

IFÁ DIVINATION POETRY AMONG THE YORÙBÁ OF SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA: AN ARCHETYPE OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Ifá divination poetry is one of the most popular genres among the Yorùbá of Southwestern Nigeria. A careful exploration of the *Ifá* Literary corpus reveals that quite a lot can be understood about the philosophy of the world. This study intends to seek for an alternative ways in *Ifá* poetic verses to address some socio-political problems. The study employs the literariness and functionality of *Ifá* literary corpus as an archetype of contemporary society. The paper is targeted towards identifying the archetypal elements in selected *Ifá* literary corpus, to analyze how archetypal characters in *Ifá* divination poems can be used to tackle contemporary social crisis among others. The objectives of the study include the examination of selected *Ifá* poems to proof that it has universal appeals and archetypes. Our methodology is descriptive using selected *Ifá* literary verses and adopting George Frazer's (1992) mythological tenets (the Golden Bough) which stipulates that societal values and norms are the pivot of both oral and written literature and Carl Jung's (1967) archetypal images and symbols for our analysis. The study concludes that *Ifá* divination poetry contains archetypal potentials that have universal appeal to contemporary society and can be used as better alternative for societal growth and development.

Keywords: Divination, Poetry, Archetype, Contemporary, Ifá, Society.

INTRODUCTION

In the pre-independence period and not until recently, the Whiteman perceived Africa as a literary land without its own history, literature, linguistics and in fact its own ways of doing things. William (2000, 2), quoted in Adeyemi (2017, 349) states that:

In reality, Western Culture is one of the only two cultures that has been successful over the time in terms of the quality of life it provided to its adherents (the other success is Chinese culture). To see real violence and oppression, one needs to look at the life of non-Muslim Islamic majority countries. This comment is not different from that of Emil Ludwig who says that Africans have no idea of God. According to him, God is a philosophical concept which 'savages' like Africans are incapable of framing. The Whites believe that literature exists only in the written mode. This infers that anything unwritten is not literature. These declarations no doubt are prejudicial, Eurocentric and biased. The denial of the status of "culture" to the way of life of a given community is no doubt unfair. One fact that we cannot run away from is the fact that every society has its own way of life which is its culture. Literature should be adjudged by its sociological function and mode which encapsulate its imaginative and creative qualities. Sangodare (2019, 1) writes:

In fact, anthropological and psychological works like Frazer's and Jung's have invalidated the Eurocentric view that the body of works before the era of written culture cannot be called literature. Scholes and Kellogs, quoted in Akporobaro (2006, p. 36), affirms this invalidation thus:

The anthropologists beginning with Frazer in *The Golden Bough* have given priceless information about the relationship between literature and culture in primitive society, opening the way to such literary studies... the psychologists – Jung, even more than Freud, have given us equally important insights into the ways in which literature is related to an individual's mental process, making possible a new fruitful school of literary studies – archetypal criticism. Africans are blessed with myriad creative genres evolving from their different religious engagements. The divination text for example, is a type of poetry common in Africa. They are with one or more kinds of divination and each of this has generated a form of poetic or artistic outlet. Akporobaro (2006), quoted in Sangodare (2019, 2) supports this position thus:

In many African societies like the Yorùbá, Ìgbò, Ìsoko and Akan, divination is a highly developed and popular religious institution that constitutes a means of knowing the wishes of the spiritual powers. In these societies, the art of divination has evolved along with specialized occult poetry known only to the priests and recited during the divination exercise. In accordance with the function, divination poetry has special content and format.

Ifá divination poetry is an embodiment of wisdom, the Yorùbá world view, philosophy and socio-cultural projections. It shows the richness, the beauty and the dialectic essence of orator in the African context. *Ifá* divination poetry is described as “a mystery vessel of wisdom, knowledge and understanding sent by *Olódùmarè* (God) to do good deeds among men. Adegbindin (2017, 363) quoted in Sangodare (2019), opines that:

Yorùbá have a faith in a plethora of deities and the spirituality of the cosmological order, they express their strong belief in the existence of unfriendly forces of evil people, Sorcerers, witches, gnomes and so on. Fears of these unfriendly forces lead people to employ various forms of divinatory techniques. Their aim is to gain knowledge of the extent of their involvements with these forces and of the means to fortify themselves against their wrath. They also use divination to gain knowledge of the will and directives of their numerous deities and ancestors.

