simply be a hackneyed cliché can be observed in the perception of color gradients (Bloj, Wolfe, & Hurlbert, 2002). An even more intriguing case may be that of multiple star systems in which one star *literally* shines light on the others and vice-versa (Crockett, 2014). In such multiple star systems, interactions between such stars may include orbits around a common barycenter, gravitational radiation, tidal friction, magnetic braking, magnetic activity driven by rapid rotation, stellar winds, the influence of more

[1] Dedicated to the Dogon astronomers who taught us about *sigi tolo*, *po tolo* and *emme ya tolo*. The author would also like to thank Professor Daniel Avorgbedor of the University of Ghana for reading an earlier version of the article and sharing useful insights on African rhythmic patterns.

distant bodies within the system, and Roche-lobe overflow (which may lead to loss of mass or exchange of mass between stars) (Eggleton, 2006). We argue that one must realize that the term "mutual illumination" is merely an analogy and that, at times, to truly apprehend the significance of such an analogy, one must go back to the literal meaning of mutual illumination, such as that which occurs in star systems. Further, when the analogy is extended to other forms of influence beyond only illumination to other interactions that occur between such natural phenomena as stars, the result is enriched theoretical, methodological, and terminological understandings. In other words, theories, methodologies and terminology used for explaining mutual illumination and interactions in the natural world may be co-opted or appropriated for use in comparative intertextual analysis. This is because the relationships possible between any two stars may be analogous to the relationship between any two texts, disciplines or arts compared. What we call the multiple star theory of mutual illumination (and interaction) will, thus, serve as an innovative conceptual framework from which the primary text, Jími Ṣólaṅkẹ́'s *Ọ̀nà Là* is understood in and of itself and with reference to other metaphorical stars – *Ɔkwan Atware Asuo* and *The Road is clear* – texts from which it is ultimately derived. Beyond just the relationships and interactions between the textual stars themselves, there is also a relationship between stellar bodies and with the planetary observers affected by (and perhaps affecting?) the stars at a distance. By analogy, this would be the listening audience who may be shaped by (and in turn may play/have played a role in shaping) the texts in question.

This article presents the first scholarly intertextual and stylistic study of an original African poem entitled *Ọ̀nà Là* as expressed in the Yorùbá language. As a poem, *Ọ̀nà Là* is singular in that it follows a very unique path with regard to its origin and subsequent transformations from one medium to another and one language to another. Looking at each text as a metaphorical star, one observes that from the original *Ɔkwan Atware Asuo,* just as in multiple star systems, other stars (texts) may form around it and interrelate with it in various ways. Prominent among the ways in which texts may interrelate is the medium of a shared theme, which is analogous to sharing a common center of mass (barycenter) around which two or more bodies orbit. They also may share stylistic elements, which is analogous to Roche lobe overflow (Jackson, Arras, Penev, Peacock, & Marchant, 2016). Roche lobe overflow occurs when the mass of a star escapes from its gravitational sphere of influence and this mass is pulled into the Roche lobe of another star. Additionally, just as in the formation of multiple star systems, the older star may donate some of its mass to newer stars (e.g. the Algol paradox) (Pustylnik, 1998). In what is known as the Algol paradox, for example, the older star is smaller due to exchange of mass to the larger star when its surface extends beyond its own Roche lobe. Again, we can look at exchange of mass as analogous to the adoption of stylistic tools and devices in a new text based upon those present in an older text. How subsequent texts are formed is analogous to a theory of how stars are formed, which holds that:

> extra stars can pop up within another star's protoplanetary disk —the dense saucer of rotating gas that surrounds a newly formed sun. These disks are the byproducts of the large clouds of dust and gas that form stars. Sometimes a massive cloud will collapse in on itself and pull in more materials, causing the core of the cloud to grow so dense and so hot that it begins the nuclear reaction that births a star. As this happens, the cloud starts rotating around the star, forming the disk. Many researchers believe that the spinning disk can start pulling in even more materials, growing so gravitationally unstable that parts of the disk collapse again into new stars. (Grush, 2016; Tobin et al., 2016)

The analogy being made here is that just as stars can form around the initial newly formed sun, so too can additional texts form around the initial text.

(Inter)Textual Background

With regard to the texts under study, the first metaphorical star to be formed – *Ɔkwan Atware Asuo* – originates in the Akan language of Ghana, West Africa, which was then reinterpreted into

English of the United States as a separate star – *The Road is clear*. From there, it was again re-conceptualized, reformulated, and ultimately performed in the Yorùbá language of Nigeria, West Africa, in our primary text – *Ọ̀nà Là*.

The transformations undergone from *Ɔkwan Atware Asuo* to *Ọ̀nà Là are* are similar to the stages in the evolution of a multiple star system. However, it is worth noting that the Yorùbá poem does not fit into any pre-existing sub-genre of Yorùbá poetry whether *ewì, rárà, ìjálá* or any other as it has remained more faithful to the texts upon which it was based than to pre-existing subgenres of Yorùbá poetry (Babalola, 1966; Bamgbọṣe, 1970; Beier, Gbadamosi, & Wenger, 1972; Okùnoyè, 2010; Ọlabimtan, 1977; Ọlátúnjí, 1984). Pre-existing types of Yorùbá poetry can be distinguished from one another by the stylistic vocalizations that are employed and by the skills and idiosyncratic traits of the performers. According to Babalola, "Yoruba traditional poetry in general is best classified not so much by the themes as by the stylistic devices employed in recitals", making specific reference to styles of vocalization (Babalola, 1966, p. 23). Babalola states:

> Although Yoruba scholars have recently selected the word "ewi" to connote "poetry in general," the vocabulary of the Yoruba language has always contained specific words for the different types of Yoruba oral poetry classified according to the manner of voice production employed for a particular poetic utterance. Esa or ewi is a type of Yoruba oral poetry in which a falsetto voice is employed. Ijala is another; this is chanted in a high-pitched voice. Rara is yet another, recognized by its slow wailing, long-drawn-out chanting style. Ofo or Ogede is another type and this is distinguished by its being entirely a stock of centuries-old magic formula sentences uttered very fast with the normal voice of ordinary speech. (Babalola, 1966, p. vi)

