



Orality in Yorùbá films: A study of selected films of Akínwùmí Ìṣòlá

Abidemi Olusola Bolarinwa

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Despite technological innovations, orality still forms one of the aesthetic elements in the new media such as home video films as a result of the unending interface between orality and the literacy tradition. Using intertextuality as an approach, in this article I examine orality in selected films of Akínwùmí Ìṣòlá, with a view to showing how he uses verbal arts as a powerful tool for the transmission of cultural values. The selected films are *Saworoide* (1999), *Agogo Èèwò* (2002) and *Efúnṣetan Aníwúra* (2005). The films were selected based on their preponderant featuring of oral narratives. My findings reveal that folktales, legends, songs, Ifá corpus, drumbeats, incantations, and panegyric are the Yorùbá oral genres that Akínwùmí Ìṣòlá incorporates into his films. One can infer from Ìṣòlá's films that there is an overlap between his oral culture and his creative work because culture is the active force that energises and drives the creative work. I conclude that Ìṣòlá uses his creative ingenuity to re-awake and preserve Yorùbá oral tradition in his films, which points to the fact that oral literature has a continued vitality for contemporary society. **Keywords:** oral culture, preservation, intertextuality, Akínwùmí Ìṣòlá, film.

Introduction

In this article, I analyse the films *Saworoide* (1999), *Agogo Èèwò* (2002) and *Efúnṣetan Aníwúra* (2005) (directed by Tunde Kelani) by the Nigerian scriptwriter Akínwùmí Ìṣòlá, with a specific focus on the oral genres he utilises in these films, which I approach as a form of intertextuality. I argue that he uses verbal arts as a powerful tool for the transmission of cultural values in his films. Firstly, I explain what I mean by cultural values and intertextuality before providing a brief overview of existing studies on Yorùbá films. Then I proceed to analyse the ways in which various oral genres are utilised in the three films.


Terminology and relevant existing research

Film falls under the intangible aspect of human culture; it is an integral part of the expressive arts which comprise the literary arts, the plastic arts, and the music arts, hence it is taken as the set of traditions from which a person draws his or her sense of identity (Irele; Adélékè, "Culture, Art and Film in an African Society: An Evaluation"). From the foregoing, it can be observed that film as a cultural artifact reflects or shares the common meanings and values of a particular culture during a particular time. Therefore, more than any other entertainment form, films reflect the cultural and social experiences, and convey core cultural values of a society. Filmmakers write their stories from the common pool of the society where they belong. Different societies have several cultural practices which are mirrored/showcased to the world through films (Ekwuazi; Ògúnléye).

According to Johnson (99), "Film is the most effective medium for promotion, propagation and preservation of culture. Many cultures of the world have used its potential to their advantage". Adesanya asserts that the British, American, Chinese, and Indian cultures have influenced some Nigerians and people of other countries who enjoy watching their films. Also, the cultures and verbal arts of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria—that is, Yorùbá, Hausa, and Igbo—have been communicated to the world through Nigerian films.

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According to Durey (616), intertextuality is a coinage used by Julia Kristeva to discuss Mikhail Bakhtin's texts as the interplay of writers, texts, and other texts. Abrams and Harpham (364) use intertextuality to signify the multiple ways in which any one literary text in fact consists of other texts, by means of its open or covert citations and allusions, its repetitions, and transformations of the formal and substantive features of earlier texts. This reveals the relationship between a writer, his works, and the influence of other works or texts on his style or content of his work. Shakib (123) defines intertextuality as the literal and effective presence in a text of another text. Allen opines that: "Text is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text, in which several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another" (35).

Yamasaki (2) asserts that the core idea of the theory is that texts, such as plays, novels, and films are always related to other texts in a way that produces multiple meanings. Bazin (qtd in Barthes), while discussing the issue of intertextuality in film, enunciates that there is no doubt that all films were, in principle, works of authors who at a certain time and with certain technical and aesthetic means had managed to create certain distinctive cinematic artwork (Barthes). Drama and fictional texts such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God*, *Efúńsetán Aníwúra*, and *Lísábi Agòńgbò Akalá*—to mention but a few—have been adapted into films.

