

From Folklore to Multimedia: Repositioning Nigerian Folklore for Cultural Development in a New Technological World

Godwin Aondofa Ikyer

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6997-5661>

Federal University Wukari, Nigeria

ikyeraondofa@gmail.com; aondofa@fuwukari.edu.ng

Abstract

In Nigeria, cultural contents have continued to be explored in relation to their typologies, taxonomies and social value. Some folklore materials are disappearing due to modernisation and globalisation, leaving marginal communities to turn to alien models, some of which are not effective or accessible. The desire for a community-based model is weak as it is considered primitive and inferior to contemporary existence. Folklorists are too few with too little research wherewithal to carry out an extensive and broad-based study on oral art forms and their continued relevance to society. An ironic hybrid and interdisciplinary connectivity exists between folklore and multimedia as cultural materials adopt modern technologies, which an in-depth study could bring to light. This article, using the contextual perspective of analysis, examines ways in which folklore materials could continue to be explored even in their dynamic new multimedia “homes” such as music, photography, moving images, audio, computer, and broadcast media, thus creating new narrative and performance spaces other than the oral and the literary, and a new interface between folklore and modern technology life. The article proposes the undertaking of enhanced research into the hidden dimensions of folklore and the re-fashioning of cultural thought, science and technology, in line with cultural and global trends towards enhanced knowledge and development.

Keywords: folklore; multimedia; modernisation; hybrid; interface

Introduction

African, Asian and Latin American communities are among the many marginal communities around the world that explore the potency of oral communication in



Imbizo

<https://upjournals.co.za/index.php/Imbizo>

Volume 8 | Number 2 | 2017 | #3168 | 16 pages

<https://doi.org/10.25159/2078-9785/3168>

ISSN 2078-9785 (Print)

© Unisa Press 2018

organising, refashioning, and regulating themselves in regard to various aspects of their lives such as entertainment, expressing values, denouncing vices, intensifying linguistic, socio-cultural, economic, political and religious bonds, reconstructing chasms and building bridges, and charting and developing a vision in their spatial ecology. Oral art forms and their subsumed material culture have their roots in the socially unifying properties of culture and therefore illuminate a people's worldview and values, which are precursors to subsequent creative, scientific and technological developments and innovations. In contemporary society where value is placed not just on property but also on ideas and information, oral art productions retain their relevance as effective tools of fostering greater knowledge and development in diverse fields, be it medicine, engineering, pharmacology, environment, biotechnology, biochemistry, or economics. In this regard, Gunner (2007, 76) states that "many oral cultures have developed various strategies within the complex framework of their semiotic systems."

The cultures of African countries are basically oral in nature, although the written word is an age-old tradition in Africa. Cultural and creative ways of expression are orally based and constitutive of the processes of oral art preservation (Baran 2009, 21). Oral art forms have now found new expressive forms of conveying their content, of hybridising with other forms of preservation, of reemerging in new postmodern forms, of probing academic discourse from multidisciplinary angles, and of engaging in a higher multidirectional creativity and application. This study used the contextual perspective in analysing the ways in which folklore materials could continue to be explored even in the dynamic new "homes" of multimedia in forms such as music, photography, moving images, audio, computer, broadcast media, sale and lease, film, oral histories, physical artifacts, and graphics, thus creating a new phase of narrative and performance space other than the oral and literary and a new interface between folklore and modern technology life.

African Oral Art Forms and Folklore

Oral art forms, which are reliant on the oral traditions of transmission, maintain a preservation connection because knowledge is passed on from one generation to the other, forming chain-like connections through processes of retelling and memory recollection. This makes the knowledge chain-long, ubiquitous and dynamic, with each (re)telling having its own re-colouring and performance dynamics, depending on the narrator, audience, time, atmosphere, and setting. The flexibility and continued relevance of oral art forms rest on their interactive and connective chain axiomatic in their generational stretches, and even in the variety of resourceful strategies, techniques and formulas that create freshness in the telling of an age-old tale.

It may be a rather unpleasant surprise to those who do not know the African culture to learn that African oral art forms are dynamic, so much so that they are customised to fit the local flavour, aesthetics, norms, values, and visions of different generations and

societies. In fact, contemporary media that disseminate knowledge and information via scientific and technological devices are increasingly finding value in media commoditisation, restructuring or refreshing, mass production and distribution processes. Multimedia is being deployed in university departments, on the internet, on social networks, and on logos of phones and computers, such that it has become unfashionable to continue to fix oral art forms and folklore to any static, time-bound and culture-bound content and evaluation criteria that restrict rather than open up maturation matrices for growth, broader perspectives, and development.