We find that the poem *Ọ̀nà Là* does not share any of these distinguishing features in terms of styles of vocalization. Rather than being chanted in "falsetto" or a "high-pitched voice," (as typical of the vocalization style of *Ṣàngó-pípè* (Isola, 1977; Philips, 2006, p. 367)) *Ọ̀nà Là* is chanted in a low-pitch, breathy voice. It can also be distinguished from *rárà*, which is characterized by its "slow wailing, long-drawn-out chanting style," as there is no wailing nor are the words drawn out. Further, it neither has the "magic formula sentences" nor is it uttered in a particularly fast manner. *Oríkì* is yet another genre wherein, according to Barber, "In Okuku, the only named chanting modes based on oriki are ijala, iwi and rara iyawo" (Barber, 1991, p. 80-1). Barber further defines *oríkì* as "collections or strings of name-like attributive epithets, 'praises' which are neither narrative nor descriptive but vocative. They are addressed to their subject or 'owner,' and are felt to encapsulate, and evoke in some way that subject's essential powers and qualities" (Barber, 1994).

Not only does Jími Ṣólaǹkẹ́–the noted dramatist and poet who performs *Ọ̀nà Là*–not employ the typical vocal styles associated with the pre-existing sub-genres of Yorùbá poetry as explicated above, he also cannot readily be subsumed under the profile of a typical performer of any of them (Adeniran, 2009). Okpewho, drawing on Ọlátúnjí's research, states that, in terms of the feature types or themes of Yorùbá oral poetry:

> The first feature is the oriki, or praise, which indicates a theme; the second is ese ifa, or divination poetry, which identifies the context of the poetry; the third is ofo, or incantation, which identifies the form; and the fourth feature embraces the owe and alo apamo, which are gnomic forms representing proverbs and riddles respectively. (Okpewho, 1992, p. 128)

Again, we find that *Ọ̀nà Là*, as will be explicated below in our stylistic analysis, cannot be neatly subsumed under any of the above themes, forms, or contexts. Here, we argue that rather than focusing on faithfulness to a pre-existing genre of Yorùbá poetry, *Ọ̀nà Là* is influenced by and actively draws upon the form, content, and stylistic devices of the literary and musical texts and the African historical experiences upon which it is based. This influence is analogous to a star whose development is

influenced by gravitational forces around a common center of mass, stellar winds, etc. The poem also mirrors the movements of the song "The Path" for which it serves as an opening formula. In other words, the formation of a single star may be, in many ways, analogous to the formation of larger systems of which they are a part.

"The Path" recounts the history of African people kidnapped from Africa and taken to the diaspora who eventually return to Africa and/or the ways of African people in what has, in recent times, been termed the "Sankɔfa Movement" (Akoto & Akoto, 2000). In this paper, we argue that *Ọ̀nà Là* intentionally transcends the bounds of Yorùbá verbal art to become truly African in the broader sense where, again, Africanness is not delineated by association with a specific ethnic group but by its firm rooting in the Global African experience which takes into account multitudes of African people of the continent and the diaspora. This poem, composed in 1978, reflects and anticipates greater interrelation and interdependence among African people where the pre-existing indigenous and/or illusory colonial markers of division among us are de-emphasized in favor of a progressively more and more global African whole.

Lived African Historical Experiences	**Akan Text** *Ɔkwan Atware Asuo*	**English Text** *The Road is clear*	**Yorùbá Text** *Ọ̀nà Là*	**Original Song** *The Path*	**Lived African Historical Experiences**

Table 1: Intertextual Parallels of *Ọ̀nà Là*

As shown in Table 1, the subsequent texts are influenced by the anterior texts and all are influenced by their historical context. Secondarily, subsequent texts can influence how we see and understand older texts. This sphere of influence is analogous to the Rosch or Hill Sphere – the gravitational sphere of influence – within which a text may influence another just as a star in a multiple star system may influence another.

As *Ọ̀nà Là* is based on pre-existing texts, a clear path of the transformations undergone to arrive at the final orally recited poem can be represented below:

> (0) Akan Oral Text (1) Akan Drum Text (*Ɔkwan Atware Asuo*) → (2) Akan Oral Text (*Ɔkwan Atware Asuo*) → (3) Akan Written Text (*Ɔkwan Atware Asuo*) → (4) Written English Translation (*Ɔkwan Atware Asuo*) → (5) Original English Written Poem (The Road is Clear) → (6) Written Yorubá Poem (*Ọ̀nạ̀ Lạ̀*) → (7) Yoruba Oral Text (*Ọ̀nạ̀ Là*)

Figure 1: Transformations of *Ọ̀nà Là*

As can be seen, the source text upon which the others are based is an oral text "transcribed" as a drum text which is "spoken" on drums before being recited orally in live performances as can be heard here:

1. "Talking Drum" http://www.folkways.si.edu/rhythms-of-life-songs-of-wisdom-akan-music-from-ghana/world/album/smithsonian (Kumi & Manu, 1996).