Adaptation, according to Hutcheon (6), is a form of intertextuality experienced differently by each reader. There are multiple sources available to scriptwriters; they may create an entirely new work from history, myth, pure fiction, or from his society; they may also decide to translate or adapt existing work which involves/requires modification, alteration, and recreation. The implication of this is that the scriptwriter is re-presenting the existing work in another form that will be most acceptable and accessible.

Hyginus Ekwuazi's work centres on the emergence of films in Nigeria and provides information on the film concept and reality in Nigeria. Manthia Diawara dwells on popular culture and oral tradition in African films. He affirms that African film makers have deviated from foreign film culture by making use of cultural elements within their culture. Onyero Mgbejume focuses on the historical development of Nigerian films with its associated problems. He concludes that, if the stakeholders could play the game according to the rules, the film industry in Nigeria would thrive. Olagoke Àlámú ("Trends in the Development of Yorùbá Film: The First Decade (1976–1986)") focuses on trends in the development of the Yorùbá film within the first ten years of its existence between 1976 and 1986, and discusses extensively the historical, development, and classification of Yorùbá films, and also examines the aesthetics of the Yorùbá video films ("Documenting the Yorùbá Traditional Religious Festival for Posterity; Issues and Challenges"). Adéléké ("Audience Reception of Yorùbá Films: Ìbàdàn as a Case Study") carries out an analytical study of audience reception of Yorùbá films in cinema houses. He submits that psychological and sociological factors affect the attitude of audiences of Yorùbá films. Joseph Dáíró looks at the Yorùbá beliefs in predestination "omì ipín" (water of destiny) where he uses a Yorùbá film drama, a weekly television broadcast which exploits the theme of predestination as a case study. Adekunle Yusuf focuses on Adébáyò Fálétí on screen by exploring the different stages of Fálétí's art from stage to television productions, and the era of home video films. He eulogises Fálétí as a dramatist, novelist, and poet.

Akintunde Akínyemí discusses oral literature, aesthetic transfer, and social vision in two Yorùbá video films. He centres the article on the playwright's use of elements of oral literature in depicting the socio-political realities of contemporary Nigerian society. Sèsan examines African aesthetics in two Yorùbá language video films. He investigates the origin of aesthetics from the ancient (classical) period to the contemporary period and examines the use and effect of aesthetics in the selected films. Ureke and Tomaselli's work focuses on the transformation of African cinema to film services. The duo explore how African cinema can be examined in terms of a film services framework which includes both industrial criteria and ideological shifts as a way of deepening screen media studies in search for a more holistic value chain framework. In my 2019 article, I study the recreation of oral poetic genres in selected Yorùbá home-video films. I conclude that, with the filmmakers' recreation of the Yorùbá oral poetic genre in their films, they have been able to initiate continuity and change in the use of the Yorùbá oral poetic genre.

Orality in three films of Akínwùmí Ìṣòlá

This section has been organised according to genre. I indicate in which ways Ìṣòlá has incorporated the following oral genres: folktales, legends, songs, Ifá corpus, drumbeats, incantations, and panegyric.

Folktales

Yorubá people educate and entertain themselves through folktales and folktales represent the Yorubá philosophical way of thinking and serves as a vehicle of self-expression (Taiwo 38). Folktales are also deep in ideas, rich in expression, and enthralling to hear. The cultural content and the inclusion of songs and wise sayings in folktales make them entertaining and informative. Among the Yorubá people, folktales serve as cultural identity. It is a veritable tool for cultural transmission, character development, and historical education. Majasan (41) asserts that folktales are one of the most appropriate instruments of educating and acculturating the youth. Aligning with the position of Majasan, Awoniyi avers: "Stories, songs, myth and dancing were combined to stimulate the children's emotions, quicken their perceptions, and guide them as they explored, exploited and interpreted their environment. The objective of education was to make an individual an *Omoluàbí*, to develop his personality and character and weave him (or her) harmoniously into the social fabric" (63).