In Yorùbá belief system, *Òrúnmilà*, the progenitor of *Ifá* divination poetry is one of the primordial divinities believed to be existing with *Olódùmarè* (God) before creation and partook in the works of creation. *Òrúnmilà* is believed to be a witness of man's choice of destiny in heaven before the journey to the earth. Hence, he is addressed as *Èlérù Ìpín* meaning “the one who witnessed man's choice of destiny. This belief culminated in the idea of consulting with *Òrúnmilà* (*Ifá*) before embarking on any new project including the birth and naming of a new born baby. This is to ensure the nature and destiny of such a child and also to ensure that the child is rightly tutored. Ajàyí (2002, 17) observes that every mythological poem recounted by the *Ifá* priest is revisited for solving problems in contemporary society because the fate of the contemporary client depends on the experience of one past client or the other. This implies that the archetypal projection in *Ifá* divination poetry manifests in the relationship between the two characters. This is in agreement with the notion that archetypes are replications of experiences, characters, motifs or themes.

Balogun (2003, 143) observes that there is a close relationship between archetypes and oral tradition. In *Ifá* divination poetry for example, there exists myths and stories that have bearing on people's lives in present times. It is postulated that cultural, social and psychological specifications in the contemporary society have precedents from the past to

demonstrate that nothing is new (strange) under the sun. No wonder, Jung (1975, 48) declares that:

The concept of archetype is derived from the repeated observations that for instance, the myths and fairy tales of world literature contain definite motifs which crop up everywhere. We meet such motifs in the fantasies, dreams, deliria and delusion of individual living today. Each society has its own myths which guide its behaviours. For instance, the Yorùbá creation myths recognize the importance of Òrìṣàńlá (Ọ̀bàtálá) and Odùduwà. This accounts for the position of high esteem in which these two figures are held among the Yorùbá people. According to our informant, the Igbos on the other hand trace their origin to Israel. The Èbìràs believe that *Ohomorihi* is the creator of the Universe and they always show their allegiance to Him. Myth is an instrument with the capacity to promote social harmony between human and the nature worlds. Myths to a large extent, guide people's behaviour and their reactions to natural events. For instance, the recognition of Odùduwà's purported role in the creation process subsequent to his founding of Ile-Ifẹ̀, the cradle of the entire Yorùbá race, acts as a unifying factor among the Yorùbá people. The same goes with Òrìṣàńlá, the divinity believed to be in charge of man's destiny.

The assertion above implies that myths have both ideological and sociological values as they form an integral part of the socio-cultural life of the Yorùbá. Myths have functional hidden codes, which could be explored. Myths also have the power to pull back the society from total collapse. This is because there are myths that have to do with morality. An example is the Yorùbá myth that forbids co-wives to engage in physical combat. Such an act is believed to be opened to punishment by the family oracle. The punishment by the oracle is dictated by the super ego that prevents co-wives from engaging in physical combat.

Socio-political relevance of *Ifá* Divination Poetry

The socio-political relevance of *Ifá* divination poetry in contemporary society cannot be over emphasized. The genre plays prominent role in enhancing the well-being and progress of mankind both politically and socially as we shall see later in this paper. It is in line with this opinion that art has to influence the society. As found in folk stories, the key issues in *Ifá* divination poetry are entertainment and didacticism. Salami (2002, p.xvi) states that "*Ifá* divination poems can be used to reshape the already broken life of man where terror, hatred and anarchy are the order of the day". This statement expresses the viability of *Ifá* divination poetry to correct pervasive social anomalies. Sangodare, (2019, 69) exclaims that on the premises of this, Wande Abimbọ̀la published "*Ifá will mend our broken world*" in 1997. Abimbọ̀la (1995, 32) had asserted that:

The contact which the traditionally minded Yorùbá makes constantly with the *Ifá* corpus therefore enriches his aesthetic values and satisfies his imaginative instincts in the same way as modern novels, poems, and films educate, satisfy and enrich the dwellers.

The statement above provides a background for the usefulness and relevance of *Ifá* poetry in both aesthetic and social functions which are two primary values of literature through other sub-functions can be realized. The functionality of *Ifá* divination poetry manifests both in its content and form. In like manner, Lawuyi (1989, 7) quoted in Sangodare, (2019) posits that "*Ifá* text provides insight into the socio-political reality of the Yorùbá". According to him, *Ifá* literary poems represent "the traditional Yorùbá worldview which enables the people to understand their environment. The literary corpus is thus referred to as "a repository of