Although ultimately the source of the drum text language is the spoken language, as shown by step (0) in Figure 1, in the performance we have the drums are played first and then a person says out loud what has been performed on the drums. Because many African languages, including Akan and Yorùbá, are tonal, these tones are able to be reproduced via language surrogates such as drums, horns, and other musical instruments as discussed by Kaminski (2008) with regard to the source text *Ɔkwan Atware Asuo*. Speech is reproduced by using these surrogates to articulate the tones of the words, which can be understood by those who are able to interpret them. When such drum language becomes institutionalized in a set poetic form, it becomes what is known, in common parlance, as a drum text. Appendix B shows one of the most common versions of the original Akan drum text known as *Ɔkwan Atware Asuo* from which the Yorùbá poem *Ọ̀nà Là* is derived (MacDonald, Salter, & Eaton, 1978; Nketia, 1974). The full text of *Ọ̀nà Là*, in turn, can be found in Appendix A; both texts are included in the original language plus an interlineal self-translation and gloss for each line. Appendix C includes

the English language text entitled *The Road is Clear* which effectively serves as a bridge between the *Ɔkwan Atware Asuo* and *Ọ̀nà Là*. Appendices can be found here: https://goo.gl/NpuO5u

There are two primary metaphors at play in the Akan, English and Yorùbá texts that serve as thematic elements around which the three texts "orbit" in their intertextual parallels that will be discussed more fully below: these are the stream/river and the path/road. The stream/river represents African people, the road represents a man-made dialectical force of utility, yet destructiveness, which cuts through the stream/river. Interestingly, similar metaphors have been employed by other African artists as they also feature prominently in the novel *Two Thousand Seasons* by Ayi Kwei Armah (incidentally written around the same time that "The Path" was produced). In the prologue of *Two Thousand Seasons*, Armah (1979) utilizes similar imagery of African people looking for a way back to our way and stream water flowing senselessly and uselessly towards its destruction in the desert. Armah juxtaposes that image of the stream with a road to destruction where the masses are running headlong to a city of white death filled with enticing and entrancing images of glitter, glamour and shiny trash. Meanwhile, those who already have experienced the destructive death of the white city move away from it looking for a way back to our way (Armah, 1979). According to Lakoff and Johnson, "no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its experiential basis" (2008, p. 19). Armah's use of these metaphors is representative of the collective experiences of African people (the stream/river) having been cut through by the road of colonialism/enslavement.

In "The Path," which can be heard at the link in example (3), the composer, Ralph MacDonald is certainly aware of the Akan drum text as the first five lines of its translation into English can be found in the liner notes of the original album (MacDonald et al., 1978). MacDonald then composed his own original poem in English, entitled *The Road is clear*, demonstrably based upon the Akan text (which can be read in Appendix B) dealing with how the road has cut through the river, but how the river–symbolic of nature and that which is original and from ancient times–will eventually be victorious. As shown in Appendix C, this notion is conveyed in the following lines:

2. The road has brought the whole world together
   Like a power drill cutting through portions of the earth
   With all these happenings, the rivers of the world remain undaunted
   (MacDonald et al., 1978)

This theme is carried forward by Jími Ṣólaṅkẹ́ in his Yorùbá rendering in which similar metaphors and the same overall theme persist. This again supports the argument that *Ọ̀nà Là* is unique in that it prioritizes faithfulness to contextual and intertextual parallels over the maintenance of expectations of existing sub-genres of Yorùbá, the language in which it is chanted. The poem, *Ọ̀nà Là*, in turn, is a microcosm of what transpires in the song, *The Path* as a whole. In *The Path*, through all of the transitions, eventually the original African sounds (with an additional rhythmic enhancement) pervade once again in the end showing that which is ancient and from the Creator (African people) will ultimately be victorious.

Musical Background

At this juncture, it is important to provide a breakdown of the entire song, *The Path*, of which *Ọ̀nà Là*, in many ways, is a microcosm as the two parallel each other with respect to the core elements included (MacDonald et al., 1978). The full song can be heard here:

3. https:/youtu.be/3y4cc8lzPBI

As in *The Path*, there are a number of "metrical accents" and "aural cues", which the music requires the listener to extrapolate (Hasty, 1997, p. 17). According to Hasty "The primary aural cue is the first beat of the meter in question as the first beat marks the beginning and end of a series of equal

metrical durations"(Hasty, 1997, p. 18). Here, all first beats are accented as first beats (and metrically identical as first beats) where the "'first position' and 'accent' may be regarded as interchangeable expressions" (Hasty, 1997, p. 18).

The entire rhythmic pattern, as such, is repeated in "continuous succession of equal durations," or meter (Hasty, 1997, p. 14). As is the case for the musical accompaniment, stress in the spoken poem is also placed on the first beat. This rhythmic pattern exists as either "multiples" or "equal divisions of a metrical pulse" (Hasty, 1997, p. 14). *Ọ̀nà Là* can most readily be thought of as a musical hybrid of a Pan-African sort. It retains important African performance practices/principles throughout. There is, undoubtedly a typical 12-unit time line rhythmic phrase typically referred to by African musicologists as the "Yoruba Bell Time-line" which is also dominant in areas such as those of the Ewe, Fon, and Central Africa (Collannino, Gómez, & Toussaint, 2009). In the "Yoruba Bell Time-line" as it is typically arranged, there is a consistent and evenly-spaced subdivision, or stressed beat, of these 12 units into four equal-time sub-phrases. These four (4) beats could be marked by another bell, drum, etc., and with the main time-line usually assigned to an idiophone or "loud" instrument that is loud enough to remain audible since it guides the entire performance. The metrical structure can be thought of as the canvas upon which *Ọ̀nà Là* as verbal art is painted and with which the verbal artist, Jími Ṣólaṅkẹ́, creates his personalized, yet universal, Pan-African masterpiece which cannot be thought of as entirely Akan, Yorùbá, amaXhosa, or Diasporan, but must be regarded as an intentional combination of these and more as representative of the Global African World.