Folktales cover a wide range of areas but the common types of folktales include fairy tales, fables, trickster tales, and why stories. They can reflect cultural, historical, geographical, mathematical, and political content and Yorubá folktales are heavily influenced by the people's worldview and traditions. Instances of folktales occur in *Ìṣòlá's* films. There is an example from *Ṣaworoide* in which Adébòmí and his wife Adédigba narrate a folktale that has to do with a hunter and his dog to their son. According to them, whenever the hunter found himself in a difficult situation, he would summon his dog to come to his aid. When the dog was stolen, the hunter was devastated. The hunter succeeded in getting his dog back because of the cordial relationship that existed between the two of them. The lesson that can be deduced from the folktale that is embedded in the film is that nobody is an island and that we need one another. What the filmmaker is canvassing for is cordial relationship. Through the folktale, *Ìṣòlá* provides an avenue for African children to receive instruction through their mother tongue, thereby learning to love the mental heritage of their people and the natural and necessary expression of their heritage which is the language.

Legends

A legend is a story handed down through generations which is believed to be historical. *Olátejú* (85) opines that legendary tales are about the lineage history of a particular family or personage as told orally by their progenitors, the bards, or as contained in their lineage poetry. The legends once lived many years ago as human beings in the various communities and were deified after death as gods and goddesses as a mark of appreciation for their contribution to the development of their people and community.

Legends are largely extended oral histories of some unusual humans—that is a filius or a filia figure—who are imbued with superhuman, heroic qualities, such as uncommon or unique carriage, courage, and pedigree. Legends are stories of men and women who contributed significantly to advancing the cause of their people. Examples of these legends in Yorubá society are: Basòrun *Ògúnmólá* of *Ìbàdàn*, *Sódeké* of *Egbaland*, *Ìyalóde Tinuúbú* of *Egbaland*, and *Efúnṣetan Aníwúra* the *Ìyalóde* of *Ìbàdàn land Dasylya* (139).

In the film *Efúnṣetan Aníwúra*, reference is made to the great warriors of *Ìbàdàn land*. These are *Iba Olúyòlè*, *Iba Afokòjà*, *Balógun Ìbíkúnlé*, *Basòrun Ògúnmólá*, and *Ààrè Látòòsà* whose heroic deeds were brought to the fore. An example of a legend from the film *Efúnṣetan Aníwúra* is that of *Balógun Ìbíkúnlé*, a renowned farmer and warrior in *Ìbàdàn land*. He quickly rose to the rank of *Balógun* of *Ìbàdàn* during the reign of *Baalè Oyèsílè* in 1851. *Ìbíkúnlé's* regime as the generalissimo of *Ìbàdàn* was characterised by many wars. *Ìbàdàn* won all the wars with his expertise and he was responsible for the large number of vassal states brought under *Ìbàdàn's* hegemony. *Balógun Ìbíkúnlé* was very tireless in warfare and, as such, fought gallantly throughout the breadth and length of *Yorubaland*. As a result of his military might and restlessness, he became dreaded and no town wanted his encounter. *Ìbíkúnlé* was therefore likened to a formidable power that shook the whole world of his time. He was, however, given a befitting burial as a legend. As a mark of respect to this great man, a major street in *Ìbàdàn*, from *Mòkòjá* roundabout going through his palace to *Oríta-Mérin* junction, was named after *Ìbíkúnlé* by the *Òyó* state government.

The legend *Balógun Ìbíkúnlé*, as reflected in the film *Efúnṣetan Aníwúra*, is endowed with supernatural and heroic deeds like courage and unique carriage. He contributed immensely to advancing the cause of his people. Therefore, the story of this legend was used by the scriptwriter as a potent weapon to boost the morale of the society as well as an instrument to safeguard its communal security. It was also used in the film to implant or inculcate sound moral values in the minds of the people. The legacies of oral tradition are therefore documented in motion pictures by the film makers who are believed to be custodians of their societal history.

