



RE-AWAKENING CITIZENSHIP THROUGH ANCIENT AND MODERN HEROES AND HEROINES: SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF IFÈ OÒYÈ ANTHEM

Akíndélé Àjàyí Adébáyò¹ and Olúwatóyìn Mary Oláiyá (Ph.D.)².

¹Department of Yorùbá, School of Languages, Osun State College of Education, Ilá Òràngún.

²Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

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ABSTRACT: *The Ilé-Ifè often called Ifè Oòyè, occupies a central place in the cultural, spiritual, and historical identity of Yorùbá. It is popularly accepted as the ancient Yorùbá town believed to be the cradle of Yorùbá civilisation. Just like other Yorùbá cities and towns, Ilé-Ifè has an anthem that corroborates and harbour the socio-political relevance of the city in Yorùbá land and beyond. This paper provides a detailed socio-cultural examination of the anthem by first presenting the lyrics in Yorùbá, along with the translations and then analysing its socio-cultural thematic relevance; exploring its origin, usage, and role in reinforcing communal identity among Ifè people and more broadly among Yorùbá; and reflecting on its relevance in modern times. The paper relies on qualitative and textual analysis of data mainly from the transcribed anthem and other secondary data sources including documentaries, academic journals, published and unpublished thesis, historical films and creative works. Theoretically, work is anchored on the sociology of literature. The paper posits that the anthem functions not only as a hymn of praise, but as a living reminder of myths, values, heritage, and an exhortation toward cultural continuity, prayers, unity, exertion of Yorùbá worldviews and progress. The study recommended the more nuanced inquiry into Yorùbá towns anthem for more exploration of people's identity and cultural biases. It is in line with United Nation's number SDG 11 that advocates for sustainable cities and Development globally.*

KEYWORDS: Ancestral home, Anthem, Cities, Cultural Identity, Ilé-Ifè.



INTRODUCTION

The Ilé-Ifè often called Ifè Oòyè, occupies a central place in the cultural, spiritual, and historical identity of Yorùbá. It is popularly accepted as the ancient Yorùbá town believed to be the cradle of Yorùbá civilisation. Just like other Yorùbá cities and towns, Ilé-Ifè has an anthem that corroborates and harbour the socio-political relevance of the city in Yorùbá land and beyond. This paper provides a detailed socio-cultural examination of Ilé-Ifè anthem by presenting the lyrics in Yorùbá, along with the translations and then analysing its socio-cultural thematic relevance; exploring its origin, usage, and role in reinforcing communal identity among Ifè people and more broadly among Yorùbá; and reflecting on its relevance in modern times. The paper posits that the anthem functions not only as a hymn of praise, but as a living reminder of myths, values, heritage, and an exhortation toward cultural continuity, prayers, unity, exertion of Yorùbá worldviews and progress. The study recommended the more nuanced inquiry into Yorùbá towns anthem for more exploration of people's identity and cultural biases. It is in line with United Nation's number SDG 11 that advocates for sustainable cities and Development globally.

Consequently, anthems serve as powerful cultural markers: they express identity, collective memory, values, and ambitions. While national anthems are well known, local or town anthems often play critical roles in grounding people in their immediate heritage. The town anthem of Ilé-Ifè is one such example among the Yorùbá. Ilé-Ifè is more than a geographic location: in Yorùbá cosmology and history it is the source of humanity, the place where Odùduwà is said to have established the Yorùbá lineage, a site of myth, sacred kingship, art, religion, and culture. Understanding the Ilé-Ifè anthem helps us understand how the people of Ifè view themselves, their past, and aspirations.

Anthems of towns or institutions often encode institutional values, hence, useful in constructing identities and cultures for such institutions including their unique features (Oyèbáńjí and Bánkólé, 2022, p. 1). National or City anthem is a powerful tool for construction of social and cultural identity ingrained in people the sense of belonging, bonding, emotional and physical attachment and establishing the strong connection to the icons in the history of a nation or town. Since songs are memorable and emotional means of expressing one's idea, feeling or thought, the lyrics in national anthem is sung and being sung to instill the cultural identity in the people. In anthems, 'the words that must always be sung, that have always been sung whose words and tune seem like permanent signs thereby making entities like nations appear permanent.' Kellen (2003, p.166). The wordings in anthems goes beyond mere expressions, they are rhythmically established to perpetuate the nationality and sense of belonging in people. Songs to Yorùbá are quite easy for they delight and rejoice in spontaneous composition of lyrics as ones of their uniqueness (Bier and Gbadamosi, 1951). Ilé-Ifè anthem is a modern lyric that projects the image and socio-political relevance of Ilé-Ifè in Yorùbá land and beyond. Ifè anthem is a two-versed lyrical composition with refrains composed by an Ifè indigene, Chief Late Oṣùolálé Fálóyín in late 1990s as a mark of further identity for Ifè people boasting of rich cultural identities and values of Ilé-Ifè in the past and present time. This work investigates the socio-cultural relevance of Ifè in Yorùbá, Nigeria and relevance in global map with the hope to validating the symbolic values of Ifè traced to their anthem. By so doing, the work affirms town anthem as a veritable means of social construal of most towns where aspiration, supplication, uniqueness, traits and heroic deeds of the past icons are also construed.