Stylistic Analysis of *Ọ̀nà Là* with selected Comparisons to *Ɔkwan Atware Asuo* and *The Road is clear*

This section presents a stylistic analysis of Jími Ṣólaṅkẹ́'s *Ọ̀nà La*, the Yorùbá poem, which sets the tone for the overarching theme at the outset of the song *The Path*. In this analysis, the primary research question relates to how this poem is an example of transcendent African verbal art that parallels its source text(s) and the historical experiences of African people that it is meant to encapsulate. This will be done with regard to how *Ọ̀nà Là* is organized and explicated aesthetically, stylistically and thematically. *Ọ̀nà Là* is a manifestation of African verbal art in a broader sense than what is typically connoted by the term and there are several criteria that that can be applied in defining it as such. This is because it is not situated within the context of a specific continental African ethnic group, but rather, because it transcends such divisions to mean "African" in the most comprehensive sense of the term to include various ethnic groups and African people of the Continent and the Diaspora.[2]

Oyelaran uses several criteria specifically for defining Yorùbá verbal art:

- Syntactic structure
- The basis of rhythm and tonal and structural parallelism
- Prominence
- Repetition
- Tone grouping, etc. (Oyelaran, 1975, p. 762)

While the poem does indeed evince some of these characteristics, it is quite unique in speaking to the experiences of African people throughout the Global African World including Akan and Yorùbá people of the continent, Africans of the Caribbean and the United States as well as being in conversation with the African past and future. Because of its ambitions to be more African than rigidly Yorùbá, the poet makes a sustained effort to understand how the African story is conceptualized and told, which is also reflected in the stylistic devices that serve as a conduit for elements of the Akan and English texts in different ways. It is argued herein that all of these stylistic features move the poem from the realm of exclusively Yorùbá (the language of its expression) to a Universal African category

[2] See Gomez (1998) for a discussion of the transformation from the culturally particular to the composite universal African which occurred in the African Diaspora.

of verbal art which unites African people not only by means of thematic criteria but also aesthetic criteria. This paper will proceed through a stylistic analysis and argue for *Ọ̀nà Là* as an example of Pan-African verbal art which encompasses both the continent and the diaspora in content and form. Further, a stylistic analysis will be made in which recurring structural parallel patterns and formulae, phonological parallelism, lexical parallelism, syllabic parallelism, repetition, silence, syntactic parallelism, and semantic parallelism will be explored. In the conclusion, an account of the overall significance of *Ọ̀nà La* within the larger context of *The Path* and within the even larger context of African people of the continent and the diaspora as a whole will be given.

Intertextual Parallelism

This section will explore the intertextual parallels between *Ọ̀nà Là* and the other texts of which it is cognizant and to which it intentionally refers. The primary focus on parallelism is due to several reasons including the fundamental role it plays in verbal art. Succinctly, the nature of parallelism is that of patterned repetition where a single idea is affirmed or restated in a variety of ways. According to Okpewho:

> As a repetitive device … parallelism is a tool of pleasure and of convenience. On one hand, there is a touch of beauty in the skill with which the performer plays one set of words or images against another without altering the structure of statement or the central message. On the other hand, there is a real need for a balanced framework which will order the vast amount of information harbored into a set of harmonious relationships. To that extent, then, parallelism is, like repetition, the soul of the oral performance. (Okpewho, 1992, p. 82)

However, in *Ọ̀nà Là* parallelism is viewed as manifesting itself on two levels. One is the more obvious intratextual parallelism wherein, in a single literary piece, the same or similar elements recur systematically. On another level, intertextual parallelism is also found wherein, for two (or more) pieces of oral literature, one is based upon the other(s). The newer creation is conscious of its sibling(s) and, while not being identical twins, assimilates and dissimilates in various ways as do stars of multiple star systems. This intertextualism is relevant in this case because, as mentioned previously, *Ọ̀nà Là* is based on the poem *The Road is clear*, which is, in turn, based upon the Akan drum text *Ɔkwan Atware Asuo*, "the path crosses the river" which is drummed and spoken. As shown in Figure 1, there are many transformations that have taken place – just as in the case of Africans of the Diaspora, there were many transformations. However, as Malcolm X argued "Just because a cat has kittens in an oven, you don't call the kittens biscuits" (Marable, 1995, p. 211). This means that even though Africans may have been born in a different place, we are still essentially Africans. Similarly, through various transformations, there are similarities and dissimilarities, but through it all, the ties that bind *Ọ̀nà Là* to the texts to which it refers run throughout. This is one of the major points of the song and is a requirement for texts analyzed using the Multiple Star System Theory of Mutual Illumination and Interaction.

In the course of these transformations, the second major stage is the English re-rendering of *Ɔkwan Atware Asuo*. The English rendering as shown in Appendix C is entitled *The Road is clear* and is an original poem based on the concept of *Ɔkwan Atware Asuo*. Then *Ọ̀nà Là* is based on *The Road is clear* as a translation and re-interpretation from English to Yorùbá. So, intertextual parallelism can be found between the Akan text (drummed and voiced), the English text and the Yorùbá text through the various transformations where each successive stage is acutely aware of its parent form.

It is also evident that transformations have occurred from speech surrogate (drum) to speech to the written text and back again. In all of these transitions, the most prominent motif is the interaction between nature and man and the inevitable triumph of nature. Thus, there are images of the road representing man-made creation and the river representing creation from The Creator. Another correlation that permeates each text is that in all of them there is a degree of conflictual interaction and ambiguity with regard to seniority in each stage. In the original Akan drum text, there is a repetition of the line *Ɔpanin ne Hwan?* "Who is the elder?" as a chanted refrain as shown in Appendix B.

This concept is carried over into *Ọ̀nà Là* as shown in the following lines:

4. A kò rí ẹni sọ fún wa
   1PL.SUBJ NEG see someone speak give us
   "We didn't see someone who could tell us"
5. Bọ́yá odò l'ẹ̀gbọ́n
   may be river be'elder
   "whether the river is the elder"
6. Tàbí ọ̀nà ni o
   DISJ road be EMPH
   "or if it is the road"

Anteriority/eldership is one of the major themes that permeates both the Akan and the Yorùbá texts. In each, the stream or the river is representative of nature, which hails from ancient times and was created by the Creator. The road, on the other hand, is representative of man-made creation. In the conflict, a dilemma is presented as to who is the elder, which, in the African context is a question of superiority as well as anteriority. In each text, the verdict is that the river is from ancient times; the river is from the Creator of all things and is therefore the elder and, therefore, superior. While in the Akan text, we are given this as the answer, in the Yorùbá text, the answer comes via the river proving itself by bursting out onto the road which cut through it previously in its youthful arrogance. This theme is laid bare in the English bridging text in the following lines:

7. Is the river the superior one?
   Or is it the road?

This parallel extends into the song itself which documents the journey of Africans from Africa, to the Diaspora and back. Analogously, one could see enslavement, colonialism, and their insidious updated forms – neo-enslavement and neo-colonialism – as the road, which cut through Africa and African people. However, as was the case in the English poem, the elder of the two, representative of African people, the first people on the planet will eventually be victorious. Thus, both the English and the Yorùbá text have taken the philosophical Akan text and injected an additional politicized element of ideological clarity and justice in its retelling. Therefore, the Yorùbá text is "in conversation with" the African audience, the African past, and the African future as well as the Akan text from which it is ultimately derived and the English text through which the theme passes. This phenomenon is what is meant by intertextual parallelism and could also be referred to as textual transcendence. This is analogous to the common barycenter around which all of the texts orbit.

Phonological Parallelism

In this section, phonological parallelism will be discussed. In this case, *Ọ̀nà Là* makes use of line-internal sound patterning. This is understood as parallelism between sequences of sounds (Fabb, 1997, p. 148). Indeed, (8-10) include a repeating sequence of consonants in what may be termed "consonant harmony."

8. ọ̀nà **l**à, ó **j**á gba**r**agada /l/ /d͡ʒ/ /r/
   road split, 3SG.SUBJ burst open/wide
   "the road is clear, it passes open and wide"
9. ayé **l**ù **j**á**r**a /l/ /d͡ʒ/ /r/
   world beat burst'body
   "the world is brought together"
10. ọ̀nà ti **l**a àà**r**in odò **r**èé kọ**j**á /l/ /r/ /r/ /d͡ʒ/
    road PERF split middle river this pass

"the road cut through this river" [bold emphasis added].

In this sequence, repeated consonants are /l/ /d͡ʒ/ and /r/. Interestingly (10) maintains this sound patterning but, this time, in a partially inverted order. Thus, ironically (perhaps only to phoneticians and phonologists), there is a repetition of liquids (and palatals) in a poem about a river and a path. This patterning of voiced alveolar liquids and palatal consonants calls attention to the intentionality of structuring the form of the oral literature here as verbal art as opposed to ordinary speech. Secondarily, it acts as an organizing principle at the inception of the composition of the poem.

Bamgbọṣe identifies tonal, lexical, and semantic word play in Yorùbá poetry, but here we have something entirely different in what may be termed "phoneme play" at a level smaller than the lexeme or word (Bamgbọṣe, 1970, p. 110). This sound play at a level of units smaller than the lexeme is, no doubt, intentional and serves as a marker of this poem which, among other unique features, distinguishes it from other Yorùbá poetry.

We find similar alternations in the original Akan text as shown in Appendix B

11. **M**e-**d**e **b**rɛ**b**rɛ me**d**e **b**rɛ**b**rɛ
    1SG.SUBJ-take slowness 1SG.SUBJ-take slowness
    ma**s**i **t**a.
    1SG-PERF-stand firm.
    "I use slowness, I use slowness. I have stood firm."
12. **M**e-**d**e **b**rɛ**b**rɛ **m**e**d**e **b**rɛ**b**rɛ
    1SG.SUBJ-take slowness 1SG.SUBJ-take slowness
    ma**s**i **t**a.
    1SG-PERF-stand firm.
    "I use slowness, I use slowness. I have stood firm."
13. **T**a **K**o**f**i **B**ere**mp**ɔn,
    Ta(nɔ) Friday-born man-great
    "Ta(nɔ), the Friday Born, Great One"

In examples (11) and (12), we have alliteration with an alternation of voiced and voiceless consonants where /m/ /d/ /b/ /b/, /m/ /d/ /b/ /b/ are repeated representing the voiced while each of the first two lines ends with words containing /s/ and /t/. This voiced/voiceless alternation is then partially flipped with /t/, /k/and /f/ representing voiceless sounds, then we have /b/ /m/ as voiced and /p/ as voiceless. There is also an intentional play on sounds where the first lines end with *ta* "firm", while the third line begins with *Ta*, as an abbreviation of *Tanɔ*. Also, the first two lines have *brɛbrɛ* "slowness," while the third line has *berempɔn* "Great One" in an intentional combination of phonological elements which serve as organizing principles for the lines in question.

The significance of this observation is that whether or not Jími Ṣólaṅkẹ́ intentionally looked at these phonological stylistic elements of the original Akan drum text in his re-interpretation re-created in the Yorùbá language, both Akan and Yorùbá have similar raw materials or tools with which to create verbal art. In this author's opinion, Ṣólaṅkẹ́'s knowledge of the original poem makes it, however, likely that he examined the original text and intentionally chose to use not only the overarching themes for the purposes of intertextual parallelism, but also decided to incorporate similar stylistic devices. This sharing of stylistic devices is similar to stars which may share or exchange mass between each other (Hutyra & Sumpter, 2017).

Lexical Parallelism

Lexical parallelism may be understood as opposition or similarity of meaning maintained in different locations within the verbal artistic work. According to Fabb, when parallelism is manifested at the lexical level, this is when "two words are interpretable as being parallel to one another; the relation of meaning between the two words determines the relation between the two larger sections of

text which include those words" (1997, p. 139). According to Bamgbọṣe, "The main difference between tonal word play and lexical word play is that whereas tonal word play involves only one lexical item without any change of meaning, lexical word play involves two lexical items, each with a distinct meaning" (Bamgbọṣe, 1970, p. 111).

The sixth and seventh lines of *Ọ̀nà Là* contain such words that are interpretable as being parallel to one another. These are *odò* "river" and *ẹ̀kún omi* "fullness of the water/flood" and *ṣàn, ṣàn, ṣàn, ṣàn* "flowed, flowed, flowed, flowed" paired with *ṣàn títí* "flowed endlessly/until."