It has become obvious that cultures, ideas, patterns of thought, aesthetics, norms, values, visions, ethos, and social content about society itself can no longer be represented only by traditional memory monographs. Contemporary mediums of narratives and performances using audio, visual and other technical effects via extensive multimedia possibilities, strengths and technologies, such as non-linear, three-dimensional internet interactivity, editing, education content and other electronic devices have created a new hybrid form of representing old contents to reflect an enhanced and digital way of achieving cultural preservation, representation, and reflection of the ways of life and thinking of a people. Using multimedia, the structure of narratives and performances has been revised and/or recreated for technical and creative effects, transforming its first form to suit technological and scientific equipment and trends.

Oral Art Forms, Folklore and their Constituent Forms

The processes and struggles related to the decolonisation of Africa resulted in the coinage of the term orature, used in departments of English across African universities. Appropriating the nomenclature of orature is relevant to postcolonial Africa to foreground African oral narratives and performances against a broader folklore of, for instance, music and architecture in Western folklore. The term orature was coined by Pio Zirimu to set discursive limits to oral art forms “and the use of utterance as an aesthetic means of expression,” and to place greater emphasis on the oral aspects generated in myths, legends, proverbs, riddles, jokes, tongue twisters, aphorisms, satires, songs, theatrical mimes, folktales and oral performances (Aliyu 1986, 51; Zirimu and Bukenya 1986, 88). Orature is fashioned out of the fluid, dynamic and ontological impulses and qualities of the spoken word, deriving from the consciousness that every society started with oral transmissions. The oral seems to be associated with Africa and it has the derogatory connotation of a backwater society; despite folklore’s continued relevance as it interfaces with modern media technologies.

Mwangola (quoted in Babajo 2011, 9) states that the term orature has come to mean “an interdisciplinary aesthetic system weaving together numerous genres in the performance of a concept.” Okpewho (1992, 43), who prefers the term “oral literature,” sees it as “literature delivered by word of mouth,” stating that oral literature “emphasizes the oral character of the literature.” Much as the term orature has varied definitions, for example,

that it is “the versions of a well-known tale” (Ben-Amos 1971, 4), is “constrained by conceptual and theoretical limitations” for not streaming a “clear cut disciplinary path for itself” at some time in its emergence (Liman 2012, 3).

The study of orature or oral art forms has changed due to its fluidity and the endeavour to be in tune with the dictates of the time. Apart from the ever-continuing research on the disappearing aspect of oral art, which remains unexplored or underexplored in terms of salvaging, documenting, collecting and classifying, oral art forms have raced beyond local limitations, having been flavoured by scientific and electronic media technologies, to arrive at the emerging line of victory in text, technology and culture. Oral art forms now connect culture to the community in technological, contextual and application forms and analysis. Currently, the fieldwork in orature is at the core of interdisciplinary revelations, conceptual changes and the synthesis of the forms and other threads of disciplines via, for example, multimedia interfaces. Fieldwork in orature has helped to unravel contemporary realities of cultural forms and their hybridism; their reformation to accommodate technical presence in the delivery; their production and consumer limits; their new way of coming to terms with their postmodern production; their blending with multimedia technology; their interrelationship with other fields of human endeavour such as language, literature, history, philosophy, mass communication, film, media and multimedia studies; their reincarnation of the faces of social media, internet and web domains, tablets, smartphones, cellphones, and computer wallpapers; their electronic versions in photography and film, radio and television; and their utilisation of computerised musical instruments and sound effects.

The interface of orature with multimedia has doubtless moved oral art form discourse beyond base pristine micro culture to a macro dimension, a dynamic focus on synthesis between the culturally provided, the technologically given and the creative application of technology. This dynamic interaction ensures a new form of dual creative expression, an empirical spiral and a new generation of hybrid material that gives new insights into narrative and performance methods and theory. It also opens up the field of orature and folklore to varying perspectives, seeks to understand cultural materials better, and creates a bigger production, distribution and consumption reach that encompasses both the old and modern forms. There is a further shift from the ready-made and traditionally provided narratives, performances and folklore to a synthesised balance of traditional and technical forms, the old and the new, which may add and or drop aspects of the genre or category to suit modern dictates and still maintain the thrusts of cultural expressions.