knowledge embracing culture, history, philosophy, medicine, moral, folklore, religion, policies as well as socio-economic welfare of their life. He also argued that “the themes contained in the *Ifá* literary corpus can provide a panacea to many problems militating against the progress and growth of a nation. In the same vein, Ojó and Ajayi (2016, 178), quoted in Sangodare (2019, 70) believe that there is an intrinsic relationship between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ called ‘myth’. Ojo and Ajayi explain that myths perform various functions as an effective tool in the communication process in all discourse and in the traditional Education system, and myth is very important because it refers to narrative presentation of archetypal, eternal, ideals or eschatological meaning in terms of events in the sensible space time world. According to them, *Ifá* verses enlighten mankind on how to manage resources, how to govern ourselves, how to select good leaders for the society, how to choose viable business, how to relate with one another and so on. They further explain that *Ifá* poetry frowns at theft, dishonesty, lying and disobedience, high-handedness, hardened heart, bribery and corruption, embezzlement and so on. This infers that *Ifá* poems condemn all unethical behaviours and punish deliberate violation of society taboos and unethical laws of the society.

These roles of *Ifá* verses are not peculiar to *Ifá* corpus alone, it is also “the features of all other oral narratives like folktales, myths and legends in the Yorùbá society and they are forms of one archetype or the other because the points are primordial elements and they are not peculiar to just one society. They are universal elements which are present in other forms of art and other societies. In like manner, the economic value of poetry especially in the modern age cannot be underestimated. There is no doubt that today, people now join *Ifá* cult simply because of their economic hardship. For instance, most practitioners now charge their customers or clients exorbitant fees on enquiries. This is common with rich and well-to-do persons who are charged heavily.

In an oral interview with Òpèfeyítímí, as reported by Şàngódáre (2019), he says that “socially, *Ifá* divination poetry plays a significant role in the interactions of human beings from womb to womb. He refers to the poetry as a corpus of guidance and counseling. According to him, before the coming of foreign religions to Africa, every phase of human life from birth to death was usually moderated and directed by *Ifá*. He expatiates that it was the counseling on the destiny of man”.

Archetypal Themes in *Ifá* Divination Poetry

Nearly, if not all religions in the world incorporates predestination into the bedrock of their principles. The Yorùbá are not left out. Hardly can one see any ethnic group that has no place for destiny in their world views. The belief of each ethnic group determines their thinking and attitude about life and this, invariably determine and direct their actions. In Yorùbá cosmology, there is a firm belief in destiny. *Òrúnmìlà* is believed to be the deity in charge of man’s destiny. The name ‘*Èlérìí Ìpín*’ used to describe *Òrúnmìlà* testifies to this belief. Therefore, he is being consulted through *Ifá* divination. Whatever *Òrúnmìlà* says is neither queried nor waved off. He also says what each person’s destiny demands. The concept of destiny is also referred to as *orí*, *ipín*, *àyànmọ*, *òrun*, *ẹlédàá* as the case may be and according to the belief, one *Àjàlá* is believed to be the molder of heads in heaven. According to the myth, *Àjàlá* was given the freedom to shape the head the way he wanted it. This however, is the physical head (*orí ìta*) but the inner head (*orí inú*) is what we refer to as destiny. Yorùbá accord respect to ‘*orí*’ and so, constant rituals are performed for the individual ‘*orí*’ who is believed to be able to ward off evil, enemy attack, wicked plans but instead, brings fortune. This is as a result of people’s believe that man do not live alone in the world, rather, they live

with other creatures, evil spirits, witches and wizards who have spiritual power to change man's destiny. It is also believed that not all men choose good destiny from heaven, hence, the effort to change bad destiny to good one through divination. Whatever the case may be, there is the belief that whatever success or failure a person will record, the person's destiny (*orí*) determines it. Abimbólá cites the *ifá* verse below to support this claim.

<i>Njé ohun gbogbo tó bá ñ dùn mí</i>	-	All that my heart desire
<i>N ó máa rò f'órí mí</i>	-	I shall disclose to my <i>orí</i> (destiny)
<i>Orí ẹni lalágbòràndùn ẹni</i>	-	One's destiny is his sympathizer
<i>Orí mí là mí o</i>	-	My <i>orí</i> (destiny) should make me prosper
<i>Ìwọ lalágbòràndùn</i>	-	You are the sympathizer

It is evident that today, despite the introduction of foreign religions, despite the high level of condemnation for the traditional religious rites, people still make consultations with traditional religious leaders in search of solutions to their various problems especially when it comes to what to do and in what situation. We have heard and have read about Imams, Pastors and leaders of modern religious organizations who patronize traditional religious practitioners for protections. Many of such people have been accused of performing unpardonable rituals before floating their churches. Some employ the use of charms such as 'Awòrò (crowd puller), *Àfòşẹ* (no query charm) and the likes. The motif behind these actions is not different from one religion to the other. This infers that all religions believe in the existence and functionality of destiny in man's success or failure in life.