Statement of the Problem

Understanding the socio-cultural identities of people have been observed from diverse concepts. Extant works have examined anthems of states or nation from historical, philosophical, thematic, stylistic and pragmatic perspectives. Among these studies are Dze-Ngwa (2014), Olásunkànmí et al (2015), Aló and Ayínúolá (2017), Onditi (2018), and Ayínúolá (2020, 2022). But the socio-cultural identity in anthems of towns, most especially ones in Yorùbá language has not received needed scholarly attention. Only the histories, praise poetry and of course national symbols and artistries received more attentions. The idea of attempting the exploration of people's cultural identity from towns' anthem sound modern and has not received needed academic attentions. Hence, this study attempts the analysis of socio-cultural identity of Ilé-Ifè people through their anthem.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

This study aims to examine the socio-cultural identity of people consists in Ilé-Ifè anthem with the aim to validating it as a unique way of identifying people's cultural traits. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to:

- i. identify the socio-cultural identities of people judging from Ifè anthem
- ii. analyse the preponderance of ancestral prowess in Ifè anthem
- iii. positing Ifè anthem as repository of cultural belief and citizenship and;
- iv. examine the social function of Ifè anthem among people.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper relies on qualitative and textual analysis of data mainly from the transcribed anthem and other secondary data sources including documentaries, academic journals, published and unpublished theses, historical films and creative works. Theoretically, work is anchored on the sociology of literature.

Demographic Details of Ilé-Ifè Anthem

Lines And Stanzas	Year And Date	Composer	Form	Durations
23 Lines, 3 Stanzas	1992	Chief Sàfiríyù Oṣùṣálálé Fálóyìn	Audio-visual	3 Mins 28 seconds

Biography of Chief Sàfiríyù Oṣùṣálálé Fálóyìn, the Composer of Ilé-Ifè Anthem

Late Chief Sàfiríyù Oṣùṣálálé Fálóyìn was an indigene of Ilé-Ifè. Chief Sàfiríyù was born on the 14th of September, 1942 into the family of Late Pa Oláńrewájú Fálóyìn of Ejésí-Lúfúsìn Compound in Ilódè Quarters and Late Madam Adéṣolá Fálóyìn of Adéṣun-Irédumí side of Ilé Ifè. He lost his two parents (father and mother) at the tender age 8 and 11 respectively but very determined as a young. He started his Primary School education at Saint Patrick's Catholic



Primary School, Àbẹ̀bí, Ìbàdàn in 1958. He returned to Ilé Ifẹ̀. He returned to Ilé-Ifẹ̀ and lived with his uncle, Late Pa Tóyòsí Omíṣore. It was his living among the Omíṣore's Family, whose love for education was monumental that rekindled his determination to achieve higher educational standards because the old Sàfíríyù was seen with those younger than him going to the Universities or travelling abroad. He made up his mind to succeed in life. He proceeded to Olúorogbo High School, Ilé-Ifẹ̀ and obtained his West African School Certificate and equally attended Divisional Two College, Ilé-Ifẹ̀ after which he proceeded to the college of Education, Ilẹ̀ṣà in 1984 for the National Certificate in Education-NCE, and later to the Ọbáfẹ̀mi Awólówò University in 1997 where he obtained his B.Ed. degree in year 1980 with flying colour with amazement from people.

He took teaching profession seriously and he was a committed and professional teacher. He taught at Ethiopian Primary School and St Stephen's, A Mọ́dákẹ́kẹ́ and after graduating taught at St Johns' Grammar School, Ansa-rudeen and Ethiopian Grammar Schools all in Ilé-Ifẹ̀. Since his tender age, he has been playing leadership roles wherever he finds himself. He was prominent in the field of culture. He initiated the Traditional Ifẹ̀ dance and Yorùbá dance troupe in all schools and colleges in Ifẹ̀ and its environ. He represented Ifẹ̀ and Ìjẹ̀ṣà Zone and then Ọ̀yọ́ State in many cultural competitions and Festivals and came home with certificates and prizes. He was the only assessor in the then Ifẹ̀ Central Local Government who trekked more than 200 kilometres in various workshops. He was a member of the popular para-military organization, Man O War and the Nigerian Civil Defence. He was a great poet and composer of melodious songs. He composed the universally accepted "Ifẹ̀ Anthem" (Ifẹ̀ Oòyè ẹ́ jí gírì), sung at the first-ever Ife Day Celebrations which earned him a Merit Award only from His imperial Majesty, Ọba Okunadé Šíjúádé, Olúbùṣe II, the then Ọ̀oni of Ifẹ̀. He was Zonal Chairman of the Association of Nigeria Theatre Practitioners (ANTP). He was the first man to sit on the seat of the National Descendants Students Association (NIDSA) Ilẹ̀ṣà chapter and the National Secretariat, Ilé-Ifẹ̀ in 1982 as the President. A presenter of both Radio and Television programmes. He presented (Tales and fables) Àlọ́ in Ifẹ̀ dialecton radios. He was responsible to the publicity sub-committee and took important roles in the compilation of the historical background of the present Ìlórò community as a whole. Late Fálóyín Sàfíríyù Oṣùlálé was a professional teacher till his death and he was a devoted Christian. He was blessed with glorious children and caring wife. What was remarkable about this man was that throughout his educational pursuits, he was always in class with age-mates of his children but never bothered, never looked back for a minute. He was committed to his goal. He was successful but alas, Death never allowed him, to enjoy all the struggles and abundant talents, embedded in this, grass-to-grace man! He died in July 31st 2008 after a brief illness. He was survived by two sons and three daughters all whom, he gave very sound education and good character alongside one of his junior brothers who recently retired from the services of Ọbáfẹ̀mi Awólówò University. History and the people of Ilé-Ifẹ̀ shall never forget this talented, energetic and patriotic son of Ilé -Ifẹ̀, who gave his all to his place of birth and humanity.