The common assumption that oral art forms and folklore are handed down from one person to another by memory or performance, is shape-bound. This assumption, which is distributed in history only within a community, is gradually being punctured with the hybridism that resonates with varieties of perspectives in multimedia production. It draws upon creative and technical spaces and connects old and new ideas, narrative and

performance techniques, values and visions for convergent and divergent presentations and interpretations. An important thought in coming to terms with contemporary oral art forms is that its contents, techniques, style, audience, contexts and other forms of culture-specific tastes can be rejuvenated, experimented with and revitalised to become attractive once again to the youth, whose “modern” concepts reject all forms of traditional and cultural productions. These processes of hybridism come about due to cultural realities of the value changes and technology-driven tastes of the modern era.

The interface between oral art forms, folklore and multimedia has created a fusion of the old and the new for an emergent orality, appropriated the technique of parody, pastiche and collage, and opened up boundless possibilities and new sensibilities for a new culture and orality to thrive. Science and technology is therefore not a threat but a partner in creating a cultural, generational continuum, a trajectory of re-directing the youth tacitly to patronising old art forms in their new forms and presentations, and paradoxically re-prioritising traditional forms of narrative and performance. We have come to realise, as Liman (2012, 10) points out, that “Today, digital communication and the new media are exerting a tremendous influence on our lives, especially on the processes and patterns of cultural production, distribution and consumption.” Reuber (2011, 7) also subscribes to this school of thought by noting the following:

Once upon a time, folklorists thought that genuine folk narratives and belief systems circulated only by word of mouth. In recent years however, especially with the invention of YouTube, on-line music, videos and electronic versions of graphic novels, we cannot deny the importance of popular culture in the transmittance, adaptation, and change of traditional folk material.

With this new understanding of the ways in which digital media influence our lives, it is important to unpack folklore as it interfaces with new media to transmit folk material.

Folklore is a broad field of study that encompasses all concerns of humanity. According to Brunvand (1968, 11), “the study of folklore is a sub-division of the broader study of people and their works.” Brunvand (1968, 11) further notes, however, that:

In traditional lore ... there are counterparts for literary and representational art, philosophical speculations, scientific enquiries, historical records, social attitudes and psychological insights.

Thus, the study of folklore is as dynamic as folklore itself.

Dundes (1968, 37) points out the broad spectrum of folklore studies when he states the following:

There are many ways of studying folklore. The literary scholar treats folklore as literature or as source material for literary masterwork. The historian regards folklore as data supplying folk attitudes towards historical events and figures. The anthropologist sees folklore as a people's autobiographical description of themselves, a description which helps the enquiring ethnographer to see the culture he is studying from the inside out rather than from the outside in. The psychologist considers much of folklore to be collective fantasy with important clues for the analysis of both social and individual psychology. The educator thinks of folklore as part of the treasured heritage of national and ethnic groups which can be used to enrich and enliven otherwise routine curricular offerings. And so the different disciplines come to the materials of folklore with different interests as to how folklore should be understood and utilized. This variety of approaches to the study of folklore is healthy and it attests to the inherent value of folkloristic data.

I hasten to add that multimedia practitioners use folklore as interdisciplinary material that is not static or culture-bound and limited in discipline discourse or distribution and consumption but is flexible enough to be flavoured and textured with additional creative and mechanical touches in order to reach a wider audience cutting across different generations. It is this dynamism of folklore that makes Kosova (1980, 266) define it as "an artistic expression which is simultaneously traditional and innovatory" as well as "an open system, which functions and exists within the relationship and changes of its component parts."

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Goetz 2007, 863) describes folklore in modern usage as an academic discipline, but also states that folklore "comprises the total of traditionally derived and orally or imitatively transmitted literature, material culture, and custom of subcultures within predominantly literate and technologically advanced societies." In the fluidity of oral art forms and folklore, multimedia has found space to document and express cultural knowledge in a multidimensional and multidisciplinary fashion. This multidimensional and multidisciplinary nature of folklore has helped the field to spread its tentacles and create new ways of performance and relevance.