Songs

In Yorùbá tradition, almost no ceremony occurs without a corresponding song attached to it. Different rites of passage are marked with songs and dancing (Adéyemí 58). Singing songs during important ceremonies is a way of life and has become an undying cultural legacy of the people. Adéyemí (58) classifies Yorùbá songs into eight categories, namely: ceremonial (*orinayeye*), religious (*orinajemésin*), children's (*orinomodé*), war (*orinogun*), work-reinforcement (*orinamúséyá*), folktale (*orinalò*), proverbial (*orinòwe*), and invective (*orinèèbú*). Euba and Adéplá also agree that songs are described by their functions—that is, the singing is described by a function to which it is associated. Specific songs accompany specific occasions and songs are mainly accomplished with some musical instrument such as idiophones, chordophones, membranophones, and airophones.

Songs serve functional purposes. Entertainment comes first among the goals of performance. However, the use of songs for therapeutic, psychological, and emotional wellbeing is exemplified in lullaby, a kind of song used to lull children to sleep (Hamzat 163). It is also effective for the emotional wellbeing between lovers. The use of songs in fanning the ember of discord is also rampant and it can also incite groups and individuals against each other. There is fluidity in song in Yorùbá culture, and recitation could also be concluded with song.

Ìṣòlá used songs extensively in the selected films under study to drive home his points. In *Ṣaworoide* and *Agogo Èwò*, he showcases nine proverbial songs, including the following examples from the films:

Wón mà le ò
Wón mà le ò
Àwọnìjòyè yí mà le ò
Ajàntiele (*Ṣaworo Ide*)

They are terrible
They are terrible
These chiefs are terrible
Ajàntiele

E wá wayé òṣèlú
Òṣèlú alabòsí
Wónkòwó ilú sáṣò
Wón fowó mutí (*Agogo Èwò*)

See the lot of the politicians
Our fraudulent politicians
They loot the treasury
They squander the money

The first song from the film *Ṣaworo Ide* is a protest song by the people of Jogbo town that has been under the servitude and tyrannical reign of the king Oníjogbo. They used the song to ridicule the indisciplined king and chiefs of the town; the song is used by the people of the town as a weapon to express their mind so as to curb the excesses and unruly behaviour of their leaders. The second song from the film *Agogo Èwò* is sung to expose their fraudulent leaders who squander the money meant for the people. The two songs expose the suppressive and subversive posture of rulers of Jogbo town on those they govern. The songs are therefore employed by the filmmaker as an accompaniment of the element of oral tradition in achieving the theme(s) of these films.

Ifá corpus

Scholars like Abimbólá (*Ifá: An Exposition of Ifá Literary Corpus*), Olátúnjí, and Oláléyé assert that Ifá is one of the most important Yorùbá deities. Ifá is believed to have been sent by Olódùmarè, the Almighty God, to use his profound wisdom to put the earth in order. The belief of the Yorùbá concerning the great wisdom of Ifá is manifested in some of the praise names they give to him. Two of such praise names, according to Abimbólá (*Ifá*), are Akéré-finú-sogbón (The small person with a mind full of wisdom) and Akoni-lóràn-bí-iyekan-èni (He who gives one wise advice like one's relative) (9). It is this great wisdom of Ifá that gives him a high position among the other Yorùbá gods.