Theoretical Framework: Sociology of Literature

Sociology of Literature dwells mostly on the contact any work or work of art has with human beings and society in which they live. According to Ọ̀gúnṣínà (1987) the name of this theory suggests that it is the fusion of two disciplines: Sociology and Literature. That means it is a kind of theory that is interested in the interrelationship between literature and the society having almost all the metrics of human interpersonal relationship as its metrics. Ọ̀gúnṣínà (1987, p. 13) further defines sociology as "the science of social relationships as well as the consequences



of those relationships for ongoing social systems and the process of social change”. The Mirror image approach of the sociology of literature hinges on certain principles such as:

- i. Reflecting Gender Norms
- ii. Challenging Stereotypes
- iii. Effecting Social Change
- iv. Projecting positivity and defects of the society

Sociological theory advocates for the analysis of works or an observation in relation to the benefits it offers humanity and how the thoughts, idea and propositions on daily basis touch humanity in one way or the other in such a way that their attitudes, lives, or everyday’s embankments will be altered. The popular proponents of sociological theory are Talcott Parsons, Robert K. Merton, Randall Collins, James Samuel Comans, Peter Blau, Niklas Luhmann, Marshal McLuhan, Immanuel Wallerstein, George Homan, Harrison White among others. They propounded the supposition that intended to analyse objects or phenomena from the perspectives of social realities drawing interconnection between people so as to substantiate sociological knowledge. (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>). The advocates of sociological theory see beyond the mere skeletal of the work or proposition but the impact it has on people who undergo that phenomenon. This implies that nothing happens in isolation because society begets the things we are discussing.

Weber (1968) in Ritzer (2010, p. 125) says: ‘‘Sociology . . . is a science concerning itself with the interpretive understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences’’ It implies that sociological theory concerns itself with the actions and happening that affect or impact people in the society and how the impact manifest in their lives. Sociology also interested in the causes and effects of a cause that constitute the experience of men in the society.

It also investigates how the individual relationship affects the group or general populace. In essence, collectivism rather than individualism is the basis of the sociological theory just like the use of indigenous healthcare spread from individual to group and thereby becomes their culture. Ritzer (2010, p. 124) puts it as thus; ‘‘In other words, sociology, too, can only be practiced by proceeding from the action of one or more, few or many, individuals, that means, by employing a strictly ‘individualist’ method’’ (G. Roth, 1976, p. 306). Despite his stated adherence to an ‘‘individualist’’ method, Weber was forced to admit that it is impossible to eliminate totally collective ideas from sociology. But even when he admitted the significance of collective concepts, Weber ultimately reduced them to patterns and regularities of individual action: ‘‘For the subjective interpretation of action in sociological work these collectivities must be treated as solely the resultants and modes of organization of the particular.

While it is part of the sociology must accede to collective decisions and inclinations. There are instances when collectivism is not recommended or advisable. This is what Weber through Ritzer (2010, p. 124) opines above. He observes that collective effort influence better and deeper than individual, yet, collectivism is not always the best but it is difficult to take it away from sociological theory because social actions is impossible without what Akìwọ̀wọ̀ called asùwàdà where *àjogbé* and *àjóbí* hold the pillar for social cohesion in the society. Olútáyò and Akanle (2021, p. 1) buttresses as thus:



...sociological theories make explanation and understanding of social relations possible. Sociological theories enable generalized explanations and particular understanding of social relations and social processes in manners that allow appreciations and projections of social relations and realities. It is impossible within the discipline to efficiently and effectively explain social occurrences, issues, situations and developments without theoretical localization and contextualization.