Multimedia Transformation of Oral Art Forms and Folklore

As humans began to interact beyond their cultural boundaries, and as groups intermingled in various ways, the scope and level of communication and interaction broadened, and different media forms, devices and applications came to the fore. This marked the start and the evolution of multimedia. Schiller (1974, 11) sees the evolution of the media to mass media in economic terms when he points out that the "pressures and vicissitudes of the market system ... mirrored the early needs, changing strength and the enlarged scale of operations" of the media. Katzman (1974, 4), in analysing the evolution of the media to multimedia argues that "changes in man's ability to communicate over time and space result from innovation in both technology and methods of using technology." According to Ruth Finnegan (2007, 189), works of art

are no longer restricted to their traditional domains such as the oral or the written, but have become part of “multiple media.” She states that artistic products are:

No longer so much a matter of linear single-voiced texts, far less of membership of exclusive uniform categories like “the written” or “the oral,” but of the varying play and intersection of diverse voices, multiple media, serial transformations ... the processes of inscription are not simple one-to-one transfers but a maze of decisions and interventions ... multiple actors and co-creators, plural layers and associations giving way to greater sensibility to the possibilities of overlapping multiplicities, running through a range of multiple media modalities, participants, voices, situations and historical specificities.

Multimedia may be defined as a seamless digital harmonisation of text, sound, animation, graphics, still images and motion videos delivered by computer, television, the web or other media in a way that ushers in, for individual users, high levels of control and interactivity. Merolla (1992, 225) sees multimedia as “technology that guarantees scholars to share scientific and documentation knowledge with cultural producers to re-ascertain the expansive reach to other users, particularly the African Diaspora and the far and near local public.”

Multimedia concerns itself with the integration of texts, graphics, drawings, videos, still and moving images, audio, and other forms of computer-mediated software and hardware media by means of which information can be transmitted, processed digitally, stored and represented. Multimedia represents all types of media content. Multimedia technology now forays into the realm of oral art forms and folklore to transcend cultural barriers and limitations to resuscitate the documentation and preservation of an ageing art form and to broaden its cultural, technical, creative, interdisciplinary, scientific, and technological horizons.

Multimedia comprises devices such as radios, tape recorders and television sets, and technology devices such as computers (laptops and desktops), cell phones, tablets and smartphones, and channels for communicating multimedia content such as radio stations, television channels, projectors, newspapers, magazines, web design pages and social networks. Multimedia emerged in the era of the development and convergence of technologies to facilitate broader societal development. Multimedia was envisioned before the twentieth century, and its origins can be traced back to 1455 when Gutenberg and Caxton invented the printing press. Since then it has evolved into web design and application.

History, culture, values, performances and narratives have been brought to our doorsteps through digital technology. For example, the German fairytale, “Hansel and Gretel”, which was recorded in print by the Grimm Brothers in 1812, has been adapted

for various media. Engelbert Humperdinck used it to compose an opera (performed in 1893), and Arthur Rackham (1909) based an animated motion feature film on the opera.

Multimedia has made possible the mass production and consumption of cultural materials as well as their conversion into different forms, thereby providing a fresh flavour, a neo-orality, a new perspective of understanding the materials, a new way of analysis, a new trend of academic discourse, a fresh start with theorising about this blend of the old and the new, and a fresh means of transferring, transmitting, and encountering information and entertainment. We now have a new morphology of narrative, a new non-linear, dual-sensory interactive electronic form of expression and communication which adds a new pattern to the cultural narrative. In hybrid forms, the limits of time, audience, and space are reshaped to reflect the hybridisation. The multimedia interface has also nullified the mass communication postulation of mass psychology and has dismantled “the law of psychic unity of the masses” because the masses are fed in different directions by different producers with varying visions, targets, and levels of creativity and technicality. Much against the ideas of McLuhan (1967, 3) about a mass or global village and his statement that “electronic circuitry profoundly involves us with one another,” Blake (1985, 491-2) argues that “technology has broken the global village into condominiums ... the world has become less a tribal village and more an urban apartment building where people in adjacent flats cannot recognize one another.”