14. Odò ti ṣàn, ṣàn, ṣàn, ṣàn.
    river PERF flow flow flow flow
    "The river has flowed and flowed and flowed and flowed."
15. Ẹ̀kún omi ṣàn títí
    fullness water flow endlessly/until
    "The fullness of the water/flood flowed endlessly/until."

In the above lines, emphasis is marked in the repeated *ṣàn* "to flow" in line six of the poem. This repetition serves several aesthetic functions. Namely, repetition functions to draw the listener's attention to the action being performed and to assist the listener in differentiating that which is being chanted from everyday speech. This is expressed in the English poem (shown in Appendix C) as the replacement of "flowed" with "over flowed."

16. The river has flowed and flowed
    Until the river flowed and over flowed

The Yorùbá repetition of *ṣàn*, however, seems to add to the visceral and visual imagery more than a single employment of this word could and, indeed, even more than the English rendering is able to evoke. These same lines can be seen as an exemplification of syllabic parallelism.

An instance of lexical parallelism also occurs in the original Akan drum text:

17. asuo yi firi tete.
    river this from ancient
18. asuo yi firi Ɔdomankoma Ɔboadeɛ
    river this from Beneficent Creator

"The river is from ancient times. The river is from the Beneficent Creator" (Nketia, 1974, p. 54)

In these lines, we see *tete* 'ancient' and *Ɔdomankoma Ɔboadeɛ* "Beneficent Creator" linked together through lexical parallelism to convey both anteriority and superiority of the river vis-à-vis the road. Anteriority exists in the sense that the river is from ancient times while the road is a recent creation. Superiority is conveyed in the sense of the river being from *Ɔdomankoma Ɔboadeɛ* "Beneficent Creator" while the road is merely a man-made creation. We find that in both the source poem, *Ɔkwan Atware Asuo*, and the target poem, *Ọ̀nà Là*, lexical parallelism adds to the weight and the aesthetic feel of the overall composition. Again, we find both the source text and target text using similar stylistic elements to convey the core ideas maintained throughout the various transformations undergone.

Syllabic Parallelism

What is meant by syllabic parallelism here is the same number of syllables over two or more lines. In examples (14) and (15) there is a case of the quadruplication of *ṣàn* in the first half of the parallel structure, which accommodates the syllable number in the second half. Further, the relationship between the two lines is clear thematically and structurally. Each half of the couplet contains **seven syllables**, creating poetic harmony and balance. Indeed, syntax and syllable are important in the

formation of parallel structure in Yorùbá verbal art (Ọlátúnjí, 1984).

A similar example of syllabic parallelism is found in *Ɔkwan Atware Asuo* in the following lines:

19. Konkon Tanɔ
    Konkon Tanɔ
    "Tanɔ's praise name"
    Birefia Tanɔ
    Birefia Tanɔ
    "Tanɔ's praise name"
    …
    Agya Kwaante e.
    Father Kwaante e
    "Tanɔ's praise name"

Each of the above lines maintains four (4) syllables. Although each line is saying something different, each is a praise name of *Tanɔ* and intentionally retains the same syllable structure. A similar device is even found in the English poem, *The Road is clear*

20. The Road is clear
    Long and endless

As shown in examples (20), each line possesses four (4) syllables. Here, again, we find intertextual parallels in terms of the stylistic devices used in the original Akan drum text, the English text, and *Ọ̀nà Là*.

Repetition

Vocalized repetition in the poem is useful for patterning, which structures the form of the chant. An example of this is the repetition of the formula *Ẹ̀rù ò bodò* "The river is unafraid' in lines (5) and (24) of the poem as shown in Appendix A, which divides the chant into two distinct groups of images. Additionally, the phrase *Ẹ̀rù ò bodò* "The river is unafraid" contributes aesthetically to the gradual building of tension as well as the marking of successive distinct stages of the poem. This tension ultimately culminates in the phrase's appearance in the ultimate line of the poem, forming the emphatic core. This type of repetition is also found in the Akan text which reiterates the question *Asuo atware Ɔkwan, Ɔkwan atware Asuo, Ɔpanin ne hwan?* "The path has crossed the river; the river has crossed the path; who is the elder?" by articulating this full utterance twice. These repetitions harken back to the periodic repetition of the chorus in the song itself where the only words uttered, "Awe! Awe!"/"Our way! Our way!" feature at several key points throughout the song.

According to Okpewho, repetition is useful in the extemporaneous organization of a "convenient framework for holding the distinct elements of the composition together" (Okpewho, 1992, p. 78). In each of the two texts, repetition serves the purpose not only of structuring the poem, but also of being a feature that produces auditory delight for listeners. It also may impress upon the listener a sense of the oral artist's diversity of wisdom providing fullness of effect. Okpewho states that "fullness of effect is achieved through the repetition of a key word or phrase in a variety of settings" (Okpewho, 1992, p. 72). Thus, repetition occurs at the level of the word, at the level of the sentence and, via intertextual parallelism, at the level of the entire poem as a whole.

Silence

In *Ọ̀nà Là*, silence is used adeptly in the creation of tension and anticipation at the outset of the poem. Here, although the background music continues to play, Ṣólaǹkẹ́ pauses at specific points throughout to punctuate his performance. Thus, silence should not be thought of as the complete absence of any sound whatsoever, but rather the pauses between breath groups. In the very first

utterance, the phrase *Ọ̀nà là* "The road is clear" is stressed while a brief pause is allowed before the second phrase *Ó já gbaragada* "It bursts out wide". In a similar complementary situation to that of matter and anti-matter, the silence, when understood as a marker of breath groups, is necessary not only biologically (for breathing), but also crucial in *Ọ̀nà Là* to the creation of aesthetic atmosphere as the vocalized utterances are.