The understanding of society to the scholars who advocates for sociological theory is that one can only get to know the society or learn about any society by intentionally interacting with people. It's noteworthy to clearly say that theories under sociological theory are numerous. Such theories include Feminism, phenomenology, social function theory, functionalism among others but this study stays under their umbrella term sociology which encompasses all the social behaviours, changes and adaptation of a group to recent and current development in cultures. But the learning in such manner may be intentional but the acquisition of the knowledge becomes unintentional because a lot someone will be learning will not be taught by anyone but be pick by the learners, the students of the society. Social interaction is therefore a necessity for the effective explanation of social occurrences.

Theoretical Connection and Justification

From the foregoing, it is crystal clear that sociology of literature is interested in what literature has to offer humanity as literature itself is a product of human relationship in the society. The theory is fitting of this study because Ifè anthem is a vivid description of peoples and their cultural relevance and values within their jurisdiction. The theory is also interested in explaining the social order in the society, the work in question is also interested in showcasing the social values of the society in question. Thereby, it is a fitting theory that analyses the areas of strength, values and pride of Ife which they derive from history, heroes, posture as cradle of Yorùbá. The areas of call to service of humanity, preservation of Ifè dignity and guiding of ancestral heritages, as presented in the anthem, are also vital to sociology of literature. Without an iota of doubt, this theory is suitable for this work in no small measure.

Anthems in Forms and Context

Anthems either national, state or town are composed and replete with great deal of identity norms, traits and peculiarity of the town or state they stand for. The studies reveal that most of the African national anthems were composed as protest songs for liberation of African against colonialism (Blake, 2006; Onditi 2018). The origin of national anthem emerged from French Revolution *La Marseillaise* written by Claude Joseph Rouget in 1792. It was initially tagged song for the Army of the Rhines before it was adopted as National Anthem in 1775. The idea of national anthems for other countries that begot city and town anthems stemmed from this French Revolution song. The liberation songs that are later on coined into national anthem to seek liberation and exert the uniqueness of each state or city or town is called anthem (Cusack, 2005; Allen, 2013; Onditi, 2018). The institutional orientation and essence of most African anthems is a reflection of people's social values embedded within the cultural confines of people. Thus, national anthems are regarded as sacred, ritualistic and godly within their respective domains.

Onditi (2018, p. 10) identifies five patterns in most of African national anthem. To him, African national anthems as linked to the concept of 'African potentials;' inclusive development,



nation-building, Pan-Africanism, governance and identities, values and ethics. While the observation is very relevant to the issue of African anthem, they are not uncommon to find when we come to the anthems of the town as well in Africa most especially in Yorùbá speaking towns of Southwest region. Even though they are composed in indigenous dialects, inclusive development, nation building, values and ethics that form the socio-cultural identity of the people cannot cease to emerge in them. Hence, they see anthem as a means of expressing their thoughts, emotion and feelings about their towns in form of music which the studies affirm is one of the most understood language in Yorùbá society because “Man expresses himself through cultural forms; in the case of music, he uses a specialized language, different from everyday language, which poses various levels of understanding and allows us to observe the extension of dialogism in modern culture, and also the importance of passion, with its cognitive and contractual dimensions” (Hormigos, 2010, p. 92).

In the indigenous Yorùbá societies, the impact of music cannot be overemphasised. The role anthem lyrically sung like music play is similar to *oríkì*, praise poetry in Yorùbá, in that the protest is limited truly in *oríkì* but the uniqueness and socio-cultural norms of people are enshrined in *oríkì* likewise national anthems. Hence, the issue of anthems is relatively new and has started to gain momentum in Yorùbá land in recent years. Almost all the towns now develop and compose their anthems which replace or complement national anthems during their annual carnivals or important occasions across the southwestern region of Nigeria. “The rendition of any anthem is done on special occasions to perform the functions of memorials, rituals and narratives. Such special occasions include official opening and closing of public events... ” (Ayínúṣàlá 2022, p 125). When the anthems are sung, the citizens are emotionally and psychologically connected to their roots and personalities in their immediate and distant past. Therefore, some scholars called it a godly ritualistic genre (Onditi, 2018). This is the reason why Kellen (2003, p. 166) avers that; ‘the words that must always be sung, that have always been sung whose words and tune seem like permanent signs thereby making entities like nations appear permanent.’ The lyrics in anthems perpetuate the love and affection individual has for the country or entities like state, city or towns to remain ingrained in the minds of the people.

Bánkólé and Oyèbáńjí (2022, p.132) while examining the lexico-semantic attributes of some universities in Ekiti State observes that anthem remind the people that are connected to it about the institutions, entities of town, state or organisation about them. This is why many states, cities even newly established schools make it a duty to composed an anthem that depicts the attributes and values of that institution. They aver that:

Singing the anthem has a major psychological effect upon masses, due to its enhancement of national or institutional commitment. Anthems are composed for institutions in order to repeatedly remind members and the general public about their core mandate and values. The composition of anthems by institutions also signals autonomy just like in the case of nations where the national anthem symbolises freedom from imperialism. Anthems may also help in the publicity of institutions.