Owing to different innovations and techniques that usher in a renewed interest in cultural forms previously abandoned for postmodern values, and a new trend of cultural hybridisation vested with youth appeal, old oral art forms are being rejuvenated through multimedia. The musical group, Zanga Zanga of Africa, has used computerised musical instruments, techniques and forms of modern value to parody numerous oral art forms, including riddles, rhymes, jokes, myths, legends, songs, poetry, kwagh-hir performances, folklore, and proverbs of the Tiv people of Nigeria, in this way recapturing the interest of the youth in these forms. Parody is integral to postmodernity and has helped to revive old art forms. For example, the Tiv children’s play “*Imaama*” and the songs “*ka an nan tôôm gbenger ihô?*” (Who has taken my unsheathed knife?), “*tsween tsween*” (Bitter, bitter), “*ayoo*”, “*ishor katse*” (Dance is inheritance) and “*agbe tôô a tôô!*” (Dropped, take, you take) all have had a fair share of paroxysms of parody and pastiche in modern Nigerian hip hop music. Another example of pastiche is the Tiv legend “*Takuruku ta aji atar*” (Takuruku has laid three eggs) which to the Zanga Zanga group has become “*Zanga Zanga ta aji atar samber abeda nyôr Abuja, Lagos, Kano ...*” (Zanga Zanga has laid three eggs, spreads its wrapper to Abuja, Lagos, Kano ...) as a way of extending their performance reach in music. The three eggs have symbolic importance to the Tiv as they represent the tripod stones arranged to prepare food. These stones are said to have been given as a gift by Takuruku, the ancestral head of the Tiv, a gift that is believed to impart identity and prowess. In the new genre of the Tiv legend that the Zanga Zanga of Africa presents, the group’s music and performances

speak of their technical and creative inputs. In their performances they make use of media devices such as mechanised repetition, clockwise and anticlockwise acrobatics of performers, the zooming in and out of artists and audiences by cameras, the input of lighting and colour to suggest meanings, and the echoing of voice(s) from time to time. This new method is computer-mediated, and performances are not live as are traditional performances of a similar kind.

Among the Hausa of Northern Nigeria there are several examples of art forms where there is a fusion of “the old and new via electronic media gadgets and experiment with form by the modern popular artists” (Liman 2013, 6–7). There are rituals and incantations such as “*Bokanci*,” “*Sihiri*,” “*Dibbu*,” “*Bori*”; play songs, riddles and narratives such as “*Daskin Da Ridi*,” “*Waka a Dandali*,” “*Carman Dudu*,” “*Yar Tsana*,” and “*Lugu Lugu ta nuna*”; music and dance such as the “*Korosau*” cultural dance song, “*kalangu, sarawa, gada dance*,” “*takai danc*”; Fulani song and dance in films like “*Songaya Ibro Shada*” and “*Ibro Kwaro*”; and proverbs such as “*sa’a ta fi gati*,” “*allura da zare*,” “*allura da ruwa*” and “*komai nisan dare*.” These art forms are all generously used in various versions of multimedia, typifying a transformation, a freshness of perspective in comprehending cultural materials, and a new form of cultural preservation. The narrative, “*Daskin Da Ridi*,” which has human, material and plant participants, has been re-made with an entire human cast! There are also variations of theme, style, aesthetics, and vision to suit today’s tastes; thus new versions are made. There are Sadi Sidi Sharifai’s parodies of the popular songs of Rabilu Musa alias Dan Ibro, especially the song “*Bani Bayanin Naira*,” which is itself a parody of a blind beggar’s song that is sung across the towns, cities, villages and hamlets of northern Nigeria. The panegyric of court singers, in recognising the Emir of Zazzau and the Emir of Kano, has been “coupled” in style and content by Adam S. Zango, and is no longer performed in the traditional “Hausa classical court singings of Tabshe traditions like Musa Dankwairo and Saidu Faru’s but in his new version of court singing” (Liman 2013, 6). This new “genre of Tabshe” is “produced in the studio with the aid of electronic gadgets like the piano, synthesizers and computers” to carve out a “musical equivalent of traditional Tabshe beats” (Liman 2013, 6).

In the southeastern part of Nigeria there are numerous examples of hybridism, parody and pastiche, particularly in films. The film, *Royal Sacrifice*, which attacks the Igbo concepts of “free born” and “outcasts,” attempts to capture a fresh perspective of modern yearnings that uphold and question culture simultaneously. The films, *Osuofia in London*, *Bag of Jokers*, *The Prodigal Brother*, *Royal Fracas*, *Blessed Son*, *Aki Na Ukwa*, *Aki and Pawpaw*, *Aku and Pawpaw Sisters* and many others, have manifestations of culture in its traditional mode or in its changing character. These films are evidence of the paradigmatic shifts in the production of art forms to reach wider audiences. These films also generate new versions of a vision for society even as some of the films aspire

to make economic gains. Tradition, culture, values, and identity are re-created with new gusto, new perspective, and new forms of value system and identity.