The Theme of Character

Yorùbá believe in predestination but at the same time, they value good character. Yorùbá believe that each person choose his or her destiny in heaven but decides the character to exhibit on earth. There is the belief that even if one chooses a good destiny but lacks good character, such person is a failure in life. One Yorùbá poem reads:

Eni tó lówó/kólé/láya/lókọ/bímọ tí kò ní iwà
Owó Olówó/ilé Onilé/Aya Aláya/Okọ Olókọ/Ọmọ Olómọ
Ló ní/ló kọ/ló ní/ló bí

Literally, this means that a man who has plenty of money, builds a mansion, marries a wife/husband, bears children but lacks good character, all he has belong not to him but to another person.

Despite this belief, Yorùbá believe that a person's destiny can be influenced by his character. There is the belief that character can spell doom in several ways. For instance, someone with bad character may not receive favour, so also, the gods may be angry with such a person thus hindering his reception of favour, blessing and other good fortunes of life. Here is this *ifá* verse which claims that character (*iwà*) was *Ọrúnmilà's* wife but for her filthiness, *Ọrúnmilà* divorced her. She left *Ọrúnmilà's* house and went to the house of *Olódùmarè* (God, the Supreme Being) because she was God's granddaughter, whose father, *Patience* was God's first son. This is what informed the popular saying that "*Sùúrù ní Baba iwà*" meaning, "Patience is the father of character".

Immediately Character left *Ọrúnmilà's house*, *Ọrúnmilà* began to experience hardship. He decided to look for 'Character' and bring her back home. He found her but 'Character' refused to yield *Ọrúnmilà's* appeals, instead, she advised *Ọrúnmilà* to display decent behaviour.

The lesson here is that whosoever exhibits good character has to be patient and enduring because series of insults will come his way in his service to humanity, but if one endures, there will be a reward for such person. So, we are urged to jealously guide our character. Guiding one's character is no doubt applicable to the contemporary society. There is the belief that when good character is lost within a family, such family will be in disarray. So, husbands are urged to learn from *Òrínmilà's* experience, that husbands should jealously guide their character as they pamper their wives so that their wives will not leave them. Here, the important roles women play in the family is stressed. Indeed, in Yorùbá culture, a man who cannot successfully manage his wife and children is regarded as irresponsible. Symbolism is central to literary criticism. This implies that the literariness of a work reposes in symbolism. Quoting Shittu (2011, 57), Şangodare (2019, 88) says: "In symbolism, symbols are used to represent ideas and qualities. The poet/writer uses symbols with the understanding that the reader understands referents of the symbols".

Symbolic patterns are numerous applied in *Ifá* divination poetry. Identification of one's symbol for resolution of the problem on ground is a recurring phenomenon in *Ifá* divination poetry. By the use of symbols, the contemporary character (client) locates his symbolic figure, who assumes, in the divination process, a mythological status. The relationship between the character in the modern time and the mythological protagonist in an *Ifá* poem demonstrates an archetypal structure. The two clients are the persons who consult the diviner (*babaláwo*) for advice and guidance by means of divination. The two also have similarity in the emergent *odù*. Thus, they both have to get through the same steps for their problems to be solved. However, the first client has to be a model or a symbolic example for the later (real) client in finding a solution to his problem. *Ọlátúnjí* (2005,135) opines that:

Symbolism underlies *Ifá* divination system, the core of which is the recitation of the *ẹşẹ ifá* pertinent to the problems of the person consulting the *babaláwo* (diviner). For, after the *babaláwo* has recited numerous *ẹşẹ ifá* from the emergent *odù* figure and the client has isolated the one relevant to his conditions; the client identifies himself completely with the protagonist. The actions of the protagonist and his fortunes are considered prognosticative of the fate of the client.

He goes further to say that:

The protagonist represents every man who has to socially and physically exercise his will to seek help and deny himself of some things in order to achieve some sort of equilibrium in his relationship with cosmic forces around him. Each *ẹşẹ ifá* presents man in his eternal struggle for a *modus viand*. The individual client in his symbolic identification with this primordial man takes the symbolism full cycle.