The values and mandate that any institution hopes to reflect in their products now or beyond are well established in anthems. It is truly a symbol of hope, aspiration and liberation from imperialism that depicts their readiness to take their city or town to greater height. It is a symbol of autonomy in their respective domains. Most importantly, anthem market and publicizes the institution. This is why it is a bit different from the role *oríkì* plays in the socio-cultural life of

Map of Ilé-Ifè showing major Places and neighboring Towns from <https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Ife-Wikipedia>



Bird's eye view of a section of Ilé-Ifè, Yorùbáland (Photo credit: Wikipedia the free encyclopedia)



Data Presentation: Lyrics and Translation

Verse 1

Ilé-Ifè ni orírun ayé

1

Ìlú Oòduà baba Yorùbá

Èdùmàrè tó dá wa si Ifè



Kó má se ba Ifè jé mó wa lóri

KÓlúwa kó máa ràn wá ẹ.

5

Refrain

Ifè Oòyè ẹ jí gírì

Ẹ jí gírì, kẹ ẹ gbé Ifè ga

Olóri aye nIfè Oòyè

Ká múra láti tè ńíwájú

Òràmfè Onílé-iná

10

Oòduà a wèriri jagun

Òkànlénínwó Irúnmọ̀lẹ̀

Ẹ gbéfẹ̀ lékè ị̀sòro gbogbo

Verse 2

Ilé-Ifè ibi ojúmó ti mó wá

Ìlú àsà oun ìlú èsìn

15

Gbogbo Yorùbá e ká re Ifè

Ká lo wohun àdáyéba ti ó jojú

Ilé Oòduà Ifè ló wà

Opá Òràn'yàn; Ilé-Ifè ni.

Boji Morèmi Ilé-Ifè ni,

20

Ará, e káre Ifè Oòdáyé.

Ifè Oòyè ...

English Translation (approximate / interpretive)

Verse 1

Ilé-Ifè, the origin of the world

1

City of Odùduwà, father of the Yorùbá

God who created us into Ifè

May not let Ifè be ruined during our time



May the Lord always assist us. 5

Refrain

Ifẹ Oòyè, awake with vigour

Awake with vigour, let us lift Ifẹ high

Ifẹ Oòyè, you are the source and leader of the world

Let us prepare to progress

Òrànmfẹ, whose house was built with fire 10

Odùduwà, the ubiquitous warrior

At the heart of spiritual entities many-hundredfold

Let Ifẹ be raised above all problems.

Verse 2

Ile-Ifẹ, the source of day break

City of culture and the religion 15

All Yorùbá, come to Ifẹ

Let us go to behold the valuable ancient artefact (or precious heritage)

Ilẹ Odùduwà is there

The staff of Òrànyàn is in Ilé-Ifẹ.

Mọ̀rẹ̀mì's grave is in Ilé-Ifẹ, 20

People, salute Ifẹ Oòdayé.

Socio-cultural Analysis Ilé-Ifẹ Anthem

Ifẹ anthem, if analysed socio-culturally is embedded with great deal of themes that contain socio-cultural identity of Ife among the towns in Yorùbá land and globally. Their identity is different and the uniqueness of these identities is contained in their history, heroes and their status as cradle of Yorùbá civilisation. Hence, the anthem is analysed culturally to unravel the identities unique to them as follows:

History of Creation with Ifẹ as the Source

One of the dominant pre-occupations in Ilé-Ifẹ anthem is their origin and description of Ifẹ as the origin of entire world and cradle of Yorùbá civilisation. While there are many oral accounts



as to how Ifè was created and how it became known as the origin of Yorùbá, the one with many rebuttals from archeologists, historians and cultural researchers is the one related to mythology of Ifè attributing Odùduwà to the founder of Ilé-Ifè after Ọbàtálá was already drunk on their way from the sky-God (Olódùmarè) who ordered them to create the universe (Akínjògbìn and Àyándélé 1980; and Àlàdé, 2015). In spite of the rebuttals and attribution of the creation story to a mere fantasy, it becomes a source of inspiration and pride to Yorùbá, Ifè indigenes, the composer of the anthem inclusive. It is widely circulated among Ifè people, taught in schools, used at festivals and community gatherings. It is recorded by various bodies including Yorùbá Library, Ifè Diaspora Organizations. The myths and symbols the anthem refers to (such as Odùduwà, Ọrànńfẹ, Ọrányàn, Bojì Morèmi) are deep in Yorùbá mytho-history. Hence, in line 1 and 2, the anthem says:

Ilé-Ifè ni orírun ayé Ilé-Ifè is the origin of the universe 1

Ìlú Oòduà baba Yorùbá The town of Oòduà, the father of Yorùbá (Line 1&2)

The first line and second line are products of Yorùbá mythology of creation of universe by Odùduwà, Ọbàtálá and other gods. The mythology describes the creation of universe as the one from God who commanded Ọbàtálá to lead lieutenants to earth. The said Ọbàtálá got intoxicated along the way but Odùduwà took over from him and led other entourage to a place that was full of water. This is well-captured in Àlàdé (2015, p. 60) as thus:

Odùduwà was sent by God from heaven to create the earth and the human race. He descended from heaven accompanied by his lieutenants and landed at Ilé-Ifè, with a handful of sand and a cock in his hands, he spread the sand over the earth, which was covered with water, and the cock spread the sand all over the earth and created land. Most of these uncoordinated conflicting stories were very difficult to prove or be binding on history for any academic mind.