In southwestern Nigeria, there are also attempts to “rejuvenate” Yoruba folklore through multimedia forms. For example, Femi Lasode directed a “visual version” of the Sango mythology. There is also “the transposition of Obatala,” a mythological tale originally sourced in Yoruba society, retold in writing by Obotunde Ijimere, translated by Ulli Beier, and produced as a film directed by Thompson Otaomi. These versions have created a new multimedia mythology with a variation in content, aesthetics, and concern. Even within village history, for example in the Labode village, Ibadan, Oyo State, the history of a master drummer has been turned into a film by Tunde Kelani, this time no longer set in a village environment but “in an urban location in Osun State with all the trappings of modern culture rather than the mythical attributes of an oral culture in a village in the outskirts of Ibadan” (Liman 2013, 8).

All these examples amply attest to the modern-day transformation of oral art forms and folklore through the use of multimedia.

Paradigms of Orature and Multimedia Interface among the Tiv of Nigeria

Among the Tiv people of North Central Nigeria there are numerous examples of compelling visual and audio transformations of oral art forms and folklore into multimedia.

Adan Wade Kohol Ga, a Tiv classic text written by Senator Suemo Chia about a man of valour and hard work who fought verbal wars of jealousy and met his death, was translated into English as a written text by Tyohdzuah Paulinius Akosu with the title *The Story of Adam Wade*, and was made into a film by Anjira Solomon Nyiekaa. In its new forms, it was reshaped and re-enacted, incorporating new trends and recreating old ways. In the film, a caged hen incubating her eggs is not verbally or literally presented but is visually presented at the point when Pendatyo u Wade, Tagude, (Wade’s esteemed wife,) got pregnant, suggesting that her long-held expectations of pregnancy have been fulfilled. It may be an implicit insinuation that the hen-hatching metaphor symbolises a prospect for better days ahead. Audio effects in the film of night birds constantly singing at certain points, may indicate that some bad omen is on the horizon. The night birds sing “*me kpe a or! Me kpe a or!*” (I will die with someone ... I will die with someone!). The bird used in the film is the *mtsaan*, the African owl, and it is visibly busy with its sing-song work, a duty performed only when evil is about to befall the world. Also evident in the film are children’s plays, riddles, and games, such as “*menama oo! Too ankyo la nam a!*” (Amenama! Take that dice and give me), a game meant for mathematical calculations and logical thinking among the Tiv. Another game, “*ka an nan ye luam sha nyam ivo? Or ne ya luam sha nyam igyo!*” (Who has eaten with goat

meat? This one has eaten food with pig meat!), usually dismissed by contemporary youth, is revived in the film. One finds young people now engaging in the very riddles, jokes, plays and games previously thought of as being too traditional, unfashionable and irrelevant, and doing so with renewed zeal, thereby attesting to the value of multimedia productions.

Another example of a popular parody and pastiche of a Tiv oral art form is the Tiv anthem that is sung/played at special occasions and celebrations. The original version goes as follows:

Yo o oo!

Ageba geba vaa kaa

Iwer ikaa

Un mba Tiv cii wuha/zua

Duwe sha tembe/sha won yô

Ikyur ior i hembe ayem ve!

Begha ande sha hyande ve!

Inyaregh ki bough ki kume

Er ka wura yô

Ndyar yough yi yough

Wan Begha hile ihongo

nomso-or duwe sha tembe/won yô

ikyur ior hembe ayem ve!

“Oh lah lah!

Trumpets sound

Shouts abound

Prestigious Tiv sons and daughters wonderfully dressed

Walk gaily to space

People wander in wonder!

The lion found itself on the tuft!

Evil money thunders

Like rain

Walk valiantly, valiantly

The Young Lion blocked the seashore

The Young man comes out to space

The crowd dispersed in wonder.”