Ifá divination poems are used symbolically in our analysis. In *Ogbè Ìwòrì*, we have this:

<i>A díá fún Èbù Èyìn</i>	-	Devine for <i>Èbù Èyìn</i>
<i>Èyí tí sọmọ iyá ògún</i>	-	The sibling of <i>Ògún</i>
<i>Akíkanjú èniyàn ni iyá ògún</i>	-	<i>Ìyá Ògún</i> is an energetic person
<i>Şùgbón tó bá sọ pé òun ó şe nńkan lóla</i>	-	But anytime he plans to execute a project
<i>Èbù Èyìn á ti lẹ̀bà ibẹ̀ jẹ</i>	-	<i>Èbù Èyìn</i> would go to destroy the set up
<i>Tí ọ̀n bá sọ pé lẹ̀tunla làwọ̀n ó lẹ̀bà şe nńkan</i>	-	If he fixes another for the third day
<i>Èbù Èyìn á lẹ̀bà à jẹ</i>	-	<i>Èbù Èyìn</i> would have gone to cause destruction

Ògún experienced this set back many times without knowing the cause of his failures until when he goes to divine. It is an irony that *Èbù Èyìn*, *Ògún's* confidant is the one plotting his failure. *Ògún* never thought his blood brother could do this to him. *Ògún* choose to consult with *Ifá*. This gave room for wisdom and spiritual intervention. *Ifá* clears away the darkness and *Ògún* is advised to refrain himself from disclosure of his personal affairs to anybody. Henceforth, *Ògún* keeps his intention to himself and hence, he is transformed to maturity.

Here, *Ògún* symbolizes an individual who is a victim of secret conspiracy in life, and the plot features as an archetypal illustration of how *Èbù Èyìn* damages the programme of the entire world secretly.

To a client whom the *Odù Ogbè Ìwòrì* is revealed will eventually be warned against disclosing his personal affairs to the second person, even the closest person to him. Also, the client has to comply with whatever instructions are given by *Ifá* such as refraining from disclosing his plans or programmes to another person.

Similarly, the *Odù Odì Ọsá* referenced the individual who sees himself in the midst of enemies spearheaded by jealous people around him. Such a person is metaphorically pictured in the character of the Tiger. The Tiger finds himself in the midst of antagonists and rival animals. To a person who this *Ifá* verse is revealed, first derive the symbol of the Tiger, the qualities of fame and bravery but also surrounded by enemies who are envious of him. This is to affirm that what the character is facing is not new. It is the archetype of the Tiger.

In the poem, out of jealousy, and because of his fame, several animals make the Tiger their common enemy who should be rebelled against. Rebellion propelled by envy and without anything positive for their community. Their concern is to out stead the Tiger from the forest kingship.

Saara, saara labẹ́ẹ́ fá - The sharp blade shaves the head in quick strokes

A díá fún èìnlọ́jọ ẹranko - Divined for uncountable number of animals

Nijọ wọn n b'Èkùn sọtè - On the day they encounter the Tiger in cold war

Nijọ wọn n b'Èkùn sọtá - On the day they were making the Tiger their

common enemy

The fact that his enemies are many may give the impression that the Tiger will surrender but the Tiger conquered them through the assistance of his priest – *Ìdin sàá sàá* and *Ìdin sòó sòó*. The Tiger was instructed to offer twenty (20) razor blades as sacrifice and he complied. The number of blades he is instructed to offer as sacrifice tells the seriousness of the attack.

There is a link between the Tiger and the individual person who relieves the poetic Tiger's experience in the contemporary society. Such a contemporary personality has to imitate the Tiger's step. Having complied, the Tiger gets ready for the war. His counter-attack is more forceful and destructive than that of the animal rebels. The Tiger is used as a symbol of bravery and terror.

Apart from this, *Ifá* corpus plays vital roles in the affairs of man and the community. Yorùbá don't play with the voice of *Ọrúnmilà*. As mentioned earlier, *Ọrúnmilà* is projected as the custodian of man's destiny. So, they would not do anything without consultation with *Ọrúnmilà* be it social, economic, moral and political affairs of the people.

Òjó and Àjàyí (2016, 2) quoted in Şàngódáre (2019, 150) lay credence to this claim that “thus the *Ifá* literary corpus (*Odù Ifá*) contain verses (*ẹsẹ*) which is loaded with political social and economic issues in the Yorùbá society. Equally too, Láuuyì (1989, 7) describes the *Ifá* poetry as a codification of a complex worldview and a text that provides insight into the socio-political reality of the Yorùbá traditional and modern life”. As much as we would want to support this notion, we want to state that this is not applicable to the Yorùbá race alone.

The priest can be compared to the contemporary politicians or advisers. The priest, most times, determine the political, social trends of the people. They do not do anything outside what the priest says. For example, the king makers act on the advice of the *Ifá* priest to choose the right candidate for the post of the king. However, it should be noted that the oracle advices, he does not force any opinion or advice on the people but the people bear the outcome of their actions. i.e. for or against the oracle advice.