Without Ifá, the importance of the other Yorùbá gods would not be appreciated. If a man is being punished by the other gods, he can only know this by consulting Ifá. If a community is to make sacrifice to one of its gods, it can only know this by consulting Ifá. Thus, Ifá is the only active mouthpiece of Yorùbá traditional religion taken as a whole. As a mouthpiece, Ifá serves to popularise the other Yorùbá gods, and to immortalise them (Abímbólá, “The place of Ifá in Yorùbá traditional religions” 3–4). Ifá co-ordinates the work of all the gods in the Yorùbá pantheon with his great wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. He serves as a ‘middleman’ between the other gods and the people, and between the people and their ancestors. He is the mouthpiece and the public relations officer of all the other Yorùbá gods (Abímbólá, “Place of Ifá” 4). The wisdom and understanding of Ifá is believed to cover not only the past but also the present and the future. According to Olátúnjí (111), by consulting Ifá, the Yorùbá find meaning and purpose in the past, the present, and the future. In traditional Yorùbá society, the Yorùbá consult Ifá before they do anything important and in all the major affairs of life: with the birth of a new child, in sickness, in contemplating a journey, in choice of a life partner, and at any other important turn in their lives.

This is an example from *Òtùá méjì* in *Saworoide*:

Aṣo funfunni sunkúnaró
Ìpílẹ̀ ọ̀rọ̀ ní í sunkúnekeji tan tantan
Adiá fún Adérinmókunṣomọ oní aláńákánesu
Ijọ tí n mékúnsèràhùn ire gbogbo
Bókanbá yọ nínú ibú a bónà wá
Ire gbogbo ọ̀ mọ̀ wá Jogbowá ọ̀ ire gbogbo
Bá a bá damisóri a bẹ̀sẹ̀ wá
Ire gbogbo ọ̀ mọ̀ wá Jogbowá ọ̀ ire gbogbo

White cloth longs for indigo dye
 The first part of a statement cries for the second
 Divination was performed for the offspring of Alánákánesu
 The day he was crying for all good things
 When one comes from the deep it comes straight to the path
 May all blessings come to Jogbo
 When water is poured on the head it runs down to the feet
 May all blessings come to Jogbo

As an age-long practice in Yorùbáland, Ifá is normally consulted before a king is enthroned but in *Saworoide* the reverse is the case because the kingmakers install a king without consulting Ifá and without performing the necessary rites. Due to this act, the town is witnessing a lot of problems that had not been seen before. The chief in the end consults the Ifá oracle for a way out of the pandemonium that the people are experiencing. The Babaláwo offers prayers of blessings for the town of Jogbo and normalcy returns to the community. In the film *Saworoide*, Ìṣòlá makes it clear that Ifá literary corpus is the repository of Yorùbá culture inside which the Yorùbá perception of their own historical expertise and understanding of their environment can be ascertained. In relating belief practices to films, Ìṣòlá makes selective use of resources from the people’s oral tradition.

Drumbeats

Graphic or phonic substances are not the only means of communication; we can also communicate through semiotic-symbols or signals. One of the means of communication among the Yorùbá is the talking drum. To understand the signal of any talking drum, one must be familiar with the language of the immediate community. A person without the knowledge or understanding of the Yorùbá language will find it difficult to interpret the signal of the Yorùbá talking drum because sounds produced by the drum would not be meaningful. The language of the drum differs from human speech in that the latter is articulated but the former is not. The implication of this is that drum sounds have a lower level of structural distinctiveness than the human language per se. A drum is manipulated by man to produce sound initiating speech tones. Therefore, the message given by the drum is always ambiguous because it is based on tones and rhythms (Ajayi, “The Talking Drum” 575). The Yorùbá drum performs both rhythmic and communicative functions. It may also serve as therapy for troubled minds and may give warning, signal danger, or mobilise people to do some kind of work. A lot of people find it very difficult to

interpret the obscure message of the drum because of the narrow means by which the drummer communicates his thoughts, which are merely tones and rhythms.

Due to the fact that only few people can decipher the language of the drum, there is ambiguity or multiplicity of meanings. In Yorubá traditional society, drumming is a family profession, which requires skill and perfection that cannot be attained without proper tutelage (Ajayi, "Talking Drum"). Therefore, a son in Yorubá society whose father is a drummer learns the art from childhood from his father and thereafter inherits his father's skill. In the contemporary Yorubá society, drumming is no longer the profession of the Àyàn family; interested individuals can now learn the art of drumming.