The creation mythology which cannot be totally accepted not totally debunked forms part of what informed the composer of this anthem to include the uniqueness of Ifè as not only the origin of Yorùbá but also the origin of entire mankind as postulated by Akínjògbìn and Àyándélé (1980). The innate uniqueness of Ifè here serves two purposes; it is a renaissance and clarion call to the indigenes to take full responsibility of their roles in modern time, as the leaders and also to sensitise them about the history for literature intentionally or unintentionally serves to teach people about history. This forms part of the mirror image approach of proponents of sociology of Literature. That students of society will be very blind to the fullness of that society without literature. To further solidify the status of Ilé-Ifè in the creation story, the composer makes a subtle reference to Ọrànńfẹ's hill in Ilé-Ifè which is a symbolic allusion in the creation history. Ọkè Ọrànńfẹ is a place the Odùduwà and his entourage settled while coming from the sky. Adébí sí (2015, p. 62) who takes a clue from Akínjògbìn and Àyándélé (1980) opines that there was a period when the world was covered by water. The Almighty God then decided to send some of his messengers to the world and they included Ọbàtálá or Ọrìṣà Ọlá or Ọrìṣà Aláṣe (as the leader) and sixteen Ọye (immortals). They were given five pieces of iron, a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth, and a cockerel. Somewhere on their way to the world, the leader, Ọbàtálá, got drunk with palm wine. Odùduwà seized the symbol of authority from him and eventually led the party to the world. "The site on which they landed is traditionally known as Ọkè Ọrànńfẹ in Ilé-Ifè. On arrival at the site, Odùduwà set down the five pieces of iron and placed the lump of earth on them. The cockerel then spread its toes on the earth" (Adébí sí 2015, p.62). The reference to Ọkè Ọrànńfẹ goes beyond any



other detail from Ifè anthem. The reference is symbolic and serves to rekindle people's cultural and historical awareness as contained in the theory of sociology of literature that advocates for how literature reflects, exposes, educates and corrects the ills of the society.

Similarly, in line 14, the anthem further bears the historical allusion to Ilé-Ifè as the source of mankind from which day breaks before it spreads all over the world. Even if there are many oral accounts about how Ifè was created and people often dispel the theory that Ilé-Ifè cannot be the source of all mankind (Şówùmí, 2011), the composer being one of the indigenes that will always promote the image of the city turns a deaf ear to this and goes ahead to instill it in the anthem that:

Ilé-Ifè ibi ojúmó ti mó wá Ilé-Ifè, where the day breaks (Line, 14)

The reference to Ilé-Ifè as the place where the day first breaks here is to further cement the mythology that describe Ilé-Ifè as not only the cradle of Yorùbá but also the source of mankind not minding the scholarly rebuttal that; "The idea of a rain and dove as the method of earth creation sounds more like magic than real. Archeologically, the Yorùbá race is not more than 2000 years, meaning other tribes existed before the Odùduwà appearance" (Şówùmí, (2011, p.18) in Ilé-Ifè and there is possibility of other creatures in Ifè before him which aligns with Awé account of Ilé-Ifè that Ûgbò Kingdom existed in Ilé-Ifè before the appearance of Odùduwà that dominated the aborigines before they depart to form another kingdom from where they attack the Ifè ruled by Odùduwà's descendants.

Prayers and Supplications

Line 3-5 is a typical example of prayers (*iwúre*) in Yorùbá cosmography. The composer is not oblivious of the values of *iwúre* (prayers) in Yorùbá cosmology that Yóó şe, kò şe, àdúrà tuni lára ju èpè ló (no matter how small, whether it is effective or not, prayer comforts and pleases one more than curses). Therefore, to lay foundation for any prosperity, the type the composer wishes for the Ifè indigenes, there is need for prayer. Hence, he says:

Èdùmarè tó dá wa si Ifè	The God that created us into Ifè
Kó má se ba Ifè jé mó wa lóri	Shall not ruin Ifè during our time
K'Ólúwa kó máa ràn wá şe.	May God help us! (Line 3-5)

The composer, on behalf of the indigenes of Ilé-Ifè becomes the *awúre* (offeror) while *agbire* (recipients of the prayer) is Olódùmarè who the Yorùbá, believe to be omnipotent and omnibenevolent. All the prayers, one offers through the deities or directly from the offeror, are directed to Olódùmarè who is ever magnificent.