Punctuated interlinear silence, as it occurs repeatedly throughout *Ọ̀nà Là*, may be conceived as a type of repetition or as a response to the call of the preceding line. In this manner, it could be understood as similar to the function of a vocal response by a chorus. Due to silence, the repetition of the metrical time interval alternating between the vocals and intense punctuating silence with pauses of pronounced lengths helps structure the oral performance. Silence serves a similar function as evident in the recitation of *Asuo Atware Ɔkwan* whereby, when the drums "speak" the particular line, the accompanying translator is silent and while the translator speaks, the drums are silent. This forms a composite turn-taking that, in typical call-and-response format, adds to the overall aesthetic feel of the poem as African.

Silence serves a crucial function as the defining element that separates the vocalized utterances of the poem itself from the distinct breath groups of the poem. Further, it gives each element of the message an emphasis and integrity of its own. The breath group is the silent period – again, a response to the vocalized call. Silence is also utilized in the creation of "rhythmic language, divided into regularly recurring units of rhythm (or abstract time) characterizable as lines" (Bird, 1972, p. 207). The patterned repetition of silence contributes to the structural and aesthetic character of the poem in a manner similar to its vocalized elements.

2.6 Syntactic Parallelism

Syntactic parallelism is also evident in *Ọ̀nà Là* in lines 22 and 23, as shown in Appendix A, in the syntactically parallel, *odò l'ayé, omi l'ènìyàn* "the river is the world; the water is the people". These two statements are the same at the level of structure, despite being of variable lengths in terms of number of syllables (which, when the same, constitute syllabic parallelism):

21. odò l'ayé
    river be'world
    "the river is the world"
22. omi l'ènìyàn
    water be'people
    "people are water"

Fabb defines such phrases as "parallel in that they have the same phrase and word classes in the same orders, and these phrase and word classes have the same functions in the clause in both parts"(1997, p. 137). Thus, these lines are examples of syntactic parallelism in that the order is the same as well as the functions of words in the clause of both parts.

Another example of syntactic parallelism can be found in the ninth and tenth lines wherein there is merely a differentiation in the subject noun phrase of each:

23. Odò l'óun l'ẹ̀gbọ́n
    river say'3SG.QUOTE' be'elder
    "(The) river says it is the elder."
    Ọ̀nà l'óun l'ẹ̀gbọ́n
    roadsay'3SG.QUOTE be'elder
    "(The) road says it is the elder."

Again, harkening back to *Ɔkwan atware asuo, Asuo atware Ɔkwan, Ɔpanin ne hwan?* "The path crosses the river, the river crosses the path, who is the elder?", this particular parallel structure serves

the purpose of providing not only intratextual parallelism but also intertextual parallelism as discussed above. This parallelism is also seen in:

24. asuo	no	firi	tete.	
river	DEF	from	ancient	
asuo	no	firi	Ɔdomankoma	Ɔboadeɛ
river	the	from	Beneficent	Creator

Thus, again, we find similar stylistic elements linking the texts together in addition to the intertextual parallelism of core themes that run through each.

Semantic and Tonal Parallelism

In the following lines, there is an exemplary case of semantic parallelism (which can also be viewed as an example of gapping) in example (25) which features parallel names for Olódùmarè (The Creator) as:

25. Ọba Adẹ́dàá "Ruler who created creation"
___ T'ó dá òkè "The one who created the hills"
___ T'ó dá ọ̀nà "The one who created the road"
___ T'ó dá odò sílé ayé "The one who created the river into the world"

As in the case of simple repetition, semantic parallelism lends itself to the idea of fullness of effect as articulated by Okpewho. The oral artist, Ṣólańkẹ́, expands on ideas of Olódùmarè, "Creator of the Universe" through a sense of imagistic variety. This semantic parallelism provides a kind of fullness, which may be found in the diversity of image that is employed for aesthetic effect. This same fullness adds to the aesthetic appeal of the chant and also helps to structure the material within it. In a sense, one may call all such instances cases of functional aesthetics or aesthetic function. Nketia gives an alternative version of line thirty-one (31) found in Appendix B where the creations of the Creator are recounted as follows:

26. Ɔdomankoma	bɔ-ɔ	adeɛ
Beneficent Creator	create-COMPL	thing
"The Beneficent Creator created a thing"		
Bɔrebɔre	bɔ-ɔ	adeɛ,
Hewer	create-COMPL	thing,
"The Hewer created a thing"		
Ɔ-bɔ-ɔ		deɛ-bɛn?
3SG.SUBJ-create-COMPL		thing-which
"He/She created which thing?"		
Ɔdomankoma	bɔ-ɔ	adeɛ
Beneficent Creator	create-COMPL	thing
"The Beneficent Creator created a thing"		
Bɔrebɔre	bɔ-ɔ	adeɛ,
Hewer	create-COMPL	thing,
"The Hewer created a thing"		
Ɔ-bɔ-ɔ		deɛ-bɛn?
3SG.SUBJ-create-COMPL		thing-which
'He/She created which thing?'		
Ɔ-bɔ-ɔ		ɛsɛn
3SG.SUBJ-create-COMPL		court/town crier
"He/She created the court/town crier"		

Ɔ-bɔ-ɔ kyerɛma
3SG.SUBJ-create-COMPL drummer
"He/She created the drummer"
Ɔ-bɔ-ɔ Ɔkyere Kwao Awua ba
3SG.SUBJ-create-COMPL Capturer Kwao Awua child
brafo titire
executioner important
"He/She created Ɔkyere Kwao, Awua's child, the important executioner" (Nketia, 1974, p. 50)

Because, the liner notes of 'The Path' only have the translation of the first five lines of the Akan drum text in translation, it is unclear which of the full texts Ralph MacDonald and Jími Ṣólaṅkẹ́ used. It is worth noting, however, that the English poem *The Road is clear* also has a similar listing of creations as follows:

27. Olodumare (God in Yoruba belief), the creator of all things and beings
    He created the hills
    He created the roads on Earth
    He created the rivers of the World

Given the parallels in the recounting of the creations made by Olódùmarè, "the Creator", in the Yorùbá text and the English text as well as those made by Ɔdomankoma, "the Creator", in the original Akan text, again it becomes clear that the "descendant texts" were making a concerted effort to remain true to the spirit of the "ancestor text" via intertextual parallels. This is analogous to multiple celestial bodies orbiting a common center of gravity without being ejected from the system (Kohler, 2016).