In *Şaworoidé* when Adébòmí and Adédigba are mysteriously killed by an unidentified person, the drum is used magically to communicatively commandeer Àyánníyí to come back home as a matter of urgency because he is the only living person in the Àyàn family that can unravel the mysteries that surround the Àyàngalú drum. He is summoned thus:

Ayánníyí suré tetetewá
Ayánníyí suré tetetewá
Iku ò òjò ààrùn kò dọ̀sù
Ikán á jorí, idin a jẹ̀dò
dí tóbínrín n'fìlẹ̀kẹ̀ sí
Nilẹ̀ á fí jẹ
Otító ọ̀rò nìyí

Àyánníyí come quickly
Àyánníyí come quickly
One day the earth will swallow us all
Termites will consume the head
And maggots the liver
The buttocks that woman adorns with beads
Becomes food for mother earth
Alas the bitter truth

On hearing the drumbeat, Àyánníyí deciphers the hidden message embedded in the communication and immediately leaves all he is doing and heads home to obey the clarion call. Ìşlòlá uses drumbeats to showcase Yorubá cultural values and to establish the parable of the drum as the voice of the people. He therefore uses traditional elements symbolically and metaphorically instead of being mirrored slavishly. These therefore appeal to the viewers and win their passion for the filmic text.

Incantations

Works on incantations include those of Oníbon-Òkúta, Fábùnmi, Fádípè, Bacom, Beier, Ógunbà, Olátúnjí, and Ọ̀pẹ̀fẹ̀yítímí. According to Olátúnjí, incantation is a restricted poetic form, cultic and mystical in its expectations (139). Olátúnjí further affirms that the moment incantation is obtained it becomes an individual's personal property. It is therefore guarded jealously by the owner, for to reveal it to others is to lay oneself bare to the attack of foes. Incantation can be chanted or recited and entails uttering of words according to a formula and in a set order. For an incantation to be effective, certain taboos should be strictly adhered to and it may be necessary to take some actions such as tasting certain concoctions or chewing alligator pepper which serves as a catalyst. In Yorubá society, four beliefs underlie the use and practice of incantation: the belief in sympathies, belief in the magic of names, belief in origin, and belief in the magic power of the spoken word. Bámgbósé classifies incantations into five types, namely, *ọ̀fò*, *ògèdè*, *àyájó*, *àásán*, and *ohúnifá*, which are all incantatory poetry. Ọ̀pẹ̀fẹ̀yítímí, under terminological underpinning, re-classifies incantations into four types. He asserts that *Ohùn Ifá* is not a genre per se, but rather a combination of all the verbal legacies which Ọ̀rúnmilà left behind for his followers (213). Incantation, therefore, is a personal poem, closely associated with a user who directs the powers he has invoked to carry out his desires and observing all the taboos and rites associated with the incantation. Below is an example of incantation in Ìşlòlá's film *Efunsetán Aniwúra*:

Àgbèrò ní kún n'gbòwò
 Arumàsò nìsigìdì n'rugbá oṣe
 Ènikankiì síwò lumí
 Ènikan kí ì fèsù jòkòò
 Afopokii ròwò hórí
 Àrì tagiri nitejò
 Bíná bá rómì a gbàgbé ilé tó fẹ́.é jò
 Bètù bá rómì a gbàgbé ariwo tó fẹ́.é pa
 O yá mádàá owò rẹ wá

The squirrel's hands are forever suspended
 Sigidi forever carries the calabash soap
 No one raises hand to beat excreta
 No one sits on Èsù
 Palm oil maker cannot have hand to scratch her head
 One cannot but panic on seeing a snake
 Fire forgets the house it wishes to burn
 Immediately it sights water
 Gunpowder forgets the sound it wishes to make
 Immediately it sights water
 Now surrender the cutlass in your hand to me