Moreover, the anthem in line 12 and 13 further offers prayer that Ifè conquer all their problems and tribulations. Ilé-Ifè has undergone significant internal and external wars. They have also suffered in one way or the other from external aggression of the rebels who rebuilt their strength to attack Ifè. These are the problem the author is likely talking about when he says:

Òkànlénírinwó Irúnmọlẹ	The 40 four hundred and one deities
È gbéfẹ lékè ịsòro gbogbo	Make Ifè conqueror of all problems (Lines 12-13)



The fact that the poetic personae is able to acknowledge the occurrence of problems that Ifè might have faced or still facing is a testament to the precepts of sociology of literature that literature does not exist in isolation. It reflects and address the issues and ills of the society from where the solution may emanate. Here in the anthem, the anthem projects the image of Ifè as a city that has gone through problems in the past. One of such problems is rebellion of Ugbo Kingdom and their regrouping to attack Ifè as seen in Awé (2016).

Apart from ancient external aggression experienced by Ifè, political and boundary disputes between Ifè and Mòdákéké is another major problem Ifè has faced in the past. Mòdákéké had confrontations with Ifè on several occasions. The issue started since 1930s. The major flare up occurred between 1846 -1949 and was put to rest for a while. It started again in 1997 to 1998 and it also ensued in 2000 before it was finally resolved by the then President of Nigeria politically through political instrument in form of Area Office (Sarafadeen and Adébòlà, 2025). These problems are part of what make Ifè a semi-urban city in that, they feel the aftermath of war in term of development and human. Youths are majorly unemployed, there are many strangulations to government policies that may improve the standard of living among people.

All these form part of prayer point in their anthem and what brought about the acceptability of the anthem by all and sundry in Ilé-Ifè.

Pride, Dignity Call for Citizenship

Another important pre-occupation dominantly featuring in Ilé-Ifè anthem is the call for service and citizenship that will steer Ilé-Ifè forward so as to pave way for development. The anthem makes a clarion call to all and sundry in Ilé-Ifè to buckle up and strive to promote their city by all means. Just like other anthems in the world, Ilé-Ifè anthem is also replete with call to services, the sensitisation and re-awakening call by the stakeholders to other citizens that they should take advantage of their powers, uniqueness and special traits that God bestows on them to excel in life. They should also be painstaking and intentional in their effort to promote the indigenous heritages and trigger development in their city. The example that illustrates this is given below:

Ifè Oòyè ẹ jí gírì	Ifè Oòyè, awake with vigour
Ẹ jí gírì, kẹ ẹ gbé Ifè ga	Awake with vigour, let us lift Ifè high
Olórí aye nIfè Oòyè	You are the head of the world, Oòyè Ifè
Ká múra láti tè šíwájú	Let us prepare to develop (Lines 6-9)

There is re-awakening call by the poetic personae to the citizen to wake up from slumber and take advantage of “Ọránmífè” power so as to achieve what belongs to them and promote their town rigorously and passionately. This is what a citizen is required to do to ensure the city or country develop and becomes the place of pride. A mere sound of those names and historical places should be a thing of encouragement to them to serve, boast and be ready to give back to the society that make them, which translate to progress and sustainable development of the town.

Also, in line 17 and 18, the poetic personae don't call on only the Ile-Ife indigenes alone. He sees other Yorùbá towns as extension of Ife. That is why he calls on them as well to come to



Ifè and see their ancestral home where monuments and cultural artefacts are located, so as to serve as a pride for them. He goes thus:

Gbogbo Yorùbá ẹ ká re Ifè All the Yorùbá people come to Ifè
Ká lo wohun àdáyéba ti ó jojú Come and see the beautiful ancestral monuments

(Line 17-18)

This is an appeal and clarion call to all Yorùbá people to see Ilé-Ifè as their ancestral home where beautiful artefacts are seen with the hope that when they behold them, the pride to be Yorùbá and originated from their will be strengthened in them.

The expression “Gbogbo Yorùbá ẹ ká re Ifè” (All Yorùbá should come to Ifè) is an expression of unity and harmony among people who see themselves as Yorùbá to be united. This theme is not peculiar to only Ifè anthem, most of the towns in Yorùbá land do call for unity of their people. It is called *Ìṣòkan* (oneness) in Yorùbá and *Ìṣòkan* can propel group of individuals to progress and achieve what looks unattainable goals can be achieved with the aid of *Ìṣòkan* called unity. The expression, all Yorùbá salute Ifè as not just people born in Ifè, but all who share common ancestral Yorùbá identity). This means Ifè goes beyond the natives of Ifè alone. It encompasses all those people who see themselves as the progenitors of Yorùbá most especially, those that identify with Odùduwà and Òrànmiyàn.

Similarly, it's also collective identity that emanates from unity that make the town grow and attain development. The idea is also contained in the anthem of Ifè as seen here:

Ká múra láti tẹ síwájú Let us prepare to advance, move forward.

So, the anthem is not just retrospective, but future-looking. It goes beyond a mere praise of the past heroes, the description of the place or exhortation of the heritages but also a repository of native intelligence to advice people for path to progress most especially of the Ifè as an historical town.