Conclusion and Theoretical Implications

In this paper, we have analyzed *Ọ̀nà Là* based on a conceptual framework wherein the interactions between texts are seen as analogous to the interactions between multiple stellar bodies. Although, in this analysis, we focused on the Yorùbá text as the primary text, it is clear that *Ọ̀nà Là* is related to other texts *Ɔkwan Atware Asuo* and *The Road is clear* in addition to the historical context and the people who share this common history. When actual words and stylistic tools are shared between texts, where one is derived from the other, this is analogous to the exchange of mass between two stars via Roche lobe overflow or stellar winds in which gas is expelled from a star's upper atmosphere and may be caught in the Roche/Hill sphere of another. The majority of the examples of shared stylistic devices illustrated above are of this type. However, when two interrelated texts share a common theme, this is analogous to two stars orbiting around each other or a common center of mass – the point in astrophysics referred to as the barycenter. In this common theme, we see interconnections between the contemporary African present to both the ancient and the futuristic in which the rivers reestablish their supremacy. In *The Path* in general and *Ọ̀nà Là* in particular, African people can see a metaphorical identification of themselves with the river. This is the undaunted river which will survive current hardship to ultimately overcome. In *Ọ̀nà Là*, we get a vista of the inevitable victory of the river as a metaphor for the inevitable victory of African people; for *Odò l'ayé; Omi l'ènìyàn*, "The river is the world; water is the people". Is it any wonder, then, that *ẹ̀rù ò bodò* "the river is unafraid"? On a deeper level, *Ọ̀nà Là* is a revolutionary and visionary text. It is an extremely unique Pan-African musical composition in terms of function, structure, content, and aesthetics incorporating African people from various backgrounds united in the telling of a collective African story.

We have argued that Jími Ṣólaṅkẹ́'s *Ọ̀nà Là* has transcended the bounds of existing genres of Yorùbá poetry. In our view, this transcendence has occurred as an intentional endeavor engaged in by Ṣólaṅkẹ́ on the basis of the artist's knowledge for the purposes of bringing this verbal art into alignment with other texts already in existence. As such, Ṣólaṅkẹ́ is argued to have intentionally departed from

the typical features of identification associated with forms of poetry such as *rárà, ewì,* and *ìjálá* and, in doing so, has acquiesced to the thematic, stylistic, and aesthetic imperatives laid out in the kindred texts along which *Ọ̀nà Là* runs parallel. This is analogous to a star of a specific type being influenced by those in its multiple stellar system.

In our view, by virtue of the intentionality of Jími Ṣólaṅkẹ́, *Ọ̀nà Là* has ushered in a new genre of Pan-African Yorùbá verbal art by means of a confluence of the stream of possibilities enabled by the Yorùbá language merged with the diaspora-engendered collaboration on *The Path* which epitomizes innovation and improvisation. Further, although demonstrably new with regard to pre-existing Yorùbá poetic genres, in many ways, *Ọ̀nà Là* is part of an interrelated star system linking the African Diaspora to the continent or various parts of the Diaspora to each other as found in collaborations such as those of Dizzy Gillespie and Chano Pozo in the late 1940s, and others such as

> Charlie Parker's recordings with Machito and his Afro-Cubans, Art Blakey's collaborative percussion records of the 1950s and early 1960s, Babatunde Olatunji's work with Max Roach and Randy Weston in the early 1960s, the collaborations between Dollar Brand (Abdullah Ibrahim) and Archie Shepp, the World Saxophone Quartet and African Drums, the Art Ensemble of Chicago with the Amabutho Male Chorus of Soweto, Randy Weston and the master Gnawa musicians of Morocco, Steve Coleman and Afro-Cuba de Matanzas, David Murray and Positive Black Soul. (Fischlin & Heble, 2004, p. 89)

According to Fischlin and Heble, these and other collaborations ushered in a tradition of (1) juxtaposing different histories without sacrificing identity and (2) using reflexive notions of "cultural difference as a basis for collaboration" (Fischlin & Heble, 2004, p. 89). Further, these collaborations paved the way for future artists, such as those found on the 2002 Fẹlá Kútì-inspired *Red Hot Riot* album, Nas, K'naan and Damian Marley on the *Distant Relatives* album, Les Nubians with Talib Kweli on *Temperature Rising*, Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Salif Keita's *United We Stand* and many more. In each of these cases, the musicians themselves function as living suns who mutually illuminate and influence each other (Fu-Kiau, 2001). By providing a quintessential example of what Pan-African collaboration can be, *The Path* and *Ọ̀nà Là* have provided an important precedent and inspiration for successive artists to follow, which deserves due recognition and proper placement within scholarship on the subject.

In this paper, we have presented a novel conceptual theory in the form of the Multiple Star System Theory of Mutual Illumination and Interaction. Via extended analogy, we have argued that relationships between texts can be thought of as being similar to relationships between stars in multiple star systems. We proceeded to provide a stylistic analysis of *Ọ̀nà Là* with reference to interrelated texts *The Road is clear* and *Ɔkwan Atware Asuo* to elucidate how they share common themes as well as common stylistic devices. These relationships were further articulated with relationship to their historical context and contemporary relevance. In terms of their relevance, this is thought of as being analogous to the influence stars may have on planetary observers much like how music has an influence on the audience and may, likewise, be influenced by that audience. While this is the first analysis of *Ọ̀nà Là* as well as the first conceptualization of the Multiple Star System Theory of intertextual analysis, future directions include applying the framework to other interarts, intertexts, intergenres, etc., to determine if similar interactions and interrelations apply. We feel that by interrogating the sources and original meanings of the analogies and metaphors we live by, our understanding of natural phenomena as well as arts will be deepened and enriched.

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Appendices

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