The above is similar to the contemporary political system (modern democracy). The role of Special Advisers can be said to be the archetype of the priest. In Nigeria today, we have politicians who act as priests (advisers) to politicians and they constantly intervene in the political affairs of the country. They give their opinions on National issues. They are forces to reckon with.

Similarly in the Yorùbá tradition, the priest not only advice on the appointment of leaders, they also stand by the appointed leaders to ensure a successful tenor. This is made possible by the people’s time to time spiritual intervention. Even today, politicians still make consultations with the priests thus making their position relevant.

The priest is supposed to serve mankind. He is saddled with the responsibility of warding off social chaos of any form and at any time to allow peace to reign. On this, reference can be made to *Ìròsùn Ìwòyè*. In the verse, the priest is portrayed as a comforter people hope to come across. He is always consulted in case of any social disorder. This infers that the priest’s role is to restore peace and enhance social order. He functions as solution to the people’s misfortunes. It reads:

<i>Ikú tí ò bá ní paní</i>	- The death that will not kill someone,
<i>Níí gbáláwo rere ko 'ni</i>	- Would bring a good priest across someone
<i>A díá fún Èmí Lenje</i>	- Divined for Èmí Lenje
<i>Tí n sawo ròde Ìwòyè</i>	- That was venturing priesthood in Ìwòyè
town	
<i>Èmí Lenje ló tọ àwọn awo rẹ lọ</i>	- Èmí Lénje had gone to his priest
<i>È yẹ òun lóókán ibò wò</i>	- Cast divination for me using <i>Ìbò</i>
<i>Wọn ó ké sí ọ látòkèèrè</i>	- People would request for you from abroad
<i>Kóo yáa tètè lọ òkèrè ọhún o</i>	- You should go to the place without delay
<i>Ó mọ wá wo nńkankan ńnú ilèè rẹ</i>	- But then, you would be thinking of a situation in your home.
<i>Pé àbí kí n mọ lọ ní</i>	- That should I not go?
<i>Wọn ní o má wo ẹyìn o</i>	- That you should not look back
	(Şàngódáre, 2019, 104).

The verse above emphatically stresses the social commitment of the priest. This can be likened to the committed activists and reformers. The name *Ìwòyè* is symbolic. It means “successfully healing the sick”. The name refers to the priest who is portrayed as life giver.

The priest's prediction later comes to pass. *Ẹmí's* major assignment is to rehabilitate *Ìwòyè* town.

town	<i>Nígbà ó Ẹ sáá</i> <i>Wọ̀n bá ránsẹ̀ sí Ẹmí Lenje látode Ẹwòyè</i>	- Shortly after then - They sent for <i>Ẹmí Lenje</i> from <i>Ìwòyè</i>
town	<i>Pé kó wá bá àwọ̀n tún òde Ẹwòyè Ẹ</i>	- That he should come to rebuild <i>Ìwòyè</i>
town	<i>Òde Ẹwòyè ti dàrú</i> <i>Obìnrin ẹ̀ sì lóyún n nù</i> <i>Kò sì fẹ́ẹ̀ kúrò nílẹ̀</i> <i>Ó ló dáa</i> <i>Àwọ̀n Babaláwo òun ti sọ́ fún òun tẹ̀lẹ̀</i> <i>Ó bá múra</i> <i>Ó gbòde Ẹwòyè lọ</i> <i>Ní n bá wọ̀n tún òde Ẹwòyè Ẹ</i>	- The city of <i>Ìwòyè</i> is in total disarray - His wife was pregnant at that time - <i>Ẹmí Lenje</i> did not want to leave her - It is well, he said - His diviners had told him this before - He prepared for the trip - He left for the city of <i>Ìwòyè</i> - He helped in rebuilding the city of
<i>Ìwòyè</i>	<i>Àwọ̀n ará òde Ẹwòyè Ẹ dáadáa</i> <i>Obìnrin rẹ̀, bá bímọ́ nílẹ̀</i> <i>Òde Ẹwòyè tó lọ́ lẹ̀hùn dáa</i>	- The people of <i>Ìwòyè</i> got healed - His wife put to bed at home - The <i>Ìwòyè</i> city that he went was fine
also	<i>Ilẹ̀ tó fì sílẹ̀ náà dáa</i>	- The home he left was better than he left
it		

(Sàngódáre 2019, 106)

Ẹmí is an archetype of a political rebuilders on whom the people of *Ìwòyè* depend for their 'salvation'. To fulfill this mission, *Ẹmí* had to forgo his domestic problem. He left home when his pregnant wife was in labour to answer his call to service. This is what a sincere activist or reformer should do. He should be prepared to answer call for responsibility, the situation on ground notwithstanding. His personal challenges should not discourage him.