In modern-day multimedia, at the point where the anthem declares that “evil money thunders,” there is a filmic re-enactment and an acoustic effect of a clap of thunder to introduce a new trend in presenting cultural materials through technological devices. The Ashi Waves Radio 99.9 FM station in Katsina-Ala, Benue State, Nigeria, not only broadcasts its own radio version of the anthem but also plays other voice or instrumental versions produced by the local populace. This shows that different versions of the anthem will continue to be created from the original oral form.

In indigenous language cinema of the Tiv, visual versions of films exist that attempt to rejuvenate traditional legends, myths, settings, audience, time, atmosphere, and pace to capture Tiv values and ethos. Some of these attempts include the film *Gbenda Awambe*, which was directed and produced by an Igbo, Jikeme Emmanuel (2012), from the southeastern part of Nigeria. However, this film, through its Igbo-centred fashion of narrative, appropriate fluting, costume, and other glaring contestations, wrongly assesses the legendary gift of Takuruku, the progenitor of the Tiv, the blood-sucking mystery of the *imborivungu*, and the owl pipe that is said to have magical powers and able to bring luck and wealth. The film, *Ikyese Kwaghyan*, directed and produced by Williams Kwa and marketed by Golden Paradise Studios, recasts a Tiv myth about the Tiv people’s relationship with God and God’s gift and final relocation to Nigeria. The film, *Ior Chenji*, directed by Praise Abraham, dutifully narrates the character and flamboyance of the aristocrats, the king, queen, princes, princesses, Governor Tien (maternal uncle), and other relatives and associates. The colourful costumes and pomp of Tor (the king), the expensive vehicles, and the general aura and majesty portrayed are typical of the king and of fiefdoms in Nigeria.

Like the Hausa indigenous films produced in northern Nigeria, some of the Tiv indigenous films contain many varying aspects of the religious, social, “political and ideological subterfuge of the forces of cooption and subordination of the existing hegemonic structure” (Liman 2013, 7). These are nevertheless revitalising experiments of some oral art forms on the brink of extinction. Mechanical and computer-mediated techniques, content re-fashioning, new aesthetic models, and the creation of new values, identity and vision are at the core of the transformations currently experienced in the production of oral artistic products in Nigeria. These energisers have introduced cue-in techniques, sound and visual effects, as well as editing tactics in labyrinthine complexity of digital nourishment to reintroduce and nurture certain levels of cultural consciousness, aesthetic reclamation and the tactful inculcation of cultural values. These oral art forms have found space in multimedia at the most appropriate time, a time threatened by “the current quagmire of crisis of identity afflicting Nigeria” (Liman 2013, 9).

Recent works of Obadia Kehemen Orkor, a renowned Tiv oral artist, (a poet known for his Shakespeare-like use of symbols, images, metaphors and paradoxes) are, unlike the earlier traditional live performances, computer-induced with instrumentation, mixing, synthesising and synchronising Western musical instruments with Tiv cultural musical instruments to, if nothing else, bring home the point of the artist’s switch from singing traditional songs to his newfound love of evangelical songs.

Finnegan (1992, 25), in her studies of the technology of communication being in constant flux between tradition and modernity, states that,

tradition and modernity constantly engage themselves in a contest of relevance and survival, leading to cutting down of limits of operation of the varying forms and striving and integrating forms to constantly stay afloat in symbiotic relevance.

In her recent work, Finnegan (2007, 224) emphasises that Africa is a place where people “amazingly exploit the beauties and potentialities of words together with the resources of a shimmering multi-modal and multimedia constellation of arts.” Universities around the world, especially departments of performing and dramatic arts, visual arts, and film studies, as well as web designers, phone users, social media and other agencies, have used the “constellation” of oral art forms, designs and performance images to capture the essence of their platforms and networks in renewed forms of hybrid multimedia communication.

Conclusion

African folklore is an open system, which, in its collective dynamism, adapts new contents, styles, techniques, narratives, performances, and structural changes to meet the needs of a technologically advanced world. It equally accommodates distortions,

reshaping, adaptations, hybridism, and re-enactments in its contemporary performances. New African oral art forms feature seamless audio, visual texture, lighting, acoustic effect, visual graphic, colour creation, and animation through the interface with multimedia. In assuming modernity and contemporaneity, multimedia is tacitly energising and reviving cultural forms in ways that motivate the youth to embrace them. The techniques of editing, mechanical input, parody, pastiche, hybridisation, and collage are convenient in re-energising oral art forms and folklore to develop in a new fashion, a new trend, a new version, and a new relevance.