Table 1: Recapitulating the occurrence of the different Themes where the table provides an exact representation of the Themes in Text (Ifè Anthem)

S/N	LINES OF LYRICS	Supplication	Pride and Dignity	Archeology Facts
1.	Ilé-Ifè ni orírun ayé			√
2.	Ìlú Oòduà baba Yorùbá		√	3
3.	Èdumàrè tó dá wa si Ifè	√		
4.	Kó má se ba Ifè jé mó wa lóri	√		
5.	KÓlúwa kó máa ràn wá ẹ.	√		
6.	Ifè Oòyè ẹ jí gírì		√	
7.	Ẹ jí gírì, kẹ ẹ gbé Ifè ga		√	
8.	Olóri aye nIfè Oòyè		√	



9.	Ká múra láti tè šíwájú		√	
10.	Òràmfè Onílè-iná			√
11.	Oòduà a wèriri jagun			√
12.	Òkànlénírinwó Irúnmolè			√
13.	È gbéfè lékè ìsòro gbogbo	√		
14.	Ilé-Ifè ibi ojúmó ti mó wá			√
15.	Ìlú àsà oun ìlú èsìn		√	
16.	Gbogbo Yorùbá ẹ ká re Ifè		√	
17.	Ká lo wohun àdáyébá ti ó jojú		√	
18.	Ilé Oòduà Ifè ló wà			√
19.	Opá Òrán'yàn; Ilé-Ifè ni.			√
20.	Boji Morèmi Ilé-Ifè ni,			√
21.	Ará, e káre Ifè Oòdáyé.		√	
22.	Ifè Oòyè,		√	

In the anthem of Ilé-Ifè as recapitulated above, using the metrics of sociological theory, there are elements of the three dominant themes. Supplications where the wishes of Ifè citizen to their fatherland is embedded. There is also the elements of dignity and pride that showcase the call to serve with pride, indicating the prestige of the of the town and lastly, the elements of prayers reverberate recurrently all through the text of the lyrics of Ifè anthem. While prayers and wishes tagged supplication takes only four (4) line as can be seen in the table above, which amounts to 18.2 %, dignity and pride of the citizens in the town takes dominant 10 lines amounting to 45.5 % of the lyrical text, historical relevance of the town in Yorùbá land and globally takes 8 lines out of 22 standing for 36.4 % of the total text. This is an indication that the dignity derived from the existence, positioning and historical relevance of the town drives the citizen to go to any length to proclaim their town, Ilé-Ifè as the cradle of the Yorùbá which must not be left to lose its value.

Functions and Social Role of Ilé-Ifè Anthem

Ceremonial use role of Ile-Ifè anthem is significant as a symbolism of identity of people. The anthem is sung during festivals, cultural events, perhaps at the Ọ̀nì's palace, at school assemblies in Ifè, community gatherings. It reinforces local identity. Children learn the anthem; it helps to transmit historical myths, knowledge of sacred sites, ideals (dignity, progress). For Ifè people, the anthem affirms their place in Yorùbá history and culture; for Yorùbá broadly, it invokes shared roots. For diaspora Yorùbá communities and Ifè associations abroad, it offers a touchstone of cultural belonging. By vocalising names like Odùduwà, Ọ̀rànmfè, Morèmi, the anthem keeps alive mythic memory and local sacred geographies that might otherwise fade. Phrases invoking vigilance, pride, dignity, forward movement act as moral exhortation: preserve culture, respect religion, work for the future.



Challenges, Critiques, and Contemporary Relevance

Because the anthem is circulated in oral/community tradition, there are variations in spelling, accentuation, even certain lines. Some words may be archaic, mythic, obscure, making comprehension difficult for younger generations not versed in Yorùbá myth. As globalization, urbanization, digital media change life, some young people may feel disconnected from the traditional mythic references (e.g. Bojì Morèmi, Opá Òrányàn, etc). The anthem can seem remote unless taught and contextualized. The anthem is strongly Yorùbá-centric, which is appropriate for Ifè, but in an increasingly diverse Nigeria there may be questions about how people from other backgrounds living in Ifè relate to it. The precise Yorùbá forms, pronunciation, accent, tone, need care; mispronunciation or transliteration can degrade meaning. Some suggest providing translations, recordings, multimedia, using the anthem in school curricula, festivals in dynamic ways to keep it alive.

CONCLUSION

The Ilé-Ifè Anthem (“Ifè Oòyẹ”) is far more than a ceremonial song. It is a living tapestry of myth, history, spiritual cosmology, values, and aspirations. By invoking the origin tales of Odùduwà, the sacred sites, the spiritual entities, and by exhorting dignity, pride, and forward movement, the anthem binds the present to the past while pushing toward the future. Maintaining the clarity, usage, teaching, and appreciation of the anthem is crucial for Ifè, and for Yorùbá identity more broadly. To preserve its vitality, suggestions include: using modern media (recordings, video) to make it accessible; including it in school curricula; offering translations; community performance; encouraging youth engagement; situating its landmarks in tours, e.t.c.

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