In this poem, two major facts are demonstrated. First, *Ẹmí* intervenes in *Ìwòyè* crisis and restored normalcy. Two, *Ẹmí's* priests see the future of the political sojourn of *Ẹmí* and guided him. *Ẹmí's* decision was based on the guidance given by the priest. Hence, he volunteered to bring new dawn to *Ìwòyè* town.

In the contemporary society, we have several political icons who have mediated in crises. Such people are archetypes of *Ẹmí Lenje* and *Ẹmí's* priests who resolve socio-political disorder and design the way forward for political success respectively. *Ẹmí's* service provides succor for the alleviation of the people's problems. The people of *Ìwòyè* also know that *Ẹmí* not only has the power to reconstruct their dilapidated political pillar, but he also possesses the wisdom to for see the future and show them the right direction to follow in order to rejuvenate their structure.

The Jungian archetypal categories such as the trickster archetype are found in *Ògúndá Ẹwòrì*. In the poem, the tortoise is portrayed as an inveterate trickster. In Yorùbá mythology, the tortoise is generally known as a master of deceit. He uses wittiness to display superiority of his better understanding of the world and his mastery of how to manipulate things to make his victims look foolish. To the tortoise, the use of trick wittiness deceit is to project himself as a superman in the game of intelligence. Hence, the saying: "*Àlọ̀ àlọ̀ kii Ẹ lóri Alábahun*".

Afọlábí (2005, 77-78) explains the trickster archetypal essence of the tortoise thus: In Yorùbá folklorist tradition, the tortoise is everywhere. If he is not seen playing tricks on his in-law, he is seen teaching the king wisdom. The tortoise is in fact seen as a clever animal whose craftiness is, at times, his nemesis. The tortoise then becomes a literary archetype, a raw material base for folktales.

In *Ògúndá Ìròsùn*, the cat is the tortoise's victim. The cat argues that nobody can punish an innocent person, only an offending person is liable to punishment. He says:

public	<i>Ológìnní ní ñ sòrò ní 'ta</i>	-It was the cat that was boasting in
	<i>Ní ñ pé'</i>	-He was saying
	<i>B'èyàn ò bá ti sẹ</i>	-If a person does not commit any offence
	<i>Wọ̀n ò lè mú òyàn</i>	-He cannot be arrested
	<i>Èni ó bá sẹ</i>	-It is the person that offends
	<i>Nlòfin ín mú</i>	-That the arms of the law catches

(Sàngódáre (2019, 118).

In fact, the cat was right going by the law, but the tortoise sees this as an infringement on his personality, as a challenge to craftiness for which the tortoise is known. The tortoise then decides to make the cat to be cautious of what he says in public. He sees the cat's speech as a careless one, he then teaches the cat in a sad way that life is not as the cat ignorantly thinks.

Alábahun sù ñ gbọ	- And the tortoise was hearing
him	<i>Ó sù mò pé òun ní Ológìnní ñ pòwè mó</i> -He knew the cat was talking proverbially to
time	<i>Ọ̀rẹ̀ sù ní Ológìnní àti Ahun</i> - The tortoise and the cat are friends
	<i>Alábahun wá ronú tí</i> - The tortoise thinks over it for s length of
	<i>Òun ní Ológìnní ñ pé ní jàmbá</i> - It is me the cat calls a deceit
	<i>Òun ó sù fì ohun tí àwọ̀n ayé ẹ̀ hán án</i> - He will show him the true picture of life
	<i>Nígbà tí ò bá ẹ̀ nńkan ọ̀ràn</i> - When he does not commit any offence
	<i>Tí ọ̀ràn sù wọ̀lé lẹ̀ ọ̀ bá a</i> - And trouble enters his house
	<i>Òun ó wo ohun tí ó ẹ̀</i> - I shall see what he would do
public.	<i>Yóó mò pé à á mó ọ̀ sòrò nísọ wéréwéré ní</i> - He will know/learn how to talk in