After the demise of Àwèrò, Ìtáwuyì decides to kill Èfúnsetán with a cutlass as revenge for losing his two female friends and confidant to the cold hand of death in quick succession through Ìyalóde. Èfúnsetán, being a powerful woman, recites the incantations above to render Ìtáwuyì powerless and to subject him to her will through the power of the spoken word. She also wards off the evil designs of Ìtáwuyì and becomes victorious. One can infer from the incantation made by Èfúnsetán that incantation is closely associated with a user who directs the powers she has invoked to carry out her own desires. Through his work, Ìṣòlá has therefore established the Yorùbá belief in the magic power of the spoken word.

Panegyric

Panegyric, a form of praise poem, is universal and has been explored by critics such as Abbott, Sweet, Sperl, Smith, and Finnegan respectively. Finnegan says that panegyric, in its specialised form, is: “[...] a type of court poetry and one of the most developed and elaborate poetic genres of Africa. It seems to go with a particular ethos, stress on royal or aristocratic power, and an admiration for military” (111).

In the film *Èfúnsetán Aníwúrà* the court poet eulogises the king and the chief with the praise name of the Ìbàdàn indigene thus:

Ìbàdàn a gbò sásá ogunmáásáá
 A gbò yàyà mọ́ yá
 Ìlú Ojò, ìlú Ajáyí, ìlú Ogunmọ́lá Olódògbokèrì lóju ogun
 Ìlú tó gbeonílé tó gbealejò
 Ìbàdàn májà májà tó fí kára iwájú lérú
 Omọ a jòrosùn, omọ a jègbínýó
 Omọ a fíkarahunfóri mu
 Ìbàdànkii bá ni sọrẹ àì múnirugun
 Ìbàdànbeèrè kí o tó wọ́ ó
 Níbi olè gbé n'jàreolohun
 Ìbà lówọ́ òkè Ìbàdàn
 Kò síluú tó lè fojú díá
 Fúlání dán an wò ó tẹ́ tèsintèsin
 Bècè agbára, èyin akin yíí náani

Ìbàdàn that heard the sound of war and refused to run
 They heard that war was close by but not bothered
 The town of Òjò, the town of Àjàyí
 The town of Ògúnmólá the valiant at war front
 The town that is hospitable to the indigenes and strangers
 Ìbàdàn that refrained from fighting until the predecessors were enslaved
 The offspring of he that ate Òro as supper and ate snails to satisfaction
 The offspring of him that uses shell to make pap
 Ìbàdàn is not a friend to him who doesn't take him to war
 Ìbàdàn where you ask before you enter
 A place where the thief is exonerated
 Homage to Ìbàdàn hill
 Any town who dares Ìbàdàn's mettle will regret such boldness
 The Fùlání who tries it was disgraced together with his horse
 Due thanks to you great warriors

In the panegyric of Ìbàdàn, the chanter reveals the prowess in warfare that the Ìbàdàn people are known for. He also accentuates the audaciousness of the Ìbàdàn people; they are eulogised as fearless, bold, and tactical at the war front. The panegyric no doubt stirs pride and confidence in the king and his chiefs who are Ìbàdàn indigenes because their fierceness in battle was brought to the fore. Panegyric is deliberately used by Ìṣòlá in *Efunṣetan Aniwura* for aesthetics and for arousal of strong emotions.

Conclusion

In this article I have examined orality in three of Ìṣòlá's films, with a view to showing how he uses verbal arts as a powerful tool for the transmission of cultural values in his films. I found that folktales, legends, songs, Ifá corpus, drumbeats, incantations, and panegyric are the Yorubá oral genres that Ìṣòlá incorporates. One can infer from Ìṣòlá's films that there is an overlap between his oral culture and his creative work because culture is the active force that energises and drives creative work. I conclude that Ìṣòlá uses his creative ingenuity to re-awake and preserve Yorubá oral tradition in his films, which points to the fact that oral literature has a continued vitality for contemporary society.

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