As shown throughout this article, the interface between folklore and multimedia has facilitated many manifestations of oral art forms in new forms of cultural modernity, experimentation and synthesis, which is why it is currently receiving serious attention from scholars.

References

- Aliyu, S. A. 1986. "An Experience in the Teaching of Orature." *Work in Progress* 4 (1986): 51–6.
- Babajo, A. K. 2011. *Orature Meaning, Nature and Forms: A Study Guide for Undergraduates*. Kaduna: Slimline Publications.
- Baran, S. J. 2009. *Introduction to Mass Communication: Media Literacy and Culture*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Ben-Amos, D. 1971. "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context." *Journal of American Folklore* 84 (331): 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.2307/539729>.
- Blake, R. A. 1985. "Condominiums in the Global Village." In *The Impact of Mass Media: Current Issues*, edited by Ray Eldon Hiebert and Carol Reuss. New York, NY: Longman.
- Brunvand, J. H. 1968. *The Study of American Folklore*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- Doo, M. 2007. *Tiv Kwagh-Hir*. Hingir Ager. Doomac Videos. 778, Compact Disc.
- Dundes, A. 1968. "Ways of Studying Folklore." In *Our Living Traditions: An Introduction to American Folklore*, edited by T. P. Coffin. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Emmanuel, J. (dir.). 2012. *Gbenda Awambe*. Marketed and distributed by Princess of Heaven International Christian Centre, Gboko, Nigeria. Motion Picture.
- Finnegan, R. 1992. *Literacy and Orality: Studies in the Technology of Communication*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Finnegan, R. 2007. *The Oral and Beyond: Doing Things with Words in Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Goetz, P.W. (ed.). 2007. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Vol. 4, 15th ed. s.v. "Folklore." Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Gunner, L. 2007. "Africa and Orality." In *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*, edited by Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson, 67–73. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Katzman, N. 1974. "The Impact of Communication Technology: Promises and Prospects." *Journal of Communication* 24 (4): 47–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1974.tb00407.x>.
- Kosova, M. 1980. "The Social as a Folklore Category." In *Folklore Studies in the 20th Century: Proceedings of the Centenary Conference of the Folklore Society*, edited by Venetia J. Newall. Woodbridge, NJ: D. S. Brewer.
- Liman, A. A. 2012. "Re-negotiating the Discursive Limits of Orature in the Digital Age." Paper presented on the theme "Language, Literature and Communication in the Globalised and Digital Age" at the International Conference of the Department of English, Obafem Awolowo University, Ile Ife, August 20–23.
- Liman, A. A. 2013. "Folklore and the Electronic Media in Contemporary Nigeria: Interrogating the Cultural Logic of Postmodernity." Paper presented at the Ambassador Professor Dandatti Abdulkadir International Conference on Folklore, National Integration and Development, Bayero University, Kano, April 3–4, 2013.
- McLuhan, M. 1967. *The Medium is the Message*. Madison, WI: Random House.
- Merolla, D. D. 1992. *Multimedia Research and Documentation of African Oral Genres*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Nyiekaa, A. S. (dir.). 2012. *Adan Wade Kohol Ga*. Written and produced by Suemo Chia. Marketed and distributed by Uncle "N" Video Production. Motion Picture.
- Obadia, O. 2013. *Manna. New Man. A New Word from the Singer*. Makurdi, Nigeria: Famous Global CD Tech. Compact Disc.
- Okpewho, I. 1992. *African Oral Literature: Backgrounds, Character, and Continuity*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Reuber, A. 2011. "Voodoo Dolls, Charms, and Spells in the Classroom: Teaching, Screening, and Deconstructing the Misrepresentation of the African Religion." *Contemporary Issues in Education Research* 4 (8): 7–18. <https://doi.org/10.19030/cier.v4i8.5611>.

Schiller, H. I. 1974. "Waiting for Orders—Some Current Trends in Mass Communications Research in the United States." *International Communication Gazette* 20 (1): 11–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001654927402000102>

Zanga Zanga of Africa. 2012. *Kerechoco*. Gboko, Nigeria: Franex Ventures. Musical, 2150, Compact Disc.

Zirimu, P., and A. Bukenya. 1986. "Oracy as a Skill and as a Tool for African Development." In *The Arts and Civilization of Black and African Peoples*. Vol. 4. Lagos: Third Press International.