The tortoise goes to steal a fowl in a nearby town, plucks the feathers from the town to the cat's compound to implicate the cat. By this time, the cat is in a deep sleep indicating man's carelessness in time of trial. This kind of sleep has negative effects on man's progress. The tortoise action is presented thus:

fowl	<i>Nígbà tí ó dijọ kan</i> -On the faithful day
	<i>Ológìnní ñ bẹ 'nú lé</i> -The cat was in his house
	<i>Alábahun bá lẹ̀ ọ̀ j'ádiẹ̀ gbé nilú keji</i> - The tortoise went to a nearby town to steal a
	<i>Ló bá tu hùhù adìẹ̀ láti ilẹ̀ rẹ̀</i> - He started to remove the feathers continuously
	<i>Ó tu ú tí tí té fì wọ̀ ilẹ̀ Ológìnní</i> - Until he entered the cat's compound
	<i>Ó pa adìẹ̀ ó sù ju orí rẹ̀ sílẹ̀</i> - He slaughtered the fowl and cut the head off
	<i>Ló bá fì lé ilẹ̀</i> - He dropped it on the ground
	<i>Ológìnní sù sùn fọ̀nfọ̀n</i> - Meanwhile, the cat was fast asleep
	<i>Ìgbà tí ilẹ̀ mó</i> -When it was dawn

<i>Àwọn aládiẹ ò rí adìẹ mó</i>	- The owner of the fowl could not find his chicken
<i>Wọn bá ń tọpa tọpa</i>	- He formed a search party with his people
<i>Wọn tọpa hùhù adìẹ wọ inú ilé Ológinní</i>	- They traced the feather to the cat's house
<i>Wọn bá mú un</i>	- The cat was apprehended
<i>Ní ń kígbé "òun ò ẹ̀ ǹkankan"</i>	- I am innocent, says the cat.

In this story, the tortoise is a trickster archetype. He relies heavily on tricks in almost every narrative he is featured and in most cases of trickery, he is of evil ambition. In this story, the tortoise uses the cat to prove that the ground is slippery, so, one has to be careful of what to say, where and when to say such a thing. His plans worked and the cat was implicated and apprehended. The cat has violated the criminal law and so, he has to be dealt with mercilessly. The tortoise however confesses his role in the saga after the cat has been arrested and was about to be executed. Though the tortoise paid for the fowl, he has achieved his aim. He exercises his wealth of intelligence via his trick potential. The cat would have lost his life if the tortoise does not intervene on time. While the tortoise is pictured as an image of mischievousness, unexpectedness disorder and immorality, the poem downplays the figure of the cat. In contrary, the tortoise is legendised and he is rated high in intelligence tussle among other animals.

In like manner, cunning players in power, political arena, economic engagement, inter personal relations and the likes, all have the archetypal tortoise as their model. Many people in our contemporary society are tortoise-personified. The motives are always out of egocentricity. For example, some Nigerians see General Ibrahim Babangida as a trickster genius whose leadership style is anchored in diplomatic deceit hence; he is nick-named "Maradona" literally meaning a cunning and deceitful person. Similarly too, some Nigerians perceive Dr. Bukola Saraki, the former Senate President as a political trickster considering how he emerged the President of Senate in the 8th Republic. On the contrary, one can also see the likes of the cat in real life. They have been victims of trickster. Many have been jailed for offence they knew nothing about. Their innocence is discovered after they have been wrongly punished. Examples are many and varied and we cannot exhaust them here.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study applies archetypal theory in analyzing selected poems in the *Ifá* literary corpus and the followings are our findings:

- (i). That *Ifá* divinatorial chants contain archetypal elements like myths, trickster archetype, which have universal appeal and can be found in contemporary modern society.
- (ii). *Ifá* literary corpus contains satirical echoes bordering on power tussle, myopic leadership, moral decadence and other social anomalies
- (iii). Characters in *Ifá* divination poetry mediate and carry out risky tasks to resolve social crisis. Example is the *Èmí* story who left his pregnant wife in critical condition to attend to the problems of the *Ìwòyè* people.
- (iv). Symbols and images in *Ifá* divination poetry are used to condemn vices and applaud virtues in the contemporary society.
- (v). Social regeneration is attainable through archetypal social justice, revolution and nationalism to address social challenges among others.

In conclusion, archetypal criticism is suitable for analyzing various happening in the contemporary modern society. The belief of the protagonist of archetypal criticism that life experience is being replicated has been further established. Our investigation shows that archetypes and myths are closely related.

We would like to agree with Sangodare's (2019) view that "the purpose of archetypal analysis is to defend the thesis that no event or character these days exists in a vacuum, it is only a throwback of a past event or protagonist".

The paper recommends that for Africans in general, myths and indeed, oral materials should no longer be seen as inferior. African artists in general and the Yorùbá artists in particular who wish to use them in their works should seek universal relevance for them.

Based on the analysis and findings above, one can say that African oral materials are relevant and useful within their society, and that if the oral arts such as Ifa chant are adapted to universe needs, they will gain a universal space that will remove the barrier placed on them by those with Western gaze, those using foreign ways of viewing to decimate the value of African chants.

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